SAINTLY LIVES: (ANTI)IMPERIAL AND TRANSATLANTIC DISCOURSES IN COLONIAL HISPANIC-AMERICAN POETRY AND PAINTING
(16TH-TO-18TH-CENTURY NEW KINGDOM OF GRANADA AND NEW SPAIN)

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Ernesto Carriazo Osorio
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The dissertation of Ernesto Carriazo Osorio was reviewed and approved* by the following:

Julia Cuervo Hewitt
Associate Professor of Afro-Caribbean and Spanish Caribbean Literature and Culture
Dissertation Adviser
Chair of Committee

Charlotte Houghton
Associate Professor of Art History

Mary Barnard
Associate Professor of Early Modern Spanish Poetry and Prose

Guadalupe Martí-Peña
Associate Professor of Critical Theory and Contemporary Latin American Literature

Matthew J. Marr
Graduate Program Officer

*Signatures are on file in the Graduate School
ABSTRACT

This dissertation explores pictorial and poetic representations of Saint Catherine of Alexandria, the Virgin Mary, Saint Joseph, and Saint Bartholomew mostly from 16th to 18th century New Granada and New Spain. The dissertation proposes that despite the overt religious agenda intrinsically conveyed in these hagiographic representations, they can be read also as historical testimonies of resistance and (anti)imperial sentiments that reflect the ontological anxieties and fragmented identities of colonial subjects regarding their ethnic, cultural, and gender diversity. The main literary objects of study comprise carols from the Colonial Musical Archives of Bogotá's Cathedral, carols by Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz, Fernán González de Eslava, Colombian popular ballads, and a sonnet by Francisco Álvarez de Velasco y Zorrilla, among other poetic works. Pictorially, this thesis explores colonial representations of the saints mentioned above, from the New Kingdom of Granada, New Spain, Bolivia, and some of their respective European antecedents. It takes a post-colonial approach, grounded primarily on Homi Bhabha's notions of "in-between," "double vision," and "hybridity" to explain the cultural position from which colonial Hispanic American discourses enunciate their world-views, and the differences between such a position and that from which hegemonic discourses of empire are issued. In conclusion, this study shows how hagiographies in colonial Hispanic America do not efface religious and social paradigms from Europe altogether, but incorporate local outlooks and traditions into dominant discourses, destabilizing them, vindicating the authority of "otherness," and reinforcing alternative notions of collective and individual selfhood in the construction of Hispanic American identity.

Key words and phrases: Hagiographies, Virgen de Guadalupe, El Topo, St. Catherine of Alexandria, St. Bartholomew, St. Joseph, New Kingdom of Granada, Colonial Musical Archives from Bogotá’s Cathedral, Carols, Sor Juana, Francisco Álvarez de Velasco y Zorrilla, Fernán Gonzalez de Eslava, Joseph de Cascante, gender identity, androgyny, the monstrous, colonial Latin American painting.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES ............................................................................................................................... vi

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS................................................................................................................... ix

INTRODUCTION ................................................................................................................................... 1

CHAPTER ONE: .................................................................................................................................. 31

Avatars of Saint Catherine of Alexandria in the New World: The Discourse of and About
Womanhood in Colonial Hispanic America ....................................................................................... 31

Transformations of St. Catherine’s Wheel and of the Cross (de la Cruz) ............................... 55

Sor Juana: Pyramidal Shadow, Luminous Pyramid, or Both? ..................................................... 63

St. Catherine as The Lighthouse of Alexandria: ............................................................................ 67

Philadelphus and Serapis: ................................................................................................................ 70

Sor Juana’s Femina Suite ................................................................................................................. 71

Fernán Gonzalez de Eslava: ............................................................................................................. 75

Popular ballads in Colombia, Passed On from the Spanish Collection of Romances
(Romancero) ....................................................................................................................................... 78

CHAPTER TWO ................................................................................................................................... 81

The Virgin of a Thousand Faces .......................................................................................................... 81

The Virgin of el Topo (Virgin of the Brooch) .................................................................................... 82

Bicephalia as Cultural Antecedent for the Creation of The Virgin of el Topo as MONSTER: 101

The Virgin of Guadalupe: Preserving Aztec Beliefs Through Christian Iconography .......... 108

CHAPTER THREE ............................................................................................................................ 122
Saint Joseph as an Androgynous Figure: Constructing Gender, Power Relations, and Cultural Identities in Colonial Hispanic America ................................................................. 122

Other Poetic Representations of Saint Joseph in Colonial Hispanic America ........................... 140

CHAPTER FOUR ............................................................................................................................... 148

Written on the Body: ........................................................................................................................... 148

Reading Saint Bartholomew as a Cultural Palimpsest .................................................................... 148

CONCLUSION .................................................................................................................................... 192

REFERENCES .................................................................................................................................... 197

APPENDIX A (Chapter Two) ............................................................................................................ 204

NO SÉ SI TOPO (1670) .................................................................................................................. 204

Joseph de Cascante (c.1620-1702) .................................................................................................. 204

APPENDIX B (Chapter Three) ……………………………………………………………………226

Romance a San José. Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz .................................................................226

En Jesús y en María. A San José. Carol from the Colonial Musical Archives of Bogota's Cathedral. Music by Joseph de Cascante………………………………………………………..227

APPENDIX C (Chapter Four) ……………………………………………………………………   228

Invicto Bartolomé. Anonymous. Carol from the Colonial Musical Archives of Bogotá's Cathedral …..........................................................................................................................228

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: “Decapitation of St. Catherine of Alexandria.” Gregorio Vásquez de Arce y Ceballos. Prime Cathedral of Bogotá, Colombia, 17th C. ................................................................. 34

Figure 2: “Santa Catalina.” Anonymous from New Spain. (ca. late 17th-early 18th centuries). Collection of the Soumaya Museum, Mexico............................................................... 36

Figure 3: A) “Sor Juana de la Cruz” Anonymous. 18th century. Mexico. B) “Portrait of Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz.” Miguel Cabrera, 1750. Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia, Museo Nacional de Historia, Mexico. .......................... 40


Figure 5: A) “Ixion.” B) “Ixion.” ..................................................................................................................... 60

Figure 6: “The Virgin of El Topo.” Circa early 17th century. Anonymous. Bogotá’s Prime Cathedral, Colombia. .............. 81

Figure 7 A y B) “La Pietá.” Luis de Morales (Badajoz, Extremadura, c. 1520-1586)................................................................. 83

Figure 8. A) “Bicephalous figure.” Hartmann Schedel. The Nuremberg Chronicle. Folio CLI recto. B) CLXXXII verso:
“Monster in Vasconia” (“Monstrum in Vasconia.”). Hartmann Schedel......................................................... 104

Figure 9. “Statuette from Valdivia” (Today’s southern coastal Ecuador). C.3200 B.C.E. .......................................................... 106


Figure 11. A y B) “Tonatiuh.” Post classic era. Museum fur Volkerkunde, Basel, Switzerland............................................. 112

Figure 12. “Portrait of the Malo Children.” C. 1756. National Museum of History, Chapultepec Castle / Conaculta, INAH, Mexico City ................................................................. 124


Figure 15. "The Bearded Woman." José de Ribera. 1631. Fundación Casa Ducal de Medinacelli.


Figure 20 A) Florentine Codex, book. II, f. 19 v° B) Florentine Codex, book. II, f. 126 r°.


Figure 22. “Saint Bartholomew Is Flayed.” Anonymous. 17th C. Boyacá Museum. House of Don Juan de Vargas.

Figure 24 A) “Saint Bartholomew.” Gregorio de Arce y Ceballos. B) “Saint Bartholomew.” José de Ribera. Madrid. Museo del Prado. ................................................................. 187
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my Angela, Letizia, and Eduardo,

my parents Ligia and Eduardo,

my brothers Fernando and Eduardo,

my family in law

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all my Professors

and Life itself

with everlasting gratitude.
Saintly Lives: (Anti)Imperial and Transatlantic Discourses
in Colonial Hispanic-American Poetry and Painting
(16th-to-18th-century New Kingdom of Granada and New Spain)

INTRODUCTION

“Mirar es elegir, dice John Berger, y la forma de mirar y
de nombrar lo elegido envuelve y define al objeto visto”.
Monserrat Ordoñez, in Bestiario del Nuevo Reino de
Granada, by Hernando Cabarcas Antequera.

“The truest eye may now belong to the migrant’s double
vision.” Homi K. Bhabha in regard to Salman Rushdie’s
Satanic Verses in The Location of Culture.

Numerous Golden Age Spanish plays document the Spanish response to the sly visit of Prince
Charles of Wales to the court of Philip IV in 1623 and his political plan to marry the infant princess
Maria Teresa. Most of these plays highlight the propagandistic fanfare of courtly celebrations at El
Buen Retiro Palace, the political maneuvers orchestrated by the king’s favorite Gaspar de Guzmán,
Count Duque of Olivares, and the unparalleled cornucopia that the Spanish crown displayed in order to
dazzle the visitor and all other Jacobean islanders\(^1\) with the grandeur of the Peninsular super power.

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\(^1\) At the time (1623) the King of England, father of Prince Charles of Wales, was James I who succeeded Queen Elizabeth I and reigned from 1603 to 1625. Hence, his reign was known as the Jacobean period.
However, such royal excess at this moment in the history of Spain was a theatrical façade deployed by an empire that was growing in bankruptcy.2

The rich regalia, and so many stories of military victories in expansionist campaigns—heightened by mythologies and allegories—obscured other sectors of the Empire: the stories of “The Other;” i.e., the poor, the defeated, and the colonized (not that there were not grim, poor, defeated, and also colonized people in Europe or in Spain alone). One must wonder how such imperial exuberance of 16th-to-18th-century Spain was perceived in the American colonies by the Creole population, and by those who represented New World sentiments, writers and painters. Curiosity led me to explore what type of stories were being written, told, and painted in the New World while Spain celebrated the arrival of a foreign prince circa or in the so-called “miraculous year” of this unprecedented visit. This exploration led me to the study of the poetic and pictorial discourses produced in New World sectors of the Spanish Empire. That study, which I present in the following chapters, led me to the conclusion that the work produced in the New World during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries—a production closely related to or derived from Spanish models—shows elements of distinctly Hispanic American aesthetics and thematic concerns that subvert the master stories of the empire. However, due to the vast expanse of territory and time periods that would fall under this study, the following chapters concentrate on two important areas ruled by the Spanish Crown: The New Kingdom of Granada and New Spain.

The objective of this dissertation is to explore distinct differences in the production of carols, ballads, poems, and paintings in the New World by Creole artists and writers. This study specifically seeks to explore how poetic and pictorial hagiographies in Colonial Hispanic America exhibit anti-imperial (i.e., non-royal) discourses of resistance. I have chosen to study hagiographies because they were common modes of representation that Hispanic American poets and painters used to camouflage,

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through religious paradigms, non-religious discourses that escaped the counter-reformist eyes of the
Inquisition. Some of these representations, as the present study will argue, present two different
discourses: a traditional religious message, and, at the same time, a counter discourse to the overt
religious agenda that they seem to (or pretend to) convey. My main argument in the following chapters
is that several popular ballads and carols, as well as sonnets, and paintings from Colonial Hispanic
America can be read as testimonies of (anti)imperial sentiments: of the anxieties, world views, and
fragmented identities of colonial subjects. The close analysis of paintings, ballads and carols in the
following chapters will focus on differences that such testimonies offer, intimating through those
differences a sense of regional identity and cultural signature that differ from the colonial fatherland
and seat of power, Spain.

The following chapters will analyze a selected number of predominantly religious texts and
paintings from the Colonial period in Latin America, from the 16th to the 18th century. This analysis
takes into account the context of a transatlantic dialogue that was taking place in the Spanish colonies
during this time in matters of religion, aesthetics, and colonial politics. My main interest is to explore
how this transatlantic dialogue articulated, especially in the colonies, what Homi Bhabha calls a
“double vision” of the world. In other words, Colonial subjects were exposed to a pluralistic ‘here’ and
‘there’ in a vast Atlantic world that included Europe, America (pre-Hispanic cultures), and Africa.
Such poly-faceted vision of the world allowed colonial subjects the possibility of mixing extreme
opposites; and, from such fusions, there emerged new ways of conceiving the colonial self as the
product of a different space and of different cultures. In order to ascertain differences and variations in
the representation of religious figures and images in the New World, I found it necessary to compare
colonial productions with similar and contemporary European models in the Iberian Peninsula.
Therefore, I chose for this study a number of well known and also little known lyrical and pictorial
portrayals made in the New Kingdom of Granada (present day Colombia) and in New Spain (today’s
Mexico) of only four saints of the Catholic Church that have been highly revered in the New World: St.
Catherine of Alexandria, the Virgin Mary, St. Joseph, and St. Bartholomew. I have chosen these four saints in particular because they are amply represented in the New World both in literature and painting, and very often they are linked thematically to each other. In the analysis of these compositions, I also found it necessary to recall texts and paintings from other parts of the American continent such as Peru, Guatemala, Venezuela, Cuba, and Bolivia in order to illustrate that the ideas and preoccupations represented in the compositions I have chosen to analyze are not isolated cases. These are: (1) the social positions of women in Colonial Hispanic America, (2) Hispanic American representations of androgyny, (3) the aesthetics of monstrosities, and (4) social violence —understood as punitive practices, political wars, crimes, and the treatment of subjects and the product of their work as exploitable commodities with marketable value on the part of various sectors of society.

An exploration of the social positions of 17th century women in Colonial Hispanic America suggests that saints such as Catherine of Alexandria served as surrogate figures to fulfill at least two different purposes: (1) to reinforce the lower hierarchical position in which most women, especially intellectual women, were placed in relation to men; (2) to allow women to have a voice and be able to vindicate the position that their intellect actually deserves. At time, however, the vindication of women by male writers and painters (the triumph of a woman over a man) intimate, by analogy, the vindication of Creole subjects, considered during colonial time inferior to Europeans. For example, hagiographies of Saint Catherine of Alexandria, both traditionally and in the New World, represent tensions of power between women and men in the social echelon. In the paintings and poems chosen here, such tension is enhanced in such a way that men are often portrayed as self-enthroned executioners (of laws, men, and women). On the other hand, women are depicted as spiritually smothered and physically abused individuals, or as superiorly gifted intellects, who struggle (often to no avail) to (re)gain the place that they deserve in society, or even as defeaters of their oppressors. As an example of the later, some portrayals of Saint Catherine in Hispanic America represent Catherine of Alexandria as the victorious
defeater of her tormentor. Saint Catherine is a good example of how traditional European stories are retold and transformed, to represent a distinct Hispanic American identity.

I argue that such perceptions about women and men in Hispanic America differ among composers because not all colonial writers and painters—mostly men—necessarily questioned the living conditions of Hispanic American women from the 16th to the 18th century. In fact, the traditional story of Saint Catherine more often than not reinforced the status quo regarding the social expectations and position of women in relation to men in colonial Hispanic America. For this reason, some Hispanic American artists, such as the Neo Granadine painter Gregorio de Arce y Ceballos, reaffirmed as desirable traits traditional values such as beauty, submissiveness, and obedience in women. Such paradigms of female propriety—especially imposed upon nuns—were reinforced not only by men, but also by women writers such as Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz in New Spain.³ In their texts they often present a “double vision” of themselves: one for their male readers or confessors, and another one that exposes “sins” or prohibited deeds and thoughts women dared to experience and express despite interdictions. Their letters and confessions often are open acknowledgements of transgressions against religious and social norms. The best known example of such type of confession is Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz’s letter of self defense known as the Response. Even though this Mexican erudite nun enjoyed prestige and recognition during her lifetime, she also embodied, while alive, the pressures of a male-dominated prelate.

In my analysis of the written and pictorial representation of saints, one of the aspects studied in the following chapters is the notion of androgyny. My main argument in the exploration of the portrayal of androgyny in Hispanic American representations of the life of saints is that it served

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³ The writings of other women such as Mother Francisca Josefa del Castillo and Jerónima Nava de Saavedra, both from the New Kingdom of Granada, illustrate quite well the male-dominated mentality that prevailed among religious women in Colonial Hispanic America. However, this study does not even introduce, nor analyze, their writings solely for spatial constraints, for Sor Juana’s writings alone provide enough and ample material to explore how the Creole world is conceived of and built from the space of enunciation where she stands.
writers and authors as a tool to show resistance against the dogmas of the Catholic Church in relation to gender roles and in relation to colonial subjects as weak, dominated, passive, inferior, feminine entities, and colonial power as a strong, dominant, active, superior, and masculine figure of authority. Many Hispanic American representations of Saint Joseph and the Virgin Mary, for example, seem to re-signify traditional religious notions of gender. Some Spanish American artists and writers portray them not as male and female figures respectively, but as androgynous beings. In order to analyze such representations in the New World, and to facilitate a study of differences among European and New World representations, this study traces historical antecedents of androgyny in some texts of early Christianity that differ from current versions of the Bible. For the sake of comparison, this study also seeks antecedents of how wisdom was conceived in the Hermetic and Gnostic tradition, and it also examines androgyny in some myths of classical antiquity rewritten in European literature such as Ovid’s *Metamorphoses*. Furthermore, this study takes into consideration portrayals of saints in Spain in which androgyny has also been represented, some of which serve as models to New World artists. The utilization of androgyny as a mode of subversion of traditional Church dogma is explored in the third chapter of this study in relationship to portrayals of Saint Joseph. I argue that androgyny is associated also with pre Hispanic traditions that remained alive in the Spanish colonies; and that androgyny was used as a technique to show difference and to signify Creole cultural identity.

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4 Many of these texts belong to the Hermetic tradition from which Sor Juana, for example, had a strong influence through the readings of Anastasio Kircher, an erudite German Jesuit priest that rescued for the Western world characters and ideas from Egyptian hermetism and gnosticism such as Hermes Trismegisto and the androgyny of the divinity, and the femaleness of enoia or wisdom. Indeed, Octavio Paz affirms: “Sor Juana knew of these ideas indirectly, through [. . .] Father Kircher’s books, and other Works influenced to a greater or lesser degree by the speculations of Neoplatonic hermeticism. Thus she affirms that wisdom is essentially female and, without saying so explicitly, insinuates that what we call mind or idea is also female” (translation Sayers, 170).

5 Octavio Paz relates, for instance, that “among the ancient names of wisdom, Sor Juana lists that of the consort of Simon Magus—a person described as a charlatan in the Acts of the Apostles—whose various Christian authors and fathers of the Church [. . .] vehemently denounced in backest terms. Sor Juana must have been aware that the consort of the gnostic Simon was named Helena and that he had found her in a brothel in Tyre; Simon said that the [. . .] ‘Thought’ of God, had taken refuge in the body of the prostitute. […] Sor Juana—here in agreement with the gnostics and heretics—attributes a [female] gender to Mind” (translation Sayers, 170).
In order to ascertain differences between Spanish American and Spanish representations of saints, I also examine in this study the theme of the monstrous as an important element of the aesthetics of the baroque in Colonial Hispanic America. I explore, for example, significant transformations made in the New World to European representations of the Virgin Mary such as Luis de Morales’ paintings of La Pietá. The Neo Granadine version of Mary and Jesus integrate the figures of Mother and Son as though they were one sole body, turning the representation of these figures into a type of monstrous divinity. In this transformation, the figure of the monster serves to create a new and altogether different Hispanic-American image of the Virgin Mary that directly speaks to the realities of the New Kingdom of Granada: i.e. This New World Pietá came to be known as the Virgin of el Topo, or the Virgin of the Brooch. I argue that these transformations in part account for the popularity, still today, of this virgin in Boyacá and Santa Fe (present day Colombia). My argument here is that the popularity of such a Virgin in Colombia corresponds to the attraction/rejection associated with the image of the monster and the monstrous, in renaissance and baroque art as Rogelio Miñana points out in his study of literary representations of monstrosities in the Spanish renaissance.  

Furthermore, I argue that the deformations of the Virgin of El Topo also serve as metaphors for the “anomalies” of colonial society in Hispanic America. For this reason, monstrous figures acquire special significance in Hispanic America as part of ‘self’ representation. As this study shows, the meaning of “monstrous” as something grandiose, exceedingly extraordinary, and prodigious—thus, deviating from the norm—is also attested in the alterations made to this Neo-Granadine Virgin, to differentiate it from the European model, as a reflection of the excesses of nature in Hispanic America.

In the following chapters I argue that despite the apparent naïveté and intrinsic merriment of carols to be sung in churches as praises to religious figures, or the explicit identification of some

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Colonial Hispanic American paintings as portrayals of saintly lives, these representations were used as means to denounce various forms of violence in Spanish American colonial society. Carols made such denunciations audible and visible to listeners and readers of such carols. Paintings of saintly martyrdom, in turn, depict the violence intrinsically attached to the stories of martyrdom themselves, but, at the same time, the violent stories of such paintings can be used as surrogate cases for spectators to see the violence that took place in colonial society. To support this idea, I utilize the historical context in which the poems and paintings chosen here were made or commissioned. I also utilize colonial fictional works and documents of the period. They offer a wider view of either the imagination of the epoch or the social conditions that were officially reported in some of the regions in which some of the paintings and poems under study were made.

Regarding the theoretical tools that serve as argumentative support in this dissertation, the first epigraph that opens this introduction indicates the principle behind my intention to use reception theory in my interpretation of the works under study. In effect, as English art critic, painter and writer John Berger points out, one chooses what to see, and one’s choices define and construct the object observed. Yet, in the present work I have chosen to make use primarily of the Postcolonial theory as a critical apparatus to observe and analyze my objects of study. Postcolonial perspectives offer a solid ground for the identification of the strategies colonial subjects use to reaffirm Creole identities in Hispanic America as distinct from Europe. I find the perspectives of Postcolonial theorist Homi Bhabha particularly pertinent to examine the literary and pictorial transformations of hagiographies in New Granada and New Spain. His work offers an understanding of the standpoints from which New World authors and artists enunciate their worldviews and depict their own societies. In dialogue with Homi Bhabha, this study proposes that colonial representations of the life of saints in Hispanic America render simultaneously different meanings. Such duality, plurality and simultaneity appear to situate colonial subjects in a continuing state of limbo, in an “in-between” space of complementary or

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opposing forces that integrate, or tear apart, the mixed identity of such subjects. This is what Bhabha calls a “Third Space of enunciation” (2396). From this point of view, I argue that the poems and paintings under study represent a semantic instability that generates alternative readings, defies the univocal logos of official discourse, and marks the identity of Creoles primarily as ideologically and culturally pluralistic hybrids. Bhabha clarifies that “[t]he social articulation of difference, from the minority perspective, is a complex, on-going negotiation that seeks to authorize cultural hybridities that emerge in moments of historical transformation” (2). The poems and paintings that this study explores bear witness to those moments of historical transformation that forged the identities of colonial subjects.

The poems and paintings examined in the following chapters authorize the existence of gender-crossed beings as well as other socially or economically marginalized figures (located in that “third place of enunciation according to Homi-Bhabha) such as prisoners, “villains,” local composers, choir masters, indigenous people (Indians), etc., making them visible in the foreground. Furthermore, they enunciate the otherness of “The Other.” (i.e., the non-European subject). Bhabha reflects on the position(s) from which enunciations— whether literary or artistic—are made, and how these loci mark and distinguish the identities of subjects. In *The Location of Culture* (1994), Bhabha “focus[es] on those moments or processes that are produced in the articulation of cultural differences” (1), and asserts that any category of place “in-between” where subjects locate themselves or are situated—be it race, gender, generation, geographical space, sexual or political orientation and whatnot—help elaborate

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8 This is not to say that these traits are unique of colonial subjects from Hispanic America. Even in the Peninsula, converted Jews and Moors are good examples of a Spanish hybridism that remains visible, audible, and even edible, even today, in architecture, music, and food. In turn, the notion of hybridity is exposited in sociological terms as the constituent trait of Latin American nations by Nestor Garcia Canclini in his classic *Culturas híbridas* (1989). However, here I take the notion of hybridity that Homi Bhabha, on his part, applies to political change when discussing the ideological forces for which theory works, asking whether “the language of theory [is] merely another power ploy of the culturally privileged Western elite to produce a discourse of the Other that reinforces its own power-knowledge equation” (2381). When referring to hybridity in this context, Bhabha points out that “the transformational value of change lies in the articulation, or translation, of elements that are neither the One … nor the other … but something else besides, which contests the terms and territories of both” (2388). See “Bhabha. Homi. “The Commitment to Theory” in *The Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism.* Vincent B. Leitch, gen. ed. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2001. Print.
“strategies of selfhood … that initiate new signs of identity” (1). These strategies of selfhood that emerge and are in process in Hispanic America since the sixteenth century to the eighteenth century are those signs of identity that the present study explores through the poetry and painting of the time, primarily in New Granada and New Spain. It is this complex ‘in-between’ zone of the colonial subject suggested by Bhabha that is perceived in the Spanish colonies as Spanish, but, at the same time, portrayed through cultural codes and images associated only to the New World, as something other and different from Spain, (i.e., the outlook of Creoles who are and at the same time are not culturally Spanish, nor racially white Europeans). Such instability of identities wrought as a result of mestizaje (cultural and inter-racial breeding), allows for a variation in forms and, therefore, meanings. These ‘added elements’ in artistic and literary compositions create signs of identity directed especially to readers and spectators of a given area. These are the signs of identity that the present study seeks to explore.

Every chapter that follows will show that poetry and painting in Hispanic America do not simply copy or imitate their European models. They transform the models into something else different that defines a given time, place, and history as an ‘in-between zone’ in which colonial subjects dwell in Spanish America. This thesis, therefore, explores strategies of difference, from a New World point of view, in the 16th-to-18th-century. Such strategies allowed artists and writers to represent negotiations of otherness and sameness, in New Granada and in New Spain, as a sign of a growing consciousness of cultural identities different from the prescribed Spanish world view that colonial subjects were expected to hold. Such representations often border between resistance and subjection, for, as Bhabha has observed, enunciations “from the periphery of authorized power and privilege [do] not depend on the persistence of tradition” (2) but are rather expressions of identities that reenact and assert their differences in relation to the models they utilize. This difference is explained precisely because such expressions come from positions that, at least partially, are often disenfranchised from the geographical, ideological, cultural, racial, and economic center of the metropolis (6).
The self-reflective view of “The Other” and by “The Other” in the poems and paintings under study operates at least at two levels of exegesis: One according to the ideological assumptions of Empire, and another, under the façade of the first, that contains in its discourse the nuances of its own cultural codes. In other words, this can be explained through a phenomenon that Cuban literary critic, short-story writer, and novelist Antonio Benítez Rojo (b.1931-d.2005) observes in Caribbean literature, which he traces to the cultural (dis)encounters that emerged as a result of colonialism. In *The Repeating Island* (1996), Benítez-Rojo observes that Caribbean texts offer two orders of readings. For him, the second, the less obvious, is the primary order of reading, which is always directed to the Caribbean itself, accessible only to those who share Caribbean cultural codes. The first order of reading is actually the secondary one directed to non-Caribbean Western readers. Benítez Rojo writes:

> The Caribbean text is excessive, dense, uncanny, asymmetrical, entropic, hermetic, all this because, in the fashion of a zoo or bestiary, it opens its doors to two great orders of reading: one of a secondary type, epistemological, profane, diurnal, and linked to the West—the world outside—where the text uncoils itself and quivers like a fantastic beast, to be the object of knowledge and desire; another the principal order, teleological, ritual, nocturnal, and referring to the Caribbean itself, where the text unfolds its bisexual sphinx-like monstrosity toward the void of its impossible origin, and dreams that it incorporates this, or is incorporated by it. (Benítez-Rojo 23)

Analogously, I would argue that the texts chosen for this study from Colonial Hispanic America, also apply to Benítez Rojo’s observations of the great Caribbean; i.e. the space where European empires expanded their economic and geo-political clout through a colonial system that simultaneously collided and conflated with the rest of the world. The present study argues that, following Benítez Rojo’s ideas, New Spain and New Granada’s poetry and art also offer a similar duality. They intimate
two orders of reading in which the secondary, but principal order, speaks to the New World, to those who understand regional codes inscribed in the text, to the monstrosity of colonial instability, to its multiplicity, and to the many regional signs, and symbols the reader must interpret according to regional realities. Among these codified sings of colonial instability, Benítez Rojo underlines violence and resistance.

Most of the poems and paintings analyzed in this study can be read as ambiguous representations of colonial instability; and they offer so many different levels of meanings, that they render themselves as trompe d’oeil. This pliability of signification borders on what the Algerian philosopher Jacques Derrida (b.1930-d.2004) coined as différance: from the French word différer, which simultaneously conveys the ideas of difference and deferral or postponement. This study explores how such deferrals and differences in meanings simultaneously occur in the interpretation of a given signifier—i.e., in the words, images, symbols, colors, shapes of compositions that suggest signifying transformations.

Apart from the semantic ambiguities that the texts and paintings examined in this work convey, and the ensuing similarities of such ambiguities, including the deferral of meanings that a chain of signifiers produces as seen by Derridanean deconstruction, another aspect that I consider in the present study is the type of questions that my objects of study elicit regarding the social context in which they are produced. For example, how did some 16th-to-18th-century Hispanic American writers and artists...
conceived their own condition as colonial subjects in order to transform traditional conceptualization of saints to address colonial conditions?

The exegesis by Puerto Rican art critic and novelist Edgardo Rodríguez Juliá in his ekphrastic novel *Campeche o los diablejos de la melancolía* (1986) offers insights into the above question, to understand the critical stand that some colonial artists took in relationship to their society. In reference to José Campeche, the eighteenth century mulatto artist considered to be the first Puerto Rican painter in the history of the island, and also of the fictional character that bears the same name and background of the real painter in the novel mentioned above, Rodríguez Juliá points out the following:

He [Campeche] has to give testimony of the problematic cross-racial breeding of his own epoch; of the silent conflicts within which the hegemonic pretense of the various institutions and classes that composed the colonial society was hidden like a bothersome seed. But he also needs to make a comment on the nature of power relations among those institutions and classes. … This type of painting is the witness of the ecclesiastic, administrative, and military institutions of the colonial period.¹² (8)

Despite being a mulatto son of a freed but indebted former slave father, and a Canary immigrant mother, Campeche did not enjoy artistic freedom during his life. He owed obedience to a Bishop who commissioned the paintings of mostly distinguished, upper class Creoles. Even so, Campeche in subtle ways reaffirms in his paintings his own view of himself and of the Creole society he portrays with a critical eye. His portrayal of a monstrous child, known as Child Avilés, deformed, without legs and arms, a child with the face of an adult, and, seemingly aware of his own condition of a being

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¹² *Le toca testimoniar el mestizaje problemático de su propia época, los callados conflictos dentro de los cuales se escondía, como una semilla inquietante, la pretensión hegemónica de los distintos estamentos y clases que formaban la sociedad colonial. Pero también le corresponde formular un comentario sobre la naturaleza de las relaciones de poder entre esas clases y estamentos. ... Esta pintura es el testigo del estamento eclesiástico, administrativo y militar de la colonia.* (8)
imprisoned in his body, Rodríguez Juliá reads as an allegory of Campeche’s own condition as a mulatto and a colonial subject, by analogy also imprisoned in his own hybrid body. This example, in Rodríguez Juliá’s study of Campeche’s work, serves to suggest an analogy with other production of other Creole writers and painters in the New World, also subjected to set expectations and incarcerated to previous models, but that managed to articulate or represent in codified forms the artist’s own ‘self-hood’ as colonial subject as well as the conditions and realities of colonial life. I argue that the same projection of a Creole identity displayed by the Creole Mulatto artist, José Campeche, as seen by Rodríguez Juliá, operates in the poems and paintings from New Granada and New Spain that this study will examine.13

The present study is divided into four chapters, each one concerned, for the most part, with representations in New Granada and in New Spain of a particular saint. The first chapter explores perspectives that colonial Hispanic America held about women, mainly through representations of Saint Catherine of Alexandria by different painters and poets, including Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz; as well as representation of Sor Juana Inés of herself and by other poets and painters. The chapter begins with the well-known story of St. Catherine in *The Golden Legend*, the traditional European collection of hagiographies recorded by Jacobus de Voragine from oral traditions of European peasants in the 13th century. I explore in this chapter the influence of this legend in the representations of Saint Catherine in colonial Hispanic America, and examine how New World artists and poets replicate or change de Voragine’s story of this saint in their representations. As part of this discussion, I identify other remarkable women who lived in or were from Alexandria during the early years of Christianity in Egypt. The purpose here is to expose the striking similarities held among these narrations and their formulaic nature with the story of Catherine of Alexandria in order to show that, historically, women have not been as invisible as they appeared to be. Besides, several women figures have been prototypical images of wisdom as well as victims of the unjust and narrow-minded andro-centrism that

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has judged them and condemned them so cruelly. In this analysis I found it necessary to refer to other women from antiquity besides Saint Catherine in order to point out that women such as Sor Juana were aware of their decisive role in her own historical moment, and used stories of other women, as for example Saint Catherine, as surrogate examples of their own social condition.

Next, for the sake of comparisons, I examine an ekphrastic painting allusive to Saint Catherine by the Neo Granadine artist Gregorio Vesquez de Arce y Ceballos (1638-1711), where part of de Voragine’s legend is visually replicated word by word. Afterwards, I also consider an anonymous painting from circa late 17th or early 18th century Mexico in order to illustrate how this representation of St. Catherine in New Spain presents a feminine identity that inverts the message of de Voragine’s story. I claim that, at least as an ideal, this change intimates a subversive reaffirmation of women’s independence and power, by analogy, Creole society, over male/patriarchal dominance in New Spain.

This chapter also examines some ways in which women such as Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz were seen or saw themselves in colonial Hispanic America. To do so, I compare two colonial portraits that represent Sor Juana: a traditional one from 1750 by Miguel Cabrera, and a very different painting, from the 18th century, that shows Sor Juana as a type of living crowned nun and a Madonna with a female Christ-like child. I compare this anonymous view of Sor Juana with other poetic carols about Saint Catherine written by the Mexican nun and by male writers from New Granada. I argue that these representations speak of the resistance of some colonial women, and Creole men, to be socially undergraded and of a yearn to be acknowledged with the dignity that they deserve.

In Sor Juana’s representations of Saint Catherine and of herself through a series of eleven carols dedicated to Saint Catherine, I analyze the allegorical implications of symbols and metaphors like the Rose (representing virginity or enclosure), the Pyramid (representing the immortality of the intellect), the Wheel (representing the inescapability of fate), the Lighthouse of Alexandria (representing the creative powers of imagination), and the Star, among other metaphors. In these carols, these symbols
convey the tribulations that Saint Catherine and Sor Juana had to go through in their lifetimes and their God-given stamina to endure their suffering, according to the literary versions of their lives.

Here my main argument is that colonial Hispanic American poetry and painting by or about women often reflect and subvert their underestimated position in a politically andro-centric society. Yet, women who gained social preeminence because of their intellectual abilities (as it was the case of Catherine of Alexandria in the fourth century after the “common era,” or of the seventeenth century Mexican nun Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz) were objects of manipulation on the part of figures of power or among colliding political factions. Catherine of Alexandria and Sor Juana resisted the oppression of some colonial authorities on the one hand, while enjoying the support of some other Colonial rulers on the other.

I argue that this simultaneous appraisal and dejection under which Sor Juana’s writings sway constitutes an example of that “double vision” and “in-between” ontological zone that Homi Bhabha proposes. She is not only a woman in a man’s world, but also a Creole, a colonial subject, under the laws of an imperial power. Sor Juana stands alone in that ambivalent and unstable space of enunciation because the intellectual world to which she belongs is socially owned and controlled by men, and women are, therefore, excluded from it. Sor Juana found it necessary to project herself as though she were a male member of that intellectual world in order to be an equal partner in the dialogue of her time. To do so, she needed to minimize and debase her femaleness before the eyes of men. Nevertheless, being female intellect for her the space of enunciation, she also needed to extol it, as she did it, and as her carols to Catherine of Alexandria attest. These contradictions characterize Sor Juana’s ambiguous identity. For instance, in her Response to Sor Filotea, she utilizes the conventional discourse of her time about the inferiority of women but delegitimizes the exclusion and condemnation imposed on her by extolling the historical presence of many biblical and pagan female figures that excelled and whose intellect was fully recognized even if many of them were cruelly punished to death precisely because of that recognition.
Sor Juana, utilizing her womanhood as a technique to unveil power, also reaffirmed her own self by debasing her femaleness with utterly poignant and devastating irony. Notorious is, for instance, her self-humiliation in her official act of contrition. She calls herself “the most unworthy and ingrate creature of all those bred by thy Omnipotence.”14 Also, in her letter of defense to Sor Filotea, her constant self-inflicted dwarfing as a clumsy writer15 who is so incapable and unworthy to understand the Scriptures,16 etc., utterly contrasts with the unparalleled knowledge and intelligence her own writing deploys. Nevertheless, as Octavio Paz has observed in *Sor Juana, or the Traps of Faith*, the poetic images of Catherine of Alexandria that Sor Juana creates in her carols to this saint are nothing else but the projection of the nun’s own image of herself (628).17 In other words, as José Campeche incorporates his own critical view of the society the mulatto artist is asked to portray in his paintings, Sor Juana inscribed her own reality as colonial subject in the figure and life (martyrdom) of Saint Catherine.

In contrast to Sor Juana’s carols to Saint Catherine, this chapter also analyzes a unique sonnet dedicated to Saint Catherine written by the Neo Granadine erudite Francisco Álvarez de Velasco y Zorrilla otherwise known as “the platonic lover of Sor Juana”18 in which he addresses the literary representation of women in Colonial Hispanic America, and the reception that the figure of Saint Catherine had in the New World.

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14 “Juana Inés de la Cruz, la más indigna e ingrata criatura de cuantas crio vuestra Omnipotencia…” (Petición, 874)

15 “mi torpe pluma” (Respuesta, 827)

16 “…aquellas sagradas letras, para cuya inteligencia yo me conozco tan incapaz y para cuyo manejo soy tan indigna” (Respuesta, 829).

17 “si es indudable que la conciencia de su condición de mujer es indisoluble de la vida y de su obra: […] escoge como santa de su preludición a Santa Catarina de Alejandria, doncella docta y martir” (Paz, 628).

18 i.e., “el enamorado de Sor Juana.” This apposition is based on the prolific number of poems and the letter that Francisco Alvarez de Velasco y Zorrilla writes to his beloved “Nise” i.e., Sor Juana.
Likewise, this chapter explores the possible background of 16th century Novo-Spanish (Mexican) poet and playwright Fernán González de Eslava as a convert Jew and his ensuing conflictive relationship with figures of ecclesiastical authority in the New World. This background, I claim, seems to be the underlying reason for him to write a romance to Saint Catherine. The appeal that the story of this saint seems to have had for him lies in the narration of uneven power relations, the defeat of the powerful, and the victory of the subaltern. I propose such idea because Eslava, as a subaltern figure himself, like Saint Catherine, was incarcerated, and his ideas were the reasons to unsettle the official authority of the Inquisition. Having shown all these cases, the chapter ends corroborating the use of poetry and painting as modes of subversion against the established order of Colonial life in the 16th and 17th centuries in New Granada and New Spain. In their respective works examined in this chapter, Eslava, Sor Juana, and Zorrilla share their criticism or discontent with religious ideas or figures of authority, and speak in their representations of the unstable conditions of colonial subjects.

Last, chapter one retrieves sections of some romances dedicated to Saint Catherine, transcribed in the 1970s by Gisella Butler from oral traditions in various regions of Colombia. These are rhymes often sung by and for children. The lyrics bear witness to the violence inserted into people’s minds since an early age in Colombia as something as natural as a child’s game. Thus, the figure of Saint Catherine, through these literary representations, has come to reinforce the violence that has characterized the collective memory of the people of Colombia.

Chapter two, *The Virgin of the Thousand Faces*, recalls the seminal work of American mythologist Joseph Campbell, *The Hero of the Thousand Faces* (1949), as it explores mainly two of the sundry representations of the Virgin Mary as an archetypal heroine: one who transmutes her identity in countless avatars depending on the purposes for which she is portrayed and the cultural group that represents her, or that represents itself through her. The Colombian scholar Olga Acosta\(^\text{19}\)

\(^{19}\) For a more comprehensive study of the representation of the Virgin Mary both in Hispanic America and in the Peninsula, refer to Olga Acosta’s lecture “*Milagrosas imágenes Marianas en el Nuevo Reino de Granada.*” Memorias de las IV
has written a forthcoming and very comprehensive study on the images of the Virgin Mary. However, different from Acosta’s study, in this chapter I chose to explore two New World manifestations of the Virgin Mary: one from the New Kingdom of Granada, the Virgin of el Topo or the Virgin of the Brooch; and the most prominent, in all parts of the Americas, The Virgin of Guadalupe, from New Spain, today Mexico. As part of the discussion, and for the sake of comparison, I offer as an example of New World transformations the case, in Cuba, of the Virgin of Mercy, or Virgen de la Caridad del Cobre. I begin this chapter by analyzing the semiotics of the precious metals and stones that accompany a Neo-Granadine composition of the Virgin of el Topo, tracing back in literary documents and historical studies the meanings that emeralds, pearls, and gold in this representation used to have in the colonial period. My interpretation in this chapter of this image is very different from any other previous study. The main purpose in my analysis of the Virgin of el Topo is to explore the aesthetics of monstrosities applied to religious images in New World representations (see page 4). The historical and philosophical groundings of such aesthetics –the monsters- have been explained above (pages 7 and 8); however, it is worth noting that monstrous representations of religious images in Hispanic America served to confirm the identity that Europeans and Creoles constructed of the New World as a prodigy of nature, a land (and its people) full of excesses and anomalies.

Despite the lack of historical evidence to attest that the Virgin of El Topo was painted and conceived with the purpose of portraying monstrosity, the figure of monsters and monstrosity has been an important element of art and literature since, and even before, the Medieval Ages. It has been a mode of representation especially during the baroque; the monster was a figure through which the artist and writer could communicate allegories, symbols, and codes and through these offer a meditation on

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20 For the view of Hispanic America as a prodigious monstrosity, see Bestiario del Nuevo Reino de Granada, by Hernando Cabarcas Antequera. For the excesses and anomalies of peoples in the New World, see, for instance, Fray Juan de Santa Gertrudis, Maravillas de la Naturaleza.
social, political, philosophical or religious/aesthetic preoccupations. This chapter explores different notions of monstrosities that served as precedents and models for Hispanic American artists. With that background, this chapter examines the image of the Virgin of el Topo as the synthesis of opposites, the fusion of the sacred and the sacrilegious, the contrast between the ideal of beauty and beatitude that the image of the Virgin Mary is supposed to convey, as well as the anxiety –monstrosity- that such an image transmits to the observer. Here I argue that despite the sacred attributions to the painting and its striking resemblance to a possible European model, the Neo Granadine Virgin of el Topo purposefully represents a baroque monstrosity that did, in fact, inspire poetic expressions of awe, uncertainty, and anxiety in a somber tone.

In contrast to pictorial representations of the Virgin of el Topo, I analyze a carol from the Colonial Musical Archives of Bogota’s Cathedral, by Neo Granadine composer Joseph de Cascante, dedicated to the Virgin of el Topo in which the poet seems to dialogue with the same pictorial image of the painting of the Virgin of el Topo. In my analysis of this poem, I use Stanley Fish’s notion of “affective stylistics”\(^{21}\) to show the ontological instability that the words in this poem convey. My argument here is that in order to show grim yet real dimensions of human existence during the colonial period in Hispanic America, both painter and poet destabilize the sacredness and appeasement that religious images were supposed to inspire.

Fundamental to this chapter, as a theoretical grounding for the argument of hermaphrodite monstrosity in 17\(^{th}\) century images (both poetic and pictorial), are the studies, among others, of David Williams, Rogelio Miñana, and Umberto Eco. Particularly, as I explain how the Virgin of el Topo can also be read as a bicephalous male-female figure, I trace various examples of bicephalism throughout history from various parts of the world. For instance, I refer to Hartman Schedel’s representations of

\(^{21}\) “Affective stylistics is derived from analyzing further the notion that a literary text is an event that occurs in time—that comes into being as it is read—rather than an object that exists in space. The text is examined closely, often line by line, or even word by word in order to understand how (stylistics) it affects (affective) the reader in the process of reading. […] the texts consists of the results it produces, and those results occur within the reader” (Tyson, 175).
bicephalia in his *Chronicle of the World*, from 1493, to show that, in Christendom, such representations were associated with ominous signs and natural disasters as the direct result of apostasy. Likewise, the Virgin of el Topo, as shown in another poem also by Neo Granadine Choir Master of Santa Fe (de Bogotá)’s Cathedral, José de Cascante, was also believed to exert influence on meteorological phenomena and thus it served to cajole “infidels” (i.e., Indians) into the Christian faith. Another bicephalous figurine from Valdivia, present day Ecuador, from circa 3000 B.C.E., proves that bicephalia in the Virgin of el Topo found ancient roots in, and connections with, the cultural representations of indigenous peoples in the Andes.

The second half of this chapter explores how another Virgin, equally transformed to fit New World necessities, and the Virgin that has gained most adepts all over Latin America, the Virgin of Guadalupe, from New Spain (Mexico), was represented both in poetry and painting in the colonial period. Examining closely one of the miniatures that integrates a larger painting of the Guadalupe (1700-1705), by Juan Villegas, I make the case of the fusion of the image of Guadalupe with the body of Juan Diego, the Indian to whom, according to tradition, the Virgin first appeared in Mount Tepeyac in 1531, both as the historical need to Christianize the Indian population on the one hand, and on the other, as a strategy to preserve, in a subtle and almost hidden way, Aztec beliefs in androgynous deities. For this analysis, I utilize *Quetzalcoatl and Guadalupe: The Formation of Mexican National Consciousness, 1531-1813*, a seminal work of Jacques Lafaye. In this work, Lafaye finds the male-female principle in the Guadalupe image based on the knowledge that, for indigenous people of central Mexico, she is Tonatzin, mother goddess of gods. Tonatzin is found in the Aztec pantheon together with Quetzalcoatl, male-female, creator and destroyer, bird and snake or feathered snake (plumed serpent) supreme being.

Representations of the Virgin of Guadalupe explored in this chapter are found in the *Indian Spring* or *Primavera Indiana* by don Carlos de Sigüenza y Góngora, as well as in a long reverberation of don Carlos’ literary predecessor in the early 1600’s, Bernardo de Balbuena’s *Mexican Grandeur*
Neither author escapes from the heavy influence of Greco-Roman mythology. In *Indian Spring*, I examine how the Indian is represented and how the poem through its representation intimates a sense of Mexican identity that almost extinguishes, from Mexican Creole society, the presence of the Indian. Such negation highlights, at the time of don Carlos’ life (1645-1700), and at least in his poetry, that the image of the indigenous people in Mexico belonged to the remote past, and not to a growing Creole society. The ethos of the intellectual elite in Mexican society (to which Sigüenza y Góngora belonged) had already been fully transformed and assimilated into an imported culture. Nonetheless, his poetry dedicated to the Virgin of Guadalupe intimates a very strong sense of nationhood, distinct from Spain: the Virgin is portrayed by Don Carlos as the sign that marks her birthplace as the miraculous, wonderful, and unparalleled site of universal salvation: New Spain.

This chapter also explores the only sonnet that Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz composed to the Virgin of Guadalupe, praising the literary caliber of Father Francisco de Castro, a Jesuit who composed probably the longest ode to the same Virgin. Both authors make emphasis on New Spain as a privileged land full of wonders, being the most prominent one the Virgin of Guadalupe herself. She is portrayed as a native, not imported, flower, and as Latin America’s Protectress. Sor Juana also defines the unique identity of the Creole and his or her land through her extoling awareness of de Castro’s penmanship (he himself being a Spaniard by birth, but clearly—judging for his poetry—a Mexican by heart). The chapter also shows how this sense of marvel is found again, and underlined in Miguel Cabrera’s treatise of pictorial composition dedicated to point out the marvels of the original representation of the Virgin of Guadalupe. Miguel Cabrera was the same painter that composed the most famous representations of Sor Juana.

This chapter shows that the issue of androgyny as a variant of the monstrous serves to point out the unstable hybridity of colonial subjects. Just like androgynous beings are neither male nor female, or both male and female, so Creole colonial subjects in Hispanic America are culturally thought of as both white and non white, Spanish and non-Spanish. Since colonial subjects were ontologically and socially
situated in that space “in-between,” androgyny offered a symbolic representation of colonial, Creole, identity. Such ambivalences, so ingrained in Hispanic Americans since Colonial times up to the present, are explored in Hispanic American representations of the Virgin. The third chapter continues the same exploration of the representation of cultural ambiguity, but now in relationship to the representation of androgyny as a manifestation of cultural hybridity that feminizes colonial subjects and Hispanic America as subdued, inferior entities, represented in some portrayals of the figure of Saint Joseph.

Chapter three, “Saint Joseph as an Androgynous Figure: Constructing Gender, Power Relations, and Cultural Identities in Colonial Hispanic America,” analyzes several representations of Saint Joseph, the earthly husband of the Virgin Mary. This chapter explores how and why Saint Joseph in Colonial Hispanic America is often represented as an androgynous figure, both man and woman. These representations, which on the one hand follow European models, seem to enhance and even underline androgyny in order to make a statement in favor of New World colonial communities as an attempt to preserve, through codified statements of representation, Pre-Hispanic world-views. In other words, through the representation of an androgynous figure (not absent in European models), Creole artists and writers in Hispanic America are able to follow European antecedents while, at the same time, retain traditional customs and life styles, as well as notions of gender that greatly differ from those instilled by Catholic dogma. My overall argument in this chapter is that the painting and poems examined here seem to stand as counter discourses that reject the gender polarization of human kind as a strategy to preserve part of indigenous beliefs and pre Hispanic identities in the New World.

The chapter begins by placing the image of Saint Joseph where, in most cases, the European tradition expects him to be found: as a paradigmatic male figure in a nuclear family (Jesus’s father and Mary’s husband in the manger). It continues to explore differences and enhancements associated with New World codes and traditions. It further explores how the Hispanic culture often creates ambiguously gendered identities, due to the complex results of a gendered language and in the simple
act of naming a child according to Christian traditions. This ambiguity is first illustrated in a baroque fragment of a carol from Bogotá’s Cathedral devoted to Saint Joseph, titled *En Jesús y en María* (“In Jesus and in Mary”). Here I propose that the composer of this carol, at least textually, partakes of this gender ambiguity as he shares the same name of the saint to whom the carol is dedicated. The author of this poem, Joseph de Cascante, a Colonial subject, claims in the text of this carol to Saint Joseph that Joseph should be recognized. Yet, given that in the poem Joseph, the husband of Mary, is also the author’s name, it is not clear to the reader whether the poem alludes to the author of the poem or to the earthly father of Jesus, or both. The Biblical figure of Joseph may be a pretext to call attention to the composer and to his colonial reality in which, like the Biblical Joseph, New World writers and painters are forgotten or excluded for their own ambiguity or for the inferiority derived from their “in-between” condition. This claim for recognition by the poet is validated by published archival documents that attest to the inconformity on the part of Joseph de Cascante with his living conditions as a Colonial subject. The most important point here, however, is to explore the complexity of the fact that, in the instability of identity created in the poem, Joseph—the composer as well as the biblical character—is identified with Saint Joseph by way of Jesus and Mary “En Jesús y María.” It is in the context of such instability that subversion is intimated in the poem through the also problematic figure of Saint Joseph in Christianity. The chapter explores the significance of such instability in the pictorial representation of colonial subjects in New Spain, and of Saint Joseph in New Granada.

This chapter also illustrates, as social contexts, androgynous social practices in New Spain and New Granada in which male children were first treated as adult men to then turn them into brides of Christ; and in which Hispanic American nuns were physically portrayed, or represented themselves, as men. Read in this social and literary context, Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz’s *Romance to Saint Joseph* and her *Response to Sor Filotea* show how cross-gender identifications of men and women were quite common in Colonial Hispanic America.
This chapter also explores several iconic representations of Saint Joseph as the image of the Madonna in various regions of Colonial Hispanic America, as well as the pictorial transformation of the Madonna and other female figures into St. Joseph in Europe. In the analysis of these images, the work of Spanish art historians Benito Navarrete Prieto, Teresa Zapata Fernández de la Hoz, and Antonio Martínez Ripoll have been fundamental. My interpretation of primary texts as manifestations of subaltern alterity that integrate both sexes into one identity is nourished by the exegetical contributions of gender studies and feminist literary theories such as Kristeva’s “semiotic order.” Equally elucidating have been Carl Jung’s studies on Alchemy and Gnosticism. Also, Leo Steinberg’s *The Sexuality of Christ in Renaissance Art and in Modern Oblivion* provides sufficient and convincing evidence to prove the erotic and homoerotic origins in art history of the innocent-looking chin-caress or foot-touch between baby Jesus and his Mother the Virgin Mary, or Joseph and baby Jesus. Based on these critical references, I argue that the notion of alternate gender roles has been a concern of various and different cultural representations in Colonial Hispanic America. In light of such findings, I further propose that some Hispanic American poets and artists portrayed their own gender views through religious images even when those views went against Church dogmas. Thus, I also propose that poetry and painting in Colonial Hispanic America often times deploys the cleverest stratagems to say one thing by declaring just the opposite, or to negate incontestable “truths” by affirming them. It is in that instability of meaning, that texts and paintings convey a strategy of identity, as illustrated in the male and female identification of Joseph in the carol “In Jesus and in Mary”, by Joseph de Cascante, analyzed in this chapter.

Chapter three also provides a literary analysis of the ontological instability metaphorically presented in yet another poem from the Colonial Musical Archives of Bogotá’s Cathedral titled “Innocent Butterfly” (*Ynocente Mariposa*), dedicated to Saint Joseph. The image of a butterfly metaphorically evokes the drive of light seekers (believers) to reach the (Divine) light and to be
irremediably scorched by it. I argue that the literary image of St. Joseph as a butterfly metaphorically conveys the idea of ontological fragility and mutability, an idea that reinforces the unstable strategies of identity that characterize colonial subjects in the New World. Some of these poems still seem to suggest ambiguous ontological states, while others seem to recur to portrayals of Saint Joseph as a redeeming and empowering leader for specific peoples who go through social ordeals and power relations similar to those undergone by the Biblical Joseph.

Following this idea, this chapter examines a visual representation of Saint Joseph as an enormous butterfly or as a queenly Virgin Mary in “The Patronage of St. Joseph” (1737), a huge canvas (196.1 x 252.6cm.) by Bolivian painter Gaspar Miguel de Berrío (1706-1762) which hangs at the Museo de la Casa Nacional de Moneda, Fundación Cultural BCB, in Potosí, Bolivia. The size and complexity of this painting certainly call attention to the central figure of Saint Joseph as an androgynous being. Both a crowned king and a queen, androgynous Joseph is portrayed as an accepted figure to protect the Church. I find this fact to be a subversion of the beliefs of the Catholic Church that the painting purportedly stands for. Here I propose that this androgynous representation of Saint Joseph intimates signifying codes pertaining to a Creole colonial cultural identity. Thus, I explore how and why the literary and pictorial representation of androgyny assigned to Joseph in the New World is an expression of that hybrid or mixed identity of colonial subjects in Hispanic America. Beyond gender roles, the representation of a mixture between male and female can be extended to other mixtures that integrate Creole identities in terms of race, cultural backgrounds, languages, class and gender.

Finally, from the Musical Colonial Archives of Bogotá’s Cathedral, I have included another poem titled "What Shall I Tell Thee When I Praise Thy Powers" (Qué te diré cuando loo tus poderes).

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22 See definition of “Mariposa” in Covarrubias’ Diccionario de autoridades. Tesoro de la lengua castellana o española. “…tiene inclinacion à entrarfe por la luz de la candela, porfiando vna vez, y otra, hafta que finalmente fe quema. […] ¶ Dixofe maripofa, quasi malipofa, porque fe afsienta mal en la luz de la candela donde fe quema” (Folio 103v).

23 In relation to some of the carols that speak of Joseph and I have selected here, sometimes the poetic language is related to ancient mythical references intermingled with imagery that not always is readily understood and seems to lack cohesiveness with other images in each poem as a whole. All these factors together make these poems rather arcane.
I note how this poem from New Granada was re-written under the influence of another carol by Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz that was solemnized in the Cathedral of Puebla, New Spain, in 1690, and that Sor Juana dedicated to Saint Joseph: the Third carol, number 294 from the First Nocturn: (¿Who did hear? Who did hear? Who did see? / ¿Quién oyó? ¿Quién oyó? ¿Quién miró?).

The fourth and concluding chapter, titled “Written on the Body: Reading Saint Bartholomew as a Palimpsest” considers the flayed skin of Saint Bartholomew as a metaphorical palimpsest: a parchment where multiple stories have been written, rewritten, and peeled off over the centuries, but always leaving traces in Hispanic American representations of an ontological and ideological instability of multiple and sometimes opposite meanings in a New World context. Here my main argument is that many artists in Hispanic America seem to negate a religious official discourse while imitating and supposedly reaffirming it in their lyrical and pictorial compositions. In other words, stories depicted in representations of Saint Bartholomew often appear to speak against their didactic purposes. For example, Neo Granadine artists simultaneously hide and expose, affirm and negate, or declare in silence what an individual is and what he/she is not. Such simultaneity, an identifiable characteristic of the baroque, is what constructs ambivalent cultural identities by integrating opposed world-views, beliefs, or points of view. Such presentational integration is also promoted, no doubt, by the syncretism that Jesuits instilled through their teachings in the New World. Jesuits saw in the new lands and people a fertile ground in which they could bring together, in a harmonious coexistence, the Christian faith with non-Christian traditions. This process also helped in the creation of mixed identities in Colonial Hispanic America that continued to shape national self-hood even after its independence from Spain.

As an illustration of such syncretism, this chapter begins with an explanation of the Aztec ritual of Tlacaxipeualiztli, or flaying of men, celebrated in honor of the god Xipe Totec or the “flayed one,” as the closest New World indigenous figure to the image of Saint Bartholomew. Discussing the success that the Jesuits had all over the world in their evangelic missions in their efforts to syncretize local
beliefs with Christian imagery, the chapter moves on to show how, according to *Comentarios Reales* (Re(g)al Commentaries) by the mestizo writer the Inca Garcilaso de la Vega, Saint Bartholomew was syncretized also in Peru with the local pre-Hispanic deity Viracocha. Here I argue that, based on El Inca Garcilaso’s rhetorical construction, this syncretism seems to have helped not only the evangelic purposes of the Spanish, but also the imperial strategy of Spain to take advantage of the familiarization of the Incas with a dynastic system in order to preserve it for the purpose of ruling. In other words, in the midst of internal conflicts of power among the Incas, the syncretism of Saint Bartholomew with the mythical Inca deity Viracocha offered a way to facilitate the creation of an imperial discourse that, based on local prophesies, allowed the group ousted from power to ally the Inca Viracocha with the Spaniards in the deposition of Atahualpa. In short, as I argue in this section, at least in Peru, the image of Saint Bartholomew was used for dual political purposes. The scholarly research of Professor Rocío Quispe Agnoli documents this notion. As an example, I retrieve some of her findings regarding how Native American, Peruvian Guamán Poma de Ayala presents the image of Saint Bartholomew and his apostolic significance in Peru as a way to do away with idolatry.

Based on examples and historical documentation provided, this chapter analyzes the only two poems devoted to Saint Bartholomew in the voluminous anthology of carols from the Colonial Musical Archives of Bogotá’s Cathedral: *Invictus Bartholomew* (*Invicto Bartolomé*), and “Today a Divine Champion” (“Oy un Campion Divino”). Here the chapter examines how Neo Granadine poets interpret and transform the narration of Saint Bartholomew from *The Golden Legend*, and the constant semantic ambivalences that these poems articulate. The chapter also examines two poetical compositions by Mexican poet and playwright Fernán Gonzalez de Eslava: *Hierogliphycas* and *Divine Ballad*. A comparison of *Divine Ballad* with *Profane Ballad* composed by Pedro Liñan de Riaza, shows the

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influence of drama, particularly of Lope de Vega and Calderón de la Barca, in Liñán de Riaza’s composition. The profane ballad by Liñan de Riaza serves as a model for Eslava’s transformation of it into a sacred theme.

Fundamental for the exegesis of the Neo Granadine poems and paintings portraying Saint Bartholomew analyzed in this chapter are the studies on the representation of the human body researched especially by historian Jaime Humberto Borja. His studies offer a solid theoretical background to understand the baroque rhetoric of the body that was approved and reinforced by the Council of Trent. It will also take into account various influential treatises on how to paint body parts. Furthermore, Borja’s studies on baroque corporeity allow me to propose that while Neo Granadine artists purportedly represented Bartholomew as a saint, when in actuality, through codes of body representations, they depicted him more closely as a villain, thus strongly reflecting codified anti-religious sentiments: Precisely the opposite of what the painting was supposed to represent. In the analysis of such double vision intimated in the Neo Granadine canvases of Saint Bartholomew, this study traces possible European sources of inspiration in order to detect the changes exerted on the models. It also analyzes how those changes in the New World created different stories altogether from the Biblical allusions depicted or narrated in Europe.

The present study contributes to the field of Colonial Spanish American literature in the analysis of pictorial and literary representations of this period in ways that have not been studied previously. These representations deploy strategies of identity that reaffirm independent statements of self-assertion on the part of colonial subjects that in most cases differentiate from Europe by transforming imperial paradigms of beauty, gender roles, etc., to New World realities, codes, and symbols. These acts of self-assertion produce as a result an in-between zone of cultural hybridation that speaks of the constructions of new signs of cultural identity of colonial subjects in the New World. As a conclusion, I hope to have shown that the literary and pictorial works from Colonial Hispanic America considered in this dissertation reiterate their transatlantic cultural origins (mostly Spanish), and, at the same time,
more often than not, reaffirm their differences from European canonical models. This strong element of ‘Creolization,’ reveals what Homi Bhabha calls “hybrid forms of life and art” (xiii). This is what the chapters that follow propose to show. It is my hope that this study entices further research of other carols from New Granada, New Spain and of other regions of Hispanic America on similar issues of cultural identity in colonial Hispanic America.
CHAPTER ONE:

Avatars of Saint Catherine of Alexandria in the New World: The Discourse of and About Womanhood in Colonial Hispanic America

Most of the poetic and pictorial representations of Christian saints in the West, including those of Catherine of Alexandria, are highly influenced by the stories that in the Middle Ages European peasants had kept by word of mouth for generations. Jacobus de Voragine collected many of those popular stories in *The Golden Legend*, a book considered today to be the main archive of the lives of the Saints. Among these, Saint Catherine is one of the historical or fictional women who lived in or were from Alexandria. Other women from Alexandria were the former prostitute and latter anchorite Mary of Egypt, Potamiaina, Amma Syncletica, Eugenia, Euphrosine, and the non Christian Neoplatonic philosopher Hypatia. From this narrative cluster of Egyptian women, Saint Catherine of

25 Potamiaina was tortured by a judge and then threatened with rape by “gladiators”—according to the Greek text, but the Armenian and Latin versions mention a “pimp.” She was sentenced to death along with her mother Marcella in Alexandria by covering their bodies from top to bottom with burning tar. In the Church History of Eusebius, Potamiaina had been a slave. Her noble birth is emphasized five times, and her wealth twice. Her beauty (which later became a cliché of martyrdom) is also mentioned (Jensen 9-10; 87; 90).


27 Daughter of Philip, proconsul of Egypt from 180 to 192 C.E., Eugenia of Alexandria came from a Pagan Roman family but turned into Christianity on the sly. Rejecting a prearranged matrimony with wealthy and pagan Aquilinus, Eugenia disguised herself as man in order to join a community of monks which eventually elected her as their abbot. She was martyred in Rome around 257 C.E. during the reign of Valerian and Gallienus (Swan 81-82).

28 Born in 410 B.C., Euphrosine of Alexandria identified herself as eunueEsmeraldus hiding from his father in a monastery. Troubled by the beauty of the young Esmeraldus, he (she) was sent to live in an isolated cell. Distraught by the disappearance of his daughter, Euphrosine’s father seeks support from the abbot. The father is sent to Esmeraldus (his own disguised and self-masculinized daughter) for comfort and council. Esmeraldus falls sick, and moved by his father’s grief, Esmeraldus finally reveals his previous identity (Swan 83-84). With some omissions, this biography follows essentially the same story line of Pelagia of Antioch, found in the Monastery of El Escorial (Salisbury, 99-104).

29 “Hypatia, the head of the Academy in Alexandria, was a friend of the Roman perfect Orestes, who was trying to preserve the peace between embattled Jews and Christians in that Hellenistic metropolis of the Nile Delta. Thus the philosopher and
Alexandria is perhaps the most widely known and represented martyr from the Nile delta in Colonial Hispanic America.

The lives of the saints served as exempla by the Church to teach about Christian devotion and faith. Like the other women mentioned above, St. Catherine is identified by her stereotypical beauty, wealth, royal lineage, and, remarkably, by her knowledge and wisdom. De Vorgine’s Golden Legend states the following:

Catherine, the daughter of King Costus, had a thorough education in all the liberal arts. … She reasoned at length with the emperor [Maxentius], using every sort of argument, syllogistic, allegorical, metaphorical, logical, and transcendental… [T]he emperor was dumbfounded and unable to reply to her …. The young girl debated with the orators in the most learned fashion and refuted them with the clearest of proofs, until they … stood … speechless. (333-35).

De Voragine’s tale of St. Catherine portrays the frustration felt by a man in a position of power when a learned woman challenges his beliefs and superiority and does not comply with his sexual advances. Emperor Maxentius tries to cajole Catherine into becoming his concubine. He invites her to live in the palace and be second only to the queen, but she refuses. He even promises her to build a statue of her in the middle of the town so that everyone could admire her as a goddess (336). In view of her refusal, later on the emperor upgrades his offer telling her, “I do not wish to have you as my natural scientist became a target of the followers of Cyril, the extremely pugnacious bishop of Alexandria, and in March 415 was murdered by the Christian rabble.” Thus, the philosopher Hypatia appears as an almost timeless symbol of intellectual superiority and moral integrity against brutal force: an unusually gifted woman, still young and very beautiful, unmarried like so many of her Christian contemporaries, falls victim of the basest instincts and bestial cruelty—a pattern that is repeated … in many reports of martyrdom.” (Jansen 54).

Jansen cites Socrates’ report and commentary of the event thus: “… dragging her from her carriage, they took her to the church called Caesareum, where they completely stripped her, and then murdered her with tiles. After tearing her body in pieces, they took her mangled limbs to a place called Cinaron, and there burnt them. This affair brought opprobrium, not only upon Cyril, but also upon the whole Alexandrian church. And surely nothing can be farther from the spirit of Christianity than the allowance of massacres, fights, and transactions of that sort. This happened in the month of March during Lent, in the fourth year of Cyril’s episcopate, under the tenth consulate of Honorius, and the sixth of Theodosius” (7.15; NPNF, 2nd series, 2:160) (55). Jansen, Anne. God’s Self Confident Daughters. Early Christianity and the Liberation of Women. Trans. O.C. Dean Jr. Louisville, Kentucky: John Knox Press, 1996.
servant: you will reign as a queen in my realm, a powerful, highly honored and glorious queen” (337). She defies such tempting offers and states that she had found in Christ essentially everything the ‘Caesar’ offers her (i.e., a life-long state of wedlock, riches, power, and fame). She even deems his offer less durable: “Whom should I choose: a king who is powerful, immortal, glorious, and magnificent; or one who is weak, mortal, ignoble, and repellent?” (337).

Her stubbornness infuriates the emperor, and he orders to imprison, torture, and famish her while he is away, hoping that this treatment would make her change her mind. Upon his return, he finds not only that she is stronger than before, but also that she has turned his own wife and his trustworthy sentry into Christians. After killing his traitors, he orders to shred Catherine into smithereens in four “wheels with iron saws and razor-sharp nails projecting from their rims” (337). The description of how she was meant to be killed reads: “[T]wo of these wheels should turn in one direction and the other two in the opposite direction, so that their combined action, as they drove down on her from above and came up at her from below, would first mangle her flesh and then tear it in shreds” (337). However, she is providentially delivered from this perverse plan, but is ultimately beheaded for her recalcitrant resistance to authority and for her unyielding determination to remain a virgin for Christ’s sake. In fact, the issue of virginity among women was a polemical issue for the early Christian church because it became a problem for husbands and a danger for the stability of family as an institution of society. Women such as Thecla, the most famous case, suffered martyrdom for this reason.30

30 “Thecla, a young woman of Iconium, is betrothed to a man named Thamyris, when the apostle Paul comes preaching a message of chastity. Enamoured of his teaching, Thecla leaves her fiancé and follows Paul. Enraged, the fiancé and Thecla’s mother Theocleia petition the governor of Iconium to have Paul exiled and Thecla burned at the stake for disrupting marital convention. However, when Thecla is brought to the stake, a miraculous storm of rain and hail quenches the flames. Afterward, Thecla is reunited with Paul in a cave at Daphne by Antioch; there she asks to be baptized, offering to cut her hair short as a sign of commitment. But fearing that she might succumb to future temptation, Paul puts off her request. The story highlights the debate during the first years of the Christian Church over chastity.

“Thecla then travels with Paul to Antioch, and on the road a man named Alexander attempts to rape her. Thecla resists by tearing his clothes and publicly humiliating him. In anger, Alexander arranges to have Thecla thrown to the beasts. In the arena, attacked by lions, bears, and raging bulls, she dives into a pool filled with ravenous seals and thus baptizes herself. She is preserved from harm by a bolt of lightning that strikes the seals dead, and, awestruck by her power,
The painting, “The Decapitation of St. Catherine” (*Degollación de Santa Catalina*, 168 x 111 cm) [shown below], preserved at the Prime Cathedral of Bogota from the 17th century by Neo Granadine painter Gregorio Vásquez de Arce y Ceballos (1638-1711), faithfully portrays the concluding paragraphs of *The Golden Legend*:

**Figure 1:** "Decapitation of St. Catherine of Alexandria." 17th c. Gregorio Vásquez de Arce y Ceballos. Oil on canvas 168 x 111 cm Prime Cathedral of Bogotá, Colombia,

the governor releases her. Thecla then dresses like a man to travel to Myra, where she finds Paul preaching. With his blessing, she returns to Iconium and begins to teach where Paul had taught. A short epilogue relates that her life ends near Seleucia—there she ‘slept with a noble sleep’”(Davis, 6-7). See Davis, Stephen J. *The Cult of St. Thecla. A Tradition of Women’s Piety in Late Antiquity*. New York: OUP, 2001.  
When she was taken to [the] place of her execution, Catherine raised her eyes to heaven and prayed. . . . When Catherine was beheaded, milk flowed from her body instead of blood, and angels took up her body and carried it to Mount Sinai. . . . Catherine suffered under the tyrant Maxentius or Maximinus, whose reign began around AD 310. (de Voragine, 338)

The ekphrastic representation of the blood, transformed into milk and pouring like a fountain from Catherine’s neck, reflects the influence of Ambrose, one of the first fathers of the Church. In *De Institutione Virginitate*, he lists the fountain as one of the metaphors to represent female virginity (*Padres*, Salisbury, 49). Also, the transformation of Catherine’s blood into milk turns her into a type of Christ figure. Such transformation from redeeming blood to milk suggests that her decapitation is closely associated in Christian thought with the passion of Christ. The image of blood turned into milk in Ceballos’ painting also echoes the following observation by the Cistercian father Aelred of Rievaulx (†1167): “let it be enough for you to have a representation of our Savior hanging on the cross; that will bring before your mind his Passion for you to imitate, …, his naked breasts will feed you with the milk of sweetness to console you”31 (Walker 123).

Other aspects of Catherine’s legend stand out. Alban Butler’s popular *Lives of the Saints* (first published in London between 1756 and 1759) affirms that Catherine’s remnants were taken to Mount Sinai in the eighth or ninth century and kept by monks of the Eastern Orthodox Church in a monastery built there by Emperor Justinian in 527. Butler also provides an interpretation of de Voragine’s version by Archbishop Falconio of Santa Severina who alleges that the angels referred to in the *Golden Legend* are really the monks of Sinai, adducing that “monks on account of their heavenly purity […] were anciently called *angels*” (92).

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Not all artists in Hispanic America were faithful to the Medieval legend in their representations. An anonymous painting from New Spain flips the role models and moral lesson of the “original” story and presents an all-victorious and pleased woman, after having beheaded her torturer!

**Figure 2:** "Santa Catalina." Anonymous from New Spain. (ca. late 17th-early 18th centuries). Oil on canvas 162.5 x 104 cm Collection of the Soumaya Museum, Mexico.

This painting changes the traditional story altogether. Her gaze of complacency addressed to the viewers bears them witnesses of a discourse that literally places fragmented men, considered less than a woman, utterly defeated, at a woman’s feet. The message that this anonymous painting conveys must

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32 The feminization of men, especially the deafeated, was a rather common practice in the Colonial period in Hispanic America. See, for instance, Caupolicán in Alonso de la Ercilla’s canto XXXIV of La Araucana: “Le sentaron [a Caupolicán] después con poca ayuda / sobre la punta de la estaca aguda. / No el aguzado palo penetrante / por más que las entrañas le rompiese / barrenándole el cuerpo fue bastante / a que al dolor intenso se rindiese: / que con sereno término
have been quite difficult to accept even by the religious establishment in 17th and 18th century Mexico. This New World painting, however, positions women at the center of power, thus intimating how the issue of women’s power and authority was a major concern and a possible allusion for social change, from the point of view of the Creole artist, in New Spain. A similar discourse can be found in New Spain, in Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz’s poems dedicated to Saint Catherine.

In Sor Juana’s description of Saint Catherine the poet emphasizes the notion that this woman, Catherine, was intellectually superior to the men around her. She highlights the insurmountable learnedness of this saint, her knowledge and wisdom, and projects on her own erudition as well as her own circumstances. The biographical profile of Saint Catherine of Alexandria in the *Golden Legend* finds autobiographical similarities in the poetic and epistolary production of this Mexican nun, Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz. Endowed since birth with an irrepressible desire to learn, Sor Juana, like Saint Catherine, also at an early age leaves the male intelligentsia in awe, some uncomfortable, and others obsessed with her. For instance, Sor Juana’s (daring) erudition and writings left Francisco Aguiar y Seijas —Archbishop of Mexico—, and other members of the prelate, like Sor Juana’s confessor, distressed and angry. For Francisco Álvarez de Velasco y Zorrilla, a prolific intellectual from New Granada, however, Sor Juana became the object of a Platonic love and of an obsession, as his copious writings dedicated to the nun attest. For her precociousness, Mexican critic and novelist Octavio Paz, 1990 Nobel Laureate, cites Sor Juana recalling in her response to Sor Filotea de la Cruz

y semblante, / sin que labio ni ceja retorciese, / sosegado quedó de la manera / que si asentado en tálamo estuviera” (473):

Later on, almost effortlessly, they sat him [Caupolicán] on the end of a sharp stick. / The pointed and penetrating pole, even though it broke his entrails, destroying his body quite a lot, was not enough to make him give up before the intense pain: for he was left with so serene a face, not even with the slightest twitch of his lips or eyebrow, as if he were sitting on a double bed (translation mine).

33 I thought I was fleeing from my self, but oh, misery! I brought myself along, and brought my greatest foe in this inclination [to study], for I cannot determine if Heaven bestowed it on me as a gift or as a punishment” (Response to Sor Filotea, cited and translated in Scott, 53).

how much “many marveled not so much at my natural wit, as at my memory, and at the amount of learning I had mastered at an age when many have scarcely learned to speak well” (Sor Juana, Sayers, 86). She refers here to a visit to Mexico City when she was about eight or ten years old. Another one of the many biographical similarities between Saint Catherine of Alexandria and Sor Juana is their disdain for earthly marriage. Sor Juana rejects it in her Response to Sor Filotea: “I entered the religious order, knowing that life there entailed certain conditions […] most repugnant to my nature; but given the total antipathy I felt for marriage, I deemed convent life the least unsuitable and the most honorable I could elect if I were to insure my salvation” (La Cruz, translation Sayers, 16-17).

Rescuing these and other strikingly similarities between Sor Juana’s life and Catherine’s hagiography, the Mexican nun constructs a sort of alter-ego or mirror of herself through her poetic (re)construction of the saint. Her extolment to Saint Catherine is composed of eleven carols divided in three nocturnes. These carols were premiered in 1691, in Oaxaca, the same year the illustrious nun wrote her letter of defense to “Sor Filotea” (i.e., the bishop of Puebla, Manuel Fernandez de Santa Cruz, who adopted that pseudonym). In her letter, she rebukes “Sor Filotea,” (i.e., the bishop), for potentially having placed her in the hands of the Inquisition by publishing her critic of a sermon of Antonio Vieira, a theological analysis that came to be known as the Athenagoric letter (i.e., worth of Athena). Sor Juana writes: “That letter, lady, which you so greatly honored, I wrote more with repugnance than any other emotion; both by reason of the fact that it treated sacred matters, for which (as I have stated) I hold such reverent awe, and because it seems to wish to impugn, a practice for

35 “Sor Juana subraya que … a consecuencia de esas lecturas [de los libros del abuelo], cuando llegó a la capital todos ‘se admiraban no tanto del ingenio cuantos de la memoria y noticias que tenía en edad que parecía que apenas había tenido tiempo para aprender a hablar’ … fue a México niña todavía, cuando tendría unos ocho o diez años” (Paz, 126).

36 Entré religiosa, porque aunque conocía que tenía el estado de cosas […] muchas repugnantes a mi genio, con todo, para la total negación que tengo al matrimonio, era lo menos desproportionado y lo más decente que podía elegir” (La Cruz 53).
which I have natural aversion” (Sayers 65, 67).\(^3^7\) Sor Filotea’s (the bishop) counsel had been that a nun should dedicate herself to the Sacred Scriptures, not to profane writings as she had done in the past. To that deceitful council, Sor Juana replies:

I say to you that I have taken to heart your most holy admonition that I apply myself to the study of the Sacred Books, which, though it comes in the guise of counsel, will have for me the authority of a precept, […]. For I know well that your most sensible warning is not directed against it, but rather against those worldly matters of which I have written. (\textit{Sor Juana}, Sayers, 9)\(^3^8\)

Her criticism of Vieira was a theological treaty, and, therefore, it was also a transgression since, according to ecclesiastical authorities, women were not supposed to meddle with a field of knowledge that was restricted to men.

Spurred by the bishop himself, she had written the critique to him confidentially, in 1690, the year before the carols to Saint Catherine were solemnized. It was a bold and lucid critique against the theological ideas of the widely respected Portuguese Jesuit Antonio de Vieira about Christ’s major tokens of kindness or \textit{finezas}. The reception of the Athenagoric letter evinced the fragile social position of a woman in colonial New Spain, especially one who dared to challenge the theological infallibility of a Jesuit priest, in particular Aguiar y Seijas’s favorite preacher. By the time her Athenagoric letter opened Pandora’s box, Sor Juana’s carols to Saint Catherine became statements of resistance and protest emitted from a peripheral and relatively safe position in relation to Mexico City: They were presented at Antequera’s Cathedral in the Oaxaca valley. This location was distant enough from the

\(^3^7\) “Esa carta que vos, Señora mía, honrasteis tanto, la escribí con más repugnancia que otra cosa; y así porque era de cosas sagradas a quienes (como he dicho) tengo reverente temor, porque parecía querer impugnar, cosa a que tengo aversión natural” (La Cruz, translation Sayers, 64-66).

\(^3^8\) “digo que recibo en mi alma vuestra santísima amonestación de aplicar el estudio a Libros Sagrados, que aunque viene en traje de consejo, tendrá para mí sustancia de precepto [...]. Bien conozco que no cae sobre ella vuestra cuerdísima advertencia, sino sobre lo mucho que habréis visto de asuntos humanos que he escrito” (Respuesta, La Cruz, 829).
clout that the archbishop of Mexico Aguiar y Seijas exerted against Sor Juana and any woman’s attempt to exhibit her intellect. Nevertheless, as the Mexican Nobel Prize critic and novelist Octavio Paz (b.1914-d.1998) observes, among other works, “the villancicos to St. Catherine … were seen as rebellion by members of the ruling ecclesiastical hierarchy of Mexico” (translation Sayers, 459-60).39

Re(x)gina Flora Astrum


39 “La Respuesta, los villancicos a Santa Catarina y la aparición del segundo tomo de las Obras con las defensas y encomios de los siete teólogos españoles—habían sido vistas, por buena parte de la alta jerarquía eclesiástica de México, como desafíos y manifestaciones de rebeldía” (Paz 592). For more particulars about Aguiar y Seijas, see also Paz’s Las trampas de la fe, pp. 524-28, 531-32; 576, 607, et al.
It is precisely that sense of resistance in Sor Juana’s writings that may have called the attention of Creole artists and poets for very different reasons. Like Saint Catherine’s, Sor Juana’s exceptional erudition and inclination to learning was amply recognized during her life time, especially by members of the political elite (e.g., Sor Juana’s protectors and sponsors, the countess and count de Paredes, both marquess of La Laguna in charge of the viceroyalty of Mexico from 1680-1688), but it was even more widely reinforced posthumously. Figure 3B stands among the most vastly reproduced portrayals of Sor Juana. As though she were posing for someone in order to be painted, the composition emphasizes not only her obedient demeanor in her conventual robe, but also her well-known disposition to read and write, indicated by the library in the background, the clock on the shelf, the open book, and the plume on a desk. On the other hand, figure 3A shows Sor Juana as a crowned nun, a tradition which garnished with flowers deceased nuns as brides of Christ. Yet, within this tradition, this painting portrays Sor Juana not dead, but alive. It represents Sor Juana as a Madonna holding with her left arm, not baby Jesus, but a baby girl. This little Jesusa or “She-Jesus” stands on a pedestal. She occupies the space and the role that the Christian narrative assigns to Jesus as Savior of the World. In other words, here she is depicted as the world’s “savior-ess,” an image emphasized by the fact that she is holding a globe of the world in one hand. She is also crowned, like Jesus, but she is crowned with flowers.

The differences between these two paintings illustrate that along with the traditional codes of expected behavior imposed especially upon nuns—obedience, simplicity, chastity, etc., as represented in Cabrera’s portrait of Sor Juana— for New World artists it was also important to highlight the subversive spirit that the figure of Sor Juana represented. Thus, she is portrayed as though she were not a dead nun, but a luscious Madonna, alive, and the sanctified mother of a female Christ figure. This transformation of traditional Madonnas embodied in a representation of Sor Juana holding a little girl Jesus is another modality of the many codified signs of Creole identity in Colonial Hispanic America. In this case, it is one that attempts to highlight the capability of women to exert roles and occupy positions as notable as those of men, particularly Jesus: an ekphrastic representation perhaps to Sor
Juana’s own comparison in her letter of defense to her own situation, persecuted and accused, and the accusations and crucifixion of Christ:

Why does only the crown [of Christ] give pain? Is it not enough that like the other emblems the crown was a symbol of ridicule and ignominy, as that was its intent? No. Because the sacred head of Christ and His divine intellect were the depository of wisdom, and the world is not satisfied for wisdom to be the object of mere ridicule, it must also be done injury and harm. A head that is a storehouse of wisdom can expect nothing but a crown of thorns

(Poems, La Cruz, trans. Sayers, 35).40

A conspicuous motif in this composition (Figure 3A) is the overabundance of flowers. The representation of flowers, particularly the Rose, in colonial Hispanic American poetry dedicated to Saint Catherine and to other saints is not uncommon.41 The image of the rose in this representation of Sor Juana suggests possible readings into the symbolic significance of the rose in Sor Juana’s poems, and especially in her carols to Santa Catarina (allegorically herself). For instance, carol 316V by Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz reads as follows:

Venid, Serafines, Come ye, Seraphs
venid a mirar come to see
una Rosa que vive a rose that cut off
cortada, más; lives even more

y no se marchita, and does not wither
antes resucita but revives,
al fiero rigor, for her own humor
porque se fecunda kindles her fecundity42
con su propio humor. against fierce rigor.

40 “¿por qué sólo la corona es dolorosa? ¿No basta que, como las demás insignias, fuese de escarnio e ignominia, pues ése era el fin? No, porque la sagrada cabeza de Cristo y aquel divino cerebro eran depósito de la sabiduría; y cerebro sabio en el mundo no basta que esté escarnecido, ha de estar también lastimado y maltratado; cabeza que es erario de sabiduría no espere otra corona que de espinas” (La Cruz, 836).
13 Roses also abound in European literature and elsewhere, but here I am concentrating my attention on the poetry produced in Hispanic America.

42 The translation is not literal. The word “kindles” is not present in the original Spanish, and fecundity appears as a reflexive verb, not as a noun. The syntax is not the same either.
Y así es beneficio llegarla a cortar ¡venid, Jardineros, venid a mirar una Rosa que vive cortada, más! (Villancico 316V, 1-15, 290)

Thus it is beneficial to cut it off: Come, ye Gardeners, come to see a Rose that cut off lives even more (Carol 316V, 1-15, [p.290)

An excerpt from Carol 313II, in turn, reads:

Tu, que ya cortada del bello pensil, sabes su fragancia mejor esparrir, ¡esto sí que es lucir! (C313II; 35-39, 287)

Once you’ve been cut From the beautiful garden, You know better [how] to spread its fragrance. This is, indeed to stand out!

It has been characteristic of the Western Christian tradition to give metaphoric meanings to flowers. However, in Sor Juana’s poem it is the rose, in reference to the Alexandrine Rose, Santa Catarina, the one unique flower with special significant meanings. Following my arguments in this chapter, I propose that the Rose in Sor Juana’s poems speaks of the idea of woman, and of the conditions of women in colonial Hispanic America, as perceived from the gaze of an intellectual Creole woman. Furthermore, the symbolism of the rose allows Sor Juana to intimate a metaphorical association among herself, Saint Catherine, Christ, and the flower. Another relationship may be also implied in the poem’s polysemy: Alexandria and Mexico City in New Spain as hubs of wisdom and fertile grounds for cultivated minds.

St. Ambrose (b. circa 337-39), one of the Fathers of the Roman Catholic Church, interpreted the image of the flower as a metaphor for virginity (Salisbury 32). Keeping in mind the importance of the teachings of St. Ambrose, carol 316V above metaphorically refers to men as gardeners (keepers of God’s garden on Earth) who try to hinder the growth of a woman (the Rose), by cutting it off. Lines 2 and 4, reiterated in lines 13-15, urge men to realize the everlasting oppression exerted by those who thwart women’s attempts to attain self-development. In the text, flower keepers (i.e., men) are challenged to see and test the strength of a Rose that, like Saint Catherine or Sor Juana herself, is
determined not to give up blossoming intellectually, since the cut rose “vive más”; in other words, it continues to live even ‘more’ once it is cut.

In both carols, II and V, the Rose functions as a symbol of immortality (the Rose never dies) and of endurance, because it resuscitates, it keeps growing despite being cut. The image of a Rose spreading its fragrance even after it is cut and removed from the garden is a metaphorical way to say that, once dead or physically removed from the surface of this earth, the soul of the saint will continue to live spiritually through faith, thus intimating the closeness of the cut rose with God.

The immortality of the soul and the endurance of the body to adversity are not the only ideas that the symbol of the Rose convey in poems written by other Creole writers in colonial Hispanic America. A rose in a garden in some cases can also serve as a symbol of women as an enclosed space, and, by analogy, women’s enclosure in a domestic and/or social space. The idea of enclosure in this context comes from the Medieval notion of the hortus conclusus or enclosed garden, within the walls of which virgins are often placed in literary and pictorial representations. In Western tradition, the image of the hortus conclusus can be found in the biblical “Songs of Songs:” “My sweet heart, my bride, is a secret garden, a walled garden, a private spring” (4:12 682). As Joyce Salisbury points out, “[t]he Fathers [of the Catholic Church] associated enclosure with modesty. … The ideal virgin, then, spent most of her time indoors” (33). Like the nuns, the ideal woman was the one who remained in the enclosed space of the home, or her father or husband’s garden walls.

In her literary representation of herself, Sor Juana expresses her repugnance or inevitable necessity to enter the convent: “And so I entered the religious order, knowing that life there entailed certain conditions (I refer to superficial, and not fundamental, regards) most repugnant to my nature” (Poems, La Cruz, trans. Sayers, 15,17). However, she is cautious enough to affirm that “[she] deemed convent life the least unsuitable and the most honorable [she] could elect if [she] were to insure [her]

43 “Entréme religiosa, porque […] conocía que tenía el estado cosas (de las accesorias, hablo, no de las formales) muchas repuganantes a mi genio” (Respuesta, La Cruz, 831).
salvation” (17). This counter balancing commentary was meant to offset the danger that would represent for her to acknowledge in her *Response* (a letter addressed to a higher male church authority) her animosity against convent life. Had she not softened her repugnance to religious life with ideas of salvation and honor, she could have easily been sent to the pyre by the inquisition. However, the convent was, precisely, the enclosed space that granted her the freedom she needed to read and write as she did. So she does not complain about the convent as the walled garden of roses or walled virgins, but about the interference of her sisters who would not leave her alone to allowed her to flourish intellectually: “wishing to be alone, and wishing to have no obligatory occupation that would inhibit the freedom of my studies, nor the sounds of a community that would intrude upon the peaceful silence of my books” (17). The enclosure, then, is the woman herself, womanhood, and her body which, from a male point of view, is a closed space (virgin), without any intellectual, political or theological authority.

In contrast, the refrain of an anonymous carol from New Granada, dedicated to Saint Catherine, reads as follows: “De los jardines del cielo / salgan las flores, y a la rosa, su reina, tribútenle olores” (Perdomo, 1-4, 291, emphasis mine). The verb *salir* in its imperative form emphasizes, on the one hand, the need to come out or go out from an enclosure. On the other hand, *salir* signifies to spring forth, in the sense of making visible that which has not been seen before. Yet, the invisible springs forth, or becomes visible from heaven, in this case from the confines of heavenly gardens, not from earth. In this sense, I find in this image the platonic parallelism between the world of ideas, above (in heaven) and the material world (on earth). The flowers of which this poem speaks are heavenly

44 [Entréme religiosa porque …] era lo menos desproporcionado y lo más decente que podía elegir en materia de la seguridad que deseaba de mi salvación” (Respuesta, La Cruz, 831).

45 “[L]as impertinencias de mi genio, … eran de vivir sola, de no querer tener ocupación obligatoria que embarazase la libertad de mi estudio, ni rumor de comunidad que impidiese el sosegado silencio de mis libros. …Pensé que huía de mi misma, pero ¡miserable de mí! trajéme a mi conmigo y traje mi mayor enemigo en esta inclinación, que no sé determinar si por prenda o castigo me dio el Cielo” (La Cruz, 831)

46 From the heavenly gardens / let flowers blossom / and to their queen, the rose / make tribute with their fragrance.
flowers, so they belong to the realm of ideas. Being immaterial ideas, rather than physical entities, they are imperishable.

Regarding Saint Catherine’s second carol (313II, see excerpt above), Sor Juana explicitly refers to the virtue of the Alexandrian Rose to continue spreading the fragrance of the garden from which it has been cut. The emphasis on the fragrance of the rose recalls, on the other hand, fourth-century ideas associated to the sense of smell. It was St. Ambrose who paid particular attention to the sense of smell as one of the most dangerous venues to lead a person into lusty pleasures. For him, virtues and vices produced their own emanations, and odors reflected a person’s spiritual or carnal inclinations. Somehow, his imagination assigned herbal secretions to the bodies of virgins and their actions (Salisbury, 15-18). From his opus on Virginity (24-25), Salisbury quotes Ambrose addressing the following command as a recommendation to chaste women: “Present your hands to your nostrils and explore with unwearied and ever watchful alacrity of mind the perfume of your deeds. The smell of your right hand will be musty to you, and your limbs will be redolent with the odor of the resurrection; [...] your fingers will exude myrrh” (18). Under Ambrose’s lens, flowers and their fragrance metaphorically and symbolically present virginity as a paramount value.

In her carols to Saint Catherine of Alexandria, Sor Juana evokes the traditional symbolic association of “the Rose” (i.e., the saint herself) with Christ. One source indicates that “[m]ultilayered petals symbolized stages of initiation, the central rose representing the point of unity, the heart of Christ” (Tressider 418). The Rose that the Mexican nun creates in her carols, however, is the figure of a mystical image that transcends life and death. The Alexandrine Rose literally resurrects, like Christ, and continues to exude its captivating aromas after being cut off (see carol 316V 5-15 above). However, such image becomes allegorically more complex in Sor Juana’s poetic representations of Saint Catherine of Alexandria, since she is also a projection of the Mexican nun, and, by extension, also of the colonial condition of other women in Hispanic America. The polysemy Saint Catherine-a
Rose-Christ-Sor Juana, in Sor Juana’s poetry and in her *Response* evokes other representations with also similar associations in colonial Hispanic America.

Following on the symbolic significations of floral images in poetic representations of Saint Catherine, and remembering that “[i]n Medieval Christianity the petals of the flower were taken to represent the five wounds of Christ; a blood-red rose growing among thorns signified the suffering of Christ and of his love for humanity, and the early martyrs and their persecutors…” (Tressider, 418), in *De los jardines del cielo (From the heavenly gardens)*—the Neo Granadine carol excerpted above—the poet depicts Saint Catherine also as a Christ figure. Just as much as Jesus is known as King of kings and lord of lords (as Handel’s *Messiah* immortally proclaims), Saint Catherine in the Neo Granadine carol is represented as queen of queens and lady of ladies, therefore exalting her to the same level of the Divine:

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A la majestad    To the majesty
de reina          of [a] queen
la ciñe           an imperial crown
imperial corona.  (15)  

De esta rosa      The thorns
las espinas,      of this rose
la defienden      defend her
y la rondon      (20)    and surround her.

La corona         The crown
de sus cienes     of her temples
de oro            [is made] of gold
y de piedras preciosas.  and precios stones.
(Perdomo 13-24, 292) (translation mine)
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The crown in this poem is an imperial (divine) crown that gives authority to a woman, a queen, thus proposing an alternative figure of power (celestial and earthly) in a New World context. In fact, this female figure of power which the Virgin Mary came to represent in the Catholic Church still rules
in the imagination of vast numbers of people in Hispanic America. However, one must remember that
is not in the New World but in Europe where the Virgin first appears as a figure of power in the
Catholic world, evoking a pre-Christian mother, Isis. The debate by the fathers of the church on the
feminine-masculine authority of the Divinity takes place in Europe, not in the Americas. Therefore, the
image of the Virgin was already empowered with authority and popularized in Europe when the first
European colonizers brought it to the New World.

In contrast to the luminous and positive imagery that the poem above presents of St. Catherine as
a crowned queen, a Rose defended by the thorns surrounds her, Sor Juana, in her *Response to Sor
Filotea*, utilizes the image of Christ’s crown of thorns now to refer to the potential sanctions that may
be imposed against her. By tacit comparison, she chooses to compare herself, a woman, to a man (i.e.,
Christ) wounded with thorns by his (as well as her) persecutors:

… the sacred head of Christ and His divine intellect were the depository of wisdom, and the
world is not satisfied for wisdom to be the object of mere ridicule, it must also be done
injury and harm. A head that is a storehouse of wisdom can expect nothing but a crown of
thorns. What garland may human wisdom expect when it is known what was bestowed on
that divine wisdom? (*Poems*, La Cruz, trans. Sayers 35).47

Although she could not explicitly admit it, it was understood that Sor Juana was writing about
herself through the persona of Christ, or, in the case of her carols to the Alexandrine Rose, through the
persona of Saint Catherine. Sor Juana’s judgment is in defense of “human wisdom” and against those
who want to do “injury and harm” to the intellect, human intellect like hers and Saint Catherine’s, as
well as against divine intellect: Christ. Sor Juana equates human and divine intellect, human wisdom
and knowledge, with reason. She comments on the virtue of reason: “while it [reason] is the greater, it

47 “la sagrada cabeza de Cristo y aquel divino cerebro eran depósito de la sabiduría; y cerebro sabio en el mundo no basta
que esté escarnecido; ha de estar también lastimado y maltratado; cabeza que es erario de sabiduría no espere otra corona
que de espinas. ¿Cuál guirnalda espera la sabiduría humana si ve la que obtuvo la divina?” (La Cruz 836).
is more modest and long-suffering, and defends itself less undergoes more suffering, and it does not defend itself so much” (33).48

In her *Response* as in many other writings, Sor Juana employs a very peculiar way to defend herself by apparently not doing so. She ironically upholds Saint Tomas’ view on women, and reiterates the common belief that women were incapable of learning, at the same time that she magnifies her intellectual greatness through self-denial. By way of such rhetorical technique, not uncommon in the baroque, she recognizes that her “clumsy scribblings are due to [her] ignorance” (*Poems*, La Cruz, trans. Sayers, 67);49 she refers to “those Sacred Letters [i.e., Scriptures, Gospels, Epistles, or Words] knowing myself incapable of their comprehension and unworthy of their employment” (9),50 or confesses, “I have sought to veil the light of my reason—along with my name” (13).51 In addition, her formal confessions and appeals seem to follow formulaic phrases that, however expected, succeed to demolish to smithereens even the most obstreperous and resilient of human wills: “JUANA INÉS DE LA CRUZ, the most worthless and ingrate creature of those bred by thy Omnipotence, and the most unknown among the ones bred by thy love…” (*Petición*, 874 translation mine).52 Among the documents that testify her official profession of vows to conventual life, the last one reads “…[I] have been and am the worst that has ever been. To all [beloved sisters] I ask for forgiveness for the sake of

48 “mientras [el entendimiento] es mayor es más modesto y sufrido y se defiende menos” (La Cruz, 836).

49 “los torpes borrones de mi ignorancia” (Respuesta, La Cruz, 845).

50 “Aquellas Sagradas Letras para cuya inteligencia yo me conozco tan incapaz y para cuyo manejo soy tan indigna” (Respuesta, La Cruz, 829).

51 “he intentado sepultar con mi nombre mi entendimiento” (Respuesta, La Cruz, 830).

52 “JUANA INÉS DE LA CRUZ, la más indigna e ingrata criatura de cuantas crió vuestra Omnipotencia, y la más desconocida de cuantas crió vuestro amor…” (*Petición*, La Cruz, 874).
God’s love and his Mother’s. I, the worst of the world. JUANA INÉS DE LA CRUZ” (Documentos 413, 876).

Such systematic self-bashing and reiterated debasement starkly contrast with the ever-uplifting tone of her praises to Saint Catherine, which happen to be parallel lauds to herself. Some critics of her works, such as Pandalf (Paz, 92), have identified these acts of self-assertiveness as “narcissistic” expressions, but they are perfectly understood as a mechanism of defense to be able to survive in an inauspicious world for intellectually avid women. Explaining the frustration or rage of Sor Juana’s [writings] about the masculine monopolization of knowledge, Octavio Paz confirms “the masculine character of the culture and world that Juana Inés inhabited” and [then poses the question of] “how, in a civilization of men and for men, a woman could possibly have access to knowledge without masculinizing herself” (94 translation mine).

Paz suggests that Sor Juana’s masculinity is mainly related with, and attributed to, her scope of knowledge, as if knowledge itself were intrinsically only masculine. It is precisely this claim of her posthumous critics and of the society in which she had to live that she criticized and opposed so adamantly. As in early Christianity, in Colonial Hispanic America women were considered unfitting—if not incapable—to acquire knowledge. Such idea was tied to the notion held by men that knowledge was a virtue and a human capacity that belonged exclusively to men. Therefore, “among the theologians who wrote praiseful opinions about Sor Juana in the first edition of the second volume of her works (Seville 1692), there is one who, astonished with

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53 “he sido y soy la peor que ha habido. A todas [sus amadas hermanas] pido perdón por amor de Dios y de su Madre. Yo, la peor del mundo. JUANA INÉS DE LA CRUZ. (Documentos 413, La Cruz, 876).

54 The English translation by Sayers Peden of Paz’s Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz o Las trampas de la fe does not include this quote; nor does it include a significant section of the chapter in which this quote appears in the original book. “el carácter masculino de la cultura y del mundo en que vivía Juana Inés. ¿Cómo en una civilización de hombres y para hombres, puede una mujer, sin masculinizarse, acceder al saber?” (Paz, 94).
the ingeniousness of the nun, candidly writes that the author of those concepts is not a woman but ‘a full bearded man’” (Paz 93, translation mine).55

In her carols devoted to Saint Catherine, Sor Juana also uses the figure of the saint as an imitator of Christ in order to reiterate her (Sor Juana’s) own ontological identification with Christ. This imitation is explicitly reiterated in the following passage:

Amor y valor imita,  
Catherine imitates  

pero mejora la causa  
Love and courage  

Catarina, porque sea  
But she has a better reason  

la imitación con ventaja:  
For a better imitation:  

que quien por Cristo muere,  
Who ever dies for Christ  

la vida alarga.  
Lives longer56  

(Villancico 314III, 23-28, 288)  
(Carol 314III, 23-28, 288)

Sor Juana extends the metaphor of the rose and its divine circularity to the image of the nautical compass or wind rose that points at the winds that batter her:

Contra una tierna Rosa  
Against a tender Rose  

mil cierzos conjuran:  
A thousand winds conspire:  

¡Oh, qué envidiada vive,  
Oh, how envied she lives  

con ser breve la edad de la hermosura!  
Being so brief the age of beauty!  

Porque es bella la envidian  
For her beauty she is envied  

porque es docta la emulan (C316V 16-21, 290)  
For her knowledge [she is] emulated.57

The lines above that identify Saint Catherine as a tender Rose wounded by winds of envy paraphrase the following passage from her Response:

Often on the crest of temples are placed as adornment figures of the winds and of fame, and to defend them from the birds, they are covered with iron barbs … the figure thus elevated cannot avoid becoming the target of those barbs … Oh, unhappy eminence, exposed to

55 The excerpt does not appear in Sayer Peden’s translation. In the original Spanish it reads: ‘Entre los teólogos que escribieron opiniones elogiosas sobre Sor Juana en la primera edición del segundo tomo de sus obras (Sevilla 1692), hay uno que, asombrado del ingenio de la monja, escribe con toda inocencia que la autora de esos conceptos no es mujer sino ‘un hombre con toda la barba’ (Paz, 93).

56 More literally, extends life, stretches life.

57 Textually, “because she is beautiful they envy her / Because she is learned they emulate her”
such uncounted perils. Oh sign, become the target of envy and the butt of contradiction. Whatever eminence, whether that of dignity, nobility, riches, beauty, or science, must suffer this burden; but the eminence that undergoes the most severe attack is that of reason (Poems, La Cruz, translation Sayers, 33).

The adornments on the top of temples to which Sor Juan refers, indicate the directions of the wind. They are the nautical compasses or wind rose that guide mariners by pointing out the cardinal positions and the direction of the winds. The figures of fame are also wounded by the very barbs that are supposed to protect them from the birds. Like the wind rose and the figure of fame, the winds that batter Saint Catherine and Sor Juana and the barbs that wound them, target them for their knowledge and intellectual pursuits. Sor Juana protests: “how obdurately against the current my poor studies have sailed (more accurately, have foundered)” (Poem, Sayers, 27). In another instance, Sor Juana compares the winds (cierzos in Carol V) with another nautical metaphor that evokes once again the wind-rose in a more positive tone. She compares her present situation with Ancient Rome, where those who were highly praised for their triumphant deeds were also vituperated publicly “so that the ship of good judgment not founder amidst the winds of acclamation” (69).

The wind rose, a symbol of life adversities which Sor Juana endured and described in her Alexandrine poems and Respuesta, is associated with a star. Sor Juana insistently highlights the image of the star in relationship to Saint Catherine in Carols IX and X:

1.—Catarina, siempre hermosa, 1.—Catherine, always gorgeous,
es Alejandrina Rosa. Is Alexandrine Rose.

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58 Suelen en la eminencia de los templos colocarse por adorno unas figuras de los Vientos y de la Fama, y por defenderlas de las aves, las llenan todas de púas; … ¡Oh infeliz altura, expuesta a tantos riesgos! ¡Oh signo que te ponen por blanco de la envidia y por objeto de la contradicción! Cualquiera eminencia, ya sea de dignidad, ya de nobleza, ya de riqueza, ya de hermosura, ya de ciencia, padece esta pensión; pero la que más rigor la experimenta es la del entendimiento” (Respuesta, La Cruz, 835-36).

59 “cuán contra la corriente han navegado (o mejor decir, han naufragado) mis pobres estudios” (La Cruz, Respuesta, 834).

60 “Lo cual se hacía … para que no peligrase la nave del juicio entre los vientos de las aclamaciones” (Respuesta, La Cruz, 846).
In this carol, Sor Juana orchestrates a polyphonic or dialogic confrontation of opinions between the importance of the Star and of the Rose as though tails and heads of the same priceless coin. Like the rose, a star conveys many symbolic meanings, therefore, by utilizing the image of a star the poet invests the poem with very powerful connotations. The star is “supremacy, constancy, guidance, …, vigilance, and aspiration. … In religion, stars formed the crowns of great mother goddesses, notably Ishtar in the Near East, and the Virgin Mary. … The five pointed star was the Sumerian emblem of Ishtar in her warrior aspect as the morning star” (Tresidder, 450). It is the same morning star (also Venus) that Sor Juana identifies with Saint Catherine:

Estrella matutina
que, del Sol precursora,
los que él collados dora,
tu splendor ilumina
de luz más apacible, más divina.
(Villancico 321X, 6-10, 294)

Morning star,
Precurser of the Sun,
Thy splendor illumines
With more peaceful, more divine light
The hills that he engilds.
(Carol 321X, 6-21, 294 translation mine)

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61 beautiful

62 tantas, so many.

63 The translation, as the original, avoids the indefinite article because Catherine is not just a Rose or a Star, any Rose, any Star. She embodies and epitomizes the paradigmatic Rose and Star (visually represented in the rose wind or nautical compass).
The light of this star is more peaceful and divine than that of the Sun. Yet, as her five spikes
suggest—in the structure of the poem by each of the five lines of every stanza,—such peace may also
speak of a certain hierarchical placement in the celestial world in which the morning star comes first. In
fact, the star, Catherine of Alexandria, comes before the Sun, a masculine celestial figure, to announce
its presence. It is important to remember that Ishtar, or Inanna for the Sumerians, is per definition “the
great Babylonian goddess of love, sex, and fertility” (Tresidder 252). Ishtar, still associated with
fertility, creation, and sex, is represented in later Near Eastern symbolism as the eight-pointed star,
which is also Venus, the morning and evening star, and an alternative form of the star in Bethlehem
(450). These attributes of Ishtar can be read as references not to the physical activity through which
humans test their fecundity and become creators of life, but to intellectual prosperity, creative powers
to generate ideas, and the wisdom of handling sex wisely. In turn, the opening refrain of Carol X
confirms that “Stars were cosmic windows or points of entry to Heaven” (Tresidder 450):

¡Ay que se abren los Cielos de par en par,
porque Cristo desciende, y su Esposa se va;
y porque entre y salga una y otra,
Sacra Majestad,
abre el Cielo sus puertas de par en par! (Villancico321X 1-5, 294).

Oh, Heavens are wide open
Because Christ descends and his Wife leaves
And in order to let one and the other
Sacred Majesty
Heaven opens its doors wide! (Carol 321X 1-5, 294)

In Carol 316V, the poetic voice first summons the Seraphs to witness the intellectual mutilation
of a woman who is identified as a Rose not because of its fragility, but because of its symbolic
associations with Christ (figura crística) since, transcending death, it resuscitates despite being battered
to death (Cruz, 6-7). The call to the Seraphs (1) acquires a closer significance in relation to what the

64 In the allegorical Loa or “Praise to the Divine Narcissus,” the goddess of sex and fertility that Sor Juana evokes in her
10th carol to Saint Catherine is, instead, the god of seeds, according to the Amerindian tradition that Sor Juana collects and
confronts with the Western Religion (i.e., Christianity)” (See Obras Completas, de la Cruz, 383).
poem describes because, like St. Catherine or like Sor Juana, sometimes seraphs are depicted also as mutilated creatures (Didron 452). They are also always asexual. Thus, as witnesses of a patriarchal program in which the mental growth of women is truncated just as much gardeners systematically trim a Rose, seraphs represent the presence of a desired sexual neutrality in a practice that empowers some individuals and dwarfs others on the basis of gender and sex.

**Transformations of St. Catherine’s Wheel and of the Cross (de la Cruz)**

Tracing the symbolic meanings of the wheel and of the Cross and the particular treatment that Sor Juana gives to these symbols in her poems to Saint Catherine may help to understand how the poetic representations of this holy figure in Hispanic America transmit the concerns and ideas that colonial subjects such as the Mexican nun and also Francisco Alvarez de Velasco y Zorrilla expressed in their writings.

The image of Seraphs in Sor Juana’s carol 316V and in the other poems that evoke the Alexandrine Rose help explain how Sor Juana transforms the iconic wheel that identifies Catherine as a martyr and her torture into a symbol of power and deliverance from evil by the highest hierarchies of heaven.65 In fact, some iconographical representations depict seraphs on top of one or two wheels representing the swiftness with which they succor those who call them (Didron, 452) (see Figures 1-3). Thus, Sor Juana reverts the deleterious effects of the instruments with which men in positions of authority intend to harm women and turns them into tools of salvation, deliverance, and divine power gained by the woman accused and tortured. In the case of Catherine’s story, these instruments of torture are wheels, also symbols of fortune and of Providence.

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Adolphe Napoleon Didron, author of *Christian Iconography: The History of Christian Art in the Middle Ages*, explains that “[t]hroughout all the ancient empire of Byzantium, angels are found on this wheel form, intended to bear the figure of God the Father or of Jesus Christ. These wheels, specially assigned to the order of Thrones by the Byzantines, but attributed by Ezekiel to all angels in general, are of various forms” (92). As it occurs with Christian iconography in Figure 4A, “[d]ynamism is added to the circle in the many images of discs with rays, wings or flames found in religious iconography, notably Sumerian, Egyptian and Mexican” (Tresidder 109).

According to the Aeropagite, seraphims belong to the highest order and were God’s immediate neighbor (161). They perennially revolve around the Divine. Seraphs are able to uplift the spirit of

subordinates by stamping the image of the former on the latter. Also, the name seraphim means “the ability to hold unveiled and undiminished both the light they have and the illumination they give out. It means the capacity to push aside and to do away with every obscuring shadow” (162). When Sor Juana, using the image of Saint Catherine as an analogy of her own persona, invokes in her carol 318 VII the seraphims to see the ever blooming rose that is constantly cut off, her poem expresses the Alexandrine Rose’s need to be illumined by them and the desire to get rid of the forces that oppress the saint.

Regarding the wheel with which Saint Catherine is iconically identified, Sor Juana’s carol 316V shows a positive transformation of the mechanism with which the saint was condemned to be tortured. In this poem the wheel of torture becomes the medieval wheel of fortune: “Cortesana en sus filos / la máquina rotunda, / solo es su movimiento / mejorar Catarina de fortuna” (316V, 36-39, 290). With the figure of the wheel of fortune, now Sor Juana sets hopes for an eventual reversal of hierarchies where the accused woman could turn from bottom to top in the social order: “Cortesana en sus filos / la máquina rotunda, / solo en su movimiento / mejorar Catarina de fortuna” (Courtly in its sharp edges / the round machine / only with its movement / changes Catherine’s fortune for the better”) (316V, 36-39, 290, translation mine).

Besides the image of the wheel of fortune in her carols to Saint Catherine, Sor Juana also utilizes the circle in conjunction with the Cross as if her very name, de la Cruz, were the axes of the circle.

Carol IV partly reads:

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66 The wheel of fortune is mentioned, for instance, in the Carmina Burana, a manuscript collection of facetiously irreverent and “mundane profanities” written in Latin by monks and apprentices in the Middle Ages (c. 11th-13th centuries) and musicalized in the 20th century by German composer Carl Orff (1895-1982). To listen to a version of Carl Orff’s musicalization of the CarminaBurana, go to [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QElIzLECo4OM&feature=related](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QElIzLECo4OM&feature=related)

67 Although “Courtly” literally pertains to the court, by extension and in context it means benevolent, kind, courteous, generous. In any event, “cortesana” offers an interesting play on words with “corte” which also means cut, and “sana” which means heal or healthy; hence suggesting that instead of hurting Catherine, the cuttings of the blades assuage her pain, which is the round idea of the whole stanza. Although Courtly is attributed to the edges of the blades, it possibly can also allude to the royal lineage of the saint, and “en sus filos” to her intellectual sharpness.
Fue de Cruz su martirio; pues la Rueda hace, con dos diámetros opuestos, de la Cruz la figura soberana, que en cuatro se divide ángulos rectos

Fue en su círculo puesta Catarina pero no murió en ella: porque siendo de Dios el jeroglífico infinito, en vez de topar muerte, halló el aliento.

(Villancico 315IV 41-48, 289)

Fue de Cruz su martirio; pues la Rueda hace, con dos diámetros opuestos, de la Cruz la figura soberana, que en cuatro se divide ángulos rectos

Her martyrdom was de Cruz for the Wheel, with two opposite diameters, makes of de la Cruz the sovereign figure divided in four right angles.

Catherine was placed in her circle but never died in it because since it was the infinite hieroglyph of God instead of running across death, she found[the breath](Villancico 315IV 41-48, 289)

68 Literally, of [the] Cross, but here Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz [emphasis mine] is clearly referring to herself also. So the Cruz in the English version stands primarily as her proper last name, meaning by the analogy of a name that St. Catherine’s martyrdom was hers as well.

69 This means not only that St. Catherine was placed in the wheel that identifies her iconically, but also that Sor Juana was placed “where she belonged,” among those of her own kind. This remark is ironic. She was placed there, in a convent, by her historical circumstances. See for example, the complaints that of her “beloved” sisters she makes in the Response, and her yearn to be alone, away from their babble: “many obstructions, not merely those of my religious obligations …, rather, all the attendant details of living in a community: how I might be reading, and those in the adjoining cell would wish to play their instruments, and sing; how I might be studying, and two servants who had quarreled would select me to judge their dispute; or how I might be writing, and a friend come to visit me, doing me no favor but with the best of will … . And such occurrences are the normal state of affairs, for as the times I set apart for study are those remaining after the ordinary duties of the community are fulfilled, they are the same moments available to my sisters, in which they may come to interrupt my labor” (Poems, Sayers, 25). “muchos estorbos, no sólo los de mis religiosas obligaciones … sino de aquellas cosas accesorias a una comunidad: como estar yo leyendo y antojárseles en la celda vecina tocar y cantar; estar yo estudiando y pelear dos criadas y venirme a constituir juez de su pendencia; estar yo escribiendo y venir una amiga a visitarme, haciéndome muy mala obra con muy buena voluntad …. Y esto es continuamente, porque como los ratos que destino a mi estudio son los que sobran de lo regular de la comunidad, esos mismos les sobran a las otras para venirme a estorbar” (Respuesta, La Cruz, 833).

70 Also, the endless hieroglyph of God’s infinity.

71 El aliento literally means the breath, but it also refers to the energy or stamina required to keep herself alive. The English version would sound more natural without the definite article (the) attached to breath, but it suggests the specific energy given by God.
The drawing above72 closely resembles graphically what Sor Juana calls “God’s infinite hieroglyph,” (315IV, 47) the two opposed lines that make Sor Juana’s last name the sovereign figure divided in four right angles. Sor Juana is explicitly aware of the circle as a symbol of infinity. It conveys “[t]otality, perfection, unity, eternity—a symbol of completeness that can include ideas of both permanence and dynamism.” (Tresidder 108). Catherine is circumscribed into the circle or wheel not in order to be tortured or die, as if crucified, but in order to insert herself, symbolically and graphically, into eternity, infinity, reinforcing her image as a Christ figure. This concept of female defiance against authority and of the notion of everlasting life, represented in the cross within the circle, gained as the result of defiance, starkly contrasts with what happens to some mythical male figures who also go through a similar torture, but with opposite results. Such is the case of Ixion, the male version and mythical antecedent of Saint Catherine’s legendary martyrdom.

The motifs for which Ixion and St Catherine are identified, essentially with the same mechanism of torture, are quite the opposite in the narrative of each of these characters. While the story of the former, representing men, stresses sexual incontinence, misery, and punishment, the story of St. Catherine stresses virginity, bliss, and salvation.

72 Exactly the same drawing is used by Swiss psychiatrist Carl Jung (1875-1961) explaining the anthropomorphised recurrence of the cross in so many cultures (Celebes, Indonesia; Opaina Indians, Northwestern Brazil, Accra, present Ghana, etc.) as an “endopsychic vision,” (i.e., internal, from within the mind) of human beings. It conveys “the essential quality of life’s energy as it appeared not only in him [i.e., “the primitive man,” the human being] but also in all its objects. … It [the cross] has always meant mana or lifepower” (Jung 155-59).
Figure 5: A) “Ixion.” Source: http://www.wilsonsalmanac.com/book/nov25.html Zeus condemned Ixion to rotate tied to a wheel in the underworld forever because of the latter’s lewdness and treachery (not that Zeus himself was any better, however.). Ixion attempted to sleep with Hera (or Juno for the Romans), Zeus’s wife, but conned by the goddess, Ixion had intercourse with a cloud that replicated her semblance. From this odd union the cloud gave birth to Centauros, father of the centaurs. As king of the Lapiths, a race from Thessaly, Ixion had also promised his father in law to give him some presents, and when he came to fetch them, Ixion pushed him into a pit of burning coals (Tresidder 254-55).

Figure 5 B) “Ixion.” Source: http://introspective.psychology.pagesperso-orange.fr/en/b-motivation.htm Cf. Coyolxauhqui. Although the stories of Coyolxauhqui and Ixion seem to have very little to do with one another, this image of Ixion presents striking parallels with the image of massive stone medallion of Coyolxauhqui from Mexico.

Not only women writers such as Sor Juana, but also Creole male poets and artists, rescue ancient and traditional symbolic meanings of the circle, older than the New World, and utilize them in order to represent a sense of identity in colonial Hispanic America. For example, the wheel of Saint Catherine is further transformed in surprising and unexpected ways by the Neo Granadine poet Francisco Álvarez de Velasco y Zorrilla (b. Santa Fe de Bogotá, 1647 - d. Madrid, 1703):
A SANTA CATALINA VIRGEN,
y Martir, por quien hizo Dios el milagro de que por conseguir sus padres succession, haziendo distintos Idolos, salió en el molde de uno la hechura de un Crusifixo: desposóse después con la Santa, dándola un anillo, y recibiendo otro della.

TO SAINT CATHERINE, VIRGIN,
and Martyr, for whom God made this miracle: because her parents needed a successor, a Crucifix was cast and came out of one of the molds of various idols. It [the son of God] married the Lady Saint later on, giving her a ring, and receiving another one from her.

SONETO
Tu sola, Catarina, has merecido
Ser de Christo la piedra, y porque hermosa
Con mas luz quede, entre el engaste briosa
El oro por su Imagen ha fundido.
Por esto, qual Pontifice, ha querido,
Para mostrar su estimación gloriosa,
A su Pontificial sirva de esposa,
De tu fuego el rubí siempre encendido.
Mas viendo sabio, que aun el brio empañado
Tiene de su valor, y que aun le queda
Mucho que descubrir con fiel cuidado.
Porque otro alguno a su valor no exceda,
y el de tu fino ardor quede avaluado,
Por pulirte mejor, te entró en la rueda. (235)

SONNET
You alone, Catherine, have deserved
To be of Christ the stone. To be precious,
Brighter, and uncorrupted by use,
He has cast a golden Image of his own.
Hence, as a Pontif, to show
His glorious esteem, he wants
The ever burning ruby of your fire
To serve as his Pontifical wife.
Yet, noting wisely that the zest of his courage
Is still tarnished, and that there’s still a lot
Left for him to disclose with faithful care
So that no one else exceeds his courage
And that[courage] of your fine ardor is [measured
He put you on the wheel to polish you better.

The poem seems to concentrate on the marriage of Catherine with Jesus Christ as if it were yet another torture, and not the blissful sacrifice of a willing union. In this sense, the sonnet totally transforms Vorágine’s tale of St. Catherine in the Golden Legend. To convey the union between Jesus and the saint, the poem semantically transforms the image of the wheel of torture that iconically identifies the saint’s martyrdom into a wedding ring wrought by Christ. But in the poem, the precious stone, a ruby, i.e., Saint Catherine, has been engrafted into the ring, “to polish” (i.e., purify) the stone (St. Catherine) better. According to Oscar Lucas, an experienced jewelry maker from Colombia, in order to round the rough stones from the mines they are placed into a circular container that spins around over and over again, imitating the effects of water on river rocks. The friction under which rough
precious stones go through, cleans them, makes them round, and shiny. Afterwards, stones are also acutely cut at various degrees and angles in order to gain their brilliance.

The introduction to the sonnet affirms that Catherine’s parents tried to find a successor for her by casting various idols, but, miraculously, God made one of their molds come out as a Crucifix. Therefore, the idol of the crucified Christ married the saint, and they exchanged rings. The preliminary summary is ambiguous. However, in the context of the poem, by marrying the crucifix, the saint married Christ. The crucifix, being a partial representation of God, the Trinity, was cast out of the same molds where idols were being made.73 Therefore, the poem also intimates the transformation brought to the world by Jesus and the Cross. In the sonnet, Christ appears as the one who casts an image of himself out of gold. The combination of gold and the ruby suggests that the stone has been engrafted on the metal as its support, in the form of a wedding ring, with which they are wed. (419). One major symbolic meaning of rubies is courage (Tresidder 419) which in the first tercet of the volta is exactly what Catherine, being compared to a precious but still rough stone, needs in order to be polished by or through the wisdom of Christ:

Mas viendo sabio, que aun el brio empañado Yet, noting wisely that the zest of his courage
Tiene de su valor, y que aun le queda 10 Is still tarnished, and that there’s still a lot
Mucho que descubrir con fiel cuidado. Left for him to disclose with faithful care

(Álvarez, 235) (Álvarez, 235, translation mine)

Line 11 talks of something Christ needs to disclose or discover carefully (i.e., Catherine’s brilliance) but what or about whom? If polishing a jewel in a spinning wheel necessarily removes particles from the surface, the process itself is a way to discover what is inside the stone. In the final analysis, for what reason or with what purpose does Christ in this poem send Catherine to the painful spinning wheel? Before answering this question, it must be noted that this is in and of itself a

transformation of the original story recorded in de Voragine, for Catherine is saved from that torture by an angel who demolishes the wheel. Also, in the original story, it is the Roman Emperor Maxentius, not Christ, the one who orders that Catherine be put through the wheel. The poem, therefore, is rephrasing the undated-year-old theological idea of purification through suffering and trials. That is the way God tests Catherine’s loyalty.74

**Sor Juana: Pyramidal Shadow, Luminous Pyramid, or Both?**

For Sor Juana, Egypt stands as the ancient hub of intellectual florescence.75 The way in which Sor Juana conceptualizes the symbol of the Egyptian pyramid in her carols to Saint Catherine can be better understood in what the nun says about this geometrical shape in her letter to Sor Filotea (Reponse) and in her *Primero Sueño* or *First, I Dream* (confessedly, the only poem that she wrote willingly).76 In carol VIII, Sor Juana identifies Saint Catherine of Alexandria as the greatest marvel of all, for she is the conjunction of all the marvels of the ancient world, including the Pyramids of Egypt. In turn, regarding the pyramid (along with the circle) as a pivotal geometrical shape for Sor Juana, she observes the following in her *Response to Sor Filotea*:

> “Occasionally as I walked along the far wall of one of our dormitories (which is a most capacious room) I observed that though the lines of the two sides were parallel and the ceiling perfectly level, in my sight they were distorted, the lines seeming to incline toward one another, the ceiling seeming lower in the distance than in proximity: from which I

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74 Conversation with Julia Cuervo Hewitt. Other examples of the same idea are represented in the stories of Jonas and the whale, or in Job’s endless series of trials, both in the Old Testament.

75 Paz affirms the following: “Sor Juana is yet another victim of one of the intellectual diseases of her age: Egyptomania. The obsession extended to the enlightenment and nineteenth-century romanticism” (translation Sayers, 175).

76 In her *Response*, Sor Juana tells the Bishop of Puebla (i.e., “Sor Filotea”: “Furthermore, I have never written of my own will, but under the pleas and injunctions of others; to such a degree that the only piece I remember having written for my own pleasure was a little trifle they called *El sueño*” (La Cruz, Poems, translation Sayers 65). “Demás, que yo nunca he escrito cosa alguna por mi voluntad, sino por ruegos y preceptos ajenos; de tal manera, que no me acuerdo haber escrito por mi gusto sino es un papelillo que llaman El Sueño” (Respuesta, La Cruz, 845).
inferred that visual lines run straight but not parallel, forming a pyramidal figure (Poems, La Cruz, translation Sayers, 41).  

The pyramid defines Sor Juana, or rather, Sor Juana primarily defines herself and her intellect first and foremost through this figure, which she takes from her readings of the German Jesuit priest Anastasio Kircher (b.1601-d.1680). Octavio Paz affirms that Kircher believed to have found in the Egyptian civilization, that of the hermetic tradition, the universal key to decipher all the enigmas of history. For instance, Kircher affirms that the Mexican pyramids were built following the example of the Egyptian ones. With mindboggling erudition, Kircher demonstrated in various books (highly praised and commented at his time) that Ancient Mexico owed its arts, religions, sciences, and philosophies to Ancient Egypt of the hermetic tradition. One of Kircher’s books, Oedipus Aegyptiacus, contains a chapter that parallels Egyptian and Mexican religions (225). Paz further affirms that “these pieces of news must have been read and accepted by Kircher’s readers from New Spain [such as Sor Juana] with great and understandable excitement” (225). Sor Juana describes the ascension of the soul to purely intellectual and spiritual pursuits as if the soul could remove itself from the body. With this, she follows and continues a long tradition and technique used by Dante, for instance, in his divine Comedy, or by Christian authors that followed the tradition of mysticism, such as Santa Teresa de Jesús, Fray Luis de León and san Juan de la Cruz, among others. In Sor Juana’s First I Dream, the pyramid is the structure in which the body reposes (indeed Egyptian pyramids are tombs) and the soul ascends, removing itself from the body. Thus, the soul and the mind get rid of assignations of sex, allowing women and men to seek intellectual growth freely, away from any type of gender limitations.

77 “Paseábame algunas veces en el testero de un dormitorio nuestro (que es una pieza muy capaz) y estaba observando que siendo las líneas de sus dos lados paralelas y su techo a nivel, la vista fingía que sus líneas se inclinaban una a otra y que su techo estaba más bajo en lo distante que en los próximo: de donde infería que las líneas visuales corren rectas, pero no paralelas, sino que van a formar una figura piramidal” (Respuesta, La Cruz, 838).

78 “Oedipus Aegyptiacus contiene un capítulo sobre el paralelismo entre la religión egipcia y la americana. Los lectores novohispanos de Kircher deben haber acogido estas noticias con inmensa y comprensible emoción” (Paz, 225).
Her poem *First, I Dream* generally is read as an allegorical auto-biographical journey of Sor Juana’s spirit abandoning the body which is left in a state of temporary torpidity. This flight, therefore, somehow reflects not only the height and scope of the nun’s spiritual aspirations, but also the initial difficulty to meet them. In the poem, she considers herself a shadow, but the very first word and attribute that defines it is the most representative and mightiest of Egypt’s geometrical shapes:

Piramidal, funesta, de la tierra  Pyramidal, doleful, mournful shadow
nacida sombra, al Cielo encaminaba born of the earth, the haughty culmination
de vanos obeliscos punta altiva, of vain obelisks thrust toward the Heavens,
escalar pretendiendo las Estrellas; attempting to ascend and touch the Stars.
(El sueño, 1-4, 183)   ("First I Dream," 1-4, La Cruz, translation Sayers, 183)

The following lines specifically explain in more detail what exactly the Pyramids mean, do, or represent for Sor Juana. The excerpt also corroborates her notion of the circle as the quintessential shape of totality and infinity:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{las Pirámides fueron materiales} & \\
\text{tipos solos, señales exteriores} & \\
\text{de las que, dimensiones interiores,} & \\
\text{especies son del alma intencionales:} & \\
\text{que como sube en piramidal punta} & \\
\text{al Cielo la ambiciosa llama ardiente} & \\
\text{su figura trasunta,} & \\
\text{así la mente humana} & \\
\text{y a la Causa Primera siempre aspira} & \\
\text{—céntrico punto donde recta tira} & \\
\text{la línea, si ya no circunferencia,} & \\
\text{que contiene, infinita, toda esencia—}& \\
\end{align*}
\]

\[\text{(400)}\]

The pyramids were but material symbols, whereon were shown the outward signs of inner dimensions in the image of the will, that is, the soul’s intentions, and that as the striving flame burns upward toward the Heavens, a blazing pyramid, so, too, the human mind mimics that model and climbs, eternally

\[\text{(400)}\]
toward the Prime Mover—the central point toward which all lines are drawn, if not infinite (410) circumference that contains all essence.

Sor Juana also refers to the Pyramids as “These, then, two artificial Mountains” (Poems, La Cruz, translation Sayers, line 412, 99). This type of oxymoronic expression fuses the natural world, assumingly God’s creation, with the artificial world created by humans. In First I Dream, previously, she had referred to the pyramids as vain ostentations of the necropolis of Memphis, main seat of the Ptolemaic Dynasty, with apparent disdain for the transient materiality of the pyramids (lines 340-45). The poem strongly suggests, then, that the utmost value of the pyramids for Sor Juana is the immaterial dimension that their shape projects upwards. The soul ascends from the shadows of a tomb (the pyramid itself) to the celestial circle that epitomizes, in and of itself, God’s timelessness and boundlessness, as the ultimate destination of the soul (see excerpts above and below):

Estos pues, Montes dos artificiales (412) These, the, two artificial Mountains
(bien maravillas, bien milagros sean), (marvelous, nearly miraculous)

… these, then, if set beside
si fueran comparados the sublime pyramid of the mind
a la mental pirámide elevada in which—knowing not how—the Soul had
donde—sin saber cómo—colocada perceived her dwelling, each of these would
el Alma se miró tan atrasados realize how far below
se hallaran, que cualquiera they stood and take her summit for a Sphere.
graduara su cima por Esfera

In this internal pyramid, the soul can find itself, and then ascend. Here, the soul reaches the top of the pyramid and experiences a wholesome epiphany. Thus, the top of the pyramid is depicted as the climatic spot where absolute cognizance and intellectual liberation (even from words themselves, mere bricks and outer appearances) take place.

Sor Juana’s use of the image of the pyramid, and the meanings she confers to it helps understand Sor Juana’s reference to Saint Catherine as a pyramid in her carol 319VIII. Nine different voices argue

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79 “Estos, pues, Montes dos artificiales” (Sueño, Cruz, line 412, 191).
here about which one is, among of the marvels of the world, the greatest of them all. The voices unanimously agree that Catherine of Alexandria is greater than all of the marvels the voices mentioned:

1. Pues el mundo ha celebrado las célebres Maravillas, yo no quiero referillas; sino inculcar con primor cuál de ellas fue la mayor.

Tod. —¡Ésta sí que es Maravilla que tal nombre mereció! ¡Esta sí, que las otras no!

The ninth voice conciliates all opinions given in the poem, concluding that Catarina embodies all of the marvels mentioned by the different poetic voices. Thus, Catherine is defined as a Pyramid that at once went to heaven: *Fue pirámide que al Cielo / fue de un vuelo* (C319VIII, 83-84, 293).

The pyramid, then, is an image that Sor Juana uses to define, symbolically, Saint Catherine’s intellect, and her spiritual projections and heights, and, by analogy her own. However, the pyramid is not the only image Sor Juana uses in her carols to Saint Catherine to convey spirituality and women’s intellect.

**St. Catherine as The Lighthouse of Alexandria:**

Sor Juana also uses the image of the legendary Lighthouse of Alexandria to speak of Saint Catherine:

8.—Diré yo, que fue el prodigio más raro aquella Torre de Faro que las naves conducía, y se vía (sic) desde su altura eminente tan patente todo el reino de Neptuno.

(Villancico 319VIII, 68-75, 293)
Octavio Paz reflects about the meaning of this lighthouse as a symbol of the relationship between the human imagination and reality, which is the same idea Sor Juana expounds, somewhat cryptically, in her description of the pyramids and in her description of other architectural constructions (such as the Lighthouse itself) in her *First, I Dream.*

Y del modo
que en tersa superficie, que de Faro
cristalino portento, asilo raro
fue, en distancia longuísimase vian
(sin que ésta le estorbase)
del reino casi de Neptuno todo
las que distantes lo surcaban naves
en su azogada luna

... 
así ella, sosegada, iba copiando
las imágenes todas de las cosas,
y el pincel invisible iba formando
de mentales, sin luz, siempre vistosas
colores, las figuras
no sólo ya de todas la criaturas
sublunares, mas aun también de aquellas
que intelectuales claras son Estrellas,
y en el modo posible
que concebirse puede lo invisible,
en si, mañosa, las representaba
y al alma las mostraba.
(see *Sueño*, Cruz, 266-73; 280-91, p.188)

And in the way
that on a glossy surface—that vitreous,
wondrous, mirror of Pharos signaling
safe harbor—ships, at farthest distances
(but not for that eclipsed)
breasting the waves of Neptune’s far-flung sphere
could be observed as clearly as if near,
every particular
in that quicksilvered *sic.* mirror,

... 
similarly, Fantasy, in repose,
her fictive brush, though immaterial,
composing images of all being,
painting in brilliant colors, even
without light, figures of
not only all the earthly creatures, but
also features of those stars we know
as concepts of the intellect, and,
as far as possible,
for the invisible to be conceived
in fancy, she limned them artfully, and
revealed them to the soul. (*Poems*, La Cruz, translation Sayers, 266-73; 280-91)

Paz explains that fantasy reproduced the material world as clearly as the mirror of the Lighthouse of Alexandria reflected the image of the vessels that sailed beyond the line of the horizon. Paz also relates the Arab origins of the myth that surrounds the construction of Alexandria’s lighthouse. It was built by Sostratus in the Pharos Island under the orders of Ptolemy Philadelphus. According to Paz, this legend resonated in the 16th and 17th centuries among mathematicians and physicists such as Descartes and Newton. The importance that notable historical men gave to the Lighthouse of Alexandria is the same that Sor Juana transferred to the female figure of Saint Catherine, thus her choice of the Lighthouse to represent Saint Catherine. In so doing, the nun constructs an image of women as eminent (spiritual) guides and sources of inspiration for people (i.e., metaphorically, sailors). In the excerpt above, however, most intriguing here is the extended function of fantasy that reproduced not only the physical world, but also the invisible entities of the universe. In this respect, Paz observes how, for Sor Juana, the fantastic—i.e., the middle ground between the spiritual and physically perceptible realms—neither is, nor does refer to, the unreal. On the contrary, for the Mexican nun fantasy was the only possible way to conceive the invisible (489-90). In her *Dream* (*Cruz, Sueño*, 188), Sor Juana compares the reputation of the Lighthouse of Alexandria with the ability of the imagination to represent and to show to the soul even the farthest things beyond the horizon. She grants this ability to women in the figure of Saint Catherine, and, by analogy to herself. Sor Juana also ascribes creative powers to women when she refers to the lighthouse (i.e., meaning St. Catherine) as the invisible and immaterial brush that has the ability to paint intangible concepts, and ideas, and imprint them in the human soul.
Philadelphus and Serapis:

In Carol IV of the Alexandrine series, Sor Juana explains the relevance of the king that ordered the construction of the Lighthouse:

Ya fuese vanidad, ya Providencia, Either out of vanity, or Providentially
el Filadelfo invicto, Tolomeo, Ptolomey, the invictus Philadelphus,
tradujo por Setenta y Dos varones Translated into the Greek language
la ley Sagrada en el idioma Griego. the sacred Law for Seventy Two men.
(Villancico 315IV 13-16, 289) (Carol 315IV 13-16, 289)

Ptolemy Philadelphus (reigned in Egypt from 285-246 B.C.E.) was the son of Ptolemy I, one of Alexander the Great’s commanders and bodyguards who became king of Egypt and started the Ptolemaic Dynasty. Philadelphus means “brother/sister loving” in virtue of his father’s political strategy to join his own son (Philadelphus) and his own daughter (Arsinoe II) in matrimony in order to maintain imperial power within the family. During his invasions and wars, Ptolemy the First renamed the city of Rabbahas Philadelphia (today’s Amman, capital of Jordan), after his son. Arsinoe II appears to be the first Ptolemaic queen to associate herself with the cult of Isis, also wife and sister of Osiris, king of the Egyptian underworld (369-73).

Sor Juana also seems to point out her awareness of the cultural clashes that took place primarily among local people, Greeks, Romans, and Christians in Egypt, and Ptolomy’s attempt to bridge the ideological clashes among these peoples with the invention of Serapis:

¿Qué mucho, si la Cruz, que por oprobio What else, but the Cross, opprobrium
tuvo Judea y el Romano Imperio, for Judea and the Roman Empire,
entre sus jeroglíficos Egipto, did Egypt, among its hieroglyphs
de su Serapis adoró en el pecho? of its Serapis adored in its bosom?
(Villancico 315IV 33-36, 289) (Carol 315IV 33-36, 289)24

80 After Alexander the Great’s demise, the vast territories he conquered were divided by his most prominent (or sycophantic) generals: Ptolemy took charge of Egypt. Seleucus controlled Syria, Iran, bactria, and Northern India. Antigonus and his son Demetrius took control of Macedonia and Greece (Bleitz, 367).
81 How much.
82 If the Cross
As a syncretistic god, Serapis mixes attributes of Zeus (god of gods), Asclepius (god of healing), Hades (god of the underworld), and even the Virgin Mary, as Serapis crushes Cerberus (the three-headed dog of Hades) with his feet, just the same way the Virgin Mary iconically steps on the devil (Beitzel, 373). Through the use of this syncretic figure, Sor Juana joins at least two traditions, that of ancient Egypt and that of Christianity, portraying herself (de la Cruz) in the Alexandrine poem, at the center of that intersection (at the Cross), as someone despised by some of her persecutors for being as versed in the matters of the Romans as in her own Christian beliefs.

*Sor Juana’s Femina Suite*83

Another notable characteristic of Sor Juana’s carols to Saint Catherine as a discourse that deliberately attempts to vindicate women’s prominent position in history is the representation of her vast knowledge of remarkable female characters, pagans, and Judeo-Christians. She mentions them as exempla of courage, wisdom, and many other virtues, including intellect. In Carol I, she mentions Abigail, Esther, Rachel, and Susana; then she continues with Deborah, Jael, Judith, and Rebecca, and ends up with Ruth, Betsabe, Thamar and Sarah. Then in Carol III Sor Juana sets Cleopatra as example of the dignity of womanhood. Like Dido in Virgil’s *Aeneid*, or like Dido in Alonso de Ercilla’s version of this female character in *La Araucana*, Sor Juana’s Cleopatra chooses to die with dignity before falling as a slave under the wishes of Julius Ceasar:

Porque no triunfase Augusto
De su beldad soberana,
Se mata Cleopatra, y precia
Más que su vida la fama;
Que muerte más prolija
Es ser esclava
So that Augustus wouldn’t conquer
Her sovereign beauty
Cleopatra kills herself, and values
Fame more tan her own life;
For to be a slave
Is a greater death.

83 With this subtitle I honor the memory of the prolific Colombian novelist R.H. Moreno-Durán (b.1945-d.2005) who wrote a trilogy titled Femina Suite (1997), composed by “Checkers,” (1977) or “Juego de Damas;” “Diana’s Blow” (1981) or “El toque de Diana” and Finale capriccioso con Madonna (1983). In this trilogy Moreno Durán reflects some of the anxieties, frustrations, dreams, and thwarted expectations that Colombian women experience in 20th century Colombia. In essence, many a time such conditions and states are not any better from those expressed by Sor Juana.
The presence of women is so prominent in her carols to the Alexandrine Rose, as well as in other works, that to remember basic facts of who these women were, and what they did, seems compulsory for readers in order to decipher the referential world that hovered around Sor Juana’s writing. In her letter to Sor Filotea (i.e., the Bishop of Puebla), Sor Juana illumines her readers about these and a whole constellation of other women, as bright and magnetic as herself. In her Response, Sor Juana explains how even in the most domestic of chores such as cooking, she turned a kitchen into a chemistry lab by observing how different elements and components reacted when mixed in one particular way or another (838).

As if women were also ingredients to observe in the greater concoction of God’s creation, she recalls that Abigail was endowed with the gift of prophesy; Esther with persuasion; Deborah enacted military and political laws, and ruled over several illustrious men (Response, de la Cruz, 839). Deborah was a judge and also a prophetess. She guided Barak and successfully led the war against Sisera, the commander of Jabin, a Canaanite ruler who oppressed the Israelites for twenty years in the city of Hazor. Jael, in turn, another of the women that inhabit Sor Juana’s referential world, handed Sisera to Barak after driving a tent peg with a hammer into the oppressor’s brain through one of his temples (Judges 4). Clearly, against the traditional vision of these women as cruel and vindictive viragos, Sor Juana mentions Jael and Deborah as exempla of women’s leadership and decisive role against male oppression.

Rebecca is important as a matriarch because she is the only woman in the Old Testament who is addressed by God directly. Married to Isaac, in her old age she gives birth to opposite twins: Esau and Jacob. Isaac favors Esau as his heir, but Rebecca pulls strings behind the scenes to make sure that things occur otherwise, favoring Jacob. She is deemed to be a political visionary who pre-arranges, successfully, the destiny of the family of Abraham according to her criteria, not to the wishes of the patriarchal order she lived in (Blitzel 112). In fact, it is her vision and guidance that becomes the
agency of Providence and gives shape to the history of the Hebrew nation, and, consequently, Christianity.

Sarah, Abraham’s wife, is so attractive that upon their arrival to Egypt as though they were brother and sister, she is brought to the attention of the Pharaoh and he takes her as his wife. People wonder if she may even bear his children instead of Abraham’s. (108). She stands as an example not only of dazzling beauty, but also of witty independence regarding her own sexual decisions and conduct. In view of the rumors, she tells her husband to go ahead and sleep with her Egyptian slave Hagar who bears Ishmael. Over the years, Sarah miraculously gives birth to Isaac, but not without previous skepticism: When Sarah had stopped having her monthly periods, … Sarah laughed to herself and said: ‘Now that I am old and worn out, can I still enjoy sex? And besides, my husband is old too’” (Genesis 18: 11, 12).

Rachel’s story speaks of substitute matrimony with Jacob, Rebecca’s son, who ends up marrying Rachel sister’s first. Rachel’s story parallels somehow the story of Sarah and Abraham, and it is related also with Rebecca’s. All these women shine for their attractiveness and beauty; they all experience difficulties conceiving children with their husbands, and give birth in their old age. As in Sarah’s case, Rachel also encourages her husband to have children with her maid servant and turns equally jealous of her (Genesis 29-30).

In her Response, Sor Juana also highlights Rahab’s piety. Rahab is identified as a prostitute who gives shelter to Joshua’s spies in Jericho. According to the Babylonian laws of Hammurabi, c. 2000 years B.C.E., inns were supposed to be kept and owned by harlots who were expected to hand in conspirators before the king if these women ever heard of plots against him in their lodges, where conspirators would normally seek refuge. Instead, Rahab hid in her lodge Joshua’s spies from inspectors sent by the ruler of Jericho. She also advised Joshua’s people to flee to the hills to avoid capture, became their informant, and, against all odds, professed her alliance to Joshua. Her discourse is taken as a proclamation of faith. See Joshua 2:1-22 (Beitzel 170-71).
Sor Juana further remarks of Ana’s perseverance. She was “a very old prophetess, a widow ….
She had been married for only seven years and was now eighty-four years old. She never left the
Temple; day and night she worshiped God, fasting and praying. … [S]he … gave thanks to God and
spoke about the child [Jesus] to all who were waiting for God to set Jerusalem free” (Luke 2: 36-38).
Here, Anna also stands as the speaker, the announcer of good news of liberation to people, or more
particularly women, like Sor Juana herself, who feel shackled and constrained.

Her vast list of references to mythical goddesses and laic historical women continues to fill the
pages of her writings. In Carol VIII she refers to the grand architectural vision of Semiramis,
highlighting the resistant solidity of the legendary hanging gardens of Babylon:

2—Puesto que he de empezar yo,
[a contar de las maravillas del mundo] [referring the Wonders of the world],
de los muros que labró
Semíramis contaré, that Semiramis built
y diré and I should say
que eran tan maravillosos that they were so marvelous
y espaciosos, and spacious
que encima carros andaban; that chariots ran on top of them;
y sembraban and dwellers
en ellos, sus moradores, planted on those walls
los mejores the best
jardines que nunca habrá gardens that will ever be.
(Villancico 319VIII, 17-27, 292)(Carol 319VIII, 17-27, 292)

Semiramis, in addition, like the Ishtar goddess to whom Sor Juana tacitly alluded as the morning
star in Carol IX, is often represented in warfare attire. She became the supreme ruler of Nineveh after
she ordered to kill its founder, Ninus. He had taken her away from her former husband, Menones, and
turned her into his own wife. Menones hung himself as a result of Ninus’ effrontery. Half dressed and
with her loose hair she travelled all throughout Assyria building great monuments, and fought against a
revolt in Babylon. All her strength and heroism was suddenly discontinued when she was assassinated by her own son (Tresidder 431-32).84

Describing the portraits of Sor Juana, that Miranda and Cabrera painted between 1680 and 1690, Octavio Paz perspicaciously defines the nun both as a poet virgin and as a warrior virgin in virtue of the medallion that armors her chest as through with a shield (357). This keen observation can tie “the morning star,” the Alexandrine Rose, Ishtar, and Semiramis to Sor Juana as alter-egos or mirror representations of her self, as a warrior virgin of warfare, no longer in the classical world, but in New Spain.

**Fernán González de Eslava:**

Saint Catherine of Alexandria seems to vent the anxieties not only of defiant women, but also of men who get in trouble with the church. More than a hundred years earlier than Sor Juana publicized her discontent with her society’s andro-centrism through her carols to the Alexandrine Rose, Fernán Gonzales de Eslava (b.1534-d.c.1602), better known as a playwright than as a poet, wrote in New Spain a Romance also dedicated to Saint Catherine (see Annex). The entire Romance is literally a lyrical paraphrasis of the account of the saint in *The Golden Legend*. As such, it falls way behind the conceptual complexity and knowledge that Sor Juana later on deploys. However, exploring which episodes of the European legend resonate with particular emphasis in Eslava’s romance, it seems that he is thematically concerned especially about the dynamics of power relations between Maxentius and Saint Catherine. They resembled, somehow, his own conflicts with authoritative figures in New Spain.

84 This legendary figure has impressed the male imagination so much all throughout the ages, that she is also referred to in Ovid’s *Metamorphoses* in both the stories of Pyramus and Thisbe, where she turns into a dove (Book 4) (Slavitt 65) and Perseus and Andromeda, where she is referred to as the great Queen, forbearer of Polydegon, defeated by Perseus (Book 5) (88); in the 16th Idyll by Theocritus (3rd century B.C.E.), generally known as the Greek founder of ancient bucolic poetry (Mills, 64); in the second circle of hell, 5th canto, of Dante’s Divine Comedy although here she is not mentioned with her proper name, but is simply referred to as her husband’s assassin who changed the laws of ancient Assyria to make her lusty drives legal (Raffel, 28); in Golden Age Spanish plays such as Calderón de la Barca’s *La hija del aire* (The Daughter of the Air) and Cristobal de Virués’ *La gran Semiramis* (*the Great Semiramis*); in Italian composer Giacomo Rossini’s two-act Opera *Semiramide*; in Degas’ *Semiramide*-*Constructing Babylon* (47) and so forth.
Some facts about his life show how González de Eslava’s relationship with the church, as a man, was similar to that of Sor Juana, years later, in the sense that both of them opted for following a religious life, on the one hand, while, one the other, resisting precepts and dogmas of the church.

Most probably from Toledo, Eslava immigrated to New Spain in 1558 when he was just 25 years old. He studied in the seminary and was ordained a priest in 1574. He also kept in contact with various religious orders and with civil and ecclesiastical authorities. Nonetheless, not always did Eslava maintain the best relations with the clergy in the New World. As a matter of fact, documents from the Archives of Indies in Seville and from the Nation’s General Archives in Mexico show that he was incarcerated because of one of his plays. In addition, someone named Juan Batista Corvera was sent to the Inquisition for having recited publicly one of Eslava’s work. It was written as a versified polemic about the Law of Moses, and some of its propositions were considered heretical (Frenk 13, 15).

Furthermore, Eslava is identified most likely as a convert. This means that he may have relinquished his Judaic faith. His priesthood is a public manifestation of his apparent adherence to Christianity. The investment of his religious attires is only apparent because part of his work “accuses God for having been unjust with the Jewish people, to whom He denied salvation and punished with exile and persecution” (Frenk 29). The following lines selected by Frenk from a debate written by Eslava reveal his position:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Dispersos por tierra ajena,} & \quad \text{Scattered in foreign land} \\
\text{Y el mundo y Dios los condena} & \quad \text{and the world and God condemn them} \\
\text{Por malos y pecadores} & \quad \text{as evil and sinful people} \\
(138-40, 28)
\end{align*}
\]

85 “Eslava ha acusado a Dios de haber sido injusto con el pueblo judío al negarle la salvación y castigarlo con el exilio y la persecución” (Frenk 29).

86 This polyphonic debate followed the structural pattern of question and answer that was common in 15th century’s Spanish doctrinal poetry. It was derived from scholastic arguments that took place in the Middle Ages. Eslava’s debate is composed in double quintets or old “décimas” (ten-line stanzas). It is divided in five sections: 1) a question posited by the author. 2) Response to it. 3) Reply to the answer. 4) The response to the reply and conclusion, and 5) as a post script, an answer to the first question by a third party. (see Frenk 26-27).
Castigara los defectos
Dios de los más ynearfectos,
y a los que no le ofendían
dexáralos, pues vivían
contentos con sus preceptos
(lines 156-60, 28-29).

The critic Ángel Rama believes that in two colloquia (XI and VII) about biblical matters, the latter particularly about the prophet Jonas, Eslava depicts a vivid portrait of the Mexican people (aboriginals and mestizos) in terms of analogy with the Jews, since both peoples sought to be redeemed (Frenk 31). Rama observes that if Eslava was indeed a convert Jew when he was clearly active at the service of the church, “the principle of transition from one culture to another, from one state to another, from one Law to another constituted the center of his vital and spiritual experience” (cited in Frenk, 31, translation mine). What this data shows of Eslava’s life, places him, even though he was born in Spain, as a colonial subject “in-between” two worlds of conflicting and, at the same time, complementary forces (i.e., Spain and New Spain, Judaism and Christianity, secular and clerical life, young and old age, etc.).

This is precisely Saint Catherine’s ontological condition. Under the Roman emperor Maxentius, she, too, is a colonial subject living in a state of transition. Taking into account that Christianity is not a native belief to Egypt, she also adopts and defends a foreign creed, which ultimately overshadows the secular knowledge she has learned under the auspices of his father, king Costus. Although she resists marital union with Maxentius, she moves from maidenhood to become the full wife of Christ. She moves from inborn wealth to willing poverty, refusing to accept the riches that Maxentius offers. Ultimately, she transits from life to death, from temporary suffering to eternal bliss and glory.

87 “fue un religioso al servicio de la Iglesia secular…. Si además fue un judío converso, el principio del tránsito de un pueblo a otro, de un estado a otro, de una Ley a otra, constituía el centro de su experiencia vital y espiritual” (Rama, cited by Frenk, 31).
Popular ballads in Colombia, Passed On from the Spanish Collection of Romances (*Romancero*)

Saint Catherine became so popular in Hispanic América that she became part of the popular culture, still today represented in nursery rhymes from the Spanish collection of popular ballads sung in Colombia. In the 1970s, Gisella Beutler gathered a colossal number of popular ballads from the oral traditions of distant and really different regions of Colombia such as Cúcuta (Norte de Santander), San Agustín (Huila), Ibagué (Tolima) and Santa fe de Antioquia (Antioquia). The lyrics account for the level of violence that many children in Colombia are exposed to and interact with uncannily as part of their mental schemata in their upbringing:

- Either you stop, stop praying
- Or I kill you!

---

In San Agustín (Huila), the song is less faithful to the original European version than the one excerpted above. It specifies (and intensifies) the number of times young Catherine is shot dead with a more modern weapon than a traditional spade:

- Taking out the pistol
- He [the father] shot her three times to death.

Like in the previous ballad, the one from Ibagué (Tolima) changes the executioner from the original king (Maxentius) to Catherine’s own father!

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**Notes:**

- *Popular ballads in Colombia, Passed On from the Spanish Collection of Romances* (*Romancero*)
- Gisella Beutler
- Oral traditions from various regions of Colombia
- Level of violence in children's upbringing
- Changes in execution methods

The last word of the onomatopoeia in Spanish simultaneously stands for a common sing-song associated with children’s happiness on the one hand, and for the sound of deadly gun-shots on the other. Yet, in Santa Fe de Antioquia, the tale of Saint Catherine’s martyrdom seems to have been already internalized so well in what children sing when they play, that the saint’s death, as in the anonymous painting from circa late 17th-early 18th century (see figure 2), unexpectedly subverts the traditional story, and she becomes the killer of her oppressor:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Santa Catalina,</th>
<th>Saint Catherine</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cabello de oro,</td>
<td>Golden hair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mató sus padres,</td>
<td>Killed her parents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>porque eran moro (sic);</td>
<td>Because they were moor[s]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>y Santa Catalina</td>
<td>and Saint Catherine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>murió de espanto</td>
<td>died of fear</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cuando la disciplina</td>
<td>when the discipline</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>del Viernes Santo</td>
<td>of Holy Friday [was enforced]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The lines above contain racial and cultural overtones (e.g., killing Moors) and a taboo act of civil disobedience and transgression (e.g., a patricide and matricide). She therefore, dies of her doings out of fear as punishment. In addition, the song contrasts the whiteness and accepted religiousness of the Lady with the Moorish, non-white, and infidel characterization of her parents (which would not explain, however, why she would be blond in the first place save if Moor refers only to “the gentiles”—i.e., non-Christians). Furthermore, these ballads reflect the overwhelming dominance of religion over the behaviors, actions, and life decisions of “good girls” like Saint Catherine.

Finally, another ballad from Antioquia, Colombia, seems to rewrite partially the myth of Apolo and Daphne: “Dear Little Catherine was seated under a laurel bush, with her feet on the freshness of the pastures, looking at the waters of the river run away” (565-66, translation mine).

88 “Estaba Catalinita sentada bajo un laurel, con los pies en las frescuras, viendo a las aguas correr” (Beutler 565-66). From Ovid’s Apolo and Dafne in the Metamorphoses: “[N]ow at the end of her strength, and pale with terror and seeing the banks of the stream … she felt in her limbs a weight and numbness, … Her soft skin began to crust and turn into bark, he hair burst into bud and leaf, and her arms ramified to branches” Slavitt 14-15).
The pictorial and literary examples that this chapter has shown confirm the notable appeal and influence that the figure of Saint Catherine had both among the Creole intelligentsia (e.g., Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz, Fernán González de Eslava, Francisco Álvarez de Velasco y Zorrilla) and folk people in Colonial Hispanic America. Her figure was used in the New World both by men and women in a successful attempt to position in the limelight the intellectual pitch of subaltern identities. Similarly, as the ensuing chapter will show, the image of the Virgin Mary also went through several transformations in colonial Hispanic America. Her image in the New World often times reaffirms other world-views and ways of living that vindicate the existence of the ugly, “the deformed” and the “sinful,” defying traditional precepts of the Catholic Church using, however, its prescriptive and approved codes of expression.
Figure 6: “The Virgin of El Topo.” Circa early 17th century. Anonymous. Bogotá’s Prime Cathedral, Colombia.
In Medieval Europe, images of the Virgin Mary adopted multiple avatars, depending on the place, village, event or simply the projection of circumstances associated with her apparitions. Thus, there were several representations of the same Virgin (all of them different) in Spain when the first conquerors and colonizers arrived to the New World. Some of those images, in some cases of dark skin like the Virgin of Illescas and the Virgin of Monserrat, made their way to different territories of the New World with their faithful devotees to be transformed again into other avatars that projected the new realities of new and different peoples and circumstances. In time, some of the transformations suffered by the image of the Virgin were done with specific agendas of conversion to Christianity or to represent a particular Creole world-view different from Europe. This chapter explores such transformations and adaptations in two of two different manifestations of the Virgin Mary through which Creole painters and poets projected new social codes in new and different contexts of social and political negotiations.

**The Virgin of el Topo (Virgin of the Brooch)**

The image above (Figure 6) is the most important and famous pictorial representation of the Virgin of el Topo in the New Kingdom of Granada, present day Colombia. The year of its composition is uncertain, but it was renovated in 1610 (Perdomo, figure V). The cleric Perdomo Escobar reports that Our Lady of el Topo was venerated in the rural chapel of the doctrine or ecclesiastical jurisdiction of Pauna, in the Andean region of Muzo (437). However, Monseñor Juan Miguel Huertas, *Mayordomo de Fábrica* of Bogotá’s Cathedral, attests that, in 1616, when travelling through Muzo, the conquistador García Varela saw the painting of this virgin, and he saw emanating from it bright beams of light in the church of the village of el Topo. The conquistador reported his extraordinary vision to

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89 A doctrine or Doctrina was a territory under ecclesiastical jurisdiction where indigenous peoples were systematically indoctrinated into the Christian faith.

90 Since Amerindian times up to the present, the Andean region of Muzo, Colombia, has been well known as the site of the richest emerald mines in the world.
the local religious indoctrinator in Pauna and to the ecclesiastical authorities in Santa Fe, capital of the Kingdom of Granada (present day Bogotá). The painting was finally sent to the Prime Cathedral in a solemn procession, despite the resistance of the people of Muzo (Huertas, 131). Today, this anonymous painting is highly venerated and it is found behind the main altar of the easternmost chapel of Bogotá’s cathedral.

In virtue of their resemblance, two versions of “La pietá,” by Luis de Morales, from Badajoz, Extremadura, Spain, c. 1520-1556, serve as the models and sources of inspiration for the composition of The Virgin of el Topo:

![Image of La Pietá](image)

**Figure 7 A and B** “La Pietá.” Luis de Morales (Badajoz, Extremadura, c. 1520-1586).

The differences between the European and the Granadine versions are self-evident. The Virgin of el Topo no only differs, but also seems to intimate the intention to differ from its models in order to
portray an independent New World artistic composition. Furthermore, the Granadine painting seems to offer peculiar characteristics that underline its Hispanic American origins and identity.

In this regard, the art historian Constanza Toquica, Director of Santa Clara’s and Colonial Museums (Claustro Museo de Santa Clara y Museo Colonial) in Bogotá, citing Vittoria Borsó, highlights the uniqueness and independent production of baroque art in Hispanic America, despite its referential resemblance to European models—particularly the Spanish baroque—as a mode of an ‘ambivalent social discourse that accompanies the birth of emancipation.’ Borsó writes:

The subversive influence of baroque rhetoric can be observed behind the old imitative brightness of the Spanish baroque. Despite the adaptation of hegemonic colonial systems, such rhetoric, due to its density, offers possibilities to develop an ambivalent social discourse that accompanies the birth of emancipation. This proposal—in vogue in current scholarly work—inverts the classic and Eurocentric thesis that saw the Hispanic American Baroque as an inferior copy (for example, Menéndez y Pelayo) and just a “pearl lost in the pigsty of culteranist poetics” of Hispanic America. (Borsó, cited in Toquica, 11 the translation is mine)91

Luis de Morales’ Pieta (Figure 7A) displays an intense and intimate interaction between mother and son. Mary sustains with firm grip the limp and lifeless body of Jesus. Dead, he has surrendered all of its vital strength to the mother who holds him desperately. The exposure of the entire body, both of Mary and of Jesus, is suppressed or at least dimmed in the anonymous Neo Granadine painting, following, instead, the much sober version of Morales’ Pietá (see Figure 7B, right above).

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91 “Detrás de la Antigua irradiación imitadora del barroco español, se puede observar, por tanto, el impacto subversivo de la retórica barroca, que, a pesar de la adaptación de sistemas coloniales hegemónicos, ofrece, por su densidad, espacios para el desarrollo de un discurso ambivalente, que acompaña el nacimiento de la emancipación. Este planteamiento, dominante en los estudios actuales, invierte la tesis clásica, eurocentrista, que veía en el barroco de Indias una copia inferior (pro ejemplo Menéndez Pelayo) y sólo una ‘perla caída en el muladar de la poética culterana’ de Hispanoamérica.” Vittoria Borsó, Citado por Constanza Toquica en El Oficio del pintor: nuevas miradas a la obra de Gregorio Vásquez. Bogotá: La mirada oblicua, 2008. 11. Print.
The most important distinction between Morales’ European Pietà and the Virgin of el Topo is the addendum of incrusted jewelry in the Neo-Granadine composition. The jewelry emphasizes new semantic elements different from de Morales’ painting. One of the main transformations undertaken in the Neo Granadine version of de Morales Pietà lies in the purpose or function for which each artwork was composed. While the Morales’ Pietà remains a painting to be hung, the Virgin of el Topo is part of a 17th century altar (227 x 112 x 82cm) made out of intricately carved silver. A brooch, a dagger, and two crowns, all made of precious metals and gems, turn the anonymous oil on canvas into a tridimensional composition of mixed art media.92

The crowns placed by the anonymous New World artist on the heads of Mary and of Jesus are especially significant when analyzed together with other elements of the composition such as the different materials employed in its creation. The artist, with the crown of the virgin, seems to convey the richness and overabundance of the “New World”93 since Gold, pearls, emeralds and other precious materials, as those used in this composition, were considered chimerical in the colonial period (Cabarcas 166).94 Such richness, however, also conveyed other meanings associated with the New World, and especially Andean cultures. Gold was closely associated with the Sun in European

92 (i.e., a composition that utilizes various materials of composition, not just oil on canvas).

93 In Bestiario del Nuevo Reino de Granada, la imaginación animalística medieval y la descripción literaria de la naturaleza americana, Hernando Cabarcas Antequera documents accounts of chroniclers such as Gonzalo Fernández de Oviedo, fray Alonso Zamora, fray Fernando Rodríguez Tena, and father José de Acosta, among others, relating the over abundance of gold, precious stones, and pearls in Hispanic America, particularly in the New Kingdom of Granada. (see 166-77). However, 17th-century New Granada witnessed a substantial drop of wealth and production based on the extraction of mineral resources (see Colmenares 343-359).

94 Chimerical not in the sense that precious stones did not represent a concrete reality, but in the sense that such stones, so abundant in the New World, were part of the chimerical worlds that Europeans imagined as places to travel to and discover. The European imaginary was strongly influenced by Medieval ideals of chivalry. Hernando Cabarcas Antequera reports that “sailors from Seville and Huelva had heard about the kingdom of Guzurut, where … there were diamonds that competed in size with the goose eggs. Los navegantes de Sevilla y Huelva habían escuchado hablar del reino de Guzurut, donde crecía el milagroso ruibarbo, y había diamantes que competían en tamaño con los uevos de ganzo” (Amadis, 83, translation mine).
tradições as well as in indigenous Andean beliefs.\textsuperscript{95} Both, the sun and gold, were believed to generate elation in the human spirit (167). This visual representation of joy, through the overwhelming presence of gold, starkly contrasts with the tearful and frowning angst that exudes from Mary’s visage. Such contrast reinforces the rhetorical paradoxes that epitomized the baroque period. In contrast to the painting, José de Cascante, the composer of a carol devoted to this virgin, depicts the same contrast or simultaneous juxtaposition between sorrow and joy:

\begin{center}
\textbf{En María hallo penas} \\
y en ella gozos; \\
quereis ver de que suerte, \\
pues no sé cómo
\end{center}

\begin{center}
\textbf{In Mary I find both} \\
Sorrows and joys. \\
Do you want to see of what sort? \\
I don’t know [how to show you].
\end{center}

\begin{center}
\textbf{Que decir que quien ama} \\
pena gozoso, \\
quereis ver de que suerte, \\
pues no sé cómo. (Perdomo 437, lines 18-25)
\end{center}

\begin{center}
\textbf{To say that whoever loves} \\
suffers joyfully, \\
Do you want to see of what sort? \\
I don’t know [how to show you].
\end{center}

Lines 18-19 and 22-23 of the carol above and the Neo Granadine painting respectively illustrate, literary and pictorial baroque images that synthesize the reconciliation of opposites in the image of the Virgin of el Topo. If at one side of the spectrum gold is bliss, it is also true that gold in 17th century Hispanic American compositions—notwithstanding authorial intentions—also may have evoked at the time quite the opposite idea: extreme suffering; i.e., the suffering of those who had to extract precious metals under slavery or impoverished living conditions. In this sense, the crown of the Virgin of el Topo could also recall with special emphasis the paradoxes of the period, the wealth and, at the same time, the grim aspect of social reality in colonial Hispanic America.\textsuperscript{96}

\textsuperscript{95} Deeply influenced by the medieval imagination, the relation between the sun and gold for some Europeans was analogous to the relation between plants and the sun. Gold was considered, therefore, to behave as though it had a vegetative life (e.g., like roots, gold was found and spread itself deep inside the earth, and it was believed to grow thanks to the influence of the sun and other celestial bodies) (Cabarcas, \textit{Bestiario}, 167).

\textsuperscript{96} About slavery and gold extraction in the New Kingdom of Granada, see \textit{Historia económica y social de Colombia 1537-1719} by the eminent Colombian historian Germán Colmenares (299-359).
Emeralds, in turn, also carried a special meaning in colonial Hispanic America. Under the strong influence of the Spanish archbishop (St.) Isidore of Seville (c. 560 – 636), eminent author of the encyclopedic *Etymologies*, emeralds were thought to have the most peaceful color. The argument was built, once again, associating precious stones with the vegetable world. It was said that if plants, being perishable, were able to cheer up the human spirit with their freshness and color, emeralds, much more so, would (being imperishable, more attractive, and valued for their beauty) make the soul sparkle with joy (Cabarcas 173). José de Acosta (1540-1600) in “Natural and Moral History of the Indies” (*Historia natural y moral de las indias*) and Fray Pedro Simón O.F.M. (b.1574 - d.1628) in “Historical News of the Conquest of The New Kingdom of Granada” (*Noticias historiales sobre la conquista del Nuevo Reino de Granada*), confirm the belief that emeralds were born in stones as white crystals that gradually turned green, like leaves of trees do, under the effect of the heat and the light of the sun (Cabarcas, 173).

Emeralds were also given premonitory virtues. It was believed that in great quantities (as in the crown of the Virgin of el Topo), emeralds could reflect inside them the images of all things of the world outside, like a mirror or a magic crystal. It was also said that Nero, after his excesses, used to enjoy looking at the fights of gladiators in a big emerald (Cabarcas, 173).

Among some of the virtues associated with emeralds it was further believed that emeralds could make whoever wore them wealthier; that they dissipated storms, improved memory, and granted loquacity. Besides, emeralds prevented concupiscence. It was believed that if someone had sexual intercourse wearing an emerald, the stone would break into pieces. The emeralds from the New World were used as part of the components of medical recipes and prescriptions for kings and princes to ameliorate carnal passions and also to prevent epilepsy (174).

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97 A similar belief had been recorded in the episode of Fitón’s Cave in an early Hispanic American account, *La Araucana* (1569), canto XXIII (328-29), by Alonso de Ercilla (b.1533 - d.1594).
Furthermore, the number of emeralds in the crown of the Virgin of el Topo (as in many other religious artifacts such as monstrances)\textsuperscript{98} corroborates the over abundance of this precious stone in the New World. This abundance is confirmed in early chronicles of the conquest and colonization of New Granada. For example, Gaspar de Morales (who sailed with Francisco Pizarro the South Sea—or Pacific Ocean—through the region of Darien) relates that two boxes full of emeralds, each box weighing at least 100 pounds, were shipped in the fleet that brought José de Acosta back to Spain in 1587. Emeralds were so abundant in New Granada, that it is said they could be found even inside the crop\textsuperscript{99} of domestic birds (173).

As cultural reverberations of these traditions, many of these beliefs about emeralds were somehow preserved through the image of the Virgin of el Topo. For example, the last three lines of an anonymous carol from Bogotá’s Cathedral (titled \textit{Válgate Dios por Imagen} “May God Save/Deem Thee as an Image”) regards this Virgin as a protector of the weather:

\begin{quote}
Válgate Dios ymagen del Topo  May God save/deem thee, image of the Brooch,
de los climas, de las lluvias  of the weather, of the rains,
ya las quitas (Perdomo 592, lines 17-19)  thou stop them now (translation mine).
\end{quote}

The cleric Perdomo Escobar documents two novenaries to the Virgin of el Topo, ordered in 1729 and 1730 in Santa Fe to ask her for water and for sun during times of extreme draught and rain, respectively (592-93).

Regarding the role of the Virgin as a model of desirable behavior according to the morally idealized standards of the church, women in the New World were thought of as sexually incontinent and dissolute by some members of the prelate. Fray Juan de Santa Gertrudis (b.1724-d.1799), for example, warns readers that in his descriptions of Nature in Hispanic America, he is forced to omit the

\textsuperscript{98} A monstrance is a religious artifact, usually made of silver or gold and highly decorated with precious stones, used to keep and show publicly the host (or bread that represents the body of Christ in the Catholic tradition). It is exposed for public veneration in processions and in some solemn religious celebrations. It is called “Custodia” in Spanish.

\textsuperscript{99} i.e., buche, in Spanish.
free reign, comfort, and little prudishness of people blundered in a mire of obscenities, regardless of their state or age. For him, the cause of this “vice” and “perdition” is the milk full of libertine malice that people from the Western Indies suck from mothers who don’t ever get married by the church. They happen to be more than three fourths of the population (9). This scathing generalization is likely to be influenced by antecedents of misogyny in Medieval Spanish literature such as *El Corbacho* (1438), by Alfonso Martinez de Toledo, Arcipreste de Talavera (b.c.1398 - d.1470). As explained above, the Virgin of el Topo then, crowned with emeralds, would represent chastity, based on the attributes given to this stone. The image also would become a paradigm of “sexual propriety;” an agent of social and behavioral control particularly for women. These virtues and properties noted by the addition of emeralds to the Virgin of el Topo would translate into a message addressed to Neo Granadine society to note the over-abundance of nature in the New World. Yet, people’s sexual drives in the New World are similarly burgeoning, according to some Spanish missionaries. The over charge of precious stones in the composition of the Virgin of el Topo over emphasizes the need to indoctrinate natives and creoles in the New World into social codes of sexual conduct that didn’t belong to them originally.

Emeralds associated with the Virgin Mary in other parts of Colonial Latin America explicitly signify hope, as the following excerpt of a poem by José Suri Águila (1696-1762), dedicated to the Holiest Conception, a doctor from Villa Clara, Cuba, attests:

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100 “Aquí se hace preciso omitir el desahogo y poco recato con que vive la gente encenegada en torpezas y obscenidades sin reserva de estado ni edad; porque si el señor San Francisco Javier escribió de la India Oriental que la mayor parte de aquella gente se condenaba por este vicio, en la India Occidental es tan común y va tan sin freno, que por lo común esta es la causa de la perdición de aquel nuevo mundo. Y la causa radical me parece que es, porque de las cuatro partes de las mujeres no llegan a casarse la una parte. Las que viven sin casarse procrean hijos e hijas, y como estas criaturitas desde niños maman la leche del escándalo que ven sin freno en su madre, por esto les entra la malicia, y temprano la usan” (Santa Gertrudis, 9).

101 In effect, from the times of the Conquest, for instance, Fray Pedro Simón reports in his writings, titled *Historical News of the Conquests of Terra Firme and the Western Indies*, that chiefs or *caciques* had all his women, which were in number the ones they wanted to have, and the rest the ones that they could afford, although one was the very principal one to whom the others obeyed: “Tenían todas sus mujeres, que eran en número las que querían tener y los demás las que podían sustentar; si bien una era la más principal a quien obedecían las demás” (545). Ver, Fray Pedro Simón. *Noticias historiales de las conquistas de tierra firme en las Indias Occidentales*. Tomo I. Cuarta Noticia. Cap. XXVI. Bogotá: Biblioteca Banco Popular, 1981.
Here, at the most literal level, the emerald is the mark or rubric that guarantees the transforming power of hope. However, the phrasing of the poem also suggests that hope is the object that the Virgin Mary, the un-withering or everlasting being, transforms even if the poem does not specify into what. The meaning emeralds still had in the 1700s becomes an important element in order to grasp what they might have signified for the artist at the moment of the composition, beyond their decorative purpose, when associated to pictorial and poetic images of the Virgin Mary.

Another conspicuous different element in the New World composition of the Virgin of el Topo is the overwhelming number of pearls around her, as well as the history they convey in the context of colonial Hispanic America. Pearls were considered to be worth more, and of greater spiritual value, than any precious stone, including emeralds and diamonds. In religious symbolism, pearls represented Christ, for it was a spotless mirror that announced the joys of the chosen ones the day of the Resurrection (Cabarcas 172). Not gratuitously, then, the crucifix that protrudes on top of the crown of the virgin contains seven pearls, individually marked with the name of a particular saint. I’ve been able to identify only three of them: Saint Francis, Saint Ignatius, and Saint Sebastian. Number seven, a number of great religious importance, is symbolically related to pearls, in the representation of this Virgin in the Andes who is, in turn, is also a version of the Virgin of the Seven sorrows, as it will be explained in this chapter.

The number of pearls in the crown of the Virgin of el Topo is associated with stories about the abundance and portentous size of pearls in the New World. According to El Inca Garcilaso, in his *La
Florida, the Spaniards who travelled with Hernando de Soto in the coasts of Florida were able to distribute among them more than 25,000 pounds of pearls as big as chickpeas. According to Garcilaso, there were so many pearls, that one of the soldiers in the expedition, Juan Terrón, scattered them in the fields to avoid carrying so much weight (hence, the popular refrain in the Spanish world, “No son perlas para Juan Terrón”; i.e., “it’s like throwing pearls in a pigsty”) (176-77).

The physical over abundance of pearls with which the Virgin of el Topo is crowned, symbolically representing Christ as the announcer of the jubilee elicited by his Resurrection, serves as contrast to the sorrow of the virgin, represented by the dagger. Hence, the virgin of the seven sorrows is normally represented with seven daggers pierced in her heart (Perdomo 458), as a way of expressing intense (also symbolically seven) sorrows. However, in this anonymous carol from Bogotá’s cathedral, “Oh, what a merry day!” (¡O qué alegre este día!), also dedicated “to Our Lady of el Topo,” the play between sorrow and joy (already illustrated above in an excerpt from a carol by José de Cascante), makes explicit references to the seven sorrows of the virgin.\textsuperscript{102} The seven sorrows of the virgin are usually represented by seven daggers stabbed into her heart. The Virgin el Topo only has one dagger that appears to pierce Mary’s heart as a symbol of her agony. Here, however, both mother and son seem to be part of the same body. Furthermore, here, the Virgin of el Topo can be deemed as a synthesis or condensed Hispanic American composition of the Virgin of the seven sorrows:

\begin{center}
\begin{tabular}{ll}
\textbf{De sus Dolores la Gloria} & \textbf{The glory of her sorrows} \\
\textbf{oy tanto se multiplica,} & \textbf{is so multiplied today} \\
\textbf{que el dolor es como siete} & \textbf{that sorrow is like seven} \\
\textbf{y la gloria es infinita.} (Perdomo 457-58 lines 32-35) & \textbf{and her glory is infinite} \\
\end{tabular}
\end{center}

Needless to say, the sixth, of the seven sorrows, i.e., which is the moment when Mary receives the body of Jesus in her arms, is the ‘sorrow’ the anonymous painting of the Virgin of el Topo represents. Yet, the painting and the carols devoted to the virgin make it clear that her sorrows are glorious and her glory is due to her sorrow. This is the type of synthesis of contradictions common in the 17th century, that the contemporary Colombian novelist Philip Potdevin, articulates through the narrative voice of a fictitious baroque and Creole artist, in his neo-baroque novel *Metatrón* (1995):

> I know not of any other epoch that had reconciled tradition with rebellion, austerity with excess, love of truth with worship of the occult; madness with sanity, superstition and devotion, sensuality and mysticism, divine power with earthly tyranny. I love conflict and I can only live with it. Within me, I find contradiction and conflict, polarized tensions that tear me apart [only] to put my scattered pieces together in my harmonic stillness.  

The turbulence of the epoch reflects my bewildered heart, or it could be just the opposite. It does not matter: we prosper in paradox; absurdity and coherence are a fertile ground to create great works: [...] we succumb in confusion, but we triumph in antitheses (36, translation mine).  

In addition to the elements examined above, and in order to establish further differences in the representation of the Hispanic American Virgin in New Granada and its Spanish counterpart, i.e., the two versions of La Pietá, by Luis de Morales, the brooch is the element of the anonymous composition of el Topo that is most closely related to the name given to the virgin in the New World. In Chibcha,

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103 The original says, literally, still harmony.

104 lit., “the antithesis.”

105 “No sé de otra época que haya logrado conciliar tradición con rebelión, austeridad con derroche, amor a la verdad con culto al encubrimiento; locura y cordura, superstición y devoción, sensualidad y misticismo, poder divino y tiranía terrestre. Amo el conflicto y sólo sé vivir en él. Dentro de mí encuentro contradicción y conflicto, fuerzas polares que me destrozan para recomponerme en mi inmóvil armonía. La turbulencia de la época es reflejo de mi corazón consternado, o bien puede ser lo contrario. No importa: prosperamos en la paradoja, el absurdo y la incoherencia son tierra fértil para crear grandes obras; [...] sucumbimos en la confusión pero triunfamos en la antítesis” (37). Potdevin, Philip. Metatrón. Bogotá: Colcultura, Tercer Mundo Editores, 1995.
i.e., the language of the indigenous group that inhabited the region where the painting was made, “topo” means needle or pin. This Chibcha word has survived up to this date in the Spanish language in some parts of Hispanic America. It is the name given to certain jewels such as earrings and brooches (Perdomo 437). Thus, it is the brooch in the painting, which pierces Mary’s heart, making her one and the same with Jesus’s own suffering. The association here between the jewel and the dagger is the sign or the code that suggests that Jesus’ skin has been perforated with the stained dagger of the Virgin. This is another substantial difference between de Morales’ compositions and the Neo-Granadine Virgin of el Topo. In the Spanish artist’s painting, the bodies of Jesus and Mary are clearly distinct and delineated, while the representation of the Virgin in the Hispanic American painting suggests that the bodies of Jesus and Mary converge into one and the same body.

As sacred as it is in its social context, the representation of the Virgin of el Topo in New Granada also suggests the notion, common during the Baroque period, of a hermaphrodite and bi-cephalous monstrosity associated with the Virgin and Christ. Such monstrosity or deformation from the normal is conveyed here by the fact that the body of Mary seems to emerge from (in)side Jesus’ body as if Jesus, the Son, were also the body of the mother. Such ambiguity suggests that possibility that it is the son’s body which seems to be giving birth to the Virgin, the Mother, who seems to emerge from Jesus’s open skin (however disguised as the veil of Mary), creating not the image of two separate beings, but a dual and integrated entity.

The notion of Jesus as mother is not new in the aesthetics of the period. However, in this painting it is suggested furthermore by the fact that Mary’s veil blends in with Jesus’ skin. The visible inner side of the veil shows a series of V angles starting at the point in which the veil intersects with Jesus’ skin. To show the blurring of the lines between the veil and the skin, the inner side of the veil is painted with the same tones as Jesus’ flesh. The veil then seems to be an extension of Jesus’

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106 In fact, it can be traced back to the high middle ages (c. 12th century) especially in the tradition of Benedictine abbeys. See Walker Bynum, Caroline. *Jesus as Mother. Studies in the Spirituality of the High Middle Ages.*
epidermis: cut wide open so that the body of the Virgin Mary can protrude out of, or appear to be the same as, her son’s body. By blurring the lines between flesh and veil, Jesus and Mary appear to be one bicephalous being (not two separate identities).  

The New Granadine representation of a two-headed, mother and son, entity suggests that the image of the Virgin of el Topo falls into the category of the monstrous. Monsters in art and in literature have epitomized the esthetics of the deformed, the abnormal, what is a prodigy. Furthermore, since the Renaissance the figure of the monster has been associated with allegorical meanings the artist or writers try to convey, often in relationship to the artistic creation and its creator. They are often associated to the grotesque, and to deviations from the norm. For this reason, they are a prodigy in the sense that the monster is something worth showing, and admiring. They are highly shocking and, at the same time, attractive. However, the figure of the monster, or the monstrous, is also subversive as it shows not what something is or is supposed to be, but quite the contrary, the monster disfigures preconceived paradigms and breaks expectations. Monsters disclose the hidden, the suppressed, and the obscure realm of the normal. Monsters are the counterpart reflections of all things (the antipodes in terms of Cicero). Monsters remind everything in nature of its potential and latent ability to transmute into something or someone else, and shed light on those other surprising, tender, and benevolent dimensions of derelicts or outcasts. For Saint Augustine, For example, monsters were still children of God and part of his divine creation. As Rogelio Miraña puts it in an epigram, “monsters are just angels read upside down” (9).  

Although there is no written record to assert that the Virgin of el Topo was seen as a form of monstrosity by its Hispanic devotees in the New Kingdom of Granada, the association between the sacred and the monster can be traced back to the Middle Ages, to the philosophical groundings of

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107 Although this image also evokes androgyny, I will refer to this topic in more detail and how it is reflected in literature and painting in the chapter devoted to Saint Joseph.

108 “los monstruos son apenas ángeles leídos al revés…”
monstrosities associated with the divinity, and to the social intentions to represent such association and other attributes in the Spanish Golden Age period. This chapter aims to explore those philosophical groundings and the tradition of the monster as antecedents for the New World artist to represent the Virgin of el Topo in such a way, as a monster: i.e., a prodigy, as something or someone quite worth seeing, someone or something worth showing (monstrare in Latin). What is that which wants to be shown through the Virgin of el Topo as a monstrosity? According to Miñana, the monster that fascinates the baroque is not only deformed an ugly, but a sign that exposes the uncertainties of the world, the moral relativity that humankind faces along its way” (14). 109

In Deformed Discourse. The Function of the Monster in Medieval Thought and Literature, Professor David Williams clearly explains how in the Middle Ages monstrosities served as a mean to approach ontological problems such as the human ability or inability to define God and to find the spiritual substance of humankind (3). This approach was primarily based on and influenced by the so-called negative theology proposed by the fifth century Greek philosopher and “Doctor of the Church” (Saint) Pseudo Dionysius the Aeropagite. According to this system of thought, human logic, whose main medium of expression is rational discourse, utterly fails to provide an accurate and wholesome definition of God. In effect, God, being beyond and above human nature, transcends all human knowledge and finite means to express it, particularly through logical discourse (5). In The Divine Names, the Aeropagite himself says this in various ways over and over again:

We must not dare to resort to words or conceptions concerning that hidden divinity which transcends being … Nor can any words come up to the inexpressible Good, …, this supra-existent Being. Since the unknowing of what is beyond being is something above and beyond speech, mind, or being itself, one should ascribe to it an understanding beyond being. (49-50)

109 “el monstruo que fascina a escritores barrocos como Gracián, Cervantes, Lope de Vega y Calderón no es solamente un ser perverso y feo; es un signo que expone las incertidumbres del mundo, la relatividad moral que el hombre enfrenta a cada paso” (Miñana 14).
Then, if the attempt to define the Divinity through words is inadequate, what does the Aeropagite propose in order not to fall into a circular argument through his very statements and words? Pseudo-Dionysius resorts to the negation of all positive affirmations of God. The more one deviates from the attempt to get closer to a definition of the divine, and the less words, in and of themselves, resemble that purported image of God that is fallaciously anthropomorphized, the more one approaches the negative way to convey not that which is, but that which is not. This method is devoid of the laws of the rational and logical discourse in Aristotle’s metaphysics that defines being on the basis of “either or,” of no contradiction, with no in-between or middle ground (48). As Williams explains, “for Aristotle and his Medieval followers, being must be able to take either the predicate X or not-X and may never take both at the same time” (49). The Aristotelian thinking is also opposite to the negative theology of the Aeropagite which allows to define something by its negation. For instance, in order to define a figure that should normally inspire confidence, wisdom, and stability —such as the Virgin Mary or Jesus— a poem such as the Neo Granadine one devoted to the Virgin of el Topo conveys ideas of uncertainty (e.g., “I don’t know,” “no sé”), short sightedness (as opposed to wisdom; e.g., “or I am a mole,” “o soy un topo”), and instability (the use of the conjunction “or”).

To highlight the contraposition between the Aristotelian posture and the philosophy of the Aeropagite, it may be useful to understand the Hispanic American poetry and painting devoted to el Topo (the pin, the brooch, or the mole, or the geographical location), as an avatar of the Virgin Mary that resists the Aristotelian encasement of being; that is to say, the Virgin can be conceived of as one thing and as another at the same time. This is contrary to the ontological dilemma posed by Aristotle in the idea quoted by Williams (referred to above) according to which something can either be or not be, but not, ‘be X and not be X’ at the same time). The ontological changes that words convey in the poem of the Virgin of el Topo reflect, instead, a hybrid and dynamic state ‘in-between’ that can embrace opposites into the same being. Consider, for instance, the opening lines and first stanza of the carol from Bogota’s Cathedral, No sé si topo (1670), by José de Cascante:
From the outset, as the Aeropagite’s negative theology does, the carol presents the impossibility to define Being. The composer begins his poetical composition precisely with a negation. “No,” or “I don’t,” in a sense, marks a tone of ontological denial throughout the poem. But then, “no sé” “I don’t know” shifts the semantic direction of the text from a carol of negation to a song of uncertainty; i.e., whether or not one can grasp the veritable meaning of things. On the other hand, while the poem expresses these uncertainties, it affirms that the speaker indeed has found Mary (or, rather, that Mary has found him) even without knowing how exactly this encounter took place. Thus the poem swings between opposite ideas. The poetic voice does not know if it has found the joy (dicha) it is looking for, and yet, it has found it. It is uncertain of finding Mary, and yet it is certain of having found her (Today, through words and deeds, I [found] Mary / oy de manos a voca, di con María 8-9). The poetic voice expresses the obscurity under which a mole lives and yet it also experiences the enlightenment produced by its encounter with Mary (lines 18-19). That uncertainty is reiterated by the word “if” in: “No sé si topo…,” i.e., whether the speaker has found the joy he is looking for, or whether he is a mole, but, since he found

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110 Vive Cristo can mean “Christ, live!” or “Live, Christ!” as an imperative clause. It can also mean Christ lives, as an indicative clause. In context, it can also mean that the poetic voice finds joy. A sign that Christ lives is that the speaker found Mary. This is a sign of Christ’s power. In other words, the poetic voice conveys this idea: because of Christ, I found Mary).

111 Meaning she found me.
Mary, that proves that he is not a mole who cannot see--i.e., understand. Still, the ontological state of the speaker is not yet definitely defined (he does not know if he is a mole). Therefore, unlike Aristotelian metaphysics, meanings, states, and beings in this poem can be and not be. Furthermore, through this paradoxical fusion, they can be(come) something else altogether.

In its more literal meaning, “No sé si topo” signifies “I don’t know if I find”. “Topo” here, in a play of words, is the first person conjugation of the verb topar(se). But in line 4, still under that tone of negation, uncertainty, and instability established in the very first line, words express an ontological crisis, wondering, literally, if the speaker is a mole because he may not see, like moles, what he is looking for. Nevertheless, at the same time, the poem also suggests quite the opposite: that notwithstanding his or her inability or limitations to see, like a mole, the speaker still finds his or her salvation. Faith, per definition, is the ability to see, feel, and hear inwardly what it cannot be seen, felt, or heard through the senses that open our perception to the external world. Therefore, this poem is presenting at least two simultaneously opposed situations: First, the poem gives credit to the earthly condition of living in spiritual obscurity, like a mole, because of lack of faith. The poem does speak of uncertainties and spiritual angst. The speaker projects a negative and deformed view of himself, as if he possibly were a mole (o soy un topo). On the other hand, the poetic voice also speaks not as a blind-ish mole any longer, but as someone who has been found and saved by Mary and Jesus. Therefore, the speaker is enlightened beyond his own volition. This transformation of faith from darkness to light is beyond the speaker’s will or capability to understand how this change of his spiritual state has occurred. It is a grace, a gift that grants comfort, bliss, confidence, and salvation.

Although the poetic voice at first recognizes his inability to see in the Virgin of el Topo the light, appeasement, and bliss that this Virgin Mary normally epitomizes and is supposed to reflect with all her regalia of precious stones and metals excavated from under the earth (the mole’s natural habitat), it is she the one who finds him. She is the light that saves the speaker from living, like a mole, in the darkness of a faithless spiritual state. In her mercy lies her Glory and Might. In synthesis, this poem, in the final
analysis, is a testimony of spiritual transformation, and a faithful recognition of the ineffable (queréis ver de que suerte, pues no se cómo, line 20-21, 24-25).

Thus, by re-cognizing the ineffable through faith—not through the intellect—, and by asserting the impossibility to express the nature of the feelings (e.g., grief, joy) that the Divine (the Virgin Mary) stirs in the human soul (En ella hallo penas y en ella gozos; / Queréis ver de qué suerte, pues no sé cómo), the poem displays a strong philosophical foundation in the tradition of the Dionysian negative theology by the Areopagite, and in the Medieval notion that love and self-denial were the ways of reaching ultimate intelligibility of the Divine. In this regard, David Williams explains: “Religion as discourse is directed […] toward the realm of the ineffable, and thus it enjoins more than the human cognitive faculties. […] [L]ove is ultimately a way of knowing, built up from logical structures but superior to all discursive modes of knowledge” (69). Williams recalls a mystical text known as Cloud of Unknowing to explain the Medieval relationship between cognition and love more clearly:

“He [God, the Divine] cannot be comprehended by our intellect or any man’s—or any angel’s for that matter. For both we and they are created beings. But only to our intellect is he incomprehensible: not to our love. All rational beings, angels and men, possess two faculties, the power of knowing and the power of loving. To the first, to the intellect, God who made them is forever unknowable, but to the second, to love, he is completely knowable” (69-70).

As I pointed out previously, in the poem to the Virgin of el Topo, it is Love that saves the speaker from obscurity or blindness (metaphorically represented by a mole). It is Love that which enlightens the speaker into the knowledge of the source whence that Love springs forth.

All the attributes that this interpretation of the poem has given to the Virgin have been traditionally assigned to Jesus himself: being the light, being the one who saves, being the one who finds the one spiritually lost in obscurity, and being the one who suffers. In this sense, in both, in the painting and in this poem, Mary is portrayed as a Christ figure, as one and the same with him (Christ lives, Vive Christo, line 6). He lives in her and she lives in Him. Christ lives because, thanks to Him and the Virgin, the
speaker has been able to see the light within himself despite his own shortcomings, his faithless state, his human life in obscurity. In addition, this poem illustrates the blind faith that many people from the Cundi-Boyacá region of Los Andes had toward this Virgin. Its appeal derives from the inevitable attraction that deformities exert over the human psyche forcing people to examine a monster closely with utter curiosity, fear, and awe.

Such deformed discourse in the literary and pictorial images of the Virgin of el Topo in New Granada intimates the aesthetic purpose of the monster: To dazzle and to shake viewers or readers, not for its own sake, but in order to destabilize and question logo-centric discourse and assumptions; to offer a different view from the mental preconceptions that society systematically builds, instills, reproduces, and reaffirms, assisted by instruments of dominant culture (i.e., school, [sacred] books, paintings, etc.). Such deformation in the poem and the painting seem to suggest a subversion of sorts in the New World artists that differs from the traditional religious discourse in Spain. Deformation, or monstrosity, here also seems to follow the characteristics of the monster in pictorial and literary representations with which the readers and the spectators were familiar. As the text of the carol by José de Cascante attests, and Rogelio Miñana points out in his analysis of early modern Spanish discourse —particularly Gracián and Cervantes—, the identity of the monster is not fixed because the monster is an image with which the artist and painter transgresses the threshold of the established order. The transformations that take place in the painting and in the carol by Cascante (from faithless obscurity and sorrow to faithful light and joy), for example, generate alternative discourses, parallel or aside from the religious stories that stand for the official versions of the establishment.

Monstrosity in fiction and art always represents a threat to power in absolutist societies for it is an image highly appealing to the masses (26). Miraña reiterates that monstrosities “destabilize meanings and identities as they open gaps in monolithic societies by questioning their biological, social, and religious laws” (27). Furthermore, the monster “is a sign that deploys the uncertainties of the world, the
moral relativity that human beings face in life all the time” (14).112 This is what the New Granadine painting and Cascante’s carol to the Virgin of el Topo seem to suggest beyond the religious paradigms they are supposed to convey. In other words, they convey an accepted religious discourse and, together with that discourse, in a different order of reading, they also convey another deformed discourse, one that is codified, and that requires interpretation: a discourse that transgresses the boundaries between what can be said and what cannot be said, but is conveyed through complex symbols and codes. This is so because the monster and the monstrous are closely associated to the New World, conceived in the European imaginary as a monstrous space full of monsters.113

Bicephalia as Cultural Antecedent for the Creation of The Virgin of el Topo as MONSTER:

The figure of the monster, or bicephalia, intimated in the New Granadine painting of the Virgin of el Topo recalls the categories of the monstrous that since classical antiquity and the Middle Ages traveled with the European imagination to the New World. Nature in this New Land, seemingly deformed, different from how things were known to be, was perceived by the first chroniclers as marvelous, exuberant, prodigious, gigantic, minute, excessive, heinous: different from the normal, or simply monstrous. Therefore, the bicephalic representation in the New World of the Virgin of el Topo is by no means a novel representation in the European imagination or in the daily realities of the

112 “el monstruo […] es un signo que expone las incertidumbres del mundo, la relavitidad moral que el hombre enfrenta a cada paso” (Miraña 14).

113 Literature that shows how the New World was conceived of as a monstrous space full of monsters abounds: to refer to just one example, Fray Pedro Simón (Tomo V, Primera Noticia, Capítulo VIII) narrates the following: Those [Indians] of the coast of Tolu […] that today is the city of Cartagena, said that they came from a man called Mechión and a woman called Maneca. She only had one tit, but it produced the milk of two [breasts]. She gave it with more strength and abundance to her children. This is why they were so corageous. They also know by tradition, or through news, or because they discovered bones of greater size than normal, that there were giants in all that province. These people were three bodies larger than regular men. Their strength, the amount of food they ate, and even their evil habits were equally excessive: “Los de la costa de Tolú de la boca de la ensenada de Acla hasta los calamares, que hoy es la ciudad de Cartagena, decían que su origen había sido de un hombre llamado Mechión, y de una mujer llamada Maneca, y que ésta tenía sólo una teta, donde se recogía la leche de ambas y la daba con más fuerza y abundancia a sus hijos, razón bastante por donde salían tan valientes. También tienen por tradición, o por saberlo por noticias o por haber descubierto huesos de más de marca, que hubo gigantes en toda aquella provincia, gente que tenía tres cuerpos de los hombres ordinarios, y con el mismo exceso eran sus fuerzas y comidas y aun sus ruines costumbres” (51).
conquered lands. Furthermore, Bicephalism was closely linked to hermaphroditism, as the case of the Neo Granadine painting of the Virgin of el Topo can be read. David Williams asserts that “the monster with the double head potentially expresses several ideas based in a duality that carries with it a sense of opposition and contrariety” (128). As part of the cultural antecedents of bicephalic representations, Williams recalls that Adam was depicted in the Babylonial Talmud (3:11,41) as a duality with two heads according to Hebrew legend. This type of bicephalism, forms part of the Biblical tradition, and is symbolically associated also with the creation of Eve. It “suggests that in the original Adam both male and female natures coexist, and his two heads figuratively stand for his hermaphroditism” (129). From such tradition, it is easy to understand the conceivable duality of the Mother/Son figure as one female-male Divinity, in Mary and Jesus, portrayed by the New Granadine artist.

According to the Biblical story of Genesis, it was from a man that humanity first saw its own offspring as Eve emerged from the body, a rib, of Adam. The painter of the Virgin of el Topo seems to follow this biblical antecedent: One reading of the painting may suggest that the Virgin of el Topo is born out of her son Jesus, the spiritual mother or origin of life (Salvation). The Virgin’s birth, and her own divinity that results from it, are only possible through the death of her son, Jesus. Thus, she emerges from Jesus’ flank, in a new Genesis, as a symbol of duality and as an inversion from the genesis that also inverts the loss of paradise into the restoration of life as spiritual salvation. For this inverted dual birth to take place, Jesus’ skin had to be opened, in a wound/birth canal, that allowed Mary to emerge in her divinity and glory, from the wounded body of her son, savior of humanity. Her emergence or birth does not separate her from him, however. On the contrary, it reunites her with her son as one being. In the painting, the Virgin’s silhouette gives the impression of being enveloped in her son’s own skin, suggesting that Jesus is the mother and the mother, Mary, an extension of her son. By means of such duality, the artist reiterates the prodigy/monstrous, hermaphrodite nature of the divinity and the glory of salvation through death and sorrow. The complex paradoxical meanings intimated in this painting recalls the duality of Andean culture and history and the paradoxes inscribed in the
processes of creating signs of identity in this region ruled by Spain, but no longer Spanish. Such
cultural dualities are associated in colonial society with the instability of gender and power, as well as
race and ethnicity and power, exemplified in the Virgin as the Divine figure that somehow replaces the
 crucified Son in the sense that she lives because of his death, but he continues to live in her. Thus, in
the final analysis, the painting of the Virgin of el Topo intimates the unity of oppositions which
universally represents the image of the gods of storms. Not surprisingly, as Monseñor Perdomo
already indicated above, the Virgin of el Topo pragmatically served to activate or stop the rainy or the
dry agricultural seasons.

The eminent scholar of world religions, Mircea Eliade, claims the androgyny of the divine, citing
“the important declaration of Jesus, as reported in Apocryphal texts, that each of us will know God
‘when […] you make male and female into a single one, so that the male shall not be male and the
female (shall not) be female, then you shall enter (the kingdom)’ (cited in Williams 171). David
Williams further highlights Eliade’s point:

[A]ndrogyne signifies, not the existence of two sexes in one being, but rather the
transcendence of the oppositions and metaphysical limitations that maleness and
femaleness signify.” In the monster tradition the hermaphrodite is not sexual, but an
ontological phenomenon. (170).

Just as there are two genders in one sole body, as the painting of the Virgin of el Topo intimates,
there are several representations of bi-cephalism that serve as graphic antecedents of this New
Granadine male-female Virgin to attest that the notion of two heads emerging from one sole body was
neither novel, nor strange for Europeans and other world cultures.

For example, a classic image of bicephalism is Janus, associated with Chronos, god of time.
Heading in opposite directions, Janus’ double face represents youth and old age, past and future,
coming and going, opening and closing, war and peace. In Janus, these polarities were not considered

114 Conversation with Julia Cuervo Hewitt.
as opposite, nor as separate entities, but as parts of the same overarching notion of time. (130-31).

Williams reports that even God has been represented as a bicephalic being despite the notion of the trinity (although God has also been widely represented as a tricephalic image):

Two heads, one bearded and white-haired, the other youthful and clean shaven, are attached to a winged body in a fourteenth-century Italian manuscript illustrating Creation. In this representation, as in others, the bicephalic figure is completed by the addition of wings, the symbol of the Holy Ghost, to create an iconography of the Trinity (131).

In turn in the sixth age of the world (out of seven) of the German *Chronicle of the World* by Hartmann Schedel (1440-1514), a physician and humanist from Nuremberg, the following images appear:

![Figure 8. A) Folio CLI recto: there is no text about this image in the chronicle. B) CLXXXII verso: “Monster in Vasconia (Monstrum in Vasconia).” Source: Schedel, Hartmann. *Chronicle of the World, 1493. The Complete and Annotated Nuremberg Chronicle*. Cologne: Taschen, 2001. Of figure 8B, the Nuremberg Chronicle of the World states that “In Vasconia appeared a miraculous creature, with two heads, the body divided from the navel up. It also had

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115 “[Vasconia, the country of the Vascones, in the northeastern part of Hispania Terraconensis, between the Iberus and the Pyrenees, and stretching as far as the north coast in the present Navarre and Guipuscoa. Their name is preserved in the modern one of the Basques, although the people do not call themselves by that appellation, but Euscaldunac, their country Euscalaria, and their language Euscaria. They went into battle bareheaded, and passed among the Romans for skillful soothsayers. Their principal town is Pompeio (Pamplona).]” Source: http://digicoll.library.wisc.edu/cgi/t/text/text-idx?c=nur;cc=nur;view=toe;idno=nur.001.0004 Folio CLXVIII recto.
two chests; and when one head ate, the other slept.” (Schedel, Schmauch et al. Folio CLXXXII verso). Although there is no direct reference to the bicephalic child in figure 8A in the Chronicle, it is clear from the text that accompanies the representation that figures with abnormal or excessive number of extensions or body parts were ominous. The representation of these bicephalic figures was associated with extraordinary behaviors of Nature. Schedel’s Chronicle reads in the Sixth Age of the World:

> Various wonders and frightful things occurred in Greece at this time, presaging the misdeeds of Mohammed (Mahometi); for in a certain year a fiery comet was seen at Constantinople; and a child with four feet was born. And in the island of Delos were seen two sea-wonders in human form. And so many things of a like nature appeared in various regions and places. (Folio CLI recto)

Here the conduct of nature is attached to the religious fidelity of people to their religious principles. In the excerpt above, Mohamed, clearly a non-Christian name likely associated with Islam, unravels a series of extraordinary phenomena of Nature due to his undesirable behavior (for a Christian chronicle of the world). In the excerpt, monsters are clearly a reminder of expectedly good (religious) conduct to avoid the wrath and calamities of nature.

Presented as a monstrosity, the Virgin of el Topo in Hispanic America, likewise, stood as a type of warning and reminder not to become an infidel, or else she, being an advocate of the weather, could unleash inauspicious calamities in nature (such as floods or draughts, as her intercession to cease them has already been documented in poetry above).

The Virgin of el Topo as a bicephalous figure, however, finds antecedents not only in the European beliefs and representations pointed out above, but also in ancient Indo-American artistic constructions from the Andes. As these indigenous cultures are interpreted in present day research, they associated two-headed figurines with the extraordinary power of their gods. For instance, the two-headed Valdivian female ceramic statuette below is said to possibly
represent fertility, duality, or mythological transformation (Jones, 201). The Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History by the Metropolitan

Figure 9. “Statuette from Valdivia” (Today’s southern coastal Ecuador). C.3200 B.C.E.

The Museum of Art in New York highlights that this type of figurines “often possessed both feminine and masculine attributes, such as the breasts of a woman and the genitals of a man” although their exact purpose still remains unknown (Department, Web). Based on these interpretations, the anonymous 17th-century Virgin of el Topo contains many of the same dualities that the Valdivian figurines suggest to modern art critics and anthropologists. Hélène Bernier,116 for instance, says of ancient Andean art that “subtly or clearly expressed […], opposite doubles and mirror images reflect the ancient heritage of symbolic dualism in the ideologies, world visions, and social structures of Andean people” (Bernier, Dualism Web.). Among some of those opposite doubles, the Neo-Granadine two-headed figure of the Virgin of el Topo fuses, likewise, not only male and female in one sole body, but also life and death with a living Mary and a dead Jesus; further, the painting represents another

duality that used to operate ideologically in ancient Andean cultures: night and the moon represented by silver, and day or the sun represented by gold (Bernier, Web.). Thus, indeed, the Virgin of el Topo perpetuates and reinforces ancient Andean beliefs, becoming an icon of indigenous identity manifested or re-presented through European religious lore. In other words, the Andean composition of the Virgin of el Topo consolidated in a harmonious expression the beliefs of the indigenous people in the Andes or non-Christian beliefs and Christian faith.117

A similar transformation in the fusion of non-Christian and Christian beliefs that epitomizes the emblem of Mexican and Pan-American identity is also found in the figure of the Virgin of Guadalupe in Mexico:

117 This is the case of many other manifestations of the Virgin Mary in the New World, transformed from European models to fill the new realities and desires of New World Creole society. Such is the history of the Virgen de la Caridad de Illescas, the dark skin Virgin transformed in Cuba in the Virgin of the Charity of El Cobre (Virgen de la caridad del Cobre). Even though this is not a Virgin from New Granada or New Spain, it is a good example of the transformations that took place in the New World and as a representative of the longing for national unity within Cuba’s cultural plurality.
The Virgin of Guadalupe: Preserving Aztec Beliefs Through Christian Iconography


Juan Villegas’ painting of the Virgin of Guadalupe (n.d.) (Figure 10A) represents in all four corners of the larger painting, miniatures of different moments of the apparition of the Virgin (García Saiz, 44). Even though it is a miniature frame in the bottom left corner (the right from the viewer’s point of view), this seeming less important representation is the one that highlights the instability of gender roles and identities pertaining the Virgin of Guadalupe, and the man, the messenger, on whose body the Virgin is represented: Tradition tells that the man was chosen by her, the Indian Juan Diego, to whom the Virgin appears. In this miniature representation of the apparition, the divine image belongs indistinguishably to the female virgin, but it is the male messenger, the body that wears the image.
Concretely, here the central male figure, presumably the Indian Juan Diego,\textsuperscript{118} is not only dressed with the incorruptible garment of the Virgin of Guadalupe, but in a sense, by her divine election and by the same divine power of transformation that allows the Virgin to appear (or that allowed the Virgin Mary to ascend to heaven), Juan Diego becomes the body—and voice—of the apparition of the Virgin of Guadalupe. In the miniature representation, Juan Diego tilts his head down to his right, mirroring the pose of the Virgin. It is a composition of unquestionable parallelisms, that suggests duality and androgyny. Since it is Juan Diego’s body the one on which the image of the Virgin seems to be imprinted, the man whose identity blurs into the image of the Virgin (the man chosen by her to be the messenger and carrier), the composition makes it ambiguously impossible to ascertain which image the person kneeling down to the left is admiring and worshiping. Is the divine figure here the image of the Virgin [or is it] the male messenger, Juan Diego (the one transformed into a Virgin-like image)? The composition appears to emphasize uncertainty with a group of men who are looking at the back of the double, androgynous, image in mystified wondering. They appear as though muttering about the apparition of the Virgin or of the messenger, or as though trying to confirm whether or not this male figure within the female Virgin is one and the same or another saintly disguise of the Virgin.

This interpretation is merely personal, but historically speaking, it makes sense to have represented characters in positions that convey wondering, skepticism, and uncertainties, as the need of the moment of the Virgin’s apparition (1531) was to indoctrinate and convince a lot of indigenous people, reticent to believe in new female divine images. If, on the one hand, the androgyny that I have pointed out in the fusion of the Indian Juan Diego with(in) the body of the Virgin Mary could have been a strategy of the Catholic Church to seduce the Indians to worship a new female divinity with notions that were not so far removed from their own world-view, on the other hand it could have been

\textsuperscript{118} The Indian Juan Diego is said to be the one to whom The Virgin of Guadalupe makes herself visible on Mount Tepeyac, where the native Tonantzin-Cihuacoatl goddess lived. For more detail, see Leal del Castillo, Maria del Rosario. “Importancia de la naturaleza y el arte en el proceso evangelizador.” Arte y Naturaleza en la Colonia. Bogotá: Museo de Arte Colonial, Ministerio de Cultura, Universidad Nacional de Colombia, 2002. p. 125
as well a Creole, Amerindian strategy to reintegrate their own mother goddess, Tonatizin, who was worshipped at Tepeyac, the same site of Guadalupe’s apparition.

In effect, the duality intimated by the image of a Virgin on the body of a man, who is an Indian, dialogues with Pre-Hispanic notions of divinity: pre Hispanic beliefs that became intertwined with Catholicism in Mexico, and were used as strategies of Christianization but also of identity. Therefore, a brief review of some of the ways in which gender relations in the Aztec world have been reconstructed may shed light on the pre-Columbian antecedents that conceived of androgynous fusions such as the one depicted by Juan Villegas (see Figure 10B):

*Gender and Archeology*, edited by Rita P. Wright, explores whether in the Aztec world gender was defined globally by the dissemination of State ideology or if local communities retained their own notions of gender. Elizabeth M. Brumfiel goes through a substantial corpus of documented sources to determine whether gender relations worked hierarchically or were complementary (144). For instance, some argue that “[o]lder deities expressing the balanced opposition of masculine and feminine were replaced by male warrior deities” and that “the influence of male dominant ideology … was resisted by Aztec women” (Nash, in Brumfiel, 144). Others, in turn, affirm that “even at the height of the empire, Aztec gender roles were characterized by ‘structural complementarity’ and ‘parallelism’ rather than dominance and submission” (McAfferty and McAfferty in Brumfiel, 145). Still others, addressing Aztec female goddesses, declare the following:

> Such images are androgynous negations of a power grounded in femaleness. Rather than affirming an equivalence of male and female power, … [massive] images [such as the headless Coatlicue and the dismembered Coyolxauhqui] suggest that power can be obtained only through maleness. Androgynous goddesses are an artistic solution to the conceptual problem of representing powerful females under the prevailing ideology of male dominance. (Yólotl González and María Rodríguez in Brumfiel, 157).
Whether or not female worshipping images served to strengthen a system run and dominated by men in the Aztec world (as it occurs today with the Virgin of Guadalupe as a female image whose worship strengthens an institution where females do not dominate), this fusion of male and female in one sole image is precisely attuned to the aboriginal set of beliefs that the story of the Virgin of Guadalupe’s apparition to Juan Diego syncretizes. In effect, the particular detail of the painting currently examined (Figure 10B) seems to encrypt the ancient veneration to Ometeotl, the highest deity of the Aztec pantheon (Gillespie 61). This deity happened to be androgynous, as its name signifies Two-God (61). Indeed, this male-female figure “was composed of two separate manifestations, Ometechhtli (‘Two-Lord’) and Omecihuatl (‘Two-Lady’), father and mother of the gods, respectively” (61). As anthropologist and professor Susan G. Gillespie attests in Aztec Kings, “[g]ender ambiguity is an important aspect of the Aztec mother-earth deity and pertains as well to their other major gods” (61). Referring to Cecilia Klein’s 1980 work Who Was Tlaloc?, Gillespie additionally asserts that “[a]nother name for the mother goddess that further confounds her masculine and feminine aspects was Ilamatecuhtli, meaning ‘Old Woman-Lord,’ a name that implies both genders” (61).

In addition, in Quetzalcoatl and Guadalupe, the Formation of Mexican National Consciousness, 1531-1813, Jacques Lafaye asserts that Tonatzin (also known as Cihuacóatl), the Mother Goddess of Gods from whom Guadalupe hence emerges in the same Mount Tepeyac where Tonatzin was worshiped, is linked to Quetzalcoatl. Lafaye writes:

One of the fundamental couples of the Mexican pantheon, or rather one of the dominant expressions (especially in the minds of the ruling elite) of the universal creative principle, is Tonatzin-Quetzalcoatl, whose creole avatars are equally inseparable. From pre-Columbian times they appear linked together as the two faces, male and female, of the primary creative principle. (215)

This inextricable association between Tonatzin (female) and Quetzalcoatl (male) shows the actual male-female dimension of the image of Guadalupe that the painting under study evokes by fusing the
image of Juan Diego and the Guadalupe together, thus re-presentationg ancient deities in whom Mexican indians used to believe. The painting openly represents a Catholic, Western-European deity on the one hand, and the surreptitious reaffirmation of a national identity based on indigenous beliefs on the other.

Given this background, Juan Villegas’s painting of the Virgin of Guadalupe suggests, on the one hand, an encrypted way to preserve androgyny as a constitutive part of Aztec beliefs, and on the other, a clever relaboration of Tonatiuh, the fifth sun-god who presides our current age according to the reconstruction of an Aztec myth of creation (See Figure 11A) (Smith, 193). In this manner, in spite of ostensibly exhibiting the religious ideology that sustains the cultural hegemony of a European empire in Hispanic America, the text (i.e., painting) also sustains the imperial discourse of the Aztec empire. Although without any connection to any Amerindian belief purely European Virgins have been represented with a halo similar to the one that the Euro-Amerindian Guadalupe and Tonatiuh exhibit, the halo that radiates from the back of the Guadalupe recalls the halo that radiates from the back of Tonatiuh, the god sun (see Figures 10A, 10B, and 11A). Thus, Guadalupe’s halo could also be read,
especially by Indians, as their Sun-god “with a symbol representing an earthquake/movement on his back” (Tonatiuh, Web).

The Virgin of Guadalupe is also represented in poetry, besides painting. Colonial literature dedicated to this Virgin shows a strong Creole awareness of national identity based on a mixture of classical European motifs and indigenous expressions. Don Carlos de Sigüenza y Góngora (1645-1700), and Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz, both Creole writers, hail their motherland as they hail Tonatzin, the mother of their land. Sigüenza y Góngora is the author of *Primavera Indiana* (*Indian Spring*), a long poem composed of seventy nine octaves of 11 syllables or *endecasílabos* each with the following rhyme structure: ABABABCC. This poem finds a decisive literary antecedent in *Mexican Grandeur* (*Grandeza Mexicana*) a poem written in 1602 by Bernardo de Balbuena (1562?-1627) and published in Mexico City in 1604. The grandeur of Mexico in Balbuena’s hundred octaves is stressed, for example, in the beauty and exceptionality of nature in the New World, although his pastoral descriptions evoke the locci amena of Garcilaso’s poetry (Lafaye 52). Jacques Lafaye notices that Balbuena’s emphasis on nature in his descriptions of Mexico City also follow the tradition of Lope de Vega and Tirso de Molina who, in turn, also focus their attention on detailing the gardens of Madrid and Toledo, respectively. Lafaye asserts that Balbuena’s descriptions of Mexico’s greatness makes of New Spain “a utopian Spain which would break with the vices of the old Spain” (53). This is a clear separation of national identities reflected through literature and reinforced sixty-four years later by Sigüenza y Góngora in his *Indian Spring*, a sacred-historical poem dedicated to the Virgin of

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119 Carlos de Sigüenza y Góngora was a nephew on his mother’s side of the emblematic baroque poet from Andalucía, Luis de Góngora. Don Carlos was also profesor of mathematics at the University of Mexico and a Jesuit since the age of 17. Although he was dismissed from the Society of Jesus for reasons that remain unknown, he is known for his faithful orthodoxy and his attempt to rejoin the order, unsuccessfully. His thoughts, therefore, remained deeply influenced by the Jesuits who dominated the mentality of 17th century New Spain (Lafaye, 60).

120 See Annex.

121 Bernardo de Balbuena was born in Spain, but his *Mexican Grandeur* clearly proves that his mentality was more Creole and Mexican than Peninsular (Lafaye, 51).
Guadalupe (55). Lafaye acutely notices the difference between *Indian Spring*, referring to the indigenous populations of Mexico, and *Primavera Indiana* as indiano was the term that referred to the Peninsulars who returned to Spain after having lived in the New World (63). Thus, *Primavera indiana* would refer more to a cultural identity closer to the Creole than to the indian population itself. This observation makes sense when considering that, for the Mexican intelligensia to which Sigüenza y Góngora belonged, seventeenth century Mexico was no longer the land of the first missionaries who had to convert aboriginals, but a [C]reole society strongly identified with its Spanish heritage. Thus, *Primavera Indiana* primarily reflects a [C]reole sensibility. Siguenza y Góngora’s writings, and his own membership to Mexico’s noble families, in fact, stand as a clear examples of that intellectual society to which Balbuena had refered more than half a century before the apparition of *Primavera Indiana* in order to show up the grandeur of Mexico. Lafaye observes a point worth-noting to understand better the content of *Primavera Indiana*, the cultural atmosphere that preceded its composition, and the social context in which it was written:

The nascent creole culture (which included […] a mythology borrowed from Hellenistic antiquity) was in all respects, in its values and their means of expression, the result of what today we call ‘transculturation.’ The forms of life, the administration, the church, and the faith itself were imported products; the American world, on which creole eyes had just begun to gaze with wonder, was denied. (62)

Such a spirit would prevail in Balbuena’s times, but in the second half of the 17th century, creoles such as Sigüenza y Góngora and Sor Juana already possessed a strong cultural identification with New Spain as a separate entity from Spain while carrying with them the cultural legacy of the Peninsulars. In fact, Sigüenza y Góngora, for example, published *Primavera Indiana* in 1668, the same year that he began his studies on Ancient Mexico (62).

Sigüenza y Góngora establishes an interesting parallel between classical Greco-Roman mythology with the Virgin Mary itself. The “sacred-historical poem” begins evoking Caliope for poetic
inspiration. Likewise, in the seventh stanza (see annex), he asks the Virgin Mary for the same inspiration to polish his writing: “Purify my accent and may my impure lips be animated as flowers blosom in May. For my voice under your shadow (i.e., gown, protection), beautiful Mary, (lit.) triumphs over (i.e., overcomes) the transience of the day (i.e., my voice becomes immortal)” (translation mine).

In any event, *Primavera Indiana* confirms Mexico as a Christian land, worthy to guide the world and to be guided by the enlightening torch of Mary. Here any other religion was fulminated and crushed by her feet, implying that the indigenous beliefs were horrendous and belonged to the obscure underworld of the demon. Sigüenza y Gongora’s poem reads:

**XLIX**

I am Mary, of Omnipotent God
the Humble Mother, Virgin sovereign,
a torch whose eternal light
is the splendid North Star of Mankind’s hope:
Let a perfumed altar in a holy temple
be instilled for me in Mexico, once Pluto’s profane dwelling, whose horrors
my foot dispells in a storm of flowers. (translation Keen’s)

Lafaye also suggests that being a sacred-historical poem, *Primavera Indiana* merges two parallel histories in the development of Mexico: lay history itself with the history of salvation of humankind, especially of the Indians. For Sigüenza y Góngora, the Virgin of Guadalupe granted Mexico a prominent status in history as the chosen place to be redeemed and sanctified by her luminous presence (64). The second quartet of octave 25th reads:

**La morada de luces cristalina**
te rinda glorias, pues amante subes,
oh México, a ser solio preeminente,
que doran rayos del amor ardiente.

May the crystalline dwelling place of light glorify thee, because with love thou rises,
O Mexico, to be the preeminent throne
gilded by the rays of ardent Love (64, translation Keen’s)

How does Sigüenza y Góngora’s *Indian Spring* portray the Mexican Indian? Lafaye affirms that in Balbuena’s Mexican Spring the Indian was remarkably absent because it depicted an “Arcadia transposed almost unchanged from Greece to Mexico” (65). Once conquered and catechized, rather than obliterated, the Indian was overlooked by the Creole who praised the prosperity of his culture in New Spain’s capital city at the dawn of the seventeenth century. The Creole in the second half of the century was not any better. Lafaye explains:

> The Indian who was reborn in 1680 thanks to Don Carlos’ pen was not the Indian of Sshagún and Motolinia—a soul to be saved, a man to be taught and feared. Sigüenza’s Indian is a dead Indian; we could even say that don Carlos’ work is a certified report of the decease of the Aztec empire. (65)

It seems to me from the reading of *Primavera Indiana* that Sigüenza y Góngora’s Indian is not quite dead, but almost. At least he is evoked with his proper name, recalling the prototypical story of Juan and his encounter with the Virgin at mount Tepeyac. The Indian Juan is mentioned not to give him any visibility, but on the contrary, to decimate through the narration the culture that he represents by subduing him completely to the overpowering presence of the Virgin Mary who declares, as cited above, to give hopes of salvation to the human soul and cut off with her feet the profane horrors that take place in Pluto’s dwelling. (XLIX). He is reduced to a prototypical name, Juan (not even Juan Diego), like any Juan. It is not until the 51st (LI) octave that he is mentioned with his proper name. Before, he is simply referred to as the Indian, portrayed as an uneducated, innocent, and poor saunterer (octave 46th. XLVI). The whole legend of the encounter of the Indian Juan Diego with the Virgin at Tepeyac is narrated through octaves 45th (XLV) to 57th (LVII). Octave XLV refers to a traveller who goes through a deep valley (recalling “this deep valley of tears” that is prayed in the rosary) and is
assaulted by a cold and cloudy storm. A serpent flies away at the presence of the fiery light (of the Virgin), and leaves the traveller exhausted, as though his body were dead, though with his heart beating peacefully. Octave XLVI compares the state of this traveller with that of Mexico, and in stanza XLVII the traveller faces the rocky heights of Tepeyac, full of shrubbery and weeds, where in ecstasy he hears the echoes of a delightful choir from heaven. Octave XLVIII describes the sudden apparition of the Virgin Queen, full of a dazzling but gentle light like a diamond. I have already noted the speech attributed to Mary in octave XLIX. In the 50th stanza the Virgin orders orders the Indian to go and announce her Empire, and the clouds adopt the shape of an ascending throne. This episode of the poem reflects Sigüenza y Góngora’s notion of Mexico itself, a new empire where humanity could be spiritually redeemed from the vices of Aztec idolatry and the European old world through the grace, intercession, and presence of the Virgin of Guadalupe (Lafaye, 63).

In stanzas LI and LII, Juan Diego hastily obeys Mary’s orders with alacrity, but returns with dismay where he submissively prostrates himself before the blazing light of the great Queen. In stanza LIII, Juan needs to follow Mary’s orders for the second time, and he confirms her will of being venerated even in the kingdoms that point out toward the Big Dipper or Ursa Major. He is asked to bring physical proof of the miracle from Mary herself. In LV, next morning, the Indian Diego, alone, climbs the cold mountain, guided by a path of roses that Mary puts on his way. LVI and LVII: The signs of Mary’s presence are the flowers which make the image of the Virgin herself, but such a prodigious sign must not be shown to the infidels. Up to this point, the representation of the Indian is finished in the poem. In any event, as a notion, the Indian in these stanzas at least does something, so he is not quite dead for Sigüenza y Góngora as Lafaye asserts. However, the image that Don Carlos renders of the Indian is dead in the sense that it is perfectly stereotypical; it faithfully rewrites —with touches of Greek mythology— the original and popular legend of the divine encounter of the Indian Diego with the Virgin. The Indian is a tabloid with predictable outcomes and fixed adjectives (humble, obedient, frightful, somber, etc.). This literary portrayal of the Indian gives faith of an eminently Creole notion of
national identity that regards the Indian as Other, not part of the elite that dominates and shapes through its writings the image of an exemplary and eminently Christian-European New Spain. In fact, the references to Greek mythology prove that not even Sigüenza y Góngora could escape from the strong literary tradition that Balbuena had followed of imitating the models of the European renaissance.

Another crucial reference to understand how the Virgin of Guadalupe was represented through poetry in colonial Latin America and what it meant for Creoles in the construction of their identity is [the poem by] the so called Phoenix of Mexico, the Jeronymite nun, Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz.

It is ironic, however, that amidst Sor Juana’s vast poetic corpus there is only one sonnet to the Virgin of Guadalupe:

Soneto sagrado 206
Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz

Alaba el numen poético del padre Francisco de Castro, de la Compañía de Jesús, en un poema heroico en que describe la aparición milagrosa de Nuestra señora de Guadalupe de Méjico, que pide la luz pública.

La compuesta de flores maravilla
Divina protectora americana
que a ser se pasa Rosa Mexicana
apareciendo Rosa de Castilla.

la que en vez del dragón -de quien humilla cerviz rebelde en Patmos-huella ufana,
hasta aquí Inteligencia soberana,
de su pura grandeza pura silla;

ya el Cielo, que la copia misteriosa,
segunda vez sus señas celestiales
en guarismos de flores claro suma:

pues no menos le dan traslado hermoso
las flores de tus versos sin iguales,
la maravilla de tu culta pluma. (164)
In this sonnet Sor Juana praises a heroic poem by the Jesuit father Francisco de Castro: a composition of 258 regal octaves (octavas reales),\textsuperscript{122} 2064 lines, five cantos (36 octaves the first canto, 70 octaves the second canto, 44 octaves the third canto, 53 octaves the fourth canto, and 55 octaves the fifth canto). One of the octaves in which I find more parallels with Sor Juana’s sonnet is the following:

Del canto primero
II
La Maravilla, digo, continuada
que a México envidiar, no ya Castilla,
más la parte del orbe más pintada
puede; la que admirable maravilla
hoy, como cuando a flores ostentada,
en un diciembre que al abril humilla,
se vio florida Maravilla extraña
aun en su patria de la Nueva España. (de Castro, Web.)

Both Sor Juana and the Spanish friar refer to the Virgin of Guadalupe as a Marvel. Jacques Lafaye observes that the word Maravilla echoes the work by the painter Miguel Cabrera (1695-1768) “Maravilla americana y conjunto de raras maravillas observadas con la dirección de las reglas de el arte de la pintura en la prodigiosa imagen de Nuestra Sra. de Guadalupe de Mexico” (1756) of whose facsimile this thesis presents the following excerpt: “Intitulo efta Obra: Maravilla Americana; porque efta nueftra America fue la efcogida por la Soberana Reyna para oftentar las maravillas de fu Retrato” (6.I XVI).\textsuperscript{123}

In this excerpt, as in the poems by Don Carlos de Sigüenza y Góngora, Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz, and Father Francisco de Castro, among others, there is the explicit recognition of a sense of belonging

\textsuperscript{122} The octava real is a stanza originally structured by Bocaccio (1313-1375). It was introduced in Spain by Garcilaso de la Vega and Juan Boscán in the early renaissance. It is made up by 8 lines of eleven syllables each rhyming ABABABCC.

\textsuperscript{123} See complete page and quote in context in the facsimilar page of Appendix1.
that is no longer European but American. In his work to the Guadalupe, Cabrera speaks of our
America as the chosen land by Divine volition to show Divine wonders.

In effect, America is portrayed as a kind of Eden. Sor Juana, Francisco de Castro, and Miguel Cabrera insist on the marvelous not only to refer to the Virgin of Guadalupe, but also and especially in order to express awe before both nature in Mexico and the nature of Mexico. This is a new land so overflowing with redolent and colorful flowers, that it is no longer Castilla, Spain, the place depicted by words, but New Spain. This idea must have rung in Sor Juan’s ears so much, that she paraphrased de Castro’s first two opening lines in the last two lines of the first stanza of her sonnet. The reiterated sense of marvel in both poems is expressed, for example, in the everlasting miracle of having the spring of April even in December’s winter, which rewrites the original legend of the miraculous apparition of the virgin to the Indian Juan Diego. Both Sor Juana’s and Father de Castro’s poems are panegyrics not only to the Virgin of Guadalupe, but also to her origin, Mexico, and America (i.e., not the USA but the so called New World). These are poems with a strong sense of nationhood, for which Guadalupe, even up to this day, becomes the symbol of a collective Mexican and Pan-American identity. This interpretation makes more sense as Jacques Lafaye points out that “[t]he expression Protectora Americana which Sor Juana applies to the Virgin of Guadalupe anticipated by a century the official oath acknowledging the Virgin as Protectress of Mexico.”

But in her sonnet to the Virgin of Guadalupe, Sor Juana goes far beyond the mere identification of this Virgin as a symbol of national and Latin American identity. In the resolution of the volta or last tercet of the sonnet, Sor Juana metaphorically equalizes the flowers to which Francisco de Castro’s pen ubiquitously refers in his heroic poem with the craftiness of his very penmanship. Therefore, Sor Juana

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124 With this expression by Miguel Cabrera in the 18th century, one cannot help but think of the essay Nuestra América, by José Martí (1853-1895), the Cuban thinker and writer who played a key role in the process of Cuban independence. Cabrera’s justification of his work to the Virgin of Guadalupe reflect that the expressions of American identity and cultural independence which thematically mark Martí’s essay had already been simmering and resonating even from the colonial period and were attuned to the revolutionary calls for independence that gave birth to Republics in the 19th century.
also identifies the place of origin of Guadalupe with a colorful and exuberant intellectual production
different from everywhere else. Little did Sor Juana know that this Virgin, today an emblem of
Mexican nationality, was going to be the center of a heated intellectual polemic pertaining freedom and
justice only a century later.

This chapter explored the multiple ways in which Creoles writers and painters reconstructed the
figure of the Virgin Mary to represent in various ways indigenous beliefs, awareness of difference, as
well as a sense of ontological and political independence from Spain. The following chapter will
continue the discussion of the same issues of transformation and re-adaptation of European models as
expressed through various representations of the figure of Saint Joseph, the earthly husband of Mary.
In the case of Saint Joseph, one of the characteristics highlighted in all of the representations chosen for
this study is the notion of androgyny as a long-standing cultural manifestation both in Europe and in
Spanish America, but, in the latter, as it will be argued in the following chapter, as a manifestation of
cultural hybridism.
CHAPTER THREE
Saint Joseph as an Androgynous Figure: Constructing Gender, Power Relations, and Cultural Identities in Colonial Hispanic America

Androgyny, as it was explored in the previous chapter, is related to duality and to the figure of the monster as prodigy, and as deviation from the norm. However, it is also related to religious explanations of creation, and as a way to represent a cultural "in-between" space characteristic of colonial mixed societies. Androgyny is an idea with a long history in Western culture and art. In Hispanic America, however, artists and poets utilized that long tradition to express difference: New realities and tensions as seen from the perspective of colonial subjects. Feminized representations of Saint Joseph in the New World seem to point out the feminization of (Hispanic) America and its colonial subjects as conquered, passive, obedient, and controlled entities.

A plethora of artistic representations of the Nativity in the Western world has instilled and reinforced in the West a sharply dichotomized gender categorization as the incontestable model to organize and build up God-blessed and righteous societies. In most reenactments of the holy manger, for example, there is little doubt that the nuclear family is composed of a man, Joseph, a woman, Mary, and a male offspring, Jesus. However, as I argue in this chapter, some poetic, pictorial, and sculptural portrayals of Saint Joseph in colonial Hispanic America defy the paradigmatic masculinity of Joseph through the portrayal of the husband of Mary as an androgynous being. These representations suggest that, in colonial Hispanic America, the figure of St. Joseph served to manifest androgynous traits through which some writers and artists projected the unique cultural identity of Creole society. In other words, from the point of view of the colonized, the representation of androgynous traits served the Creole artist to (re)define a New World society as a conscious or unconscious attempt to preserve pre-Hispanic and African worldviews in a dominant Western Christian imaginary; from the point of view of the colonizer, androgynous representations of male figures such as Saint Joseph in
the New World also served to reinforce the long standing representation of America as a feminine, weak, and subdued territory.

Santafé de Bogotá, Quito, Cuzco, Potosi, and Mexico, among others, have left representations of Saint Joseph that raise questions about the notions of gender that the colonial subject held in Hispanic America in contrast with the teachings of the Catholic church. Some pictorial representations of Saint Joseph seem to stand not only as a counter discourse that subverts established gender characteristics, but also as an emancipatory emblem of social independence, identity, and resistance from European authority.

From the Musical Archives of Bogota's Cathedral, the poem "In Jesus and in Mary" (en Jesús y en María, see Annex) - dedicated to St. Joseph by Neo-Granadine choirmaster Joseph de Cascante (1620-1702)- seems to enunciate the identity of the Saint as the fusion of his most immediate familial bonds with different gender assignations: "In Jesus and in Mary, !Heaven and earth! Recognize Joseph! Avowedly" (En Jesús y en María / la tierra y el cielo /a Joseph reconocen / con rendimiento) (1-4, translation mine). The text claims a universal recognition of Joseph through means of a dual gender representation which includes Mary and Jesus. Mother and son exalt the image of Joseph and enhance his importance. The representation of the trinity is further complicated by the fact that the poem also hints at a disguised identification of the author with Saint Joseph. In other words, the lyrics suggest a tacit allusion to the composer of the carol (deemed as yet another textual creation) since both writer and saint share the same name. The resulting duality allows the poet, Joseph, to be an integral part of Mary and Jesus (in Mary and Jesus), as well as to claim paternity, as does Joseph, the father, of the artistic creation.

Baptizing males with female names and assigning male or male-derived names to women remains a fairly common cultural practice in Latin America even today. José María, Jesús María, Mario, Mariano, Evo, or Candelario for men, and Maria Jose, Maria Jesus, Jesusita, (Em)manuela, Juana, Josefa y Josefina for women make the case of an onomastic androgyne so perfectly ingrained
in Hispanic society that people normally do not even think of such names as androgynous. Yet, they inevitably constitute a cross gender reference with which many people both identify themselves and are identified as well. Current and historic examples of the androgynous identification of people through onomastics abound, as happens in the figure below where boys and girl are given the name Mary (María):

![Figure 12. “Portrait of the Malo Children.”. C. 1756. Oil on canvas. 97x 130cm. National Museum of History, Chapultepec Castle / Conaculta, INAH, Mexico City (Marti, 415).](image)

As the poem *In Jesus and In Mary* illustrates the case in New Granada, Figure 12 also shows how names of men and women are put together and sometimes hybridized to define the gender identity of a person in the Hispanic culture, both in the New World and in Spain, in the case of Figure 12, since early childhood in the Viceroyalty of New Spain. The middle-lower section of the canvas reveals the identity of these kids as follows: Manuel Miguel Maria, Miguel Jose Maria, and Mariana Micaela Josefa. Traditionally (not so much anymore, however), parents in the Hispanic world would assign names according to the onomastic denomination of the saint that appeared on the day of birth
of their children, or according to the name of the saint(s) of their devotion, to whom they entrusted the lives of their kids, hoping that children could emulate the exemplary virtues of their protectors.

A similar phenomenon seems to occur in the poem presently under study, devoted to Saint Joseph, by Joseph de Cascante, in which the poet, Joseph, pleads to recognize the Saint in Jesus, in Mary, and tacitly, in himself, Joseph, the author. This association is complicated further in the second part of this poem: “Jesus, qué dicha. / que a Joseph obedecen, / obedecen Jesus, María” (Jesus, what a joy / to know that Joseph is obeyed / obeyed by Jesus, Mary) (5-7, translation mine), renders perhaps the most immediate connotations of the text. It is interesting here that the poet does not change the status quo. Under colonial regimes, women were expected to obey their husbands, as well as children obey adults, servants their masters, employees their employers, and the colonized the colonizer. In short, obedience is a defining part of the subaltern. In this type of society, it was understood that women and children, generically represented by Jesus and Mary, ought to obey the Father figure which was not only God, but also God’s figures on earth; i.e., Church and State. Authority was assigned to a male adult figure. In the poem, such authority is recognized and celebrated thus: “En Jesús y en María, / la tierra y el cielo / a Joseph reconocen / con rendimiento; / Jesús, qué dicha, / que a Joseph obedecen, / obedecen Jesús, María” (In Jesus and in Mary, / heaven and earth recognize Joseph / bountfully; Jesus, what a joy / [to see] that Joseph is obeyed / Obeyed [by] Jesus, Mary). Here Joseph is recognized by everybody (in heaven and in earth). If the figure of Joseph is recognized universally, such figure must hold at least a certain degree of authority. The idea of Joseph's authority is also shown in the poem through the word obey(ed). A man (Jesus) and a woman (Mary), both together, are the ones that make it possible to construct Joseph as a figure of authority. This fact is more salient when Joseph is read not only as the saint father of Jesus, but also as Joseph de Cascante, the composer of such lyrics, taking into account that he was a priest (Perdomo 24). Therefore, the author is also tacitly celebrating his own priesthood—a position of spiritual authority on earth that must be heard and recognized especially in a colonial context.
In colonial Hispanic America (as it still occurs today there and elsewhere) not all male figures (e.g., boys, Indians, slaves of African descent, and Creoles) could exert the power of authority or take authority positions for granted in Hispanic colonial society. In this sense, many men shared with females subservient social positions as colonial subjects. The figure of St. Joseph, therefore, seems to have been used in this poem no longer to consolidate firmly fixed hierarchies, but to alter and to question that social order by portraying a Joseph (who could be the author of the poem as a literary character as well) that celebrates the fact that he is being obeyed instead of obeying.

The onomastic association between creator (Joseph de Cascante) and creation (Saint Joseph and Joseph de Cascante as a character) would seem an argument *ad hominem* or a faulty shift of focus from the literary text itself as the actual object of study to the life of an individual, but the latter here is also considered as another literary invention since its construction is exclusively based on textual material. Literarily speaking, this association could be worth exploring based upon Kristeva's notion of what she calls the semiotic order because this theory suggests a connection between poetry and the feminine. Leitch explains this notion quite clearly as follows:

Kristeva finds two forces competing for expression in the language of poetry: the symbolic and the semiotic. The symbolic ... is systematic, propositional, rule-bound, tied to the social order, dependent on a functional separation between the subject and the object, and capable of existing independently of its referent .... The semiotic dimension of language ... is that aspect that bears the trace of the language user's own body and of the mother's proto linguistic presence .... Kristeva thus maintains that all signification entails the dialectical interaction of the symbolic and the semiotic. The semiotic ... is associated with the chora (literally space; Greek) receptacle, space, womb. This semiotic chora, which 'precedes and underlies figuration,' is, in turn, connected to the maternal body, to the feminine in general, and to what remains mysterious, unintelligible, and unsignifiable. (2166)
This explanation unveils an "umbilical" (so to speak) connection between "the author" (not as a person but as a literary category), or its poetic voice, and the feminine, maternal, as the spring of linguistic material to signify the world through words. Thus, femaleness becomes a basic order or force of the poetic voice and its creator in the construction of male subjects. In this particular poem, it is through language that Joseph (author and creator of the poem to the Saint, Joseph) is defined through the Holy Mother, Mary, and her offspring, Jesus.

According to Biblical accounts, Jesus was engendered not by Joseph, his earthly father, but by the Holy Spirit. In an earthly realm, however, Joseph is Jesus's father. This complex paternity is central to the ambiguity of his representation by other poets and painters. Although traditional male roles are inculcated by and learned through culture instead of belonging exclusively and intrinsically to men (Jehlen, 263-73), in Romance to Saint Joseph or Romance a San José (see Annex), Sor Juana Ines de la Cruz (b.1651-d.1695) seems to negate Joseph's masculinity by divesting him of roles conventionally assigned to men. However, in the last stanza, the erudite Mexican nun reaffirms Joseph's masculine image as "Mary's husband and God's earthly Father" (23-24).

"Hark! How wonderful / a deed, this is indeed: / A Husband without a woman / And a married Maiden. Escuchen qué cosa y cosa / tan maravillosa, aquesta: / un Marido sin mujer, / y una casada Doncella" (1-4). These lines subvert, through the figure of the Holy Family, the widely accepted norms in societies such as colonial Hispanic America as well as the Catholic church's decrees that dictated that married men were supposed to have a wife and that the wife had to be a virgin at the moment of marriage, and would bear children only in matrimony. Remembering that Sor Juana was a natural daughter, a stigma during her time, and yet a reality of colonial society, in the second line, the poem seems to rejoice in the subversion of those norms (in the image of a married man without a woman , and a married woman who is a virgin).

Sor Juana's daring comments by way of baroque rhetorical reflections continue in this fourth stanza: "He orders his own Lord / And God respects his son; / He has a Slave as [his] Lady / And a
Queen as a Wife. Manda a su propio Señor, / y a su hijo dios respeta: / tiene por Ama una Esclava / y por Esposa una Reina" (13-16 translation mine). Here, Sor Juana's Joseph is Father to his son, Jesus, but also subservient to him, he is also master of Mary, and yet a faithful servant of Mary, the Queen. Since Christianity adopted feudal social and political terms as metaphors for human and divine relationships, Saint Joseph, like Sor Juana, is both master and servant. Together with Joseph's true ambiguity as father and son, also Mary is servant and queen, and Jesus, son and father. Sor Juana's paradoxes make sense within the context of colonial society. When read in this context, these lines may be understood as statements that attempt to break traditional hierarchies.

Sor Juana's portrayal of Saint Joseph represents the human father of Jesus far more human than divine. Sor Juana's Joseph does not ignore the wide range of the most contrasting and visceral human emotions: "He was jealous and did trust; / Had confidence and raised suspicions (Tuvo celos y confianza, / seguridad y sospechas)" (17-18). He cannot evade the inexorable rotation of the wheel of fortune either: "[He] took risks and felt confident; / Was in need and held riches ([Él tuvo] riesgos y seguridades, / necesidad y riquezas)" (19-20).

Just as Sor Juana's "Romance to Saint Joseph" provides an example of how a woman partially adopts the identity of a man to represent herself, in Sor Juana's Reponse to Sor Philothea she discloses the way in which male figures of authority disguise themselves as women in order to save keep their social position. While Sor Juana, as explained in chapter 1, takes the persona of Jesus as a disguise for her own situation, also Sor Filotea (a pseudonym for Manuel Fernández de Santa Cruz), to whom Sor Juana writes her Response, adopts a woman’s name in his warnings to Sor Juana. Here he (disguised as a woman) discourages the nun to venture into presumably male intellectual spheres.

The case of Manuel Fernández de Santa Cruz as sor Filotea was a case of onomastic transgenderness, but in the Pre-Hispanic New World, transgenderness had been practiced, understood, and accepted in more physically visible ways than just the changing of a name. In fact, The National Geographic Society clearly shows the case of pre-Hispanic acceptance of androgyny notwithstanding
acute criticism that a great lot of its visual reporting contains ethnocentric accounts of human evolution and geography, presupposing a paradigmatic superiority for men.\textsuperscript{125} The series \textit{Tabú Latinoamérica}, released in 2010, renders a rarely seen version of Latin America that defines itself from within groups that for the most part had traditionally been silenced, dwarfed, and pushed to the periphery by those who have attempted to shape a homogenized sense of identity through official national and religious discourses. One of the episodes in this series deals with the decision of a considerable number of men from Juchitán—a small city circa 70,000 inhabitants up to date, located in the southeastern part of the state of Oaxaca, Mexico—to change their gender and even their sex. They use make up and dress up with traditional female garments from the region (similar to the outfits with which most of Frida Kahlo's images appear). Perfectly respected as such in their society, the Muxhes are a prominent group of men who live and identify themselves as women in Juchitán, a small city of circa 70,000 inhabitants up to date, located in the southeastern part of the state of Oaxaca, Mexico. "Muxhe is a Zapotec word used since the 16th century" (min. 5:51-6:22, translation mine). One of them, Amaranta Gómez, political leader and activist, speaks of herself and her people as follows: "A Muxhe is a person who was biologically born masculine, but gender wise lives and feels as a woman. A Muxhe, for people from outside could be a tansgendered person; however, er, [sic] I believe that identity has a lot to do with that cultural belonging, with that ancestral history to which we feel rooted" (Tabú, 6:29-6:53, translation mine). The testimony of the Muxhes in Mexico illustrates how androgyny is part of the cultural scheme of some sectors of society in Hispanic America since pre-colonial times. It should not be surprising, therefore, to find several androgynous representations of Saint Joseph in colonial Hispanic America, where his gender role as earthly father may not be as clear as his role as the mother of Jesus, as shown in the following images:

In all these representations above, Saint Joseph appears ambiguously as a bearded woman or as a bearded iconic Madonna with Child. In effect, Saint Joseph’s pose replicates conventional representations of the Virgin Mary. Particularly figures 13,E,F, and 14A and C follow the long standing European tradition of figuring Jesus feinting a caress or actually caressing his mother's cheek, or Mary touching little Jesus' foot as a recurrent iconic index. In his outstanding work, *The Sexuality of Christ in Renaissance Art and in Modern Oblivion*, Leo Steinberg deploys a vast arsenal of textual evidence -from Ancient Egypt, through Ancient Greece and the Middle Ages, to the Renaissance- that clearly shows how touching someone's chin, or the attempt to reach it, denoted most of the times an erotic signal, other times supplication, or a patronizing attitude, or even a mocking gesture (5; 110-16). He further affirms that given this longstanding tradition, "no Christian artist, medieval or Renaissance, would have taken this long-fixed convention for anything but a sign of erotic communion, either carnal or spiritual" (5). That erotic tradition is now overlooked and virtually forgotten to the point that, at present, a caress in the chin or the cheek—especially when represented in religious images—would hardly ever signify something beyond motherly love or child-like tenderness in dominant culture (2). Furthermore, to attribute erotic overtones to such gestures in religious painting seems to be generally deemed by many faithful viewers as a preposterous blasphemy. Yet, should these gestures be admittedly recognized as derivatives of that ancient tradition, the knowledge of it would elicit a completely different understanding of what St. Joseph from the 18th century Quito School and New Granada would be expressing to contemporary readers (viewers). With Steinberg's irrefutable antecedents in mind, Figures 13,E,F, and 14A and C could be as well representing a homo-erotic gesture if both Jesus and Saint Joseph in this painting are considered as fully grown men. However, no homoeroticism would be represented in any of the paintings or sculptures mentioned above if each of these representations of Joseph were deemed as portrayals of a peculiar, bearded Virgin Mary. The androgyny of the Virgin Mary in these representations would lie in her beard as much as the androgyny of Saint Joseph in these paintings
and sculptures would lie in his adoption of a traditionally feminine gender role, being, nonetheless, a father: that of a mother and, particularly, the mother of Jesus.

Bearded women are rare but not unheard of either in art or in historically documented cases. Clinically speaking, the phenomenon is known as hirsutism (Samper, Web). An exacerbated version of it is called Hipertrichosis. However rare, this physiological phenomenon is recorded and artistically (under)represented both in Europe and in Hispanic America. No one but José de Ribera, also known as El españolito (the Spaniard) may have ever captured better and with more poignant realism the emotional strain of embodying difference per se in a society that treated (and still treats for the most part) with certain degree of self-satisfying morbidity androgynous beings as a rare specimens. As the lower right side of the composition reveals it, *The Bearded Woman* (1631) (Figure 19) exhibits Magdalena Ventura and her Neapolitan family, from the city of Accumoli, known as Abruzzi. Epistolary evidence proves their actual existence: In a letter dated on 11 February 1631, The Spanish Ambassador to Venice describes the presence of the family in the Duke Aflin de Ribera's palace as follows:

In the rooms of His King a very famous painter was making a portrait of a married woman from Abruzzo, mother of many children. Her face was totally virile, with a gorgeous black beard longer than a palm, and the chest all hairy, his Excellence has taken the pleasure to let me see it (the beard) as something marvelous, and in truth it is so (Nelle stanze de V. Re stava un pittore famosissimo facendo un ritrato de una donna Abruzzese maritata e madre di molti figli, la quale hala faccia totalmente virile, con piu di un palmo di barba nera bellissima, ed if petto tutto peloso, si prese gusto sua Eccellenza di farmela veder, comecosa meravigliosa, et veramente e tale). (G. de Vito, Cited in Perez, 1, translation mine).
The portrait was commissioned by the 3rd Duke of Alcala, also viceroy Fernando Afan de Ribera y Enrique, given his power to afford a fairly common hobby among the nobility in 17th century Spain, particularly in the court of Philip IV: to collect portraits of human prodigies (dwarfish men, giants, bearded women, etc.) (Pérez 1-3).

Figure 15. "The Bearded Woman," 1631. José de Ribera. Fundación Casa Ducal de Medinacelli.

In Figure 15, Ribera exhibits another nuclear family: mother, father, and a newborn, far more human than divine, unlike the paradigms provided by religious images of the nativity. As with other examples previously examined of how St. Joseph is represented and conceived, the portraits of Joseph and Child from Quito and New Granada, and The Bearded Woman by Ribera, destabilize the assignation of gender roles according to sex. Such paintings comprise a rupture of traditional social structures and a departure from fixedly centered sets of beliefs. Yet, St. Joseph as a bearded woman is not accompanied solely by Ribera's portrait of Magdalena
Ventura to illustrate the case of androgynous hirsutism as depolarizing statements of gender identities either in Europe or in Hispanic America. Another antecedent, both for Ribera and for bearded women in South America, is found in Figure 16A.

In turn, Colombo-Mexican architect and restorer Rodolfo Vallín Magaña and Colombian art historian Laura Liliana Vargas Murcia explain the background of saint Liberata, represented in Figure 16B, as follows:

She is also known as Wilgefortis, the strong virgin; Kummermis, the virgin ashamed for having a beard like Jesus; or Liberata, the virgin liberated by God. It is said that Wilgefortis, daughter of a Portuguese king, had made her vows of chastity, but her pagan father wanted her to marry forcefully. In order to preserve her vows, she asked God to deform her so that she would not have any wooers. Hence, her face grew a beard. The king accused his daughter of witchcraft and ordered to crucify her so that she would suffer as the groom she had chosen: Jesus. (180, translation mine).

Vallin and Vargas further explain that in Lucca, Italy, a Christ from the Byzantine period was represented with a robe tied to his waist, but because Western iconography was used to representing Christ Christ with his naked trunk, the tied robe that covered it led to the belief that the crucified person was a woman. The clergy used the story of Wilgerfortis to explain such supposition. Wilgerfortis is often represented as though a bearded, dressed, crucified, and crowned Christ, but sometimes she is made beardless in order to avoid the giggling mockery of church visitors (180).

The tradition of changing Virgin Mary's gender (or her "pagan" avatars such as Juno) and turning her into a St. Joseph is further documented by art historians Benito Navarrete Prieto, Teresa Fernandez de la Hoz, and Antonio Martinez Ripoll. They have reported some instances of such a practice in the re-elaboration of models taken by Spanish painters from Madrid:
These cases exemplify a clear transfiguration of an emulated female model into a quintessentially male identity according to religious paradigms. In Europe, too, then, Jesus' human father is paralleled or tantamount to Jesus' mother in some cases, but they seem to be less daring than the bearded woman identified as a man by the Quito School (Figure 13E). The question that comes to mind is: Why do these pictorial and literary artifacts emphatically undergo gender role crossings, making them onto logically ambiguous and uncertain? Such transformations, however partial or apparent, imply and demand a certain amount of internal movement on the part of the observed object should those ontological states "in-between" (Bhabha 2389) be successfully conveyed to intended audiences. Jane Eade explains that "Motus in Aquinas, following Aristotle, refers not simply to 'movement' but to any kind of process or state of becoming" (242). She keenly observes that "[t]he dynamic of conversion, or 'turning' towards is expressed in the devotional arts of the baroque by a powerful sense of kinetic energy, mirroring an interior yearning for the repose of union" (242). This observation seems to imply that the baroque artist tended to represent subjects as
if they strove to be agents of change within themselves. Their yearning for the repose of union suggests that subjects reach ontological equilibrium when they synthesize into one being the two transitory entities that appear to cancel each other out as opposites (e.g., despite their male-female opposition, St. Joseph can be the Virgin Mary as well) instead of statically recognizing one entity only through the negation of the other (e.g., if the subject is Joseph, he cannot be Mary, and vice versa). Murray Stein confirms that "[t]he God image of a people is not static; it evolves through time. That is to say, the ultimate God image, which is embedded in the collective unconscious, gradually emerges into consciousness over the course of millennia" (9). The same must occur with virtually any other image: St. Joseph, St Mary, friends, relatives, and so forth. If people's archetypal images emerge from the subconscious and change through time, the 18th century is witness of a process of representation and interpretation that continues up to date. "The development of the God image is a result of interplay between the images and definitions presented by tradition and the human protagonists who carry that tradition forward. This dynamic ... leads to the manifestation of a more complete God image ... , that is less one-sidedly Patriarchal and more inclusive of the Feminine" (9). This commentary is attuned in literary studies with reader response theory which recognizes the meanings of a text as negotiations between the text and its readers. In that sense, the present exegesis, not of the God image, but of the image of St. Joseph, is part of the same process whereby "the image ... is never to be seen as final and complete, and humans are co-creators of new dimensions of meaning and understanding" (22).

In *Alchemical Studies*, Carl Jung comments on the efforts of alchemy not to separate but to integrate natures despite the systematic intention of the Church to get rid of demons, whose expulsion from the human soul paradoxically alienated people from their own human nature. (130-31). For alchemists "Nature not only contains a process of transformation—it is itself transformation. It strives not for isolation but for union" (131). In alchemy, the offspring of such
union (King and Queen) is the hermaphrodite Christic figure. In effect, Alexander Roob, in *The Hermetic Museum: Alchemy & Mysticism*, explains that "[t]he symbol for the work of reunification, which is known in India as the Sri Yantra, meaning the complete interpenetration of the sexes, was seen by the pupils of [Jakob] Böhme --b. c.1575 - d.1624, German Christian mystic and theologian-- as a symbol of Christ, since he, as a second Adam, restored Adam's primal androgyny." (165). In the *Mysterium Magnum*, Böhme asserts that 'For this reason, Christ became human in the woman's part and brings the man's part back into the holy matrix' (Roob, 165). In addition, according to cabbalistic teaching taken up by Paracelsus and Böhme, "Adam was androgynous: He was a man and a woman at the same time (...) quite pure in breeding. He could give birth parthenogenetically\(^{126}\) at will (...)" (Böhme's *vom dreifachen Leben*, Amsterdam, 1682, in Roob, 165).

This transformation of nature from male into female (Joseph as Mary), or from female into male (Mary as Joseph), suspended in the intersection of both, is what seems to be taking place in the portraits of *Saint Joseph with Child* referenced above. It is also what I have amply demonstrated as a widely common cultural practice in Colonial Hispanic America and Spain (the naming of people as Maria José, José Maria, etc.). Such paintings appear to strive for union of traditionally exclusive categories (male / female). They seem to advocate not either or, but both identities contained in one sole image in order to consolidate, at the same time, as a metaphor, a Creole, mixed identity and perception of self in colonial Hispanic America. This mixed identity is not rare among some groups in colonial Hispanic America, particularly among some black populations whose set of religious beliefs from Africa included androgynous deities such as Obatalá. Julia Cuervo Hewitt in *Aché, presencia africana: tradiciones yuruba-lucumí en la narrativa cubana* attests that "Obatalá, extoled, acquires androgynous characteristics. Continuing being the king that needs to regain the kingdom usurped by

\(^{126}\) Parthenogenesis: reproduction from an ovum without fertilization, esp. as a normal process in some invertebrates and lower plants. From Greek parthenon = virgin + genesis = creation
Oduduwa, in the New World, the creator and father of men rises definitely as a mother-father, king-queen and god-goddess” (122, translation mine).^{127}

**Other Poetic Representations of Saint Joseph in Colonial Hispanic America**

The following is one of the poems dedicated to Saint Joseph, "Ynocente Mariposa" from the colonial Musical Archives of Bogota's Cathedral:

*Ynocente Mariposa*

*A San José.*

*Coplas:*

*Ynocente mariposa*

*fenix Joseph en tus llamas, si*

*en el cielo no ay senisas, dime*

*para q. te enbarcas.*

The first stanza identifies St. Joseph both as a butterfly and as a Phoenix. Remarking St. Joseph's innocence, the lyrics characterize St. Joseph, first and foremost, as a pure and naive (innocent) figure. If one rearranges the syntax of the first in stanza in the following fashion, *Inocente mariposa, fenix Joseph, si en el cielo no hay cenizas, dime para qué te embarcas en tus llamas*, the word "embarcas" (embark) would not signify to set out on a journey. Here, rather, the speaker asks St. Joseph why he has decided to let himself be swathed, involved, consumed in his own flames if there are no ashes from which to be reborn as a Phoenix. In this stanza, St. Joseph is burning (*en tus llamas*), and as the poem progresses, such flames seem to represent Joseph's living passions and desires (*lo actibo de tu fuego*). In the second stanza, for instance, such flames are tyranical because they seem to dominate St. Joseph's feelings and actions. The poetic voice recommends the Saint not

---

^{127} Obatalá, exaltado, adquiere características andróginas. Sin dejar de ser el rey que tiene que recobrar el reino usurpado por *Oduduwa*, en tierra americana, el creador y padre de hombres surge definitivamente como madre-padre, rey-reina y dios-diosa (122).
to flutter his wings, which at this point, in a double metaphor, are also compared to the sails of the ship on which he intends to embark. Instead of feeding the fire and passions that invade him (like a pirate), he should stay quieter, and wane (amainar) his impetus:

\[
\text{Si lo actibo de tu fuego} \\
\text{tiranás llamas alaga, no} \\
\text{des velas a tu golfo:} \\
\text{mira q. es pirata, amayna.}
\]

The third stanza keeps referring to St. Joseph as a female figure, a butterfly, and specifies the passion that consumes him: jealousy. The poetic voice keeps advising him to stay in his place, not to move, to keep quiet, and realize that flapping his wings would only originate chaos and lead him to a stormy life:

\[
\text{Por celosa no presumas} \\
\text{dexar el puerto, repara q.} \\
\text{son velas de tormenta esas} \\
\text{que vatieres, alas.}
\]

In the fourth stanza, the poetic voice acknowledges that the world where Joseph lives in is a sea (i.e., is full) of jealousy and intrigues (mar de rezelos), and encourages the Saint to be strong and endure such troubles, as though accepting carrying their weight over his shoulders. Should Joseph lead his life with jealousy, he would encounter dangers along his way:

\[
\text{En tanto mar de rezelos} \\
\text{noble mariposa, aguanta,} \\
\text{que no hay rumbo sin peligro} \\
\text{donde los celos se embarcan.}
\]

The last stanza reinforces the idea of enduring difficulties, for those who live in grace are the ones who have heard and learned not a few lessons:

\[
\text{Las olas de tu cuidado, noble} \\
\text{mariposa, aguanta,} \\
\text{q. no ay bajos de escarmientos en} \\
\text{las alturas de gracia.}
\]
Particularly, the last three stanzas advocate a passive attitude in life. They advise St. Joseph not to let himself be drawn by lowly human passions such as jealousy (there's no path without danger where jealousy is embarked; i.e., where there is jealousy). Although the poem does not specify what originates jealousy, applied to St. Joseph one may think jealousy refers to the fact that he, like a man, could not touch Mary to engender her son and become the real father of Jesus. In other words, the poem advocates Virginity for St. Joseph, which is the most conspicuous trait of the Virgin Mary as well.

Should the speaker's advice be followed, St. Joseph's figure would be portrayed, in sum, as a passive, virgin, and obedient character. Hence, the feminization of Jesus in this poem can stand, by extension, as an idealized representation of Hispanic America and its people: passive and obedient entities.

Examining further the meanings that the word "butterfly" suggests, it denotes from the outset a fragile ontological metamorphosis because butterflies are but the ultimate result of it. As an apposition, the word "butterfly" ought to be considered with special care in Spanish and in English nowadays since in most Latin American countries and current-day Spanish "mariposa" connotes an effeminate man, and a "[social] butterfly" signifies in present-day English a garrulous and fickle diplomat, this poem requires, in order to avoid wrong interpretations of it, to check the meaning of "mariposa" as it was understood in the 17th century and before.

If yet in a very peculiar way according to modern standards, Covaruvias' *Diccionario de autoridades* (*Authorative Dictionary of the Spanish Language*) provides the closest meanings of terms as they were in use during the 17th century (the English translation will not follow all the idiosyncrasies of the original rendering, but simply brush a rough idea):

Butterfly, is a little animal that is counted among the little winged worms, the most imbecile of all that there can be. This one tends to get into candle lights, insisting one and yet another time, until it is finally burned. And for this reason the Greek gave it the
name of pirauftis. You will see Erasmus in the Chiliads, verb Pyraufia; gaudium. The same occurs to young, light men, who see nothing but the light and the radiance of woman to hang out with her. And when they have gotten too close to her, their wings are burnt, and they lose their lives. It was said Butterfly almost butter fly because it alights wrong on the candle light where it is burned. (Folio 103 V, translation mine)

MAR I P O S A, es vn animalito que fe cuenta entre los gufanitos alados, el mas imbecil de todos los que puede auer. Efte tiene inclinacion a entrarfe por la luz de la candela, porfianto vna vez, y otra , hafta que finalmente fe quema. Y por efta razon el Griego le dio el nombre de pirauftis. Veras a Erafmo en las Chiliadas, verbo Pyraufia; gau dium. Efto mefmo les acontece a los mancebos liuianos, que no miran mas que la luz, y el refplandor de la mujer para aficionarfe a ella: y quando fe han acercado demasiado fe queman las alas, y pierden la vida. ~ Dixofe maripofa, quafi maripofa, porque fe afienta mal en la luz de la candela donde fe quema. (fol. 103 V.)

However idiosyncratic, Covarruvias' definition literally sheds light on the symbolic operations that seem to be taking place in this poem with Joseph's metaphoric metamorphosis. Taking into account the definition above, the poem suggests that Joseph's propensity to strive toward light (i.e, the splendor of women toward which men feel attracted), may actually annihilate him, as that light burns him.

Still, a butterfly is by no means the last of Joseph's metaphorical transformations in this poem. He is also associated with the Phoenix (fist stanza). This imagery brings to mind the following questions: Why should the image of a "pagan" myth be selected to represent a holy figure in the Christian tradition? What significance does the story of the phoenix contain to have readers associate it with the gender identity of Saint Joseph?

Of the Phoenix, Ovid reports that "from out of his father's body, a baby phoenix is born." (15.401). In addition, "he promptly uses his talons and unsoiled beak to construct a nest in the
branches high at the top of a quivering palm tree. As soon as this nest has been lined up with spikes
of the mildest nard, with grated cinnamon, red-gold myrrh and cassia bark, he rests his body upon
them and ends his life in their fragrance" (15.396-400). Clearly, in Ovid's rendering, the attribute of
giving birth is no longer exclusively assigned to females, but to a male-female figure instead.
Besides, immediately after this description he goes on narrating further androgynous traits and
sexual transformations in other species: "But if these curious facts and stories inspired us to wonder,
/ we may be surprised by the change of sex, when the female hyena/ who once was served by a male
appears to have grown male organs" (15.408-10). However, the price that a male-female ought to
pay for giving birth (like a phoenix), and for containing light within his body, is his own
destruction, as the phoenix is consumed in his own flames: The Neo Granadine poem to Saint
Joseph reiterates this idea of self-destruction in several passages: "...fenix, Joseph, ... lo actibo de tu
fuego, tiranas llamas alaga" (2, 5-6) or "repara / q. son velas de tormenta, esas que batieres, alas"
(10-12); i.e., notice that those wings that you flap create storms (difficulties).

Other versions affirm that the Phoenix picked up, wrapped and sealed its own remnants of
which its father was made, inside an egg made of myrrh, carried it to the city of Helios, and burnt
both the egg and its father inside it (Bell, 170, 199, 247). In turn, Plinius Secondus (more often
referred to as Plini) reports the Roman senator Manilius' account of the phoenix. This version
approximates the nature of the phoenix more to a butterfly than to a bird by referring to the chrysalis
and worm stages of this rare eagle, more akin to a butterfly: "of his bones and marrow there breedeth
at first as it were a little worm: which afterwards provedth to be a pretty bird" (Turner, 112).

So far, the Neo-Granadine poem "Ynocente Mariposa" (Inncent Butterfly) suggests the
aforementioned ideas associated with the Phoenix and the Butterfly as unstable creatures in an
androgynous state in between states of self-transformation. Pictorially speaking, the following
eighteen century painting from Bolivia, The Patronage of Saint Joseph, by Gaspar Miguel de
Berrío,\textsuperscript{128} is the one that seems to dialogue closer than other paintings and poems with \textit{Ynosente Mariposa} (Innocent Butterfly) from Bogotá's Cathedral, regarding the androgynous representation of Joseph as a butterfly.

\textbf{Figure 18.} “The Patronage of St. Joseph.” 1737. By Gaspar Miguel de Berrio (Bolivia 1706-1762). Oil on canvas. 196.1x252.6cms. Museo de la Casa Nacional de Moneda, Fundación Cultural BCB, Potosí, Bolivia (449)

Here, Saint Joseph is depicted as a queenly Virgin with a royal cape that may evoke the extended wings of an enormous butterfly. The artist places St. Joseph at the center of the

\textsuperscript{128} As the lower inscription indicates, the canvas was commissioned by Don Bernardo Lopes de Sagues in 1737. The painting comes from the convent of St. Monica in Bolivia (Gisbert 449). "The Mestizo-style Iglesia de Santa Mónica, in Bolivia, was begun in 1574 and was originally intended to serve as a monastery for the Ermitañas [Hermits] de San Agustín. However, the order ran into financial difficulties in the early 1590s, eventually resulting in its closure and conversion into a Jesuit school" (Matic et al.). Rosa Giorgi informs that "Monica may be of Latin origin with uncertain meaning of ‘mother, bride’ (506). Furthermore, St. Monica (b. c.332-d.Ostia, 387) was the mother of St. Augustine. She was able to convert her violent husband and her son into baptized Christians. She is the matron of mothers and widows, and her attributes are the book of the rule and the crucifix" (506). Based on this description, none of the characters portrayed in the canvas seem to represent this saint. However, the painting shows St. Monica's devotional adherence to St. Augustine, her power of conversion, or its indoctrinating agenda against heresies (as St. Augustine himself was a convert who adamantly fought against heresy).
composition, continuing the long-standing iconography of the Protective Virgin or the Virgin of Mercy, of which innumerable examples can be drawn from the annals of history. Few of those examples I chose for the present chapter are the Virgin of the Caves by Zurbarán, Madonna of Mercy and the Madonna of the Protective Robe (see figures below):


The androgynous image of St. Joseph as a crowned Virgin in de Berrio's composition stands out as the organizing pivot of a clearly stratified society. As the central figure, he is the medium, the channel of transition and connection between two opposite world: The world below, inhabited by humans, to whom Queen or King Joseph protects, and the world above from which Divine light
emanates directly to enlighten androgynous St. Joseph and his protégées; or day, represented by the sun, on the one hand, and night, represented by the moon, on the other.

In the colonial Hispanic American context, the figure of St. Joseph is represented in several ways and occasions as an androgynous being. This insistence in art makes peripheral identities not only visible, but also central, as main characters. In literature, the figure of Saint Joseph stresses the mutability of being: The propensity of Joseph, as representative of a Creole sentiment, to adapt and reinvent himself, over and over, like a phoenix. In the poems and paintings this chapter has explored—particularly "Ynosente Mariposa" (Innocent Butterfly) and the Bolivian Patricinio de San José, by Berrío—Saint Joseph is a figure quite clearly and precisely "in-between" heaven and earth, life and death, light and darkness, maleness and femininity (e.g., in the flight and fall of the Phoenix), etc., the dual character of androgyny is a trait that has been expressed through those "in-between" spaces where some colonial Hispanic American poets and artists have positioned Saint Joseph in the construction of their world-views. Androgyny has been understood and accepted as part of daily life in some communities in Hispanic America since Pre-Columbian times, as the case of the Muxes from Mexico has shown. It must be noted, however, that the transformation of female models into males and vice-versa in Hispanic American representations of St. Joseph is not a practice unique of the New World, but it is rather taken from already existing European practices. In any event, transformations of models continued to be a common practice in the New World also as an attempt to reflect a Creole outlook that certainly differs from the same European models that it uses. In the following chapter, this study will show how those transformations take effect in different forms and modalities of subversion of traditional models and teachings in New World Creole representations of Saint Bartholomew.
CHAPTER FOUR

Written on the Body:

Reading Saint Bartholomew as a Cultural Palimpsest

One of the most popular and most represented saints in Hispanic America is Saint Bartholomew, one of the twelve apostles of Christ who, according to legends, reached the New World in his travels. Perhaps the oldest and most traditional popular account of the life of Saint Bartholomew can be rescued, aside from the Bible itself, from *The Golden Legend* by thirteen-century Dominican friar Jacobus de Voragine. Physically speaking, according to this European narration, Saint Bartholomew was fair; “[h]is hair is black and curly [. . .], his eyes are large, his nose even and straight, his beard is long, with a few grey hairs, his body well proportioned” (221). Regarding his appearance and habits, “[h]e wears a white, sleeveless tunic with a purple border, and over it a white cloak which has purple gemstones at the corners.” (221). He stands out for his frugality, for “[f]or twenty-six years now he has worn the same clothes and sandals, and they look neither old nor dirty. He kneels a hundred times daily to pray and a hundred times every night” (221), and thanks to angelical intercession, he “never grows weary or hungry” (221). His personality is depicted as “unfailingly happy and cheerful” (221). He is also rather fickle for his seekers, for he will appear before them not when they want, need him, or ask for him, but whenever he wishes to attend their requests (221). He certainly was a troublesome figure for those who did not follow the Christian faith and worshipped “idols.” He is said to have taken possession of the places where infidels from India (i.e., any remote place outside Christendom) held idolatrous practices. He neutralized the power of local idols by fastening the devil within them with chains of fire, making the idols completely useless before their followers. He is said to have saved King Polimius’s daughter who was possessed by the devil. As a result, he succeeded in converting the king and his immediate family to Christianity (222). He performed several exorcisms, among which the most notable one was the liberation of an Ethiopian: i.e, a black man, physically described as a frightening deformation out of the influence of the devil upon him (223). Voragine tells that King
Astrages, Polimius’ brother, learned of the transformation that Bartholomew exerted upon his brother against him. In order to defend his legitimate right to preserve his native beliefs and worshipping practices, Astrages ordered to beat the apostle with clubs and then flay him alive. This is the moment in the life of Bartholomew most often represented, his flaying. However, de Voragine’s account provides alternative versions of Bartholomew’s martyrdom. For example, in *The Golden Legend*, de Voragine says that according to St. Dorotheus, the apostle was crucified upside down. De Voragine also affirms that in other accounts, it is reported that he was beheaded (224). The stories of Bartholomew’s martyrdom, especially of his flaying, traveled to the New World with conquistadors and missionaries, as he was popular and became the patron saint of plasterers, tailors, furriers, binders, butchers, glovemakers, stewards, house painters, and tanners (Giorgi, 500).

As one of the most widely represented saints in Colonial Hispanic America, Neo Granadine (Colombian) and Novo-Spanish (Mexican) painting and poetry about this saint clearly show the awareness that Creoles in the colonial period had of this legend as common knowledge, and also the reception and significance that such account had among them. As in the case of other saints and religious figures studied in previous chapters, also Saint Bartholomew served to represent Creole views of colonial society. The paintings and poems that this chapter explores show how this saint has been used in the New World in order to express and reinforce the interests and outlook of natives, missionaries, and Creoles in various parts of colonial Hispanic America, particularly in New Granada, Perú, and New Spain. The interest and motivations for the representation of the flaying of the saint vary. However, it is precisely such transformation in the representation of this saint what speaks of the complex negotiations between the artists and writers and their social and political conditions. As it will be discussed in this chapter, Saint Bartholemew flayed also served Hispanic American writers and painters as a tool to represent colonial society and pre Hispanic America in the context of European history and of Christianity. For this reason, this chapter proposes to read the flayed skin of Saint Bartholomew as metaphorical palimpsest: a parchment where multiple stories have been written,
rewritten, and peeled off over the centuries, but always leaving traces of previous stories as well as of ontological and ideological instability in its layers.\textsuperscript{129}

Many artists in Hispanic America seem to negate religious official discourse in their lyrical and pictorial compositions, while at the same time imitating and supposedly reaffirming such discourse. In other words, stories depicted in New World representations of Saint Bartholomew appear to speak with a double voice against their didactic purposes. In other words, New World stories of Saint Bartholomew scratch or peel off older, traditional European stories of this saint and rewrite upon them the special appeal and re-significations that they acquire in Spanish colonies (e.g., the right to preserve indigenous beliefs and rituals, showing the saint as “the bad guy,” not as the saint it purportedly represents in Christianity.

Several questions related to the images of St. Bartholomew will be considered in this chapter. The first question is how the human body is represented and what does the representation of the body seem to state as a discursive artifact. The following pages also will explore how the aggressive flaying of Saint Bartholomew perchance serves as a perfectly suitable trope for Colonial subjects to distinguish their nonwhite European racial identity in Colonial Hispanic America. If social hierarchies and political as well as human negotiations are portrayed pictorially and poetically through representations of this saint, then, who inflicts punishment upon whom, and why, in these representations?

\textsuperscript{129} I base my notion of palimpsest on its dictionary definition, and also on Gérard Genette’s understanding of Levi Strauss’ use of the term \textit{bricolage}, according to Jacques Derrida. The American Heritage Dictionary defines palimpsest as “A written document, typically on vellum or parchment, that has been written upon several times, often with remnants of earlier, imperfectly erased writing still visible. Remnants of this kind are a major source for the recovery of lost literary works of classical antiquity” (894). In turn, Derrida explains Levi Strauss’ notion of \textit{bricolage} as the ability to adapt for one’s purposes the instruments one finds at hand and were originally built for other purposes, different from the ones for which one uses such tools. As G. Genett observes, this is the same principle that takes place in criticism, and especially in literary criticism (Derrida, 920). This explanation of \textit{bricolage} is no different from the definition of palimpsest provided herewith and from the practice of New World writers and artists who take already existing models they find at hand and transform them to express their own agendas.
The narrative background of St. Bartholomew that nourishes the poetic production and imagination of Colonial Hispanic American writers and painters is quite diverse. At the same time, the story of the saint that comes to the Americas through Europeans, missionaries — particularly in Mexico and Peru— found some pre-Columbian beliefs and ritualistic practices quite fitting to re-elaborate a syncretic image of the saint and, thereby, evangelize the natives. In effect, Octavio Paz recalls the totalitarian strategy of the Jesuit order in the 17th century to syncretize native beliefs far and wide —from Mexico to China— with the Christian doctrine in order to institute it as a universal truth. Paz further attests that, in Mexico, the Jesuits displaced the clout of the Franciscan and Dominican orders to the point of becoming not only the most powerful and influential teachers of Creoles from New Spain, but also the very voice of their own conscience (56-7).130

One of the Aztec rituals that most closely relates to the flaying of Saint Bartholomew, serving the strategy of the Jesuits in New Spain, was the Tlacaxipeualiztli, or “flaying of men” (Wohrer, 3 translation mine), celebrated in honor of the god Xipe Totec or Lord of Liberation or, literally, Our Lord the Flayed One (Antei, 13).131 As it occurs with many Colonial Hispanic American

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130 For a more thorough exposition of how syncretism operated in New Spain and other regions of the world influenced by Jesuit missions, see “Sincretismo e imperio” (Syncretism and Empire) in Paz, Octavio. Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz o Las Trampas de la Fe. Mexico, D.F.: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1995. 55-67. Print.

131 Other references based on evidence from Sahagun, identify Xipe Totec as the patron god of goldsmiths and featherworkers. See Smith, Michael E., The Aztecs, 2nd ed. Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2003. 96. Print. This deity is also identified as Mixcoatl-Camatl or the Red Tezcatlicatlipoca, the first son of the supreme male-female deity who created the universe. The other sons were the Black Tezcatlipoca (known as the Tezcatlipoca), Quetzalcoatl or the White Tezcatlipoca, and Huitzilopochtli or the Blue Tezcatlipoca. Susan Gillespie confirms that Totec means “Our Lord” (152). A further identification of Xipe Totec is related to Motecuzoma’s attempt to flee to Cinalco, or the house of maize, a mythical place in the west, ruled by Huemac, when Motecuzoma heard for the first time of the ominous arrival of strangers (the Spaniards): “Motecuzoma sent his messengers to Huemac with gifts of human skins (associated with annual sacrifices to the god Xipe Totec) asking that he be allowed to reside there. At the cave entrance, of Cinalco, the messengers met Huemac’s servant, Totec (= Xipe Totec), who took them to Huemac” (158). Also, Xipe was Topiltzin Quetzalcoatl’s assistant according to Codex Rios (158-59). See Gillespie, Susan. The Aztec Kings. The Construction of Rulership in Mexica History. Tucson: U of Arizona P, 1989. Print.
representations of Saint Bartholomew, this ritual contains and elicits among most readers an exacerbated degree of crudeness that reaches the uncanny.\textsuperscript{132}

Giorgio Antei, author of \textit{Las rutas del teatro} (or \textit{The Pathways of Drama}), points out that the sacrificial victims of the ceremony of flayed men (\textit{Tlacaxipeualiztli}) were slaves and captives taken from communities subdued after war. These slaves and prisoners were purified and worshipped as if they incarnated \textit{Xipe Totec} or the flayed one.\textsuperscript{133} After cutting their hair beside a fire and keeping them as relics by the masters, the victims were sent to the altar of \textit{Huitzilopochtli}. Even if they fainted, they were dragged up the altar by their hair. Against a sacrificial stone, each victim was laid on his back and firmly held by his head and extremities while a priest stabbed the victim’s chest and removed his heart.

\textsuperscript{132}For a minute explanation of this coinage, see Freud’s essay \textit{The Uncanny}. Broadly explained, the uncanny (\textit{unheimlich}, lit., un-homely, unfamiliar), “is […] related to what is frightening—to what arouses dread or horror” (Freud, 514).

\textsuperscript{133} The Franciscan friar Bernardino de Sahagun locates the worship to this god in Tzapótlan, in Xalisco. Those who suffered from alcohol (called \textit{pulcre}) related eye maladies would make vows to \textit{Xipe Totec} and wear his blood dripping skin during the \textit{tlacaxipehualiztli} (flaying of men) ceremony. For more detail on the physical description of this god and the ceremony of flayed men or \textit{tlacaxipehualiztli}, see Chapter 18\textsuperscript{th} of First Book, and Chapter 2 of Second Book in Sahagun, Fr. Bernardino de. \textit{Historia general de las cosas de Nueva España}. Vol. 1 Mexico D.F.: Editorial Porrúa 1956. 65-66. 110. Print.

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to uphold it toward the sun and the four cardinal points of the earth. Afterwards, the body of the immolated victim would be thrown down the steps of the temple. Once the heartless body bumped down the steps all the way to the ground, the one who had taken the slave captive would generally chop up the body into pieces, eat it, and offer its parts to other people. The victims were called *xipeme*, which means flayed, and *tototecti* which means the dead in honor of the god *Totec*. The skins were given to various people among the public to be worn in order to literally incarnate the divinity that the slave was representing in the Nahuatl pantheon (14).

Not surprisingly, a description of this public ritual unfolds its similarities with the lithic, cartographic, pictorial, and poetic accounts of Mexica’s origins and process of settlement. By means of cyclical reenactments of the *Tlacaxipeualiztli* ceremony, as well as of massive sculptures, countless repetition of domestic tools, statuettes, and pottery produced by local artists subdued by the Mexicas, they solidified in the collective memory of vanquished cultures the supremacy of the Aztec Empire.

The points of encounter between the ritual to *Xipe Totec* and the story of Bartholomew go beyond the obvious flaying of skins. These apparently dissimilar stories and figures also hold in common the desire to legitimize the set of beliefs of their respective creators by means of spectacular performances. Further, both are portrayed as healers. Mentioned in the Gospels by Matthew (10:3), Mark (3:18), Luke (6:14) and in the Acts of the Apostles (1:13), Bartholomew is not exempted from following Jesus’ instructions: to set out and preach, heal the sick, revive the dead, heal those with dreaded skin diseases and expel demons (Mathew 10:5-8). The Christian saint could have been associated very soon with the Aztec divinity in the sense that, according to Sahagun, *Xipe Totec* was

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134 Refer, for instance, to The Codex Buturini which describes the Aztec’s foundational migration from mythical Aztlan to Tenochtitlan, or the Myth of Coatepec, based on the Florentine Codex, and translated into Spanish by Miguel León Portilla. This myth narrates the birth of Huitzilopochtli from Coatlicue or snake skirted earth goddess, and the defeat of beheaded Coyolxauhqui, which is also represented in a giant monolith. All these narrations were used as reminders of the Aztecs’ conquests to subdued peoples. See Carrasco, David and Eduardo Matos Moctezuma. *Moctezuma’s Mexico. Visions of the Aztec World*. Boulder, CO: UP of Colorado, 2003.
believed to also heal skin deceases as dreadful as smallpox, abscesses, and scabies (65). In another sense, the dead victims were also purified and brought back to life in the skin and spirit of Xipe Totec.

The merging of Christian and non-Christian objects of faith as part of the evangelization mission of Spanish orders occurred in other parts of the American continent as well. In the twenty second chapter of the Fifth Book of his Re(g)al Commentaries, Inca Garcilaso de la Vega makes an ekphrastic description of a statue that the Inca Viracocha orders to make in the likeness of his uncle “Viracocha, the Phantom” (256-57). The sculpture is said to be of “a man with a fair height, with a more-than-a-stretched-hand long beard. His garments long and lose as a tunic or a habit, reached down to the feet. It had a strange animal, of unknown figure, with lion claws, tied to its neck with a chain, and the collar part of it held in the one hand of the statue” (258, translation mine).135

Clearly, the Inca Viracocha uses this sculpture as an instrument to visually legitimize and reinforce his position of power among the Indians he subdues: It is the Inca Viracocha himself the one who instructs the Indians as to how to reproduce the semblance of the god. But in view of their inability to materialize it faithfully according to his own mental scheme, Inca Viracocha wore the habit of the god, forbidding everyone else but he himself, the King, to do the same (258).

Inca Garcilaso admits that this statue resembles the images of the blessed apostles, and particularly, of Saint Bartholomew:

[This saint] was depicted with the devil tied up to his feet, as the figure of the Inca Viracocha stood with his unknown animal. The Spaniards, having seen this temple and the statue in the shape that has been said, wanted to say that, possibly, Saint Bartholomew the

135 “Era un hombre de buna estatura, con una barba larga de más de un palmo; los vestidos, largos y anchos como túnica o sotana, llegaban hasta los pies. Tenía un extraño animal, de figura no conocida, con garras de león, atado por el pescuezo con una cadena, y el ramal de ella en la una mano de la estatua” (Garcilaso, 258).
apostle could have arrived to Peru to preach to those gentiles, and that the Indians could have done the statue and the temple in memory of him. (258, translation mine)\textsuperscript{136}

In his literary invention, Garcilaso also reveals how much this apostle was naturalized among \textit{mestizos} from Cuzco as part of their cultural identity, to the extent that the saint became more Peruvian than Spanish. This group of \textit{mestizos} adopted St. Bartholomew as their patron and intercessor, creating a brotherhood around this saint that excluded Spanish participation. Hence, some Spaniards sustained that the adherence of \textit{mestizos} to Saint Bartholomew in reality was a way to follow the pre Hispanic worship of Inca Viracocha (258). The entire account of Viracocha relates a series of enmities and alliances among Chancas, Quechuas and other groups with the Inca Empire. The connections between Saint Bartholomew and the spirit of ‘uncle’ Viracocha appears as a rhetorical strategy to legitimize, through religious discourse, imperial and military expansionism of the Incas.

In turn, in \textit{The First New Chronicle and Good Government (El primer nueva corónica y buen gobierno)} the Peruvian chronicler Felipe Guamán Poma de Ayala (b.1556 – d.1644) confirms yet another function of Saint Bartholomew in Hispanic America. Professor Rocío Quispe-Agnoli reveals that an episode in this chronicle presents Saint Bartholomew and the cross of Carabuco as a divine attempt to do away with idolatry among Andean natives (68). She also highlights that “the arrival of this apostle was seen as ‘the first miracle that God made in this kingdom’” (68 translation mine)\textsuperscript{137} and points out that in folios 92 to 94, the chronicle “narrates the encounter of Saint Bartholomew with an Indian sorcerer who converts himself into Christianity and asks for ‘mercy and restitution’” (68,

\textsuperscript{136} “le pintan [al Señor San Bartolomé] con el demonio atado a sus pies, como estaba la figura del Inca Viracocha con su animal no conocido. Los españoles, habiendo visto este templo y la estatua de la forma que se ha dicho, han querido decir que pudo ser que el apóstol San Bartolomé llegase hasta el Perú a predicar a aquellos gentiles, y que en memoria suya hubiesen hecho los indios la estatua y el templo” (258). In chapters 17th to 29th in the Firth Book of Re(g)al Commentaries the Inca Garcilaso de la Vega narrates the life and death of the Prince Viracocha, his uncle the phantom, and their sacred royal lineage. Inter alia, the whole episode also attempts to paragon the architectural and political sophistication of the Incas with the Empires of the Western world.

\textsuperscript{137} “La llegada de este apóstol es vista como ‘el primer milagro que hizo Dios en este reyno’”
Furthermore, Quispe Agnoli observes that Guamán Poma “links this story with the actions of Franciscan friars and hermits who, in his opinion, had preached before the conquest” (68, translation mine), but there were no records because no one wrote them (68). In any event, the intended effect of introducing the figure of Saint Bartholomew as an apostolic missionary (who brought Christianity to the region before the arrival of the Europeans), in the resemblance of a local deity in the New World proves to turn out partially abortive in the Andes.

Guamán Poma indicated in his corónica that the Incas, e.g., rulers such as Topa Inga Yupanqui and Guayna Capac, continue with their idolatry (Quispe Agnoli 68). In folio 264, the chronicler affirms that the former “‘used to speak with uacas, and stones, and demons and, because of them, he knew their past and future, and that of everyone else’” (69 translation and emphasis mine). This partial description parallels in part Voragine’s attributions to Saint Bartholomew who also “foresees everything, knows everything, speaks and understands every language on earth; he knows already what I [Berith] am telling you now” (221). Here, the saint is omniscient and omnipresent, but it is the speech of a demon what bestows upon Bartholomew such Divine traits. Likewise, in the Colonial Andean world, it is through demons that rulers are also able to foresee and to know as Bartholomew does. Inca rulers use this claim as a rhetorical tool to legitimize their familial association with

138 La crónica “narra el encuentro de San Bartolomé con un indio hechicero que se convierte al cristianismo y pide ‘misericordia y restitución’” (68).

139 Guamán Poma “enlaza esta historia con la acción de los frailes franciscanos y hermitaños que, en su opinión, habían predicado antes de la conquista” (68).

140 “According to Andean traditions, long before the years of Inka expansion or the arrival of the Spanish invaders, the land was inhabited by a succession of powerful warring beings or god-men and god-women called huacas. [...] Huacas were (and still are) places and physical objects of special, sacred significance—often outcroppings of rock, remarkable peaks, or springs” (4). See: Mills, Kenneth, William B. Taylor, and Sandra Lauderdale Graham, eds. Colonial Latin America: A Documentary History. Wilmington, Delaware: Scholarly Resources, 2002.

141 “Topa Inga Yupanqui hablaba con las uacas y piedras y demonios y sabía por suerte de ellos lo pasado y lo venidero de ellos y de todo el mundo y de cómo avían de venir españoles a gobernar y así el Ynga se llamó Viracocha Ingá” (Guamán Poma, f. 264, cited in Quispe Agnoli, 69).

142 An idol vanquished by Bartholomew.
Viracocha, project that image onto their subjects by adopting his name, and justify their imperialistic enterprises.

Nevertheless, no matter how much Topa Inga Yupanqui had managed to authorize himself as Viracocha Ingá, and how much Viracocha could have been associated with St. Bartholomew, the parallels between Guamán Poma’s description of that Inga and the God-like powers that the European legend of Bartholomew attributes to the saint seem to be significantly similar. The former reinforces non-Western beliefs while the latter systematically attempts to destroy them. Such a difference shows how the myth of Saint Bartholomew imported from Europe was transformed in the Andes in order to strengthen and confirm the legitimacy of the ideological world that was already there, thwarting the hopes of missionaries to sweep away “idolatry.” In addition, such “idolatrous” world-view actually served the Spanish to justify their presence and carry out their cataclysmic changes in the fabric of society. In effect, Quispe-Agnoli recalls the knowledge of “various prophecies about the fall of the empire and foreign invasion. Some of these prophecies talk of the return of the God Viracocha, the creator, from the sea, in a moment of imperial crisis that causes calamities and suffering” (69).

In this regard, the Inca Garcilaso explains the following in Chapter XXI of the Fifth Book of his *Re(g)al Commentaries*:

[A]fter the irruption of the Spanish, they seized Atahualpa, tyrant King, and killed him. Not long ere he had killed Huascar Inca, the legitimate heir, and had inflicted upon those of royal blood (regardless of sex and age) the cruelties that we shall say later on. For this reason, the Indians truly confirmed the name of Viracocha to the Spaniards, saying that they were the sons of the god Viracocha, who sent them from heaven to expel the Incas and save the city of Cuzco and all its Empire from the tyrannies and cruelties of Atahualpa, as the selfsame Viracocha had done it in another occasion, revealing himself to the prince Inca Viracocha to save him from the rebellion of the Chancas. … And because they believed to
be the children of their god, they [the Indians] respected them [the Spanish] so much, that
the former adored the latter. (254, translation mine)\textsuperscript{143}

Nevertheless, after this explanation, Garcilaso qualifies this belief of the Indians as vain,
rebuking the Spaniards for not having talked the Indians out of it. He opines that it would have been
better, no doubt, if the Spanish had “preached the Holy Gospel with the example that the doctrine calls
for” (255) and said that “the true God had sent them to take [the Indians] out of the tyrannies of the
demon” (254-55, translation mine).\textsuperscript{144} These quotes expose, once again, the failure of the evangelic
mission —embodied by Saint Bartholomew as an exemplary figure— to efface the collective memory
of the Indians and the prevalence of “idolatry” among them. Both the Chronicle and the Commentaries
disclose, on the one hand, the Christian identity of their authors, and, on the other, their sound
knowledge of their own Inca background, placing their speeches at the crossroad of a simultaneous
affirmation and negation of what they are and what they are not.

This ontological instability is precisely what some Andean paintings of Saint Bartholomew from
New Granada convey. The best image I can think of that captures such condition of Colonial subjects is
the permanent attempt by artists and painters to keep a complex balance between traditional Church
doctrines and New World views. In a state of imbalance, they struggle not to privilege one discourse
over the other, but remain in a constant “in-between” cultural space.\textsuperscript{145} These works reflect the acute

\textsuperscript{143} “Y porque luego que entraron los españoles prendieron a Atahualpa, Rey tirano, y lo mataron, el cual poco antes había
muerto a Huascar Inca, legítimo heredero, y había hecho en los de la sangre real (sin respetar sexo ni edad) las crueldades
que en su lugar diremos, confirmaron de veras el nombre de Viracocha a los españoles, diciendo que eran hijos de su dios
Viracocha, que los envió del cielo para que sacasen a los Incas y librassen la ciudad del Cuzco y todo su Imperio de las
tiranías y crueldades de Atahualpa, como el mismo Viracocha lo había hecho otra vez, manifestándose al príncipe Inca
Viracocha, para librarel de la rebelión de los Chancas. ... Y porque creyeron que eran hijos de su dios, los respetaron
tanto que los adoraron” (Garcilaso, 254).

\textsuperscript{144} “Si a esta vana creencia de los indios correspondieran los españoles con decirle [sic] que el verdadero Dios los había
enviado para sacarlos de las tiranías del demonio, que eran mayores que las de Atahualpa, y les predicaran el Santo
Evangelio con el ejemplo que la doctrina pide, no hay duda sino que hicieran grandísimo fruto” (Garcilaso, 254-55).

\textsuperscript{145} As already seen in the previous chapter, this notion is theorized in postcolonial studies by Hommi Bhabha. See “The
Location of Culture” New York: Routledge, 2007 (p. 56). A fact that could illustrate this state is Guamán Poma’s signature
awareness of their Creole creators of the type of audience for whom they were writing or painting in order to gain visibility and respect before a Peninsular audience that really did not know them and would consider them at least exotic at face value.\textsuperscript{146}

Ballads and carols have not been studied to the same extent as narratives and chronicles have as historical sources for this period. However, I argue that the poems from the musical archives of Bogotá’s cathedral, as artistic expressions from the colonial period, serve as tools to observe, interpret, and draw possible interpretations on the psychological, social, cultural, and political panorama Colonial subjects in Hispanic America must have experienced. For instance, “\textit{Invicto Bartolomé}” (see Annex) presents a subtext that seems to envelop the figure of this Saint in the context of warfare, as a warrior. However, the poet does not explain against whom or what he is fighting, nor what or whom he defends. At first sight, the opening stanza would hastily lead to believe that Bartholomew stands against tyranny and in favor of Christ:

\begin{center}
\begin{tabular}{ll}
\textbf{INVICTUS BARTHOLOMEW} & \textbf{INVICTO BARTOLOMÉ} \\
Anonymous, to St. Bartholomew & Anónimo, a San Bartolomé \\
No music & Sin música \\

\textit{Invictus Bartholomew} & 1 & \textit{Invicto Bartolomé}, \\
\textit{Who for Christ’s sake} & 2 & \textit{que con valor esforsado}, \\
\textit{With effort offered the skin} & 3 & \textit{la piel por Xpto. Ofreciste} \\
\textit{Courageously to iron and tyrant} & 4 & \textit{al acero y al tirano}. \\
\end{tabular}
\end{center}

\textit{(Perdomo, 1-4, 368 translation mine)}

The word “offered” or “\textit{ofreciste}” invites the reader to consider the idea of offering or sacrifice. To understand ‘the offer’ of St. Bartholomew as a sacrifice for Christ’s sake requires on the part of readers a psychological predisposition to read and accept what other discourses already teach about the saint. In this context, the word “offered,” seems to imply willingness, but this willingness is qualified,

\textsuperscript{146} For instance, Guamán Poma de Ayala addresses his Chronicle and many letters to His Majesty the King Philip III of Spain. See Quispe Agnoli 35, 228-9, 23

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as Felipe de Ayala in a letter addressed to Philip III, King of Spain, even though in the Chronicle the author identifies himself as an Indian (Quispe-Agnoli, 230).
paradoxically, by the unwillingness of the sacrificed to give the skin (i.e., be skinned). He gives it “with effort.” It is not easy to volunteer to be killed by a tyrant; it requires courage. Yet, in this poem the Saint offers (willingly) his life to the tyrant. In any event, the wording of the poem surrenders Bartholomew’s life to the tyrant’s flank willingly despite his hesitation.

In my reading, the poem seems to have deviated from its expected argument (i.e., that he is willing to sacrifice his skin and life for Christ). Thus, the poem presents Saint Bartholomew offering—not sacrificing—his life, his skin, to a tyrant. Perhaps, this unexpected turn could be better understood in dialogue with the European legend from where the story of the saint comes. As a matter of fact, de Voragine’s legend leads one to ask if perchance Bartholomew was not as cruel and intransigent with the culturally Other as the culturally Other was merciless and cruel with the Saint. De Voragine’s narration of the life of St. Bartholomew does not mention tyrants, but kings, Polimious and Astrages. Rather than a tyrant, the former is shown as a generous and convert king. The story depicts him as a victim, not a victimizer, of the demon. “When he [Bartholomew] had preached the mysteries of the faith to Polimious, Bartholomew told him that, if he were willing to be baptized, he would show him his god bound in chains. … the king was baptized, together with his wife and children and all his people, and he renounced his kingdom and became a disciple of the apostle” (223).

On the other hand, as de Voragine’s hagiography of Bartholomew pointed out at the beginning of this chapter, the words and deeds of Polimious’ brother, Astrages, when he learned that Bartholomew had led his brother to apostasy, destroyed their gods, and dishonored their temple, led him to seize the Christian saint, beat him with clubs, and flay him alive. His reprimanding actions are as exemplary for his people as all the shattering, chaining, and burning that Bartholomew, on his own part, executed in order to convince people of the power of his faith and convert them to Christianity. Bartholomew’s role in this account is as aggressive and intolerant with people who hold other beliefs as Astrages’ reactions against the saint. Nevertheless, each one is adamantly defending his own belief. The narration proves a
well-spread adage in the Spanish-speaking world: *Quien a hierro mata a hierro muere*, or “He who lives by the sword dies by the sword.”

The relationship among Bartholomew, Polimious, and Astarges seems to be analogous to the situation of missionaries in the New World in relationship to African slaves, and Amerindians, or in any remote place, which de Voragine’s legend generically calls India. Due to the medieval imagination of the colonizers, they believed—like Bartholomew did in India—that they had the right to swipe out the idolatry of the Indians. On the other hand, the Indians and black populations in Colonial Hispanic America, in turn, whenever possible, defended their “idols” and their beliefs against the tyrants that attempted to destroy them. In Hispanic America, the figure of the king, then, was associated with a governing system that must have been tyrannical but familiar for Creole Neo Granadines if they composed poems and sang about such a system in the first place. In this sense, the *villancico* as a genre became a song of nonconformists; a protest against political submission to oppressive regimes. Even though this poem is anonymous, the poem is likely to have been written by a cultivated and learned person, most probably a priest, Creole or Spanish, at the service of the Church. Therefore, the poem hints at the awareness that learned members of the Catholic Church had of the society these members depict, are part of, and construct. In the account of *The Golden Legend*, it is with the same authoritarianism characteristic of tyrants that Saint Bartholomew manages to impose his Christian beliefs on the infidels. This type of imposition would naturally resonate among those who have gone through analogous procedures in a Colonial Hispanic American context.

Lines 5 to 11 of “Invictus Bartholomew” present, instead, a more benign, if yet still ambiguous, view of this apostolic figure:

The poem adds an element that is not even mentioned in Vorágine’s *Golden Legend*: Nature. Bartholomew is hailed and blessed as Nature’s defender. He is conceived of as a faithful soldier to the Creator. The fact that the natural world takes sides with Bartholomew who in turn defends it in God’s name, may be read as an index of how much the figure of this saint voiced the interests of indigenous people, Creoles, and Spanish in Hispanic America as a defender of Nature, the land, as opposed to a colonization program that promoted the construction or expansion of urban centers and posts for commerce as well as the extraction of raw materials.148

The poem also seems to praise the American landscape as a *locus ameanus*, including the natural elements of Pastoral literature, a primordial paradise without Adam and Eve or any other human intervention except from Bartholomew, nature’s defender. Since the saint is the one who takes care and defends nature, nature can be fertile only under his tutelage, as a defender of God’s creation. In effect, that absolute harmony of Nature with Bartholomew, so characteristic of the figure of St. Francis of Assisi, does not seem gratuitous since the Franciscans were one of the first missionary orders in the

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148 Since this carol is undated, it could have been from the 17th or 18th century. Here, evidence (or lack of it) does not allow to adopt a Manichean stand portraying the interests of the Spanish and those of natives, Creoles, or other ethnicities antagonistically. Predictably, many Spanish shared with Indian people both their respect to and exploitation of nature. Indians exploited salt and gold mines, erected colossal architectural works, and built impressive works of hydraulic engineering such as irrigation systems that altered the natural landscape. On their part, Spanish such as José Celestino Mutis (b.1732-d.1808), as the founder of the Botanical Expedition (1783-1816), incontestably proved the interest of Peninsulars in preserving Nature even if such an exploration worked at the service of the mercantile purposes of the metropolis. See De San Pío Aladrén, Maria Pilar, scientific coordinator. *Mutis y la Real Expedición Botánica del Nuevo Reyno de Granada*, Vol. 1. Barcelona/Bogotá: Lonwerg editores / Villegas editors, 1992.
Americas. Two paintings from New Granada of Saint Bartholomew being flayed demonstrate that some of the Franciscan sisterhoods, (i.e., the Clarisses) used this mythic figure in the city of Tunja no less uncannily than Sahagún’s description of Aztec rituals in New Spain.

The poet, from line 12 on to the end, plays with the ambiguous polysemy of words in order to signify how the marks of Saint Bartholomew actually segregate and dismember Christianity instead of agglutinating them together as one sole Church and body, the body of Christ.

We see such a testimony  
Of your faith so rubricated  
that all the members of your body  
Leave singled out.  
(368, translation mine)

de tu fe tal testimonio  
vemos tan rubricado,  
que de tu cuerpo los miembros,

todos se van señalados.  
(Perdomo, 368)

These lines allude to the epistles of Paul to the Romans (12:4-5), and his first letter to the Corinthians (12:12-31). The Biblical discourse calls for unity and social order, explaining metaphorically that everyone is a constitutive part of the Body of Christ, exerts different functions, and ought to be positioned in the right place so that the body as a whole works well. With this background in mind, the poem also could be used as a message to maintain the social hierarchies that allowed society to operate as it was: a clearly stratified, fragmented, colonial regime. Nevertheless, this poem seems to be taking this well-known biblical discourse of social harmony and cohesiveness in order to entice or at least show social desegregation. The poem plays with the semantic ambiguousness of the expression “the members” “los miembros” as it can refer to body parts, or to members of a group, or both. In this poem, members of the body of Christ, of whom Bartholomew is defender, do not stay together. They leave. And they leave singled out, as when fathers scold or reprimand their children when they have done something wrong or do not behave well. Those who belong to a group brandish their fingers to the outcasts, the renegades, the exiled sent out from mainstream society. This is part of

149 Bernardino de Sahagún who chronicled the first encounters of the Spanish with Amerindians, was a Franciscan friar. In the XVIII century, Fray Juan de Santa Gertrudis shows in Marvels of Nature (Maravillas de la naturaleza) the influence of the Franciscan orders in 18th century New Kingdom of Granada (and their conflicts with the Jesuit orders).
the meaning that this lyrical reenactment of the myth of Bartholomew emphasizes from the European Legend, suggesting a sentiment of social exclusion to those who do not share the beliefs of the Christian doctrine in colonial Hispanic America. In this sense, the poem is a palimpsest, a rewriting of de Voragine’s Legend, in and for a new social and geographical context: not “India” but the New World.

In lines 12 and 13, word choices also make a distinction between the faith of Saint Bartholomew and that of the speaker, represented by “we.” Confronting Bartholomew in direct speech, the poem talks of “your faith (tu fe), not of our faith (nuestra fe); i.e., it talks of his (Bartholomew’s) faith, not theirs (the collective speaker “we”).

The collective speaker sees the testimony of Bartholomew’s Christian faith as a rubric. In his *Diccionario de autoridades*, Sabastián de Covarrubias defines RVBRICA as the inscription of legal titles, and explains that this inscription is written in crimson letters in order to distinguish it from the rest of the text.\(^{150}\) The nuances that the word rubric conveys in modern Spanish and English allow to interpret this poem today in ways that do not differ much from what the original meaning of the word rubric. In Spanish, rubric is also the set of rules found in liturgical books. Such rules, written in red, teach how to perform and practice the ceremonies and rites of the Catholic Church. Rubric also appears as a badge and an epigraph. As an archaic term, it is a red or incarnated sign (RAE). Accordingly, the English language, in turn, provides the following meanings:

1, a title, heading, direction, or the like, in a manuscript, book, statute, etc., written or printed in red or otherwise distinguished from the rest of the text; 2, a direction for the conduct of divine service or the administration of the sacraments, inserted in liturgical books; 3, any established mode of conduct or procedure; protocol; 4, an explanatory

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\(^{150}\) RVBRICA: la inscripción de los títulos del derecho. Dixofe afi porque fe efcibe con letra colorada para diferenciarfe de la demás efcritura (Covarrubias f. 165 r).
In this poem, the word “rubricated” is emphasized by “tan; i.e., so” which in Spanish may mean “more than necessary,” implying that people perceive the teachings of the Christian faith in such an incisive manner, that they prefer to leave, to go away from it, even if they are ‘pointed out’ as unbelievers. Based on the meanings I have excerpted above, today, as before, the poem talks of Bartholomew’s teachings associated with his skin as a crimson parchment, as an instructional book, as a way to inscribe behavioral precepts and laws gruesomely in red, as if such written precepts were incarnated in his very flesh. Another meaning of “señalados” in the context of this poem may also refer to the sign of the cross. Members leave blessed, persignados; i.e., with the sign of the cross cast upon them. In this sense of the word, the poem would close with a “happy” ending; i.e., meeting the expectations of those prone to read the poem with the lenses of fervent believers on. Last, “señalados” may be associated with one of the definitions of the word “rúbrica”: a red or incarnated sign; hence, members may leave as though marked with such a sign, with the blood of the Invictus Bartholomew. However, Christianity more commonly associates sacrificial blood with Jesus himself: metaphorically then, the sacrificed saint is associated with the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world. His blood cleanses, heals, liberates, marks the chosen ones, as this poem is also suggesting of Saint Bartholomew. I will show, in due time, how this association between the saint and Jesus is also constructed in paintings.

Invictus Bartholomew and The Golden Legend coincide in associating Bartholomew with Christ, but the way the poem and the European legend make such an association is different. The former associates the Saint with the rubricated (i.e., signed with blood) members of the Body of Christ, while the latter, as it was related at the beginning of this chapter, crucifies him head downwards or beheads him, fragmenting the body of the saint.
“Oy un campion divino,” the other poem from the only two villancicos dedicated to Saint Bartholomew, today in the Colonial Musical Archives of Bogotá’s Cathedral, does not seem to convey a very positive profile of this saint. This poem is full of ambiguities that seem to highlight the vanity of showing off the saint’s enlightenment.

Today a divine champion
Yearns to be so sharp
That with knives they have given him
A lesson about sharpness.  

1 Oy un campion diuino
2 tanto anhela al lucimiento,
3 que la gala de escarmiento
4 a cuchilladas le han hecho
(Perdomo 477).

I speak of enlightenment as one of the possible connotations of the word “lucimiento” in the first stanza (1-4), as “lucirse” means to pull one’s best act, show off, or be worth of attention. In the context of this poem, its most immediate meaning would refer to the idea of standing out for doing something or being someone remarkable, visibly brilliant in relation to everyone or anything else. This sharpness is not only mental or intellectual. It especially refers to his garments, an association that the poem seems to make with his skin. Here, as in all pictorial representations of the saint that will be considered in this chapter, the skin is the casket, the wrapping that covers the inner being. Therefore, when it is taken off, the saint is to expose the true colors of human nature, the entrails, the substance underneath the surface, the otherwise invisible, the spirit, the soul. It is the nature of that soul what these poems and the paintings I have chosen to study seem to examine.

Since Bartholomew is portrayed as a champion, one must ask whom or what does he defeat according to the artist. The traditional European legend would argue that he defeats the evil and idolatry, but in fact, it is the body of Bartholomew that is utterly defeated. However, it is precisely due to such defeat that he wins his reputation as a martyr, as a defender of the Christian faith. Line eight once again portrays Bartholomew as a Christ figure (de encarnado lo vistieron, or they dressed him as the incarnated; i.e., Christ.)
Some dexterous officials
Cut him a dress
For although they left him in raw flesh
They dressed him as the incarnate.

Cortaronle de vestir
unos oficiales diestros,
pues aunq. dexaronle en carnes,
de encarnado lo vistieron
(Perdomo, 477).

If this poem were considered a palimpsest, the most obvious difference with The Golden Legend would be the lyrical, rather than narrative, form of the account. Both Invictus Bartholomew and Today a Divine Champion (Oy un camion diuino) focus on the comparison of the Saint with Christ, as it also occurs in The Golden Legend, yet neither poem chooses the image of the saint’s head-downward crucifixion or decapitation of Christ. The poems from New Granada stress, instead, his life, not his death, and his corporeity. This emphasis on the incarnation or corporeity of Christ and his body members resonates in the New World as the need to instill a stratified order in society: i.e., despite differences, each member (of society) had better keep its place and do its respective job to keep order and a sense of unity among them.

As in “Invictus Bartholomew,” in the second stanza (5-8) the Divine Champion is comparable to Christ, otherwise known as the incarnated. Here the poem also speaks of officials—who could represent governmental or military entities. In the third stanza, the narrator also associates these characters with tailors. The paradox, between lines seven and eight, lies in dressing Bartholomew—i.e., endowing him with powers that are not necessarily his, but are put on, instead, like a dress—while leaving him in raw flesh; i.e., with nothing to hide. In other words, the poem presents the contradiction of dressing him on the one hand, while undressing him on the other. This is what makes this poem paradoxical. In contrast with the first stanza, where the mention of the protagonist opens up the poem in the active voice, in the second stanza the syntax helps stress that the saint has shifted from an active to a passive and subordinated position, becoming an object, no a subject, of manipulation.
Dexterous they are, no doubt,  
For they made anew  
The old vestment  
Turning it inside out.  

The third stanza (lines 9-12) seems to me a meta-narrative of the poem itself; of its process of composition and exegesis. In other words, what dexterous officials do with Bartholomew’s skin seems to me analogous to what writers and readers do with words. New World writers would take a literally old poem and make it anew but turning the meaning of its words inside out. In search of new meanings at the core of these poems, they would tear apart the surface, the appearance of words, digging into the often disagreeable substances that lie behind literary or human corpuses. That is what spiritual (or intellectual) renovation consists of, and that is what the body of these texts does over the literary and pictorial body of Bartholomew. That emphasis in turning something old into something new, to turn the inside of a cloth so that it can be the outside, resonates as the effort to get rid of old schemes from the so called Old World and wear a new and younger spirit, what was covered in the inside, more attuned to Creoles society in the New World.

As it has been shown in the beginning of this chapter, Saint Bartholomew has acquired different meanings at different moments in different cultural contexts. It is a situation the New World poet exemplifies:

High a price he ought to pay  
to be seen dressed up as an apostle  
for only for the deeds  
Bartholomew gave up the skin.  

This last stanza keeps displacing the meanings of the saint. “Cara” in its most immediate context signifies the high price the saint has to pay to be recognized as an apostle: his own life or an unutterably painful death. The price of his impressive appearance is no less impressive than his disappearance. Yet, “cuesta,” besides referring to the cost of something, refers to something difficult
that requires effort to do or overcome. So the poem also suggests that it is not easy, after all, to wear his
investiture as an apostle. Another ambiguity is the meaning here of “las hechuras.” It seems to refer
both to the deeds of the apostle (which were quite violent despite healing, converting, and preaching to
people), and to the designs, folds, and seams of the garment he is wearing (which is taken as his own
skin).

There are other poems that serve as contrast to the two poems about St. Bartholomew from the
musical archives of Bogotá’s cathedral. Margit Frenk, from the Instituto de Investigaciones
Filológicas of Universidad Autónoma de Mexico, provides helpful insights about the occasions the
poems of the Spanish-Novo Hispanic poet and playwright Fernán González de Eslava (b.1534 - d.
c.1603) were composed, and for whom and with what purpose they were written. The critic points out
that Eslava must have been involved at least in the festivities that the Jesuits organized in Mexico in
1578 and that relics of saints were sent to these festivities (75). I believe these fragments or fetishes
functioned as an artifice to inflame the fervor and fear of the followers of a foreign faith in New Spain
and other parts of Hispanic America. However, Jaime Humberto Borja Gómez, from Universidad de
los Andes in Bogotá, details further uses of relics in the New Kingdom of Granada and elsewhere. In
“The Exhibited, Purified, and Reveled Body: Colonial Baroque Experiences” (El cuerpo exhibido,
purificado y revelado: Experiencias barrocas coloniales), Borja explains that given the virtuosity of
sainthood, the bodies of saints or their fragments were strongly believed to perform miracles and were
conceived of, therefore, as spiritual and physical healers. In urban centers, this healing was also social.
Relics became objects that signaled the identity of the places that held them, and through them their
societies were able to be renovated, and regenerated. Relics are signs of the conditions and inner life of
the people that consider them relics. In addition, people gathered around a relic as they would with a
common ancestor, so relics became an object of social cohesion that provided a strong sense of
belonging and a common set of values to believers. Such was the influence of corpses on the identity of
communities (29). Furthermore, relics also provided “the possibility to touch and even smell the supernatural world” (30).

In his *Hierogliphycas*, Eslava also utilized the poetic image of Saint Bartholomew flayed as a laudatory sycophantism in favor of “the very illustrious Sir don Bartholomé Lobo Guerrero, in his consecration” (180, translation mine). Frenk explains that this type of composition “generally accompanies a pictorial representation that uses figurative symbols, especially of the animal kingdom” (180, translation mine). Frenk also explains the images with which this poem is connected visually: “Bartolomé Lobo Guerrero would be symbolized by images of a wolf, a warrior, and Saint Bartholomew; the city of Bogotá by the allegoric figure of Faith, an eagle, etc.” (373, translation mine). Frenk further points out that plays on words with proper names were fairly common in the 16th century (373).

Working for the inquisition in New Spain, Bartolomé Lobo Guerrero moved to South America as Archbishop of the New Kingdom of Granada in 1599. Here he founded the Colegio Mayor de San Bartolomé in 1604. Eslava rhetorically assuages the outstanding antagonism between the wolf (el lobo) which stands for the archbishop’s last name, and the lamb (which represents Christ as Lamb of God or God’s people shepherded by Jesus, claiming that the inquisitor is a wolf only in the external appearance of his last name because inside he is a benign lamb: “*el Lobo es lobo en el nombre: / dentro, cordero benigono*” (23-4). This clarification appears to me utterly ironic because if there were no doubts of the positive traits of the archbishop, there would be no need to justify them with this type of explanation in the first place.

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151 “al ilustríssimo y reverendssimo Señor don Bartholomé Lobo Guerrero, en su consagración” (180).

152 Poema que acompaña una representación pictórica que utiliza símbolos figurativos, sobre todo del reino animal” (180).

153 *Bartolomé Lobo Guerrero estaría simbolizado por imagines de un lobo, un guerrero y San Bartolomé; la ciudad de Bogotá, por la figura alegórica de la Fe, etc.” (373).
Eslava further emphasizes the meaning of the archbishop’s other last name, Guerrero, as a warrior of Christ, and claims that, as Bartholomew, the archbishop gives his skin to Christ who signs it with *almagra*, a red clay or terracotta that here represents Christ’s blood (25, 41-2). This association with Bartholomew’s sacrifice apparently intends to hail the sacrifices that Lobo Guerrero has to make in life as a warrior of Christ. Yet, these sacrifices can be understood at least in two ways here: 1) as the vows of religious obedience that purportedly forces him to renounce to his own will and to live with material privations, and 2) as the people to whom he, as an inquisitor, may have ordered to sacrifice for having the devil inside them. The poems that this chapter examines show that in New Spain as in New Granada, the figure of Saint Bartholomew is represented as a warrior, associating it with warfare.

In New Spain, this warrior image would be quite suitable to match it with the warriors that were sacrificed by the Aztecs in the *Tlacaxipeualiztli* ceremony as a lesson to show subdued people the power of the Aztec god Xipe Totec, using religion as a ritualistic instrument to consolidate political supremacy. This strategy is no different from the one that Christianity assumes in relation to other creeds and people who, according to the Catholic faith, also need to be colonized (i.e., “civilized”), and purified from evil. As stated in the *Golden Legend* by Jacobus de Voragine, “Christ sends his messengers everywhere to destroy the worship of the Devil and to establish the worship of Christ” (222). “He [Bartholomew] is a friend of Almighty God, and has come to the province to banish all the gods of India” (221).

Another poem by Fernán González de Eslava (b.1534 - d. c.1603) representing Saint Bartholomew illustrates the case of sacred poetry inspired by profane, pastoral lyrics. In this case, Eslava’s poem stems from a ballad by Pedro Liñán de Riaza, a friend and collaborator of Lope de Vega (360). The juxtaposition of the first stanza should suffice to show an instance of how European models were transformed in the New World:
Riselo appears as the foreign wooer of Celia in Frey Lope Felix de Vega y Carpio’s theatrical comedy *The Portuguese Lady and the Foreigner’s Joy* (*La portuguesa y dicha del forastero*), but the subtext of the entire “profane” ballad seems to be *Las fortunas de Andrómeda y Perseo*, by Pedro Calderón de la Barca where Riselo appears as a villain at the beginning of this play. Liñán de Riaza seems to give prominence to this minor character by describing some experiences and details that in the play and in the Greek myth are attributed to Perseo. In effect, Perseo was found along with his mother Danaë as shipwrecks by Dictis, a fisherman, in the island of Seriph (Gáfaro, 135). In any event, Eslava, in turn, presumably well acquainted with this play considering that he also was a playwright, transforms the figure of the Villain into Saint Bartholomew. Also in Riaza, Riselo is found and saved by a fisherman, while in Eslava Bartholomew, i.e., Riselo, is portrayed metaphorically as a fisherman...
himself. This role indicates his mission to gather and trap people, taking them out of the milieu where they naturally live and can survive. Yet, this fisherman is knifed and left in a state of instability, neither dead nor alive, by the shore, which is a verge, a limit that fuses and at the same time marks the distinction between two states and compounds: liquid and solid, water and earth, between death and life. The poem alone tells what propels the violence, why he is knifed (2-4).

Eslava also changes the word female-enemy (Enemiga) for “Divine Grace” in the forth stanza. Read side by side, it seems as if he paralleled and viewed Bartholomew as a villain, and the Divine grace as an enemy (13).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English</th>
<th>Spanish</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Enemy, do you love me?</td>
<td>Enemiga, ¿qué me quieres?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mis cuidados son tus hijos</td>
<td>Mi cuidado es darte hijos,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>your children are my worry;</td>
<td>My duty is to give you children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>si me ausenté de mi gloria</td>
<td>que para que les des gloria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>if I wasted away my glory</td>
<td>and I am opening their path</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In line 14, to give children to the Divine Grace is Bartholomew’s evangelic task to convert gentiles into his faith

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English</th>
<th>Spanish</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>They open up my path.</td>
<td>Abriéndoles voy camino.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Liñan de Riaza, 360)</td>
<td>(González de Eslava, 126)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(360). (126).

Unless “my hut” stands as a metaphorical image of a body or soul inflamed in passion, the profane meaning of rama possibly refers to the branches used in a fireplace to keep a pastoral damsel
warm at her lover’s home, while *rama* (a branch) in Eslava’s reelaboration seems to be transformed into the symbol of martyrdom in Christian iconography (see Fig. 3).

The poetry seen in the examples above presents ways to refer to religious conventions on the surface while portraying between the lines a non-sympathetic image of Bartholomew in order to comment, for example, on the traits of an inquisitor such as Lobo-Guerrero. Also painters utilized religious conventions to represent non-religious ideas: The ways the human body is represented in the paintings that this chapter studies seem to speak —or rather generate among their readers many philosophical and educated guesses— about the ethos of colonial subjects in Hispanic America. Among his many insightful observations, Borja explains how the overwhelming preeminence of the human body during Imperial Spain or Colonial Hispanic American art helped construct over the centuries the notion of corporeal individuality that most people hold today (*Cuerpo* 9). The recurrence of nudity, the conception of the body as a mirror of the soul, the pre-formulated postures of body parts (such as the eyes, the hands, etc.), carnal mortifications, and so forth not only meant to stir emotions, reinforce guilt, and instill religious fervor among viewers, listeners, or readers in order to construct an exemplary social body, but also signified the triumph of the Peninsular and American baroque over the medieval preference of the soul against the body.\(^{154}\)

It would seem that the wide-open incisions and prudish-less exposures of raw flesh nudity must have been quite daring acts of self-assertion and religious skepticism. Removing the skin of Bartholomew, then, could have meant to confirm with human eyes and hands the invisible and unquestionable wonders of Divine creation. These paintings reflect the attempt to move from a world full of unfathomable mysteries into a world that tried to challenge them and disclose them as human achievements and possessions, not as Celestial prohibitions or revelations.Propelled by scientific curiosity and practice (characteristic first of the Renaissance, and later of the Enlightenment), these

\(^{154}\)However, referring to Jacques le Goff, Borja also acknowledges the complex awareness of the Middle Ages in relation to the human body.
colonial artists could be considered as precursors of nineteenth century scientific positivism in Hispanic America.

To partly justify and explain the rationale behind the relationship between painting and poetry that characterizes the present study as an ekphrastic approach, some of the “Discursos apologeticos, en qve se defiende la ingenividad del arte de la pintura,” published in 1626 by Don Ivan de Bvtron, claim to prove that Painting emulates and is related to Grammar, History, Philosophy, and matters of State (unnumbered folio). Furthermore, other discourses relate painting with Dialectics (and by extension to Ethics, as suggested in the arrangement of the word “dialEtica”), rhetoric, arithmetic, and geometry, among other disciplines. These discourses may shed light into a better observation of the paintings here under study and into the ways the seventeenth century articulated what it called ‘the rhetoric of the image.’

In “Representations of the Neo Granadine Baroque Body in the seventeenth century,” historian Jaime Humberto Borja points out that in order to serve its purpose effectively, such rhetoric of the image, or art of visual persuasion, was conveyed through five elements: 1) the composition, 2) the color, 3) the ornament, 4) the perspective, and 5) the election of the scene (7). Borja also reports that the body was conceived of as a space to represent an outward theatrical performance of the inward mores of the soul (12). Thus, paintings worked as a type of scenic (although why not also cynic) backdrop to literally frame human behavior and social practices (9). So, more than aesthetic artifacts per se, paintings were mapped and displayed as political tools to tell stories, recreate (and possibly transform) history, and shape ideology. They depicted values, vices, and virtues in a didactic attempt to homogenize the collective imagination of a culturally diversified population that was already quite literate to read pictorial signs instead of the alphabet (6-7, 9).

The paintings under study are everything but original, in the sense that they did follow those pre-established conventions and rules of composition. In fact, Horoldo Rodas has keenly identified the similitude of the body and pose of Saint Bartholomew as an 18th century sculpture from Guatemala.
with the 17th century painting of the saint hanging on Saint Laureano Church in Tunja Colombia (279).

Besides, the exposure of the body seems to serve a didactic preoccupation with human anatomy.

According to art historian Luisa Helena Alcalá, the Guatemalan sculpture (see Fig. 3 below) was done under the influence of José de Ribera’s engraving “The Martyrdom of St. Bartholomew.” She further points out the influence of sixteenth century illustrated treatises of human anatomy, in particular the engraving of Juan Valverde published in Rome in 1556 (Rodas 279).


155 I have reviewed the complete works by Ribera and did not find any engravings by him. Neither did I find a representation of the Martyrdom of Bartholomew where the saint stands erect and with the pose of the Guatemalan sculpture. However, a definite influence is the representation of a bearded, wrinkled, and possibly old man and the emphasis on his stretched arms. The Guatemalan sculpture may resemble one of Ribera’s “martyrdom of Saint Bartholomew” if the polychrome wood were laid horizontally instead of standing erect. See Spinosa, Nicola. Ribera. L’Opera Completa. Napoli, Italia: electa Napoli, Gruppo Mondadori Electa S.p.A., 2006.
During and after the Council of Trent in 1563, the Catholic Church expressly promoted pre-established conventions to portray the lives of the saints, first, as a strategic response against Protestant accusations of idolatry, and second, as an adamant defense of traditional practices, reaffirming the propagation of dogma. This fact may be considered common knowledge, but many artists in Hispanic America tended to follow such rules of composition just to reverse its original purposes. This reversal of assumptions is precisely one of the puzzling rhetorical suggestions that the flaying of St. Bartholomew may convey, far and beyond the moralizing prescriptions of the flaying as such.

One of the many questions left to the observer of these paintings of Saint Bartholomew is what did Neo Granadine artists negate and affirm at the same time and how did they do it in seemingly traditional representations? The baroque as an aesthetic and philosophical movement constantly provides pivotal points of encounter to fuse and disintegrate apparently irreconcilable contradictions (Potdevin 36-37). As the poems to or about Bartholomew examined above have already shown, boundaries of meaning and many traditional oppositions are not clearly defined in Colonial Hispanic America. An example of such ambiguity is the seventeenth-century Neo Granadine painting “Saint Bartholomew Is Flayed”.
For instance, to put it in prosaic terms, who is the “bad guy,” the one who will torture, in figure 22: is he the tormentor or the saint? Or is the figure that seems to be the tormentor someone else? The intense red pigmentation of the feet, the frowning furrows of the flayer, a firmly held knife emphasizing awful feelings in his face, and the filthiness of his fists fleshing off the left flank of the saint, all these and other details appear to suggest that the one who is really suffering a torture is the flayer. In contrast, the representation of the saint does not convey suffering. On the contrary, he seems to lean and bend down toward “the torturer” as if willing to facilitate his task, participating actively in it. The possibly effeminate smoothness of his skin and curvy delineation of his silhouette, as well as the expression of compassion on his countenance, echoed by the facial aloofness of the angel on the upper
corner reveal no traces of physical stress compared to the overt anguish of “the tormentor” who has become, instead, the tormented victim. The victimizer expresses the anguish of becoming the victim in the frowning of his forehead and his lower position, with his head downwards. In fact, in the composition, geometrically speaking he is the one below everyone else, even much smaller in size than the saint as well as the object of the saint’s gaze. Here the saint easily can be associated or confused with the representation of a crucified but still resplendent Jesus, so the artist has transformed the saint into someone else and the representation of something else, fusing into one sole image a contradiction of images and thus intimating multiple interpretations. The luminescence of the body seems to encode visually another displacement of meaning: As the poems *Invictus Bartholomew* and *Un campion* *Diuino* stressed on the image of Bartholomew as a Christ figure through its incarnation or corporeity, so is the central figure of this painting (figure 22) represented as a crucified and chained Christ.

The New World artist makes a daring twist of *The Golden Legend*: while in the European account it is the devil the one who is enchained by Bartholomew, in the New World painting the artist seems to scratch that traditional narration and rewrite another on top, by enchaining not the devil, but the purported Bartholomew, or the Christ figure, by his feet, as if he were the evil character. The New World painter also surrounds the central figure’s body with a halo emanating light in the shape of sunbeams. The composition divides the canvas vertically in one somber half, and in another half dominated by lighter colors, toward which the legs of the two men appear as though walking notwithstanding the chain that ties the feet of the saint. At the same time, horizontally, the composition contrasts a luminous upper half against an unfathomable abyss of darkness as the foundation upon which everyone except the angel seems to act his part. Finally, the natural landscape is also charged with semantic connotations: The tree to which the saint is bound is crooked and ramified enough as to suggest an eerie life of its own, as if one of its lower branches were the limb of an abnormal creature.

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156 The golden halo in the shape of sunbeams around saintly figures is widely represented in Perú, as gold (Inti), in Inca regions, represented sanctity (Conversation with Julia Cuervo Hewitt, April 2012).
with predatory fingers trying to reach and clasp the right arm of the central figure. The sinuousness of
the trunk, melted with the left side of the main character, resembles an aggrandized and distorted
shadow of his own body, and the entire composition acquires the menacing elasticity of a gigantic
octopus-like mollusk.

Inspired by the ideas of classic antiquity, in this type of paintings, the outer appearance of bodies
was meant to encase and communicate the inner values of the soul. Furthermore, paintings were meant
to shape the behavior of people and social practices, enticing people at most to adopt, or at least to
become aware of, the attributes of the saints as a mechanism of individual and collective control (Borja,
9). However, the graphic rhetoric utilized in this type of paintings contains enough ambiguities as to
contemplate the possibility of a deliberate reversal of official discourse. For instance, based on the
already described details in Figure 22, to discern exactly what character represents the saint and which
one the villain no longer becomes an expeditious and unquestionable task. What seems incontestable
history and dogma becomes doubtful contingency. With a tinge of compassion but mostly impervious
to pain, the saint appears to be confabulated with the villain in the execution of his gruesome job, and
inflicts upon him further suffering. The victim becomes the victimizer and the moral virtues of the saint
become perverted while the image of the flayer inspires a type of pity that dissipates all traces of
preconceived animosity.

A similar ontological reversal of assumptions seems to occur in Figure 21B. Strikingly, it follows
to the word many of the precepts of pictorial composition in vogue during the 17th century both in
Spain and in Hispanic America. Borja cites from *Diálogos de la pintura* by Vicente Carducho —one of
the most influential painters at his time— these guidelines to depict evil characters:

An ill-bred man fits to a deformed head, long and narrow ears, small and outward mouth,
curved and hunched neck, thin legs, [and] flat feet. The eyes should be small and
horizontally displayed along the face. [They should be] dry, opaque and cold as marble, and
swerve, quite bulged, as if about to jump out [of their sockets], unfitting to the face; joined
eyebrows, twisted and dry nose, thick and loose lips. Black-greenish color, yellow; thin, tortuous, rough skin, eminent veins, …, a fixed and cautious glace upon the eyes of others…. (translation mine 7) 157

Many of these traits seem to portray Bartholomew himself more as a villain than as a saint. As a matter of fact, it is he the one who holds the knife with which purportedly the crime of flaying has been perpetrated against him, and, ostensibly, if it were actually possible, another crime is about to take place: the decapitation of a crowning angel. This gesture conveys an aversion to being crowned by a religious hierarchy.158 Such an aversion makes itself explicit when one notices that the knife, harmlessly pointing down in the left hand of Valverde’s “corpo humano,” (Figure 21C), was deliberately changed by the anonymous Hispanic American artist to a menacing position on the other hand (Figure 21B).

Recalling Carducho’s guidelines, the face of Bartholomew in Figure 21B focuses its glance directly onto the eyes of the angel, with overt expressions of resentment, vengeance, and disdain. The other face, the one of the skin that hangs in the position of the strangest of all quadruped animals, in spite of lacking actual eyes to see anything, through the lightless hollowness of his sockets, looks quite alive directly at the viewers of the scene with an inculpating stare for his utterly humiliating and utmost twisted deformation. Presumably, the saint angrily regrets to have been turned into a beast and now intends to take revenge against the little angel that laurels him for having propagated the Christian faith among infidels.

157 “Al hombre de malas costumbres le conviene el rostro deforme, orejas largas y angostas, pequeña boca y salida hacia fuera, el cuello corvo y giboso, las piernas delgadas, los pies relevados debajo del cocavo de ellos, los ojos chicos y puestos a la larga del rostro, el resplandor de mármol, secos, que se vibran, como que quieren saltar, no convenientes al rostro, y muy salidos, las cejas juntas, la nariz torcida y seca, los labios gruesos y caídos, el color verdinegro, amarillo, flaco, tortuoso, la piel dura, las venas eminentes, …, el mirar fijo en los ojos de los otros cautamente, y depresto” (Carducho, cited in Borja, 7).

The way in which the rhetoric of the image or this graphic discourse displays its elements invites an interpretation that, once again, diverts from the meanings that western literary history traditionally records. For instance, in *The Golden Legend*, by Jacobus de Voragine, the physical and spiritual endowments of Bartholomew are described by Berith, an idol from India, in the following fashion: “He [Bartholomew] kneels a hundred times daily to pray and a hundred times every night. Angels walk by him and they never let him grow weary or hungry. His expression is always the same, he is unfailingly happy and cheerful” (221).

In most of these Neo Granadine paintings, angels accompany and apparently aid Saint Bartholomew, yet he looks crudely torn. Far from what these celestial creatures do in Berith’s description, in these canvases they do anything but protect the saint from weariness and hunger. Figure 21B unequivocally portrays a man standing defiantly on his feet rather than a submissive or friendly and unfailingly happy saint, as the Golden Legend describes Bartholomew. As already noted, no ever-joyous spirit and gladsome demeanor is found in any of these representations. Rather vindictive, spiteful, and worn out paradigms of the human condition—more akin to death than to life itself—predominate instead.
Figures 23A, B, and C illustrate how much of an influence José de Ribera exerted over Neo Granadine painting. Particularly, the lifting of the hand in anonymous *Saint Bartholomew Is Flayed* (Figure 23A) replicates the gestures that “*el españoleteto*” (i.e., Ribera) consistently utilized following pre-established conventions of postures that conveyed specific spiritual dispositions. In this case, the uplifted hand seems to indicate the heavenly reign that no one else but Bartholomew looks at, begging help and clemency. Based on Medieval and Renaissance treatises such as St. Augustine’s and Alberti’s respectively, Borja explains that “gestures used to represent the physical movements of the soul” (20). He adds that each historical period and culture chooses its own “catalogue of gestures” with its own semantics (21). He further highlights Victor Soichita’s recognition of discourses that the Christian world codified with particular meanings and delivered through a corporeal grammar since the Middle Ages. (20-21). In any event, “[t]he idea was to establish mechanisms of control over the body” (21).161

The Neo Granadine artist transforms the European models in a series of intensified metaphors.162 For instance, the skin of the hand that points out to heaven is prominently counterbalanced by its inert extension pointing down to earth instead, representing, perhaps, the two forces that drive the human soul towards heavenly and earthly realms. The well-tied or loosely spread cloth that covers Bartholomew in Figures 23B and 23C is disposed of in Hispanic America and replaced altogether by a sheer nudity that both covers Bartholomew’s genitals and probably over emphasizes its state of dead-like passivity that saintly chastity requires. If this part of the painting were read in such a way during the colonial period, the image of Bartholomew would have been used as an instrument of behavioral and demographic control, since it sent a very graphic message about sexual continence. In fact,

159 “Los gestos representaban los movimientos físicos del alma” (20).
160 “Catálogo de gestos” (21).
161 “Se trataba de establecer disposiciones de control sobre la corporeidad” (21).
162 As seen in chapter 2, in literary terms, exaggerated metaphors are called catachresis.
missionary priests often commented with distress of the propensity of Indians, Mulattos and Mestizos to promiscuity. For instance, *Marvels of Nature (Maravillas de la Naturaleza)* by Fray Juan de Santa Gertrudis, a Franciscan Missionary in the New Kingdom of Granada, was written with the explicit intention to “convert the barbaric Indians, Gentiles.” (unnumbered page). To illustrate the point, the friar narrates how Castel Fuerte, Viceroy of Lima and most reliable minister of the lord Philip V, asked a Mayor to write a list of all those who lived *amancebados*; i.e., publically together without being married, and the Mayor hilariously replied: “excepting me because I am married; the Archbishop because he is old, and Your Excellency because you are castrated, all the rest (of people) live *amancebados* (sexually together, without the sacred avowal of matrimony).”

In turn, the trunk of bare trees, more akin to raw nature in Ribera’s paintings, is transformed into an elaborate mechanism as an instrument of punishment and torture used both in Europe and across the Atlantic. Having feet and arms tied with thick laces speak of violent restrictions to the right to act freely, with self-volition. This type of corporeal treatment also illustrates visually a method to measure and control human behavior. The mortification of the flesh was a common practice among members of cloistered religious orders. However, the military vestment of the tormentor, in Figure 23A, suggests that such procedure may have been inflicted also upon detainees by colonial officials.

Another common ekphrastic element in Figures 23E and 23A is the allusion to de Voragine’s alternative version of Bartholomew’s death, according to which the saint was decapitated (figure 23A), and also crucified upside down (Figures 23A and 23E):

St. Dorotheus, for example, says … [that] ‘He [Bartholomew] died in Albana, a city in great Armenia, where he was crucified head downwards.’ But St. Theodore says that he was flayed. Again, in many books, we read that he was merely beheaded. But these discrepancies can be explained if we assume that he was first crucified, then, before he...

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163 “en sacándome a mí por casado, al señor Arzobispo por viejo, y a la V.E. por capón, todos los demás viven públicamente amancebados” (10).
died, taken down from the cross and flayed, to prolong his suffering, then finally beheaded…” (224).

The versions of Saint Bartholomew’s death crucified upside down and flayed dangle betwixt the realms of fiction and reality. Ribera and Titian represent the flaying of the satyr Marcyas as a punishment inflicted by Apollo (recognized from his laurel crown) after the half-human-half animal creature lost a musical contest with the god. The Hispanic American painters reverse the sense of triumph that this myth gives to Apollo by gesturing the crowning of the tortured and punished character by an angel instead. In both paintings, the defeaters kneel down, paradoxically assuming a typical posture of reverence rather than of victory and superiority over the defeated victim. Art historian Enrico de Pascale explains that the pipe hanging on the tree symbolizes Marcyas’ defeat. The satyr is tied, flayed, and dies upside down, as Figure 23E suggest. In Titian, Orpheus plays the violin and, among other witnesses, another satyr “carries a bucketful of water to wash the blood off the victim’s body” (79). On the right, the other character “who watches the […] execution in a pensive pose is probably King Midas” (79), the one who coveted everything being turned into gold.

Transposed to Christian narratives, the myth of Midas, and the triumph of Apollo over Marcyas seem to be quite fitting to instill religious messages into the consciousness of [the subjected] people. These lessons would be delivered visually to shape and control individuals and social behavior. Apollo’s triumph over a creature who is half human, and half animal teach about the consequences of trying to defy or even challenge the Divinity. This myth also justifies punishment over human beings that show their animal traits like Marcyas, the satyr. The myth of Midas, in turn, encourages people to embrace poverty, showing the disadvantages of being surrounded by gold.

The last painting that this chapter examines (Figure 24A) focuses more on Bartholomew’s own physical and character traits than in his flaying or on any political connotation that his torture may express. The painting confirms more its differences than its similarities with its European antecedents. Colombian plastic artist Gustavo Rico Robledo identifies in José de Ribera’s portrait of Saint Bartholomew (Figure 24B) the source that Gregorio Vásquez de Arce y Ceballos copied with no visible intention to surpass or transform the model (57). Some of the most noticeable differences between Ceballos’ imitation of Ribera’s portrait of Bartholomew and the traditional description of the saint in the Golden Legend lie in his age and his attire:

His hair is black and curly, his complexion fair, his eyes are large, his nose even and straight, his beard long, with a few grey hairs, his body well proportioned. He wears a white sleeveless tunic with purple border, and over it a white cloak, which has purple gemstones at the corners. For twenty-six years now he has worn the same clothes and sandals, and they look neither old nor dirty. (221).
Although both Figures 24A and 24B reproduce many of the traits described above, they intensify the signs of old age and discard any signs of adornment as a possible sign of status or wealth. In contrast with the pristine glitter of jewelry displayed in de Voragine’s narration, Figures 24A and 24B display no richness whatsoever, and the Saint’s clothing stands out for its simplicity. Amethysts are the purple gems per excellence. According to the contemporary catalogue on line of a prestigious jewelry store in England, Leonardo Da Vinci wrote that “amethyst was able to quicken intelligence and dissipate evil thoughts.” (Trinity London, Web). The jewelry house also affirms that “Amethyst was a favorite of Egyptian royalty” and the stone “was believed to encourage celibacy and symbolize piety so it was often used in the decoration of Catholic and other churches during the Middle Ages.” (Trinity London, Web). The properties that are attributed to the purple stone coincide with the personal traits that are ascribed to Saint Bartholomew in The Golden Legend as well as with the purple component of his garments, but the Spanish and New World paintings overlook this detail of the narration and emphasize the simplicity of the saint.

Personality wise, the Bible provides a down-to-earth —rather than magical and super natural— portrait of this saint, also known as Nathanael.164 The Gospel of John shows Bartholomew at first as a rather skeptical man. He does not believe blindly and raises doubts before making decisions or acting: “Can anything good come from Nazareth?” he asks when Philip enthusiastically invites him to come and see Jesus, the much prophesied figure about whom Moses had written in the book of the Law (John 1: 43-46). It seems clear that Nathanael is not particularly excited about the plan proposed by Philip even though both of them go to see Jesus. At the same time, Nathanael is identified by Jesus as a real, and genuine Israelite: “there’s nothing false in him” (John 1:47). Even so, Nathanael does not seem to be flattered or even impressed by Jesus’ words and presence, yet. He remains reticent and wants to know how Jesus knows him. Only when he is told that he was seen under the fig tree before Philip

164Conversation with Katherine Kidd, Ph.D., Divinity School alumna from Harvard University and University of Pennsylvania.
called him, does Nathanael change his mind to full recognition of Jesus as Teacher, Son of God, and King of Israel (1:48-49). The fig tree historically has had symbolic connotations in different cultures, and not all meanings in Christianity directly relate to this episode of Nathanael under a fig tree in the Bible. However, some Christian and non-Christian traditions associated with fig trees offer possible meanings for the fig tree in Nathanael story. “Romulus and Remus were suckled under the protective shade of a fig, which became an augury of national prosperity” (Tresidder, 181). Bartholomew was chosen to ideologically “conquer” the “gentiles,” and, by extension, to set the foundations of Christianity upon several remote nations. However, in the Bible, “Jesus [also] laid the curse of sterility upon a barren fig tree, hence a withered fig in Christian art sometimes represents heresy” (181). Tresidder also points out that the fig tree is “a symbol of abundance, maternal nourishment, procreation and—the sacred tree of life in many regions” (181). In this sense, the Biblical episode in which Nathanael finally responds positively, without aloofness, to Christ’s call may indicate that the apostle found in his Teacher an abundant source of life and spiritual nourishment, indicated by the image of the fig tree under which Bartholomew was seen.

Nathanael is mentioned again at the end of John’s Gospel, at a moment when the explicit intention of the text is to make readers and listeners believe that Jesus is the Messiah (20:30). Here, Nathanael is said to be from Cana in Galilee, the place where water is turned into wine. Nathanael appears among Simon Peter, Thomas, the sons of Zebedee (James and John), and other disciples of Jesus. This level of detail is important because the narration specifies first the names of those apostles who, at a crucial point, stand out in the scriptures for their doubts and disbelief. Simon Peter denies Jesus thrice, and Thomas is portrayed by Carvaggio (1571-1610) as the epitome of disbelief. Nathanael appears among them in the context of Jesus’ third apparition after his death, in lake Tiberias. Other sources call this lake “the sea of Galilee” (See Bulfinch. One Hundred Saints. 6th ed. New York: Bulfinch Press. Little, Brown, and Company, 2009.)
death had not been enough proof to convince the apostles of the promise of Resurrection. In sum, what
the Biblical version of Bartholomew emphasizes is Nathanael’s spiritual transformation into a follower
of Christ despite his distrustful and somewhat negligent spirit. Other sources identify Bartholomew as
son of Tolmai (Beitzel 505), but this fact simply explains Bartholomew’s patronymic (Bulfinch 33).166
None of these sources is to be taken as historically accurate, necessarily, but rather as exemplary
narrations incumbent to all followers of Christ in order to reaffirm their faith, and to all unbelievers of
the Christian faith in order to be converted.

One may wonder, how come is it that in Hispanic America the Biblical hagiography of
Bartholomew in many of the instances that I have presented here becomes the portrayal of an evil
character if, despite his aloof personality, the Saint is reported in the Bible to be allured and illumined
by Christ. I propose that it is precisely that original skepticism of Bartholomew what may have
attracted New World painters and writers to depict someone originally reticent to pay heed to the call to
follow Christ. I also propose that Bartholomew was depicted unsympathetically in the New World
because, by the traditional European account, this saint represents someone who does not respect other
people’s beliefs and religious practices if such beliefs and rituals are not Christian. In Hispanic
America, such antipathy could have been easily felt by Indians or people of African descent as well as
the many converts, sometimes falsely, Muslims and Jews, that traveled to the New World.

All the representations of St. Bartholomew that this chapter has explored, both lyrical and
pictorial, point out an ontological transformation of this saint on the part of Creole and native cultures
in the New World into something or someone that would not represent necessarily the epitome of
sainthood or exemplar faith. Rather, this chapter concludes having shown multiple ways in which
saintly figures such as Bartholomew were used, both by Europeans and indigenous rulers alike, as tools
for evangelization or indoctrination into a particular set of beliefs. In some cases, these beliefs were

166Patronymic refers to the family name derived from the name of a father or ancestor.
instilled into people’s minds through this saintly figure in order to reinforce in the collective imagination myths that would consolidate power for those who fabricated such myths, as the ekphrastic description of the statue of Viracocha (vis a vis, Bartholomew) by the Inca Garcilaso illustrates. In other cases, such as in Eslava’s poem to Bartholomew, the saint is represented taking advantage of its homonym in order to make acrid statements about powerful but questionable members of the prelate as the case of Eslava’s poem to Bartolomé Lobo Guerrero indicates. This chapter has also shown how, in the case of the Neo Granadine religious paintings and poems to St. Bartholomew, European models are taken in order to disfigure his saintly image and expose a more human, non-religious image of the saint. In all cases, the literary or pictorial image of St. Bartholomew in Hispanic America conveys, besides and beyond its religious significance, a non-Christian image in favor of local, Hispanic American world-views.
CONCLUSION

This study explores several paintings and poems from the 16th to the 18th centuries, mostly from the New Kingdom of Granada and New Spain as historical testimonies of the ways New World artists and writers rearticulated traditional European images and scriptural models in vogue in colonial Hispanic America. My main argument in this study has been that Creoles painters and writers in the New World tend to represent their colonial milieu, pre Hispanic traditions and beliefs, as well as their condition as colonial subjects in ways that recall what Homi Bhabha calls “double-vision.” Based on Homi Bhabha’s postcolonial theory, this thesis proposes that the Creole outlook of the Spanish Empire, as seen from the periphery of power in colonial Hispanic-America, express an unstable “in-between” space with regards to the Empire. My argument is that this instability endows Creole writers with a “double vision” of the world as Spanish subjects who are perceived also as different for being colonial subjects. Difference here refers, on the one hand, to the awareness of a pre-Hispanic past that is often portrayed in details and styles that depart from Spanish and European models. However, as I argue in all of the chapters of this study, those differences also address what Homi Bhabha defines as hybridity, meaning “a problematic of colonial representation and individuation that reverses the effects of the colonialist disavowal, so that other ‘denied’ knowledges enter upon the dominant discourse and estrange the basis of its authority” (114). In the exploration of such ‘denied knowledges’ in Creole cultural expressions, this study also addresses the need, as Bhabha suggests, “to focus on those moments of processes that are produced in the articulation of cultural differences. These ‘in-between’ spaces provide the terrain for elaborating strategies of selfhood —singular and communal— that initiate new signs of identity” (The location of culture, 1). In the exploration of such ‘in-between’ space as expressed in paintings and poems of the New Kingdom of Granada and of New Spain, I have been guided by Bhabha’s notion that:
The borderline work of culture demands an encounter with ‘newness’ that is not part of the continuum of past and present. It creates a sense of the new as an insurgent act of cultural translation. Such art does not merely recall the past as social cause or aesthetic precedent; it renews the past, refiguring it as a contingent ‘in-between’ space, that innovates and interrupts the performance of the present. (Bhabha 7).

This study proposes that a reading of the representation of saints in the New World offers an example of the ‘in-betweeness’ and of the sense of hybridity Bhabha suggests. For this purpose, I chose to study representations of four of the most popular saints in Hispanic America from the sixteenth to the eighteenth century. In these representations the artists sometimes transform European models in such a way that the message, while seemingly the same, contradicts the teachings of the Church. Examples are Creole versions of Saint Catherine of Alexandria, the Virgin Mary, Saint Joseph, and Saint Bartholomew, whereby, respectively, creole artists, against dominant discourse, reaffirm the intellectual authority of women; androgyny, and, therefore, the original femaleness of the divinity, is rescued against an andro-centric figure of God; and the sainthood of a saint is questioned by depicting him as an evil character, in all cases representing the realities of the colonial condition. A close study of Creole cultural expressions in popular ballads and carols, sonnets and paintings from Colonial Hispanic America show that they serve as testimonies of anti-imperial sentiments. They also serve to question dogmas and rigid patriarchal world-views. An example of such inquiries can be found in Creole versions of Saint Catherine of Alexandria, whose image is used in Hispanic America to display and hail the elevated wisdom of some women such as Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz; women often excluded from an androcentric world that seldom recognized the scope or even existence of their intellect. In other instances, such as in popular romances from New Granada, the stories that were told of the Saint evinced a society so enmeshed in violence, that even children rhymes would insistently reiterate the homicide of Catherine with a firearm as a normal matter of fact.
The initial inquiry that motivated this study was the notion that perhaps, in the New World, cultural expressions and, in general, colonial subjects perceived Spain’s imperial excesses and theatrical façade of grandeur. I hope to have demonstrated that a careful study of cultural productions pertaining representations of the life of saints in Hispanic America intimate not only awareness of the tricks and façades of the Empire, but also a codified resistance and even subversion in representations that seem to follow traditional expectations and teachings. Such double vision recalls Antonio Benítez-Rojo’s observations in reference to the Caribbean text of two orders of reading, a Primary and the Secondary orders of reading. The latter is the orthodox, traditional interpretation of texts directed to the outside. In turn, the primary order, the most important one, is directed to “internal” readers, and produced from within its own culture, for and by people who share and understand the same cultural codes. The paintings and poems here explored convey that double-vision. They speak for the European other, with its own religious paradigms, and at the same time contain plenty of indigenous or Creole elements that are meant to be read and understood fully by Indians or Creoles. The Virgin of el Topo, for example, at a secondary level, is a “copy” of its European model (Luis de Morales), and in that order of reading it is generally considered a “poorer” or less technically done work than the European one. At the primary order of reading, however, the Virgin of el Topo is endowed with a plethora of elements and transformations from the New World that would be more significant for natives or Creoles than for anyone else.

Many a time, the dialogue established from the New World with Spain results in a discourse of resistance to religious dogmas that exclude and reject other types of identities deeply ingrained in the fabric of Amerindian societies, such as the case, as explained in Chapter Three, of the Muxes from
Oaxaca, New Spain (Mexico), or the androgynous statuettes from Valdivia (present day Ecuador) assert.\textsuperscript{167}

Artists, consciously, subconsciously or unconsciously, stood out for their cunning in reflecting the ethos of their own societies in their works with an almost imperceptible subtlety, managing to state a counter discourse within the rigid framework of orthodoxy. Such is the case of the gruesome Neo Granadine representations of Saint Bartholomew, where the saintly figure happens to be portrayed, instead, according to prescriptions created by well established 16th-17th century artists such as Francisco Pacheco and Vicente Carducho on how to depict evil characters.

At no point does the present study wish to suggest that the representations studied here clearly articulate any type of national or even conscious discourse of independence or even a discourse conceived to be different from the discourse of Empire even when it differed from it. That is precisely the entanglement of such representations that intimate a notion of hybridity from Homi Bhabha’s theoretical point of view. In Bhabha’s words: “Hybridity represents that ambivalent ‘turn’ of the discriminated subject into the terrifying, exorbitant object of paranoid classification—a disturbing questioning of the images and presences of authority” (Bhabha 113). Yet, in that questioning authority, “hybridity has no such perspective of depth or truth to provide: it is not a third term that resolves the tension between two cultures” (113); or, in the context of this study, between the seat of power and the periphery of the colonial Spanish Empire in the 16\textsuperscript{th}-18\textsuperscript{th} centuries. The tension present in this ‘double-vision’ is never resolved in the texts and paintings studied in the previous chapters; hence, their in-betweeness’ and their complexity.

\textsuperscript{167} In both instances, as explained in Chapter Three, the acceptance of androgyny as a reality as feasible as the existence of males and females is rescued from these Amerindian cultures and represented in some Colonial paintings of Saint Joseph, for example, where the earthly father of Jesus is portrayed more as a Queen or a Bearded Madonna with Child than as a man. For this type of representations, Creole artists also found a deep well of inspiration or at least literary and artistic antecedents in the Judeo-Christian and European traditions, for example, in the Talmudic version of the Book of Genesis, where Adam is portrayed as a male-female character, or in the bearded women of Peñaranda by Juan Sánchez Cotán (1560-1627) and the portrait of Magdalena Ventura by José de Ribera (1591-1652).
In the final analysis, this study has attempted to provide a contemporary reading of some cultural expressions from the colonial period in Hispanic America, in the New Kingdom of New Granada and in New Spain, assessing them with new perspectives. As any work of research, the present study is also subject to be challenged by further findings and theoretical trends through time. It is my hope that this study serves as a mustard seed for further research on similar issues of cultural identity in Hispanic American Creole expressions of 16th to 18th century colonial conditions – some of which have continued to exist in different modalities but with little variations until today in Colombia.
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APPENDIX A (Chapter Two)

NO SÉ SI TOPO (1670)
Joseph de Cascante (c.1620-1702)

*Estribillo*  
No sé si topo  
con la dicha que busco  
por vida mía  
o soy un topo  
o la hallo,  
vive Cristo,  
pues, no se como,  
oy de manos a voca  
di con María.

*Refrain*  
I don’t know if I came across  
The joy I’m looking  
For my life,  
Either I am a mole\(^{168}\)  
Or I find it,  
Christ lives!  
For I don’t know how  
Today, through words and deeds,  
I found Mary.

*Coplas:*  
Si allo al buscar la gloria  
de pena un colmo  
con la dicha que busco  
no se si topo.  

*Más si pena un amante*  
Dios amoroso  
o tope con la gloria  
o soy un topo.

*Stanzas:*  
If while looking for glory  
I find the limit of sorrow  
I don’t know if I come across  
The joy I am looking for.

*Mas si pena un amante*  
Dios amoroso  
o tope con la gloria  
o soy un topo.

*En María hallo penas*  
y en ella gozos;  
quereis ver de que suerte,  
pues no se como.

*Que decir que quien ama*  
pena gozoso,  
y aplicado a María  
no sé si topo.

\(^{168}\) i.e., I am blind.
Cabrera, Miguel. *Maravilla americana y conjunto de raras maravillas observadas con la dirección de las reglas de el arte de la pintura en la prodigiosa imagen de Nuestra Sra. de Guadalupe de Mexico*”


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Primavera Indiana, Poema sacrohistórico, 
idea de María Santísima de Guadalupe 
de México, copiada de flores

Por Carlos de Sigüenza y Góngora (1668)

I
Si merecí Calíope tu acento
de divino furor mi mente inspira,
y en acorde compás da a mi instrumento,
que de marfil canoro, a trompa aspira.
Tu dictamen: atienda a mi concento
cuanto con luces de sus rayos gira
ardiente Febo sin temer fracaso
del chino oriente, al mexicano ocaso.

II
Oiga del septentrión la armoniosa
sonante lira mi armonioso canto
correspondiendo a su atención gloriosa
del clima austral el estrellado manto.
Alto desvelo pompa generosa
del cielo gloria, del Leteo espanto
que con voz de metal canta Talía
o nazca niño el sol, o muera el día.

III
Rompa mi voz al diáfano elemento
los líquidos obstáculos, y errante
encomiendo a sus alas el concento,
que aspira heroico a persistir diamante.
Plausible empresa, soberano intento,
que al eco del clarín siempre triunfante
de la fama veloz monstruo de pluma,
sonará por el polvo y por la espuma.
IV
Si indigna copa a metros raudales
la atención se recata, temerosa
de investigar con números mortales
la inmortal primavera de una rosa.
Al acorde murmullo de cristales,
que Hipocrene dispende vagarosa,
afecte dulce el de Libetra coro
la voz de plata, las cadencias de oro.

V
Matiz mendigue de la primavera,
que afectuoso venero, humilde canto
de Amaltea la copia lisonjera
el de Fabonio colorido manto.
Mientras clarín de superior esfera,
en fíjos polos, el florido espanto,
pública del invierno, que volantes
copos, anima en flores rozagantes.

VI
Rinda en vez del aroma nabateo
sonoros cultos mi terrestre labio,
aunque a tan noble majestuoso empleo
querúbicos acentos son agravios.
Los números (modelo del deseo)
sean de tanto empeño desagravio,
mi voz cadencias, rasgos da mi pluma.

VII
Oh, Tú, que en trono de diamantes puros,
pisando estrellas vistes del sol rayos,
a cuyo lustre ofrecen los Coluros
brillantes luces de su obsequio ensayos.
Purifica mi acento, y mis impuros
labios se animen florecientes mayos
que a tu sombra mi voz bella María
triunfa inmortal del alterable día.
VIII
A la cuarta estación, que señorea del frígido Aquilón, nieve volante, corría el año, mientras clamorea lánguida Clisie al fugitivo amante. Comunicando liberal Astrea escarchas al invierno reiterante y haciendo en desiguales horizontes selvas del hielo, de la nieve montes.

IX
Al tiempo, pues, que la veloz saeta remontado blasón de Sagitario a expensas de la luz del gran planeta es del Olimpo luminoso erario. Cuando a Cibeles, pródida y discreta comunica cristal la urna de Acuario, vegetó sin influjos de sus giros flores la tierra, envidia a sus zafiros.

X
Embrón florido de la luz más pura, que sacros jacta empíreos esplendores, fueron éstas, con pródiga hermosura, intempestivas de las breñas flores. Materia que en su purpúrea asegura independencias cándidas de horrores: mayorazgo en lo humano vinculado pensión infausta del primer pecado.

XI
Yace a la parte, que la Ursa fría con rígido gobierno, y cetro ufano en los retiros de la luz tardía del sol, posee con imperio cano. Yace del tiempo inculta lozania de la pura región breve tirano multiplicado escollo, cuyas peñas rígido asombro son de incultas breñas.
XII
Aquí entre toscas peñascosas grutas
opaco albergue dan a Erifictonio
cimas, que exhalan lobregueces brutas
con descrédo infausto de Fabonio.
Siempre sus rocas las venera enjutas,
a pesar del ilustre testimonio
del liquidado cielo, el monte breve,
que niega flores, que raudales bebe.

XIII
Los calvos riscos sólo contribuyen
diametrales al sol rectas centellas,
alma interior, que alientan cuando incluyen
directos rayos las febeas huellas.
Zahareños el corvo diente huyen
óptima causa de las copias bellas;
que domeña estival trillo Sicano
al duro imperio de la dura mano.

XIV
Por veneno sangriento, aljófar puro
les arroja una breve sierpe undosa
a las breñas, que son caduco muro
donde espumas dejó por piel vistosa.
En su seno no admite el monte duro
al argentado monstruo, al fin quejosa
se desliza la sierpe por las breñas
lamiendo rocas, y enroscando peñas.

XV
Emulación del piélago escamoso
templadamente plácida laguna,
del mexicano emporio espejo hermoso,
del Ciprio aborto fluctuante cuna.
Repite en ondas con balance airoso
a estos toscos peñascos una a una
las que baldonan su esquivez ingrata,
con labios de cristal, voces de plata.
XVI
Exenta nunca de inclemencia airada 
con pavoroso horror, funesto imperio 
goza esta montañuela destemplada 
en el occiduo plácido hemisferio. 
La volante cuadrilla derrotada 
del tímido Faetón, sirvió cauterio 
al terreno, que al mayo siempre espanta 
tal es su temple, su dureza es tanta.

XVII
Es el americano Guadalupe 
antes fúnebre albergue de la noche, 
si no fue donde densas nieblas tupe 
et el claro, del Arturo boreal coche. 
Timbre es lustroso el orbe, ya le ocupe 
nó de este manto azul fogoso broche, 
si de Apolo mejor purpúrea aurora 
que de fulgentes rayos el sol dora.

XVIII
Del Alcinóe yacen (oh, mortal destino) 
las siempre coloridas primaveras, 
y Adonis gime las del peregrino 
vago pensil memorias lastimeras. 
Tesalia yace en este diamantino 
asombro de dulcísimas riberas, 
y aquí yace llorada de cigarras 
Clori difunda en tumba de pizarras.

XIX
Pero a la vista de ese puro rayo, 
que el sol empíreo de convexa cumbre 
desprendió sin recelo de desmayo 
se vegetan las flores con su lumbre. 
Rayo has sido del sol, pues vive el mayo 
bella María, y con fragrante encumbre 
si en el inculto monte Fénix yace 
a vista de tu luz Fénix renace.
XX
Moderna envidia, de las rozagantes
del oriente intacto paraíso
las flores son, que tienen por constante
lo que por bello se adquirió Narciso.
Que mucho si pinceles viven antes,
que lampos beban del pastor de Anfriso,
y en competencia airosa galantean
la copia virginal, que colorean.

XXI
Tiempo es ya, tu que al tiempo ofreces vida
délfica inspiración del Cintio Febo
que en concentos sonoros aplaudida
la voz informes, que en el plectro nuevo.
Si a tan heroico asunto eres debida
cláusulas glorias de ese asombro nuevo,
cual este nunca vio ni el otro polo,
tarde o no visto del ardiente Apolo.

XXII
Dos lustros vio el orgullo mexicano
ser alfombra su imperio, de la planta
del que al eco previno soberano
de la fama volante trompa tanta.
Carlos, a quien Cortés: detente mano
venera el nombre que al Leteo espanta,
o el tiempo llegue, que en sucinta suma
sean sus hechos rasgos de mi pluma.

XXIII
Cortés del Macedón segunda envidia,
primera gloria del Getulio Marte,
a cuya sombra vuela sin acidia
bárbaros climas regio su estandarte.
Temblando al duro golpe, cuando lidia,
la más austral nevada siempre parte
mientras le dan divisa a sus pendones
graves del Culhuan duras prisiones.
XXIV
éste pues vasto cuerpo, que domeña
al gran Fernando, cuyos huesos ata
oro por nervios, y de peña en peña
por sangre vive la terriza plata.
Ya depuesta por él la inculta greña
renuncia alegre religión ingrata,
ientras Plutón con lágrimas nocturnas
exhaustas llora sus tartáreas urnas.

XXV
Nueva forma sagrada le destina,
lá que en trono modera de querubes
sagrada mente, celsitud divina
del mundo breve aun las volantes nubes.
La morada de luces cristalina
te rinda glorias, pues amante subes,
oh México, a ser solio preeminente,
que doran rayos del amor ardiente.

XXVI
La gran Reina de flores colorida
quiere el amor, que al cuerpo informe sea,
lo que a la tierra leve, ahora erguida,
de Prometeo veloz la astuta tea.
La armonía lo aplaude repetida
en el Olimpo, porque el orbe crea,
que ecos dispende ya el zafir canoro
del sublimado, del empíreo coro.

XXVII
Con pronto obsequio, y atención amante
en las plumas del céfiro va Flora
mal enjutas las alas del fragrante
néctar, que usurpa a la purpúrea aurora.
Dirige el curso a la estación constante,
que el desgreñado invierno siempre mora
y con tropas volantes de dulzuras
la esfera inunda de las auras puras.
XXVIII
De más colores, que los que en la opaca
nube, este signo de concordia eterna
matices viste, ya la aurora saca
las que a expensas del sol, flores gobierna.
La florecilla leve, la más flaca
en el mustio color, se descuaderna,
emulando a la Reina de las flores
ámbar en hojas, y en matiz olores.

XXIX
Cual a la roca de los mares canos
inestables baten las inquietas olas,
siendo sus puntas, de cristales vanos,
más argentadas, cuando menos solas.
Tal Guadalupe, de ese monte, insanos
peñascos, con las flores arrebolas,
quedando a trechos, cuando no rizados
con las olas de flores matizados.

XXX
Se exhala el sitio con fragancias bellas,
si el campo vive con flor suave,
gozando en cada flor crespas centellas,
que el cielo todo en Guadalupe cabe.
Mendigad de esta luz claras estrellas,
que mejor que vosotras nadie sabe
la luz, que el centro habita deste monte
del mayor esplendor sacro remonte.

XXXI
Entre tanto esa azul diáfana esfera
los diques rompe, que de ardores baña
dando mares de luces, que venera
humilde el sol, y temeroso extraña.
Mientras la luz fogosa reverbera,
voz atada a sonancias la acompaña,
y aun tiempo con dulcísimo sosiego
rayos sonoros son, voces de fuego.
XXXII
Trono es debido al resplandor luciente
de aquella Majestad, a quien rendidas
las columnas del cielo, en obediente
culto suyo, se muestran prevenidas.
En torno de aquel solio reverente
las alas baten, tanto más floridas
cuanto ardor las gobierna más flamante
en culta prontitud de obsequio amante.

XXXIII
Una de éstas sagrada inteligencia
delega el Consistorio soberano,
que as la tierra pronuncie la excelencia,
que le previene la celeste mano.
Deja ya el Paraninfo la eminencia
del alto emíreo, que encubriendo ufano
el origen de luces, que en sí encierra,
resplandor se dio a sí, sombra a la tierra.

XXXIV
Organiza el aire más lucido
un armónico cuerpo el ángel bello,
envidias del abril era el vestido,
emulación del tíbar el cabello.
Un volante de luces embestido
aprisiona en el terso ebúrneo cuello,
dando en su rostro albergue plancentero
al rojo mayo, y al nevado enero.

XXXV
Cual el rayo, saeta presurosa,
que a la tierra despide de los cielos
el inflexible arco en impetuosa
carga de breves condensados hielos.
Tal la veloz Inteligencia hermosa
rompe del viento diáfano los velos
cercado de otras, que aunque soberanas
bello disfraz las representa humanas.
XXXVI
Termina el vuelo donde yace altiva
la gran Tenochtitlán en áureo trono,
selva de plumas del copil cautiva
de su grandeza real es real abono.
Al hueipil, y quetzal da estimativa
el oro, cuyas máquinas perdono,
y en discurso más dulce, que prolijo,
formó palabras, y razones dijo.

XXXVII
Ahora, que el Danubio proceloso
entrega al mar heréticos raudales,
siendo veneno lúgubre horroroso
los que primero cándidos cristales,
y el águila alemana, al luminoso
planeta de la fe, niega imperiales
obsequios, mendigando entre pavor
funesto horror en vez de resplandores.

XXXVIII
Ahora que el francés lilio florido
negado a la esmeralda, que lo adorna,
se matricula al culto fementido
del heresiarca vil, que la abochorna.
Si con vanos sofismas sólo ha sido
con lo que el ateísmo te soborna,
miserable Francia teme pues se muestra
de horror armada la invencible diestra.

XXXIX
Ahora que a la hidra venenosa
el caudaloso Támesis esconde,
y al padrón de la fe siempre gloriosa
con pervertidos dogmas corresponde.
Esfera fuiste donde victoriosa
la piedad se albergó, y eres hoy donde
(jay dolor!) se acicalan atrapadas
contra la ciega fe, ciegas espadas.
XL
Ahora cuando el Aquilón friolento
en cismas arde, que fomenta el vicio,
y que intentan romper con fin violento
del alto cielo el diamantino quicio.
Rigiendo el orbe con furor sangriento
protervas mentes con errado juicio,
y esta máquina exhausta, en lento fuego
vuela en cenizas, por el viento ciego.

XLI
Ahora pues, la celsitud divina
en sacro consistorio soberano,
te levanta a la esfera cristalina,
que empeña astuto el heresiarca vano.
Sube México, pues, sube que dina
tu inocencia te aclama de la mano
de aquel, por quien al orbe ya te induces
pisando rayos, y vistiendo luces.

XLII
El desvelo de Dios, la gran María
se presenta a tus reinos dilatados
aurora bella de luz, que envía
el sol, que brilla en solios estrellados.
Alto don, por que ya se jacta día
la alta noche, en que estabas con errados
dictámenes, si en ciegas ilusiones
ibas sin freno a pálidas regiones.

XLIII
Expresiva es la imagen del instante
en que (aun Neptuno no surcaba espumas
ni albergue daba el Aquilón volante
de vivas flores a volantes sumas.
No el rayo por el viento fluctuante
rasgaba nubes con fogosas plumas)
y ya María de mancha preservada
toda era gracia, cuando el mundo nada.
XLIV
Esto dijo, y al viento dio más leve
gallardamente las vistosas alas,
en el olor indicio dio no breve
ser del empíreo las que ostenta galas.
Del orbe deja la región aleve,
fijo su norte en las celestes salas,
siendo alfombra a sus pies esa importuna
rodante esfera de la inestable luna.

XLV
Quedó México de esta gloria inmensa,
cual queda el caminante, que en sombrío
profundo valle, le asaltó con densa
manga de nubes, el invierno frío.
Voló de fuego, con la luz intensa,
tortuosa sierpe, con tan presto brío,
que deja al caminante en neutral calma,
difunto el cuerpo, y palpitante el alma.

XLVI
En esta suspensión de los sentidos,
México estaba, cuando a caso un pobre
(que la inocencia más que en los erguidos
cedros, se alberga en el inculto robre).
Llega a afrontarse con los desmedidos
peñascos, donde teme no zozobre
aun el viento veloz su sutileza,
tales los riscos son, tal su maleza.

XLVII
Llega a afrontarse con el peñascoso
vasto Tepeyácac, donde un concinto
suavemente en metro armonioso
tiene el alma suspensa al indio atento.
Extático el sentido, el deleitoso
métrico coro investigó al momento,
intentó vano si del cielo nace
que el eco solo entre malezas yace.
XLVIII
Para el curso a la vista de un flamante prodigio, dulcemente intempestivo, cada lampo de luz era un diamante de asombros raros pródigo incentivo. Lustre en fin de una gran Reina, que en radiante trono de resplandor nada ofensivo, (cada voz de dulzuras Nilo inmenso) al indio, dijo, que atendió suspenso.

XLIX
María soy, de Dios omnipotente humilde Madre, Virgen soberana, antorcha, cuya luz indeficiente norte es lucido a la esperanza humana. Ara fragrante en templo reverente México erija donde fue profana morada de Plutón, cuyos horrores tala mi planta en tempestad de flores.

L
Aquí la voz de afectuoso ruego, que a mi piedad virgínea sea votado verá mis luces el opaco ciego, y obtendrá el pecho triste dulce agrado. Ve a la mitra, que en plácido sosiego rige apacible su rebaño amado, intimale mi imperio. Y una nube trono se finge en que al Olimpo sube.

LI
Más que admirado, en dulces suspensiones tiernamente robados los sentidos, sin darle al gusto breves disgresiones, vuela el indio con pasos desmedidos. Mucho portento fue, pocas razones, del sagrado pastor, que escucha atento las que el humilde Juan dio a los oídos crédulo poco a misterioso intento.
LII
Camina triste, hacia el eriazo monte
de no haber merecido algún agrado,
cuando inundó de luz el horizonte
la gran Reina, que había venerado.
Más fogo so que el carro de Faetonte
el bello solio fue, donde postrado
dio la respuesta el indio temeroso,
con voz sumisa, y ánimo amoroso.

LIII
Dispón éle a segundas obediencias
y vuelve Juan diciendo que María
intima venerar sus excelencias
hacia los reinos de Calixto fría.
Danle a las voces cultas reverencias,
y en certificación de quien le envía,
le ruegan traiga de las vastas breñas,
de la Virgen intacta, intactas señas.

LIV
Menos confuso, al tímido paraje
vuela Juan espoleado del deseo,
dice, que su obediencia sin ultraje
de la incredulidad tuvo trofeo.
Que le piden de aquel tosco boscaje
para la ejecución de tanto empleo,
señas de mano de tan gran Señora,
que las diffiere a la siguiente aurora.

LV
Apenas anunció el rubio Apolo,
la esposa de Titón, el presto vuelo:
cuando camina el indio, al monte solo.
Al término final de su desvelo
(Plausible día al mexicano polo)
sube al monte por montes mil de hielo
ciego obediente de la gran María
por varias flores, que en el monte había.
LVI
éstas, le dice son, éstas las claras
divinas señas de mi dulce imperio,
por ellas se me erijan cultas aras
en este vasto rígido hemisferio.
No hagas patente a las profanas caras
tan prodigioso plácido misterio,
sólo al sacro pastor, que ya te espera
muéstrale esa portátil primavera.

LVII
Hácelo así, y al descoger la manta,
frangible lluvia de pintadas rosas
el suelo inunda, y lo que más espanta
(¡oh, maravillas del amor gloriosas!)
Es ver lucida entre floresta tanta,
a expensas de unas líneas prodigiosas
una copia, una imagen, un traslado
de la Reina del cielo más volado.

LVIII
Soberana Pandora de las flores
quedó María, a cuyo obsequio dieron
esas del prado estrellas, los colores,
que a influyos de la aurora recibieron.
La púrpura el clavel, y los candores
la azucena, y jazmín no retrujeron,
lo azul el lirio, y para más decoro
desprendió Clisie sus madejas de oro.

LIX
Ese aborto de Clorida fragrante
el matiz, que se viste más lucido,
el aroma, que exhala más volante
tanta Reina lo ofreció rendido.
De la humilde violeta a la triunfante
Reina del prado, feudo fue al vestido,
que a la luna, que al sol, que a las estrellas
a paz indujo en conveniencias bellas.
LX
En púrpura la túnica se enciende,
rojo campo a las líneas reveladas,
que el oro finge cuando más se enciende,
o en las sombras fallece retiradas.
Del manto azul el estrellado pende
flamante cielo, cuyas remontadas
lucientes llamas fingen en la tierra
ardores bellos, que el Olimpo encierra.

LXI
Todo el sol rayo a rayo le circunda
la planta airosa, y el semblante honesto
ya en ropaje, ya en cidarijocunda
su luz discurre, en movimiento presto.
De la émula del sol la luz segunda
la planta elige (inmejorable puesto)
y un serafín con ademán galante
es de este empíreo matizado Atlante.

LXII
Pero qué conveniencia soberana
con matices efímeros, la idea
del desvelo de Dios tiene, que ufana
la pregona a los vientos Amaltea.
Prestándole el albor de la mañana
sucinto rosicler, roja montea.
¿Qué avarienta mendiga de las flores
del jardín culto, breves resplandores?

LXIII
Para tan generoso ministerio
porción no diera el trépido lucero,
de ese pendiente turquesado imperio
lucido nuncio del horror severo.
Previniera este plácido misterio,
pues con plumas de luz vuela ligero
dando nuevas a aquél, y este horizonte
que el mundo vive, pues vivió Faetonte.
LXIV
Ese móvil espejo variable, 
errante dueño de la sombra fría, 
su esplendor corvo mantuviera estable 
a expensas nobles del autor del día. 
Su tributo fue un tiempo deleitable 
del augusto coturno de María, 
hoy con tropas de luces dirigiera 
nocturnos rayos, que del sol bebiera.

LXV
La eclíptica olvidara luminosa 
ni al torneado epiciclo de topacio 
levé contribución diera fogosa 
la crespa antorcha del azul palacio. 
En ofrenda reluciente la vistosa 
rizada llama, que alentó el espacio 
de los ejes, con vuelo presuroso 
al solio diera, que admiró lustroso.

LXVI
Y tú, que con carbunclos te blasonas 
pavón nocturno, si al celeste manto 
con desiguales luces le coronas, 
brillante asombro, del sombrío espanto. 
Cese el tributo, ¿para qué eslabonas 
tanto turquí de luz, a la que canto 
intacta Reina, pues se viste estrellas 
matizes rinde, cuando no centellas?

LXVII
No, no pinten la imagen resplandores 
que jactan por origen, el luciente, 
de los bronces torneados entre albores, 
alcázar patrio de la luz naciente. 
Ya fogosos cedieron sus ardores 
con pecho airosos, en culto indeficiente, 
cuando a vista de un águila María 
púrpura al viento, emulación dio al día.
LXVIII
Si entre breñas la patria fue sagrada
de este portento de uno, y otro mundo,
que mucho es Flora, el aura sosegada
al monte impela, que previó infecundo.
De aromáticas flores matizada
triumfó María, y con placer jocundo
cada flor, que le sirve de divisa
de abril es pompa, si del mayo risa.

LXIX
Cese pues, la atención que pensativa
examina el efecto prodigioso,
o el sagrado dictamen, que motiva
a tanto extremo el brazo poderoso.
Toda una primavera fue expresiva
en tosca tilma del trasunto hermoso,
que a despecho del rígido diciembre
influye mayos a la inculta urdiembre.

LXX
Más que prodigio, cuidadoso esmero
fue de la omnipotencia, que la copia
de tanto original, del placentero
abril vistiese la grandeza propia.
Oh, bello asunto, a quien en más venero
por quedarte con gracia nada impropia
entre fragosas de peñascos calles
del campo flor, y lilio de los valles.

LXXI
Prodigios grandes, en pequeña esfera,
bien que esfera de glorias soberanas,
la admiración extática venera,
suspendiéndole el ser luces ufanas.
Si el embrión de esta luz fue primavera,
sirvan voces floridas, más que humanas
de aquesta gloria, a una pequeña suma,
que dicta el alma, y trasladó la pluma.
LXXII
Purpúreo aborto de la blanca aurora,
matutino esplendor del áureo día,
enrojeciendo campos, que el sol dora
visten las flores, crespa argentería.
Aún no el vario horizonte se colora
con la luz que de oriente el sol envía,
y son a expensas de su lucimiento
pensil de olores, que sacude el viento.

LXXIII
Aquesta pues república olorosa,
bella a vista, y al olfato bella,
anima en cada flor una vistosa
con rayos de ámbar rozagante estrella.
No ultraje su grandeza la enconosa
villana espina, pues que exenta de ella,
(aunque a los troncos su esquivez maltrata)
libre la flor su púrpura dilata.

LXXIV
De ámbar se viste el oloroso prado,
que en pintadas bujetas atesora,
quedando con fragancias perfumado
el bello alcázar, que fomenta Flora.
A instancias de sí mismo, liquidado
su aroma se difunde a cuanto dora
el topacio encendido, que los cielos
a tumbos mide en repetidos vuelos.

LXXV
Luz primiceria del sagrado oriente,
soberano candor de la mañana
fue la Reina, que en solio refulgente
del desvelo de Dios fue pompa ufana.
En divinas fragancias cultamente
a la esfera se exhala soberana,
si flor se finge en competencia al mayo,
el sol empíreo se desprende rayo.
LXXVI
A despecho del tronco fementido
de donde se deriva su belleza,
intacta bella flor se ha concebido
en sacra pompa, exenta de maleza.
Libre de espinas brota del florido
siempre ameno vergel de su pureza,
y entre púas hibernas rozagante
es flor en pompa, y en el ser diamante.

LXXVII
Del sellado jardín de las virtudes
ámbar se exhala, o se liquida aroma,
fragrando en más activas prontitudes,
que cuanta Arabia desperdicia goma.
Pues que admiro, que en nobles actitudes
perfume el risco tan fragrante poma,
si porque empireo resplandor lo ocupe
es ya alcázar del alba Guadalupe.

LXXVIII
Basta pluma, reprime el afectuoso
conato heroico de tu vuelo ardiente,
rémora sea al curso presuroso
de tanta Reina el resplandor fulgente.
Pues será si pretendes, este hermoso
prodigio, investigar irreverente
querer escudriñarle al oro venas,
al cielo rayos, o a la mar arenas.

LXXIX
Tenue la voz pequeña la armonía,
al son cantaba de zampoña ruda,
al tiempo que el autor vago del día
por el áureo vellón el signo muda.
Gane por tierra, si perdió por mía
la voz que afecta contra la sañuda
voracidad del tiempo duraciones,
siendo atractivo a heroicas suspensiones.
APPENDIX B (Chapter Three)

54
ROMANCE A SAN JOSÉ
Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz

Escuchen qué cosa y cosa
Tan maravillosa, aquesta:
Un Marido sin mujer,
Y una casada Doncella.

Un Padre, que no ha engendrado
A un Hijo, a quien Otro engendra;
Un Hijo mayor que el Padre,
Y un Casado con pureza.

Un hombre, que da alimentos
al mismo que lo alimenta;
cría al que lo crió, y al mismo
que lo sustenta, sustenta.

Manda a su propio Señor,
Y a su hijo Dios respeta;
Tiene por Ama una Esclava,
Y por Esposa una Reina.

Celos tuvo y confianza,
Seguridad y sospechas,
Riesgos y seguridades,
Necesidad y riquezas.

Tuvo, en fin, todas las cosas
Que pueden pensarse buenas;
Y es, en fin, de María esposo,
Y de dios, Padre en la tierra (de la Cruz, 75-76).
EN JESÚS Y EN MARÍA
Música de Joseph de Cascante
A San José.

En Jesús y en María,
La tierra y el cielo
A Joseph reconocen
Con rendimiento;
Jesús, que dicha,
Que a Joseph obedecen,
Obedecen Jesús, María. (Perdomo, 328)

YNOCENTE MARIPOSA
Anónimo. A San José.

Coplas:

Ynocente mariposa,
Fenix Joseph en tus llamas,
Si en el cielo no hay senisas,
Dime para q. te enbarcas.

Si lo actibo de tu fuego
tiranas llamas alaga,
No des velas a tu golfo:
Mira q. es pirata, amayna.

Por celosa no presumas
dexar el puerto, repara
q. Son velas de tormenta
esas q. vatieres, alas.

En tanto mar de rezelos,
Noble mariposa, aguanta,
Que no hay rumbo sin peligro
Donde los celos embarcan

Las olas de tu cuidado,
Noble mariposa, aguanta,
q. no ay bajos de escarmientos
en las alturas de gracia (Perdomo, 626).
APPENDIX C (Chapter Four)

INVICTO BARTOLOMÉ
Villancico Anónimo
A San Bartolomé
Sin música

Invicto Bartolomé,
Que con valor esforsado,
La piel por Xpto. Ofreciste
Al acero y al tirano.

Cielos, hombres,
Flores y aves,
Montes, riscos,
Fuentes, prados,
Bendigante, pues tienen
De su divino autor
Tan fiel soldado;
De tu fe tal testimonio
Vemos tan rubricado,
Que de tu cuerpo los miembros,
Todos se van señalados.
OY UN CAMPION DIUINO
Anónimo. Villancico a San Bartolomé.

Oy un campion diuino
tanto anhela al lucimiento,
que la gala de escarmiento
a cuchilladas le han hecho.

cortáronle de vestir
unos oficiales diestros,
pues aunq. Dexaronle en vcarnes,
de encarnado lo vistieron.

Diestros son, no ay q. Dudarlo,
Pues siendo el vestido viejo,
Lo an vuelto de dentro fuera,
Con que lo an puesto de nuevo.

Cara le questa la gala
De apostol con que le vemos,
Pues solo por las hechuras
Dio Bartolomé el pellejo.
VITA

ERNESTO CARRIAZO-OSORIO
Calle 6D # 5-50 Apt. 402 Int. 4
Bogotá, Colombia, South America
Cell Phone Number: (57-1) 316 872 77 95
ecarriazo@cng.edu


I currently work as a High School Spanish teacher, in 11th and 12th grades, at Colegio Nueva Granada (CNG), the most prestigious International American School in Colombia. I have worked as a teacher and a translator altogether for 20 years. Among other subjects, I have taught English Literature, Academic Writing, basic Spanish, and Colonial Latin American Literature, respectively, at the National University of Colombia, Javeriana Univeristy, Penn State, Niagara University, and others. I have presented scholarly papers at various academic events, most notably the MLA Convention, the African Latin American Research Association -ALARA-, and the Kentucky Foreign Language Conference. In turn, I used to translate several books for various publishing houses, including McGraw-Hill and San Pablo.

Ernesto Carriazo Osorio
Bogotá, Colombia, 2013.
exc257@gmail.com