Between Two Worlds: Baroque Spectacle and Enlightenment Thought in the *autos sacramentales* by Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz (1648–1695)

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Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the degree of

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This thesis is the first book-length study of the three *autos sacramentales* by Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz. Sor Juana's religious drama has received little attention, despite her status as one of the greatest figures of Mexican literature. She was also writing during a particularly significant period in Hispanic literary history: at the end of the Spanish Golden Age, and at the rise of a new class of intellectual élites in the New World, the *criollos*. I contend that Sor Juana's *autos sacramentales* are crucial to understanding how she contributed to the formation of a *criollo* identity. In doing so, she engaged with the mentalities of two continents and two historical periods: Europe and the Americas, and the Baroque and the Enlightenment.

To demonstrate this, I provide a study of each of Sor Juana's sacramental plays, alongside the *loa* which was written to accompany them. My method combines close-text reading with a historical approach, and I pay particular attention to the theological function of the plays. In each chapter, I focus on the concurrent strands of thought in her works. I consider how the plays demonstrate the Catholic doctrine of transubstantiation, and how they engage with the aesthetic and theological mindset of the Spanish Baroque. I study how they incorporate indigenous Nahuatl theatrical traditions, and ask how they engage with the scientific developments of the Enlightenment. I conclude that in her *autos sacramentales* Sor Juana expresses a mindset that is both geographically and historically "between two worlds."

The influence of Nahuatl theatre on Sor Juana's dramaturgy has never before been studied. The influence of Enlightenment thought on her works has been noted by a few scholars, but never considered in relation to her religious works. The demonstration of the interaction of Enlightenment and Catholic ideas challenges our notion of the Enlightenment as a secularising movement, and has potential implications for scholars of the period beyond the sphere of Sor Juana studies.

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This thesis is the first book-length study of the three *autos sacramentales* by Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz. Despite her status as one of the greatest figures of Mexican literature, Sor Juana's religious drama has received little critical attention. In particular, no scholar has yet undertaken a study of the plays' theological attributes, despite it being the function of *autos sacramentales* to demonstrate the doctrine of transubstantiation. Commentators are also yet to situate the plays in the historical, philosophical, and literary context in which they were written and were intended to be performed. This lack of scholarship is made all the more surprising by the fact that Sor Juana was writing during a particularly significant period in Hispanic literary history: at the end of the Spanish Golden Age, and at the rise of a new class of intellectual élites in the New World. Sor Juana was one of the foremost members of this class, the *criollos*, who were born in Mexico of Spanish descent. In this thesis, I contend that Sor Juana's *autos sacramentales* are crucial to understanding how she contributed to the formation of a *criollo* intellectual identity. To do so, she engaged with the mentalities of two continents and two historical periods: Europe and the Americas, and the Baroque and the Enlightenment.

In order to rectify this gap in scholarship, I undertake the first comprehensive study of Sor Juana's *autos sacramentales*. I provide an in-depth study of each of the individual plays, while also considering the commonalities, developments and differences between them, thus presenting the first formulation of Sor Juana's religious dramaturgy. I approach each play through a combination of close-text reading, and historical and theological analysis. An added point of originality in my methodology is my claim that each of the *autos* should be read and analysed alongside its *loa*, the short introductory piece which was written to be performed before the main play. Although *autos* were always preceded by a *loa*, practical considerations have meant that they are seldom studied alongside one another in modern scholarship. Sor Juana's *autos* and their *loas* provide a unique opportunity to consider the interaction between the two pieces, and how the contents of the *loa* may affect the message of the *auto*. In each chapter, I focus on the concurrent strands of thought in her works. I consider how the plays demonstrate the Catholic doctrine of transubstantiation, and how they engage with the aesthetic and

theological mindset of the Spanish Baroque. I study how they incorporate indigenous Nahuatl theatrical traditions, and ask how they engage with the scientific developments of the Enlightenment. I conclude that in her *autos sacramentales* Sor Juana expresses a mindset that is both geographically and historically "between two worlds."

In the introduction to the thesis, I provide a historical picture of the context in which Sor Juana lived and worked, focussing on the influence of Spain in the culture of late seventeeth-century Mexico City. I also consider the rise of the intellectual class of the *criollos*, who sought to create for themselves a cultural and political identity which was uniquely American, yet equal to the ruling Spanish classes in its erudition. Finally, I point to perhaps the least-studied aspect of late seventeenth-century viceregal society—the emergence of Enlightenment thought, and the new fascination with physics, mathematics and optics. To illustrate how these strands combine in Sor Juana's work, and to suggest how they may have developed through her writing, I turn to her texts on allegory. In doing so, I exemplify how her conception of the device varies. It begins with a typically Baroque emphasis on the dual meaning of things, on the deception of the senses, and on the relationship between the material and the metaphysical worlds. It then evolves also to incorporate a more empirical emphasis on observation of the material world, and on the mental processes involved in the creation and interpretation of allegories. In the subsequent chapters of the thesis, I explore how a similar process is at work in her *autos sacramentales*, and what this implies for the way we understand how Sor Juana engaged with the different currents of thought that defined the mentality of the late seventeenth-century Hispanic world.

In the first two chapters, I analyse Sor Juana's *autos El divino Narciso* and *El cetro de José*. The first play follows the Golden Age trend of divinising classical myths, and takes the story of *Echo and Narcissus* as its source. However, many commentators have taken issue with Sor Juana's selection of Narcissus as a protagonist and figure of Christ. Against their arguments that this is a strange and indecorous choice, I propose that her decision is based on the Golden Age notion of wit. By choosing a figure such as Narcissus, who initially appears very *un*-Christlike, and yet reconciling the two characters, she displays her abilities as a consummate practitioner of the Golden Age *arte de ingenio*. In this play, she presents an orthodox *auto sacramental*, which is a perfect example of several of the aesthetic, theological and philosophical ideals of the Counter-Reformation Baroque. The second play, *El cetro de José*, replaces the sensuous nature of *El divino Narciso* with a more intellectual tone. The play is an adaptation of the Old Testament story of Joseph, which promotes the doctrine of transubstantiation

through the message of the importance of seeing things in their dual nature. However, a secondary concern is also present. By drawing attention to the *cetro* ('sceptre') of its title, Sor Juana presents an argument in an abstruse matter of theology: the translation of a particular verse from Genesis. This introduces into the *auto* a matter extraneous to its primary purpose, a technique that Sor Juana will later employ in her third *auto*. Both *El divino Narciso* and *El cetro de José* introduce the theme of the Americas through their *loas*. Each of these pieces stages a scene between Hispanic and indigenous characters, in which the former try to convert the latter to Christianity. By prefacing her presentation of Catholic doctrine with a discussion of evangelisation in the Americas, Sor Juana raises the status of indigenous American customs to the same position as the cultures of classical antiquity. She illustrates that, just as Western Catholicism was preceded by the traditions of the Old Testament, and the pagan mythologies of Greece and Rome, so Christianity in the Americas was preceded by pagan rituals.

The third chapter considers these *loas* in more detail, and in looks in particular at the influence on them of sixteenth-century Nahuatl dramas, used by the mendicant friars as an evangelistic tool. These plays were continuously performed throughout New Spain, and by the late seventeenth century had been appropriated by Nahua communities as cultural artefacts that narrated their own entrance into Christian history. At the time Sor Juana was writing, the ecclesiastical authorities of Mexico City were trying to outlaw these performances. The indigenous communities defended this practice, which they considered to be integral to their faith, but the plays were banned in several communities. In her *loas*, Sor Juana references the dramatic tradition of evangelistic plays in the Americas, and compares the practice with the performance of *autos* in Spain. By drawing attention to the parallels between the two customs, she argues that if the staging of *autos* is supported by the Church, there are little grounds on which to prohibit the performance of Nahuatl evangelistic plays. She thus again introduces an extraneous concern into her *auto*, while at the same time highlighting the influence of indigenous theatrical practices on her own dramaturgy.

The fourth chapter turns to Sor Juana's final *auto El mártir del Sacramento San Hermenegildo*, which adapts the history of Hermenegild, a Spanish visigothic prince and Catholic martyr. This is the least studied of Sor Juana's religious plays. However, in the little work undertaken on the play, commentators have questioned its status as an *auto*. I consider the theological function of the work, and its presentation of the doctrine of transubstantiation, and conclude that it fails to fulfill the criteria for an *auto* in several ways. I therefore ask what its function is, and why Sor Juana would have presented it as an *auto*. To answer these questions, I turn to

the *loa*, which portrays a group of students debating an abstract point of scholastic theology: what the greatest demonstration of Christ's love was. This is a question which is also central to other works by Sor Juana: the *Carta Atenagórica* and its following letter, the *Respuesta*. In the *Carta*, Sor Juana presented her own arguments on what the greatest demonstration of Christ's love was. When the right of a woman religious to put forward such an opinion was disputed, she composed the *Respuesta*, defending her entitlement to do so. By considering the common arguments between these four texts, I propose that the message of the *auto* is not to present the doctrine of transubstantiation, but rather to present a defence of the necessity to act according to one's convictions rather than through obedience. Putting these arguments forward in a supposed *auto* allowed her to espouse them under a veil of orthodoxy. However, her message necessitates a positive view of human potential which is irreconcilable with the vision of sinful humanity essential to the dramatic and theological success of the *auto*. This confirms why the play cannot function as an *auto*, and demonstrates the influence of a more optimistic view typical of the Enlightenment on Sor Juana's thought.

In the final chapter, I bring together these various strands of thought, and argue that their presence in the *autos sacramentales* establishes Sor Juana as a writer who found herself in many ways "between two worlds." In particular, I focus on the incorporation of the new sciences of the Enlightenment, especially optics, into the *autos*. In this light, I also consider further Sor Juana's use of mythology, and its function in exploring the relationship between the perceptible and the imperceptible. From here, I look at her use of Nahuatl mythology, and how she uses this to advocate for the historical and intellectual authority of the *criollos*. Finally, I consider how an increasingly clear formulation of the utility of empiricism comes to dominate her theological writing, how she attempts to reconcile this with orthodox Counter-Reformation views on humanity, and how her ultimate failure to do so can provide the key to the events of 1690-91, when she renounced secular learning under pressure from the Church.

First and foremost, the significance of this study lies in its advocation of Sor Juana's *autos sacramentales* as remarkable works worthy of scholarly attention. In addition, its conclusions should be of note for wider studies of Sor Juana's works. By advocating for the significance of Enlightenment thought in her writing, I nuance our understanding of Sor Juana as an archetypal Baroque figure. Instead, I argue that her position between Spain and the Americas, and between the Baroque and the Enlightenment is what characterises her as a *criolla* intellectual. Finally, the implications of this study should be of interest to scholars outside of Sor Juana studies, especially those working on the early Enlightenment. By demonstrating the

presence of Enlightenment thought in the works of a major figure of New Spain, I counter the view of the movement as a Western European phenomenon, confined largely to England, France and Germany. In addition, by stating the presence of enlightened ideas in Sor Juana's religious works, I suggest that we reassess our understanding of the Enlightenment as an essentially secularising movement, and reconsider how it may have allowed for a more complex interaction between science and faith.

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It is not possible to mention everyone here, and the omission of further names is due to a lack of space rather than lack of gratitude. Needless to say, all errors remain my own.

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ABBREVIATIONS

Unless otherwise indicated, all citations from the works of Sor Juana are taken from the edition of her collected works by Georgina Sabat de Rivers, *Poesía, Teatro, Pensamiento*.

For plays, citations from this edition indicate the play referred to, along with the verse number. For prose works, the page number is given, along with a paragraph number. For works not included in this collection, the reference given is to *Obras completas* (*OC*) edited by Alfonso Méndez Plancarte.

For plays other than those by Sor Juana, citations are given with verse numbers, according to the edition noted in the bibliography.

LN—*Loa para el auto de El divino Narciso*
AN—*Auto sacramental El divino Narciso*
LJ—*Loa para el auto de El cetro de José*
AJ—*Auto sacramental El cetro de José*
LH—*Loa para el auto El mártir del Sacramento, San Hermenegildo*
AH—*Auto sacramental El mártir del Sacramento, San Hermenegildo*

~ INTRODUCTION ~

THE BAROQUE SPECTACLE OF SOR JUANA'S RELIGIOUS DRAMA

On 28 April 1688, the Condesa de Paredes, Vicereine of Mexico, began the long journey from Mexico City to Madrid. Her husband had completed his six-year service as Viceroy in 1686, and together they were returning to Europe. She carried a collection of poetic works intended for publication in Spain, or for performance at court in Madrid: sonnets, *loas*, *décimas*, *romances*, *redondillas* and *villancicos* written by the nun-poet and prodigy of the Mexican Viceregal court, Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz (1648–1695).[1] The works were published in 1689 under the title *Inundación Castálida de la Única Poetisa, Musa Décima de México, Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz.* These writings were among the few works by a Mexican author still living in the New World to be available in print in Spain, where they established Sor Juana's reputation as the "Tenth Muse of Mexico," a literary figure to be counted among the great writers of the Spanish Golden Age.

The Vicereine's cargo of exotic artefacts from the New World continued a practice which had its origins in the early days of Spanish presence in the Americas. In

[1] The date of Sor Juana's birth is contested, with both 1648 and 1651 being cited by scholars. Her first biographer, Diego Calleja, cites 1651, while more recent scholars, among them Margo Glantz, advocate for 1648 (*Hagiografía* 51). The latter cite evidence found in the parish records of the Mexican town of Amecameca, where Sor Juana is known to have lived as a child. Julia Story discusses the sources for each date in her essay in *Mexico 1680* (Andrews and Coroleu 64-65) and concurs with other recent scholars that the earlier date is more accurate.

the early sixteenth century, Hernán Cortés had entrusted his first emissaries to Charles V with gifts of gold, precious stones and other objects, in order to encourage a favourable response to his endeavours from the king. However, the nature of the goods chosen by the Vicereine demonstrates a change in the terms of the relationship between the centre of the Spanish Empire and its Mexican viceroyalty over the course of its 150-year history. The objects she carried were no longer material treasures, but literary works which owed as much to the finest poets of the Spanish Golden Age as they did to the history of the Americas, and which were testament to a developing practice of cultural exchange across the Atlantic world. These works were not the fruit of the exploitation of material riches by explorers and *conquistadors*, but were testament to the intellectual achievements of one born, raised, and educated in the Americas.

Between 1519, when Cortés sent his emissaries, and 1688, the fortunes of both Spain and New Spain had changed considerably. The year 1681 had marked the death of Pedro Calderón de la Barca, the greatest Spanish playwright of the second half of the seventeenth century. In later scholarship, this date came to be accepted as a significant watershed in Spanish cultural history: it marked the end of the Golden Age, a period whose achievements in literature and art reflected both the height of Spain's imperial powers and its later economic and political decline. In New Spain, the seventeenth century had seen the rise of its first home-born intellectual class, the *criollos*, who were born in Mexico of Spanish descent, and the flowering of what has come to be termed the *barroco de indias*.[2]

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[2] To refer to the two largest demographic groups in seventeenth-century Mexico, I use the terms *criollo* and *indio*, for want of accurate and acceptable English equivalents. The term *indio* refers to members of the indigenous population of the Americas in the sixteenth and seventeenth-centuries, as well as to characters from these groups in Sor Juana's plays.

Sor Juana was the primary literary protagonist of this new class of intellectuals in the New World. Born in the middle of the seventeenth century, her education and literary formation steeped her in the works of the Spanish Golden Age, through the writings of Calderón, Góngora, Gracián and Quevedo, and their Renaissance and Classical predecessors. The content of the first volume of her works demonstrates her indebtedness to these authors and in many ways affirms her position as an archetypal figure of the American Baroque. The variety of the poetic genres she employs, the number of subjects on which she versifies, and the constant switching between topics and metres, are all testament to the mental velocity characteristic of the greatest Baroque thinkers. Her work is replete with the characteristic juxtapositions for which the period is noted, between the secular and the sacred, illusion and reality, fiction and truth, the transient and the eternal, and death and resurrection.

Nonetheless, Sor Juana was not a mere imitator of her peninsular precursors. She was a veritable polymath, whose interests included mathematics, philosophy, music, poetry, and architecture. Her writings included love poetry and devotional verse, romantic comedies and sacramental dramas, theological treatises and musical handbooks, political tracts, letters, and enigmas, making her one of the most versatile writers and thinkers of seventeenth-century Spanish literature. Her position as a woman religious, protégée of the viceregal court, and published author made her a unique figure on both sides of the Atlantic.

There are two particular aspects of the content of her works which mark her out from her Spanish contemporaries and immediate predecessors. Firstly, she sought to present herself as distinctively American, an intention she furthered through the recurrent use of material from the continent's pre-Hispanic past. Among the works

included in the first volume, her *villancicos*—sung poems performed before Mass on high feast days—use a variety of indigenous languages and figures. Her commentary on her own design of a triumphal arch for the entry of the Viceroy into Mexico City in 1680 compares the Greek pantheon to the history of heroic Aztec warriors. In these works, and elsewhere, she sought to establish a particularly American cultural identity which was necessarily different from the traditions of Spain, yet which equalled or surpassed them in erudition and aesthetic merit.

Secondly, several of Sor Juana's intellectual pursuits were in disciplines which had only emerged during the second half of the seventeenth century, in fields of study which we have come to associate more often with the thought of the Enlightenment than with the Renaissance or Baroque. Among these are her study of the new sciences of physics and optics, her familiarity with natural philosophy, and her recurrent reminder to her readers that observation of the world can be a path to truth. In purely chronological terms, it is entirely logical that an intellectually curious thinker of the late seventeenth century should have had such interests. Sor Juana was not just born into the world of Calderón, Góngora, Gracián and Quevedo, but she was also born into the world of Bayle, Descartes, Gassendi and Newton. Her literary studies may have schooled her in the thought of scepticism, neo-stoicism, and tridentine Catholicism, but her wider reading also would have introduced her to empirical enquiry, to deism, and to an optimistic view of human potential.

The observation of the influence of Enlightenment thought on the works of Sor Juana, and the view that she should be seen as a figure who engaged not only with the cultural histories of both Europe and the Americas, but also with the patterns of thought and the world views of both the Baroque and the early Enlightenment, is not new. It has

been made and persuasively argued by Ruth Hill and Jeremy Robbins (*Arts of Perception*), and commented on more generally by Georgina Sabat de Rivers ("Sor Juana" 380). However, these scholars have focussed primarily on the emergence of Enlightenment thought in Sor Juana's philosophical poem *Primero sueño* and in the *Respuesta a sor Filotea de la Cruz*, a theological justification of her vocation to intellectual endeavours, written in response to the Bishop of Puebla as a defence from the accusation of devoting herself too much to secular pursuits. By establishing the presence of Enlightenment ideas in these two texts, both Hill and Robbins argue against the received idea that the Hispanic world did not experience an Enlightenment. They note that this exclusion of the Spanish Empire from Enlightenment history is the result of the French and British definition of the movement as anti-Christian or anti-Catholic, and therefore incompatible with the image of seventeenth-century Spain as a conservative, backward and dogmatically religious nation (Hill 25). Rather, they suggest that in the Hispanic world, a different form of Enlightenment emerged, one which embraced the use of reason as a complement to faith, rather than a danger to it. Nonetheless, while both authors agree that the Enlightenment thought of the Hispanic world was not hostile to religion, they both cite as examples passages of texts which only tangentially touch on matters of theology. Indeed, Robbins notes that for many Spaniards, theology remained the domain of Aristotelianism well into the eighteenth century (*Arts* 230).

In order to understand the interaction between Catholicism and Enlightenment in the Hispanic world, we must consider not only those texts which deal primarily and explicitly with the new sciences, such as *Primero sueño*, or those whose religious tone belies their primary purpose of convincing their reader of the necessity of scientific

pursuits, such as the *Respuesta*. Rather, it is necessary also to include those texts which have a specifically religious, doctrinal, or devotional function, which deal directly with specific tenets of Catholic dogma, and yet seek to reconcile this with the promotion of Enlightenment thought and values. The original argument of this thesis lies in its emphasis on Sor Juana's religious works, namely her *autos sacramentales*, as integral to our understanding of her thought and works as engaging with the Baroque and the Enlightenment. In it, I argue that a theologically grounded analysis of these works sheds new light on Sor Juana's engagement with both the Counter-Reformation thought of the Hispanic Baroque, and the more modern beginnings of the Enlightenment.

Throughout the history of Sor Juana studies, her religious works have been consistently neglected. Her most famous works—*Primero Sueño*, *Los empeños de una casa*, her love poetry, and satirical verse—are all secular. The two exceptions to this rule are the *Respuesta*, which has most frequently been analysed in terms of its thought on women's rights, and the *auto sacramental El divino Narciso*, whose theological message has rarely been considered by scholars, as detailed below. In recent years, several studies have drawn attention to the significance of the daily rhythms of convent life in shaping our historical view of the nun-poet (Arenal and Schlau; S. Kirk; Poot Herrera). However, this has not translated into more concerted attention being paid to her religious writings. The oversight is perhaps understandable, given the view already propagated in her own day that she devoted herself too much to secular learning. In the *Respuesta* she defended herself from the accusation of committing too much time to the pursuit of intellectual endeavours seen as anathema to the vocation of a woman

religious. She was, nonetheless, a consummate writer of devotional works.[3] She was the author of several devotional poems and tracts, which are practically unknown today, yet which were her most widely printed works in eighteenth-century New Spain (Myers 114). She was also the author of three *autos sacramentales*: *El divino Narciso*, *El cetro de José* and *El mártir del Sacramento*, *San Hermenegildo* (*El mártir del Sacramento*). Without taking into account the time and attention Sor Juana paid to her religious pursuits, our understanding of her works and life is incomplete and biased. We do justice neither to her advanced grasp of theological matters, nor to the historical context within which she lived and wrote.

Sor Juana's *autos sacramentales* belong to a genre which has often been thought of as an exemplary dramatic expression of the mentality of the Catholic Baroque in the Hispanic world. *Autos* were performed for the feast day of Corpus Christi, which marks Christ's institution of the Eucharist, or Mass, at the Last Supper, when he distributed bread and wine among his disciples, pronouncing them to be His body and blood, and instructing his followers to do likewise. In traditional Christianity, this feast affirms the belief that the body and blood of Christ are present in the bread and wine whenever the Eucharist is celebrated.[4] According to Catholic doctrine, this occurs through the process

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[3] Probably Sor Juana's best known devotional works are her *villancicos*, written from early in her career for the cathedrals of Mexico City and Puebla, and published in the first volume of her collected works, *Inundación Castálida*. These have been analysed in a book-length study by Martha Lilia Tenorio and in several shorter articles (Underberg; M. Parker; Long; Chang-Rodríguez) Further devotional poetry is published in all three volumes of her collected works. The little scholarly work undertaken on these poems has been done by Pamela Kirk, particularly in her book *Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz: Religion, Art and Feminism.*

[4] Various Christian traditions have adopted different names for the ritual which recalls Christ's distribution of bread and wine to his disciples at the Last Supper. The most common include Eucharist, Holy Communion, Lord's Supper and Mass. Throughout this thesis, the two terms most commonly employed by the Catholic Church, Eucharist and Mass, are used interchangeably. The name Eucharist derives from the Greek word for thanksgiving, and the designation Mass comes from the concluding formula of the liturgy, "ite, missa est", with which the people are sent out.

of transubstantiation, which depends on the Aristotelian distinction between the substance of objects, their true essence; and their accidents, or the various aspects of their nature as they are apprehended by the senses. During the Mass, when the priest consecrates the bread and wine, they are changed in their substance into the body and blood of Christ, while remaining in their accidents as bread and wine. During the Reformation and Counter-Reformation, when Protestantism denied this doctrine and instead taught that the Eucharist was a symbol of Christ's sacrifice on the cross, this feast became particularly significant to the defence of Catholic belief. The function of the *autos sacramentales* was to promote transubstantiation in a dramatic manner, and to encourage devotion to the Mass as necessary to salvation. In aesthetic terms, the *autos* achieved this through an elaborate and sensuous portrayal of a world in which everything that appears to the senses is fallacious, and belies a deeper reality. The Baroque music, ornate scenery, extravagant sets, detailed costumes, and ambitious pyrotechnics employed in these plays served to communicate to the public that even the most awe-inspiring spectacles remained theatrical illusions. Things which presented themselves to the senses as reality were shown to be illusion, in the same way that what appeared to be bread was in fact the body of Christ; the seeming reality of death was believed to conceal the reality of the resurrection of the body; and the apparently chaotic and destructive nature of the material world was seen to belie a greater cosmic order which would one day be revealed in the Kingdom of Heaven.

Despite the doctrinal and devotional function of the *autos sacramentales*, and their potential importance to Sor Juana's corpus, no scholar has thus far provided an analysis of Sor Juana's works in terms of their commitment to the doctrine of transubstantiation or their engagement with illusion and reality, and with death and

resurrection. In certain regards, her *autos* have suffered the same fate as many works of colonial literature. Many of these remain unfamiliar to us because their study has historically fallen outside of the traditional major fields of Hispanic literary studies. Until recently, the cultural production of New Spain has been approached and received as an inferior imitation of the art and literature of Spain at a similar time. For scholars of the Golden Age, there was therefore little incentive to devote attention to what was seen as a second-rate copy when there was still much to achieve in the study of the Spanish masters. For a similar reason, scholars in the field of Latin American literature have also historically neglected the colonial period. As an imitation of Spanish moods and trends, it remained, with few exceptions, too "peninsular," with too little to distinguish it as being "American," and therefore worthy of a place in the development of the canons of the new national literatures which emerged in the nineteenth century. However, even with the emergence of "Sor Juana studies" as a field of critical interest in the 1980s, particularly among scholars in Mexico and the United States, her *autos sacramentales* have had a mixed history of critical reception.

A significant number of scholars who have approached Sor Juana's *autos* have done so without the kind of theological knowledge which has marked the vast majority of studies of Calderón. To date, there has been no published monograph or collection of essays devoted to an in-depth analysis of all three plays, nor the relationship between them. When the plays have been considered together, this has most frequently been in the form of short extracts in book-length studies of her works. These rarely amount to more than a few pages and therefore do not provide the space to analyse any of the plays in the kind of depth a single study would accord them (Beuchot; Martínez San

Miguel; Paz).[5] In addition, many of them are found in longer works on the life and writings of Sor Juana, each of which is naturally influenced by the thematic concerns of its author, and therefore focus on a particular feature of the play at hand.

Among studies of individual plays, the work to have received the most scholarly attention is *El divino Narciso*.[6] This play formed the basis of Pfandl's now discredited, yet influential argument that Sor Juana's writings are the expressions of her own psychoses. Following this, A.A. Parker's "The Calderonian Sources of *El divino Narciso*" investigated the Calderonian influence on the play, and remains the only major study of the play from a historically renowned scholar of the Golden Age.[7] This seminal piece has been followed by several others investigating issues of imitation, the play as a piece of classical theatre, and its adaptation of its classical source.[8] Later analyses have paid particular attention to four main areas: Marie-Cécile Bénassy-Berling, Louise Salstad and Angel Valbuena Briones ("El juego") have considered the significance of visual reflection, Jane Ackerman, Julie Bokser, Jorge Checa and Stephanie Merrim ("Narciso desdoblado") have looked at the role of the echo and other rhetorical strategies, Jonathan Ellis and Pamela Kirk have questioned Sor Juana's choice of Narcissus as a figure of Christ, and Miguel Balsa, Gloria Calhoun, and Chiara

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[5] One exception to this is Georgina Sabat de Rivers' *En busca de Sor Juana*, which includes one of the few studies devoted to the *loa* to *El mártir del Sacramento.*

[6] For the other two *autos*, *El cetro de José* and *El mártir del Sacramento*, it is possible to cite all articles which to my knowledge have been written on each play, given the paucity of scholarship on them. For *El divino Narciso*, which has received considerably more attention from critics, only the most significant trends in scholarship, and a few other selected works have been cited.

[7] This study is the exception to the rule that Sor Juana's *autos* have not been studied by specialists of the Spanish *auto*. Nonetheless, this study restricts itself, as its name suggests, to the play's sources, without paying significant attention to its theological message.

[8] See Arango "Tema y estructura;" Bauer-Funke; Díaz Balsera "Mal de amor;" Fuller "The Gospel;" Gentilli; Donadoni and Houvenaghel "El camino;" López Martín; Márques López; Valbuena Briones "Una tipología." These issues are also amply covered in Rice's edition of the play.

Donadoni and Eugenia Houvenhagel ("La híbridez) have studied the issue of religious syncretism, in relation to both classical antiquity and indigenous American rituals. As one of the very few woman writers to be included in the canon of Golden-Age literature (alongside Teresa of Avila and María de Zayas), Sor Juana has received particular interest from the field of women's studies, and there have been several studies from some of the most prominent Sor Juanistas, who have considered *El divino Narciso* from this perspective.[9] Finally, Veronica Grossi, the scholar who has written most extensively on Sor Juana's *autos*, has focussed on epistemology and political allegory ("Political Meta-Allegory;" "Meta alegoría;" "De la fiesta pública;" *Sigilosos vuelos*).

Sor Juana's other two *autos*, *El cetro de José* and *El mártir del Sacramento* have received considerably less interest from scholars. *El cetro de José* has been included in the studies of all three *autos* cited above, in addition to a handful of individual analyses. Two works focus on the representation of Joseph in the Spanish Golden Age: an article by Francisco Peña Fernández and a book by Michael McGaha (*The Story of Joseph*), with the latter including a translation of the play. In addition, there have been three individual character studies on the play, with articles by McGaha ("The Fragmented Subject") and Robin Rice ("José como prefiguración") concentrating specifically on the protagonist José, and a further one by Lee Daniel analysing the figure of the devil ("Satan as Character"). Several of the studies cited above have commented on the significance of dreams in the work. Yolanda Martínez San Miguel argues for their role as an alternative source of knowledge, in contrast to rational enquiry, and as a defence

[9] Some of the most prominent scholars to have considered Sor Juana's works with particular emphasis on her as a woman writer have been Margo Glantz, Tamara Harvey, Judith Kirkpatrick, Stephanie Merrim, Georgina Sabat de Rivers. In particular reference to *El divino Narciso*, see González, Hart, Harvey "My Goods are True" and "Seventeenth-Century Pansapphism", Kirkpatrick, Merrim. With significant overlap with some of these studies, Matthew Stroud has also considered the play from a Lacanian perspective.

of sub-altern epistemologies (194). McGaha goes so far as to argue that these contrasts "reflect [Sor Juana's] deeply fragmented subjectivity" ("Fragmented Subject" 159). The third *auto*, *El mártir del Sacramento*, is even less well known, despite a small increase in scholarship on this play in recent years. Amy Fuller has looked at the play as a historical adaptation ("Rebel"), Gerald Flynn and Daniel ("Baroque Martyr-*Auto*") have questioned the categorisation of the play, and Robert Worley has argued for a subversive political message underlying the overt nationalistic tone of the play.

The lack of a theologically grounded approach to the plays in all of the above studies has resulted in an often anachronistic understanding of Sor Juana as a writer and thinker striving towards modernity, or even post-modernity. Few of them pay attention to the doctrinal and devotional function of these plays, or engage with the historical circumstances in which these particular theological ideas flourished. Not doing so has made possible a vision of Sor Juana as a proto-feminist, proto-*indigenista* and proto-secularist, an image which does not take into account the currents in her work which tie her to the world order into which she was born, defined by religious dogmatism, overlapping ecclesiastical and political hierarchies, patronage, censorship and the constraints of race, class and gender.

In order to correct this omission, the first purpose of this study is to analyse the doctrinal and devotional function of Sor Juana's *autos*. Understanding the theological message of her *autos*, and how this was intended to be conveyed aesthetically, is a necessary step towards gaining a fuller picture of Sor Juana's theological and literary mind, as well as to providing a more comprehensive vision of her as an intellectual figure. In turn, this will allow us to locate her works more accurately within the historical and religious landscape of the seventeenth-century Hispanic world. The

second purpose of this study, which cannot be achieved without the first, is to explore those ways in which Sor Juana's *autos* depart from the model familiar to us from her predecessor and master of the genre, Calderón de la Barca. In particular, this will focus on two aspects of Sor Juana's works: those which connect her to a more chronologically accurate expression of modern thought, that of the early Enlightenment, and those which are specifically tied to the Americas, and which mark Sor Juana out as a *criollo* thinker and writer. Finally, this study will ask whether Sor Juana's *autos* succeed in reconciling these two patterns of thought, Counter-Reformation dogmatism and Enlightenment empiricism, or whether they remain at odds with one another.

This final question in particular has potential ramifications which extend far beyond the field of Sor Juana studies, and should be of concern to those interested in the transition from the Baroque to the Enlightenment, as well as to scholars of the Enlightenment in the Hispanic world. By investigating this crossover of thought in Sor Juana's religious plays, I seek to support the argument for the presence of Enlightenment thought in Sor Juana's works, and to take it one step further. If Sor Juana's *autos* make belief in Catholic tridentine theology compatible with an empirical approach to epistemology, then this suggests the existence in the Hispanic world of an expression of Enlightenment thought which was consistent with religious belief. Furthermore, it indicates that this strand of empirical thought was not confined to philosophical and scientific texts but was also present in overtly religious texts, even those often seen as belonging to a particularly dogmatic genre.

In order to provide a grounding for this study of the interaction between tridentine and empirical currents of thought in Sor Juana's religious drama, it is helpful first to turn to her more concise writings on a closely related topic: the study of

allegory. This is another important yet understudied aspect of Sor Juana's works, which is dealt with in the *autos* themselves, as well as in another significant text, *Neptuno alegórico*. This tract was written to accompany the design of a triumphal arch for the entrance of Viceroy Tomás de la Cerda y Aragón, the Marquis of La Laguna into Mexico City in 1680, and presents an allegory of the new viceroy as the Roman god Neptune. Sor Juana's design was one of two twin arches, the other designed by her fellow *criollo* intellectual Don Carlos de Sigüenza y Góngora, whose own arch and accompanying text presented the new viceroy in the line of great historic Aztec rulers.[10]

In addition to her writings on allegory in the *autos* and in *Neptuno*, some of her ideas expressed in a further text, the *Respuesta a sor Filotea*, are also directly relevant to this discussion. This text, which will be dealt with more extensively throughout this thesis, was written as a response to the publication of a letter Sor Juana had sent to the Bishop of Puebla, Manuel Fernández de Santa Cruz. The letter, entitled *Carta atenagórica*, had been requested by the Bishop following one of Sor Juana's *tertulia* in the convent, the regular gatherings of prominent intellectuals in the viceroyalty that she held to discuss matters of theological, philosophical, literary or scientific interest. During one such conversation, Sor Juana had presented arguments on what she believed to be the greatest demonstration of Christ's love, or the "mayor fineza de Cristo". This was a question which had been discussed since the time of the Church Fathers, but Sor Juana's letter specifically critiqued a sermon on the matter given by the renowned Jesuit preacher Antonio Vieira in Lisbon in 1655. It assessed the arguments put forward by Vieira, alongside those of Augustine, Aquinas and Chrysostom, and eventually supported the opinion presented by Augustine. As a reply to her letter, the bishop also

[10] For more on this event, Sor Juana's participation in it, and its significance to the intellectual and cultural life of late seventeenth-century New Spain, see Andrews and Coroleu.

published a pseudonymous letter, the *Carta de sor Filotea*, ostensibly from a fellow sister in Puebla, in which he accused Sor Juana of transgressing the boundaries of what was acceptable for a woman religious. He criticised her for not paying due respect to her religious superiors, and of devoting too much time to secular matters. In her response, Sor Juana defended her commitment to secular learning as a matter of fulfilling the purpose to which she had been called by God, and her interest in scientific study as a means of learning more about the divine, and therefore as an acceptable activity for a nun. In this text, Sor Juana does not deal directly with allegory. She does write extensively on learning, knowledge, and perception, all of which are directly relevant to this discussion, as they are closely related to the Baroque understanding of allegory, and in particular how it interacts with an understanding of the natural sciences and changing currents of thought about sensory perception and human knowledge.

Central to the concept of allegory is the acceptance that objects, words and texts can carry two meanings. To take one of the best known examples of the device, Plato's cave describes men sitting in a cave with their back to its mouth, such that the light drawn into the cave from the outside produces projections on the back wall on which their gaze is fixed. This is both an accurate physical description of shadows in a cave, and a description of what Plato believed to be the nature of reality—that what we experience of the material world is a mere projection of a higher realm of ideas. In the Mass, when the bread and wine are consecrated, they remain bread and wine in their accidents (their material significance) and body and blood in their substance (their transcendent significance). In both cases, in Plato's allegory of the cave in the Mass, the information received by the senses about the material nature of things is shown not to be entirely reliable. This encouraged a sceptical attitude towards material reality, where

the reliability of sensory input is denied, and with it the possibility of acquiring knowledge about the world through the senses. In the *autos sacramentales*, and in the Mass, this was resolved through an admonition to shape one's perception of the world according to the teachings of the church, which revealed the deeper significance behind material reality. This in turn affected the way in which value was supposed to be ascribed to such objects, and their true worth was often found to be the reverse of their appearance. Though the host may appear as a worthless piece of bread, the knowledge that it is the body of Christ transforms its value and ascribes to the material object great spiritual worth.

Even outside of the strictly religious sphere, this understanding of the dual nature of things permeated the Baroque mindset of the Spanish world, encouraging a sceptical approach to understanding material reality which drove much of the period's literary and artistic production. At a point in history characterised by the religious upheaval of the Reformation and Counter-Reformation, the economic stagnation of the Spanish Empire, the decline of strong monarchical rulers and the everyday precarity of early modern life, the philosophical ideas behind the doctrine of transubstantiation provided a way to give meaning to a tumultuous and often destructive material reality. In the Mass, what had appeared to be a simple piece of bread was shown to be not just bread, but a veil for the true presence of the body of Christ. In turn, this pointed back to the sacrifice of Christ's body on the cross, which had appeared to be the physical victory of death, but later was shown to be the means of salvation, and victory over death. In a similar manner, therefore, the precarity and transience of the material reality of the early modern world could be embraced as signs of a fallen and sinful creation, destined for redemption by God. Just as the mangled body of Christ on the cross

pointed to his resurrection, so the ephemerality of material reality pointed to its eventual redemption and restoration.

In the *auto*, authors communicated this idea by shaping dramatic plots which could be read on both a literal and a spiritual level. It was the playwright's task to devise a different *argumento* or plot for each play, which took the form of an allegory, and therefore carried meaning on two levels, the literal / historical and the figurative / transcendent, where both of these meanings were true, but the transcendent meaning gave value to the literal one. The events of the play, whatever these might be, gained significance because they were shown also to be part of Christian history. In an *auto*, this duality of meaning could be expressed in a variety of ways. In mythological *autos* (such as *El divino Narciso*), authors drew out the similarities between classical myths and particular aspects of Christian theology, in such a way as to suggest that the myths themselves somehow foreshadowed a Christian teaching which was only later to be revealed in the lifetime of Christ. Likewise, in Biblical *autos*, such as *El cetro de José*, playwrights also cited passages of the Old Testament which prophesied in some way the events of the New Testament. In *El cetro de José*, Sor Juana adapted the narrative of Joseph in the book of Genesis so as to show that Joseph, as well as being a historical Old Testament figure, also in some ways pointed towards the future actions of Christ. In addition to communicating this central idea of the dual nature of things through their allegorical form, the authors of the *autos* did this by presenting their message through the medium of theatre. One of the ever-recurring themes of the Baroque, across national and linguistic boundaries, is the idea of the world-as-stage. In her study of the Spanish *comedia*, Sofie Kluge emphasises how, in the Baroque, the idea that the world was *like* a stage became the idea that the world *is* a stage, in the same way that the elements of

the Mass really *are* the body and blood of Christ (210). *Autos* therefore, contained the allegory in both its substance and its form, and communicated the doctrine of transubstantiation through their very essence as a piece of theatre.

In light of this, in the following analysis of allegory in the works of Sor Juana, I follow several contemporary scholars (Black; Bloomfield; Levin) in rejecting the commonly understood notion of allegory as a rhetorical device which says one thing and means another, in which the transcendent meaning is privileged over the literal meaning. The *Oxford English Dictionary* continues to define allegory as "a figurative sentence, discourse, or narrative, in which properties and circumstances attributed to the apparent subject *really* refer to the subject they are meant to suggest" (emphasis mine). As the preceding analysis of the significance of allegory to the Baroque world view makes clear, both levels of meaning must be taken into account for a full understanding of the workings and implications of the device. This is seen in Sor Juana's own writings on the subject of allegory, which run throughout her drama and prose. In the introduction to *El divino Narciso*, she defines allegory using the metaphor of dress and costume. The allegory of her play, she states, is "una idea metafórica, vestida de retóricos colores" (LN 401-03). The significance of each of the levels of understanding is here made clear. Through a play on the unspoken word "figura," Sor Juana's ideas are "vestidas" both literally through the costumed figures of the play and metaphorically through the numerous rhetorical devices (*figuras retóricas*) she employs. A second definition works in a similar way. She goes on to define the characters of her play as "unos abstractos, que pintan lo que se intenta decir." In their physical creation of on-stage tableaux the characters form a visual image comparable to a painting.

Simultaneously, in a more figurative sense, their words will shape the action, and explain complex ideas in such a way as to make them tangible to the audience.

To disregard the literal level of meaning would be to disregard the significance of the material elements of the Mass, or the physical reality of the body of Christ in the Incarnation and Passion, and the necessity of embracing the material aspects of historical reality as signs of the fallen nature of creation. Nonetheless, I also reject those views on the subject, presented by Black, Levin and Bloomfield, which propose a definition of allegory in which the literal meaning is given the same status as the transcendent one. This approach, which stresses the importance of both the literal and the figurative levels of meaning, has been espoused by scholars working specifically on Christian allegory, and on *autos* in particular. Barbara Kurtz has embraced it as encompassing the "both/and" rather than the "either/or" of the doctrine of the Incarnation and of transubstantiation, that Christ was *both* human *and* divine, and that, once consecrated, the Mass is *both* bread and wine *and* body and blood (58-62). However, the approach which seems to equate material and spiritual reality is also somewhat problematic, as it often leads to the inference that the two levels of meaning are not only hermeneutically significant, but also qualitatively equal. The example of the Mass, described above, makes it clear that the literal level is only ascribed full meaning when transformed in the light of its transcendent meaning. The medieval philosopher Moses Maimonides (1135-1204) explains this through the idea of an inner and outer shell, or the respective values of silver and gold:

> Dijo el sabio, "como manzanas de oro en engastes de plata es la palabra bien torneada" [Pr 25.11]. Los "engastes" son filigranas con aberturas pequeñitas como las que fabrican los plateros, que la vista penetra…. Salomón quiere decir: "como manzana dorada en una red de plata es el discurso según sus dos caras." ¡Qué sentencia tan

> hermosa para describir una buena alegoría! Muestra que toda palabra con dos caras, exterior e interior, debe tener la exterior tan bella como la plata y la interior más bella, como el oro… Es preciso también que la exterior dé al que la contemple una idea de lo que hay dentro, como la manzana de oro engastada en filigrana de plata, que cuando se la mira desde lejos parece de plata, pero cuando se la mira bien y con cuidado descubre lo que está dentro y se revela como de oro. Así son las alegorías de los profetas. (qtd. in Lawrence 22)

This model, which asserts the importance of both levels of meaning, at the same time as it emphasises the qualitative difference between them, is at once more complex than any of the models previously considered, and is a closer fit with the Christian philosophy behind the aesthetic of seventeenth-century Spanish literature articulated above. It allows for a connection to be made between the vanity of the material world and its metaphysical redemption, where material reality, the literal level of interpretation, only makes sense once it has been lent transcendent meaning. At the same time, this transcendent meaning is only made possible by means of the literal narrative. Only by taking both levels of meaning into account can one truly understand both the Baroque's intense engagement with secular worldliness and its interest in metaphysics. In an *auto sacramental*, the final revelation of the host and chalice as a force of redemption only has effect because of the sensuous portrayal of a fallen world of sinful humanity in need of salvation which precedes it. In painting, the depiction of a decaying bowl of fruit or of the passing beauty of a flower only warrants the attention to detail given it because the eventual decay of the pictured objects is a sign of something greater to come. The interest in the pagan world of classical mythology, in contrast to its role in the Renaissance, can be justified and indeed encouraged when it is shown as a shadow of greater Christian truths to come.

Sor Juana's interaction with this particularly Baroque world view in her writings on allegory is apparent in her description of the device in the opening scene of *El divino Narciso*. Here, the allegorical author-figure, Naturaleza Humana, allegory for both nature and human nature, explains to the two allegorical figures Gentilidad and Sinagoga, who stand for paganism and Judaism, that she will take elements of each of their traditions, of human and divine letters, to explain how both reveal divine mysteries. She states:

> NATURALEZA HUMANA. Intento con colores
> alegóricos, que ideas
> representables componen,
> tomar de la una [Sinagoga] el sentido,
> tomar de la otra [Gentilidad] las voces,
> y en metafóricas frases,
> tomando sus locuciones
> y en figura de Narciso,
> solicitar los amores
> de Dios, a ver si dibujan
> estos obscuros borrones
> la claridad de las luces. (AN 113-124)

She then specifies that Sinagoga, representing the tradition of the Old Testament, will provide "el cuerpo a la idea," and adds to Gentilidad, who stands for classical pagan mythology, "y tú el vestido le cortes." Here specifically, the "vestido" is to be the myth of Narcissus, retold in such a manner as to explain Christian truths. The literal and spiritual meanings of her coming story are thus made clear. On a literal level, she will retell the myth of Narcissus, with his voice and clothes to appeal to the senses, as the best of the pagan myths do. The purpose of her play is to determine whether she can find such similarities between the myth and the gospel, that will turn the dark, murky world of paganism into the light of Christ.

Her use of the language of light and dark ("obscuros borrones" / "claridad de las luces") is here significant, for through it Sor Juana engages with the thought of many of her contemporaries who also wrote on allegorical language and its significance to reconciling the material world with Christian history. In his sonnet "De la divinidad, y Humanidad de Christo" Alonso de Bonilla (1570–1642) employs the analogy of a painting, and its use of colour, shading and perspective, to explain the Incarnation (87).[11] He describes how for God simply to reveal himself would be like painting in white on white background.[12] Instead, the painter must first create the dark background ("lejos") on which the highlights, the "realce" can more readily be seen:

> Quando en pared lustrosa, blanca y nueva,
> Introduze su forma la pintura,
> Si es de colores blancos la figura,
> no se conoce, porque no relieva.
>
> Y ansi es forçoso que el pinzel embeba
> Algunos lexos, como parte obscura (vv. 1-6)

By turning to the same imagery as used by authors such as Bonilla, Sor Juana demonstrates her engagement with the theological function of allegory. In order for God to make himself known, he had to make himself part of the "dark background" of human flesh, in order for the "light" of his deity to be revealed at the resurrection, as he states in *De la resurrección de Christo* "Y al tercer día descubrió el dorado" (168 v.12). Dwelling in the light of heaven, God is scarcely apprehensible by the human mind. In order for mankind to comprehend something of His nature, he needed to make Himself

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[11] With thanks to Tyler Fisher, both for pointing out the importance of this imagery, and for introducing me to the poetry of Bonilla, in whose work this topos is a recurrent feature.

[12] For a discussion of the notions of *sombras*, *visos*, and *lejos* in the *auto sacramental* of Calderón, see Kurtz.

man, to descend into the darkness of creation, in contrast to which the light of His divine nature may be revealed. Sor Juana takes this topos and applies it to the revelation of Christ, not through the resurrection, but in the *auto*. Here, the "obscuros borrones," comparable to the "lexos, como parte obscura" in Bonilla, are the human letters, the pagan myth, and in terms of the allegory, the literal meaning. As in Bonilla's poem, it is only by virtue of their darkness that the "claridad de las luces," the Christian truth, or the hidden meaning of the allegory, can be made visible. The Christian truth would not be understandable without the "dark" human writings in which to set it, conversely, the pagan myth remains just that without the Christian significance in it being revealed. They are, nonetheless, still opposites: black and white, dark and light. In addition, the contrast between the "obscuros borrones" and the "claridad de las luces" have clear implications for the understanding of sensory perception. By associating the world of mythology, and therefore the world of historical reality, with darkness, and then contrasting this with the clarity of divinely revealed truth, Sor Juana draws attention to the potentially deceptive nature of the material world, and of sensory perception, and instead presents divine revelation as the path to truth. Her description of allegory displays a typically Baroque scepticism towards sensory perception as a path to knowledge. This is reflected in her practice of allegorical writing which was both theologically complex and rhetorically creative. This is demonstrated to its fullest extent in *El divino Narciso*, in which Sor Juana created a world of deceit, vanity and envy, in order to show how it will be redeemed through Christ.

However, if we consider Sor Juana's further writings on allegory, in particular in *Neptuno alegórico* and the *Respuesta*, we see a gradual development in her presentation of the device, which differentiates them from those of many of her contemporaries. In

the introduction to *Neptuno alegórico*, Sor Juana presents the concept of allegory through her knowledge of Egyptian practices, explaining her choice of theme for the archway in the presentation of the god Neptune as an allegory of the Viceroy:

> Costumbre fue de la antigüedad, y muy especialmente de los egipcios, adorar sus deidades debajo de diferentes hieroglíficos y formas varias…. No porque juzgasen que la deidad siendo infinita pudiera estrecharse a la figura y término de cuantidad limitada, sino porque, como eran cosas que carecían de toda forma visible y por consiguiente imposibles de mostrarse a los ojos de los hombres (los cuales por la mayor parte sólo tienen por empleo de la voluntad el que es objeto de los ojos) fue necesario buscarles hieroglíficos que por similitud, ya que no por perfecta imagen, las representasen. (1350; para. 3)

As above, in this passage Sor Juana refers to pagan antiquity, this time Egyptian, as the basis for her definition of allegory. However, there is a shift in emphasis from the texts considered above. Alongside the discussion of its theological function, the didactic aim of allegory is brought to the fore. In an *auto*, these two functions are difficult to separate. If an *auto* shows vain reality to have transcendent meaning, then it is also capable of communicating transcendent ideas, such as transubstantiation, through tangible figures of historical reality. However, the change in focus is significant. In contrast to the citations above, the stress is no longer on the work itself, either the *auto* or the archway, and is now on the human being behind its design, and behind its choice of allegory. Whereas before, allegory appeared as a means to communicate an objective reality which was somehow obscured from view, here Sor Juana foregrounds the endeavour to apprehend and represent sacred mysteries which are outside of human grasp. Allegory serves to present abstract concepts, most often divine in nature, ("cosas que carecían de toda forma visible" and "imposibles de mostrarse a los ojos de los hombres") in an understandable manner. This is achieved by presenting them in visual

form: “hieroglíficos y formas varias.” These representations are not, in her Thomist idiom, perfect “images,” but rather “exemplars,” that is, although they in some manner resemble the idea they represent, they do not proceed from it, nor do they share its essence (Aquinas I.35). Furthermore, the function of hieroglyphs was to communicate the nature of their Egyptian deities to men, who “por la mayor parte sólo tienen por empleo de la voluntad el que es objeto de los ojos.”

The confidence Sor Juana expresses in the use of sight is a particularly significant departure from the Baroque world view explored above. While the primary purpose of allegory remains theological, it is there to communicate something about the nature of God, and about His relationship to creation, this is no longer conceived of or articulated in the same terms as we saw described in the *auto*. Here, things presented to the eyes of men are no longer deceptive illusions, which are to be mistrusted in favour of the truth of revelation, but rather they are the sole and primary means of acquiring information about the world. The fact that these allegories, or hieroglyphs, are not the perfect images of the things they represent is not a problem. If God is beyond human representation, but it is still possible to communicate something of His nature through visual means (which is the only manner accessible to man), then however deficient this method is, it still remains useful and viable.

If we follow through her argument, it becomes clear that the visual appeal of the *auto* has a second function. As she extrapolates in *Neptuno*, the aim of allegory is not just to teach in a simple and palatable manner, but because divine truths are difficult to express in an adequate manner, and therefore this must be done through veiled signs and hidden symbols:

> Hiciéronlo no sólo por atraer a los hombres al culto divino con más agradables atractivos, sino también por reverencia de las deidades, por no vulgarizar sus misterios a la gente común e ignorante. Decoro de mejores luces que aprobó el real profeta *Aperiam in parabolis os meum, in enigmate antiquo loquar*. Y de nuestro Redentor dice el sagrado coronista San Mateo en el capítulo 13: *Haec omnia loquutus est IESVS in parabolis ad turbas, et sine parabolis non loquebatur eis*. Sin otros innumerables ejemplos de que están llenas las divinas y humanas letras. (1350; para. 3)

As she goes on to explain, the complex nature of allegories opens up a wealth of possibilities for their intellectual exploration to those who can delve deeper than the doctrinal simplicity of the basic message. While the visual elements of the allegory serve to make a complex idea more simple, they also demand of the discerning reader or spectator that they probe the connections between the different levels of meaning, and thereby gain a deeper literary or theological understanding of the figures used. This requires the author to find ingenious solutions to the need to represent divine mysteries, a fact which is articulated and defended in *Neptuno*:

> Y así dejó que el pensamiento formase una idea en qué delinearlo, porque a lo que no cabía en los límites naturales se le diese toda la latitud de lo imaginado…. Y aunque esta manera de escribir está tan aprobada con el uso, no quiero dejar de decir que en las divinas letras tiene también su género de apoyo el uso de las metáforas y apólogos pues en el Libro de los Jueces, capítulo 9, se lee: *Ierunt ligna, ut ungerent super se regem: dixerunt olivae: Impera nobis*. Y prosigue introduciendo los árboles que consultan políticamente el gobierno de la montaña. (1353; para. 6)

Here, the intellect and the use of reason make up for the deficiencies of the senses. The broken link between the literal and the transcendent meaning has been acknowledged, but it is no longer problematic. It is the imagination's job to connect literal and transcendent meaning. As she explains in the *Respuesta*, this use of the imagination can

resolve the discrepancy between the world as it is apprehended by the senses, and its true meaning. According to the Baroque theory of allegory, the allegorist was required to make connections between the seen and the unseen, between the material world and its transcendent significance, in order to overcome the deception of the senses. In Sor Juana's writings in the *Respuesta*, the same task is achieved by observing the natural world, and making connections between apparently disparate objects within it, such that a fuller picture of material reality can be obtained, and deceptions in individual observations corrected. Perceiving the interactions between objects can lead to a deeper understanding of each of them, and thus build up a more accurate picture of how the world works, without the need for revelation Sor Juana advocates an approach which seeks to form a "chain of knowledge," whereby all secular knowledge consolidates one's theological understanding, thus approaching better knowledge of God:

> Con esto proseguí, dirigiendo siempre, como he dicho, los pasos de mi estudio a la cumbre de la sagrada teología; pareciéndome preciso, para llegar a ella, subir por los escalones de las ciencias y artes humanas porque ¿cómo entenderá el estilo de la reina de las ciencias quien aún no sabe el de las ancilas? (1464; para. 11)

According to this conception, learning in one subject can help to overcome the deficiencies of metaphorical speech used to describe another one, as with the example given between geometry and rhetoric:

> Yo de mí puedo asegurar que lo que no entiendo en un autor de una facultad, lo suelo entender en otro de otra que parece muy distante; y esos propios, al explicarse, abren ejemplos metafóricos de otras artes, como cuando dicen… que la oración del lógico anda como la línea recta, por el camino más breve, y la del retórico se mueve, como la corva, por el más largo, pero van a un mismo punto los dos; … Y así no es disculpa, ni por tal la doy, el haber estudiado diversas cosas, pues éstas antes se ayudan. (1467; para. 13)

When applied to the *auto* and to the metaphors and allegories contained therein, a deeper understanding of the myths and histories which form the literal level can lead to a better appreciation of the divine truths they represent.

Bringing these texts together, there is a clear and definite development in her conception of the use of allegory through *El divino Narciso*, *Neptuno alegórico* and the *Respuesta*. Each of these texts is grounded in a theocentric world view, a view of the world as a divine creation, on which is imposed a cosmic order. Each one demonstrates its roots in the scepticism of the Baroque mindset, and acknowledges a difference between creation as we observe and experience it and its transcendent meaning. However, in the two latter texts, Sor Juana begins to move beyond this, by demonstrating a way to overcome this separation through the use of empirical enquiry aided by reason, through the observation of the world, and through building connections between objects of creation, in order to perceive the order which governs the cosmos, and therefore acquire greater knowledge of God.

In the following, the study of this development from the thought and world view of the Baroque to a more confident reliance on empirical enquiry and rational deduction is undertaken through an in-depth study of each of Sor Juana's three *autos sacramentales*. For each of them, it begins with the question of how they present the doctrine of transubstantiation in an allegorical manner. This is a question which must be answered before embarking on any further analysis of the plays. In the spirit of probing connections, this study also identifies particular issues outside the central concern of an *auto* on which Sor Juana's plays touch, and ask how these relate to the central message of transubstantiation. Crucial to this is the investigation of another previously unstudied

aspect of Sor Juana's religious plays: the connections in them between each *auto* and its *loa*.[13]

Each of Sor Juana's *autos* is accompanied by a *loa*, a short, light-hearted piece which presents the main themes of the play before the doctrinal seriousness of the *auto*. The *loas* to *El divino Narciso* and *El cetro de José* are both set in the early years of the colonisation of the Americas, and feature Hispanic characters who attempt to persuade indigenous characters to convert to Christianity. As a result of their discussions, one of the Hispanic characters suggests the performance of the *auto* as a means of instructing the indigenous characters in a particular aspect of Christian doctrine. The *loa* to *El mártir del Sacramento* differs from the other two. It is set in the late seventeenth century, and features a group of students leaving a Jesuit school and discussing the theological question of Christ's greatest demonstration of His love for humankind. In the history of the reception of the plays, these simple pieces have proved to be of greater interest to scholars than the *autos* themselves. The majority of this criticism has concentrated on the *loas* to *El divino Narciso* and *El cetro de José,* and reflects the interest among scholars in Sor Juana as a *criollo* author. To my knowledge, all studies of the *loas* as a group focus on the presence of indigenous elements, hybridity, or colonial identity.[14] In addition, this topic is a recurrent theme in the majority of studies

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[13] The terminology conventionally used to describe these plays is potentially confusing here, with only two conventionally accepted term to define three things. The term *auto sacramental*, often shortened to *auto* is used to describe both the full spectacle, include the main play and its introductory *loa*, and the main play on its own. To avoid confusion, in the this thesis I distinguish between three terms: *loa*, *auto*, and *auto sacramental. Loa* refers to the introductory piece described in the following pages. *Auto* refers only to the play which follows the *loa. Auto sacramental* describes the dramatic spectacle of these two pieces together. I believe that Sor Juana's *autos* and *loas* were written together, and therefore use the term *auto sacramental* when discussing their commissioning, composition and possible performance.

[14] See Alker; Jáuregui "Saturno caníbal" and "El plato más sabroso"; Marín "La problemática" and "Teología y conciencia"; Martínez San Miguel; Rivas; Zanelli "Cultura indígena" and "De palestras"

on the *loa* to *El divino Narciso.*[15] These complement a number of studies which give a broader overview of the piece (Benoist; Galván; Grossi "La loa"; Marini Palmieri). Only one article, by Adriana Cortés Koloffon, is dedicated exclusively to the *loa* to *El cetro de José*, though there are three on the *loa* to *El mártir del Sacramento* (Cevallos; Rice "La loa como autobiografía"; Sabat de Rivers "Loa del auto" in *En busca*). The level of critical interest in the *loas* means that there is a wealth of analysis and information about their sources, the practices portrayed in them, and in particular a robust level of debate about the extent to which they uphold or undermine the imperial vision of the conquest and colonisation of the Americas (Sabat de Rivers "Apología" in *En busca*; Grossi "Subversión"). Almost exclusively, the *loas* have been studied as separate, independent plays, without considering their connection to the *auto* before which they were written to be performed.[16] One of the most significant departures this study takes from previous scholarship on Sor Juana's *autos sacramentales* is its grounding in the idea that each *auto* and its *loa* were written to be performed and published together, and therefore should be analysed both as individual pieces, and in terms of the complete spectacle they form together.

There is good reason why this approach to the *autos* and their *loas* has not been taken until now. Firstly, the theme, content and tone of each *auto* differs significantly from those in its *loa*, and this has likely led to them being studied as stand-alone pieces.

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[15] See Balsa; Glantz "Las finezas" in *Hagiografía*; Grossi "Subversión" and "Cleansing Mexican Antiquity"; Suárez; Zanelli "La loa de *El divino Narciso"*.

[16] The two exceptions to this are Carlos Jáuregui (*Canibalia* 210) and Yolanda Martínez San Miguel. While Jáuregui simply points out this deficiency in scholarship on the *loas* (and therefore on the *autos* too), Martínez San Miguel provides the first in-depth attempt to consider connections between each *auto* and its *loa*. While several of the connections studied in the following study are also pointed out in her work, many more of those present here go beyond what any scholar has written. The consideration of the historical justification for this approach is also new to this study.

Secondly, and perhaps even more significantly, each of Sor Juana's *autos sacramentales* has been analysed following the conventional model developed around the study of the *autos sacramentales* of Calderón, according to which *autos* and their *loas* are most often considered as distinct entities. There is good reason for this. Despite the knowledge that all of Calderón's *autos* were performed preceded by an introductory *loa*, it has been nigh on impossible to study his *loas* alongside the *autos* as they would have been performed in the seventeenth century. The sheer number of his *autos*, their common theme, the overlapping concerns of their content, and the fact that there has been no tradition of printing the *autos* with their *loas*, make it difficult to establish which *auto* was performed alongside which *loa*, and thus to study the connections between them.

For Sor Juana, the story is very different. With a much smaller corpus of only three *autos*, and a tradition of publishing each *auto* with the *loa* written for it, her works present a unique opportunity to study the connections between the two pieces, and to ask what this implicates for our understanding of Sor Juana's craft of composing *autos sacramentales*. Critics have still been slow to analyse these plays together, despite the potential insights into Sor Juana's art of writing *autos sacramentales* such an approach could provide. In order to begin to understand how *auto* and *loa* may relate to one another in her work, a brief history of the genre is necessary.

Originating from Latin and Italianate drama, the earliest antecedents to the *loa* in Spain were short monologic interludes performed before longer plays, named *prólogo*, *introito* or *faraute*. Their usual function was to praise the audience, give a few details of the play, summarise the action and finish by requesting silence. The name *loa* first appears in Juan de Pedraza's "Farsa llamada danza de la muerte" (1551), and again

in the *Códice de autos viejos* (1555-1570) to denote the introductory verses of each play. After 1580, coinciding with the rise of commercial theatre, these pieces were adapted for the *teatro nuevo* and adopted the specific function of explaining the rights and duties of actors and spectators. This new purpose allowed the *loa* to develop into an independent genre, and to be seen as a piece of entertainment in its own right. However, this was a necessarily time constrained role; as the commercial theatre gained prominence and its structure and rituals became increasingly familiar to viewers, this explanatory purpose became obsolete. The *loa* did survive and continue to thrive in the court theatre and, most relevantly to the study at hand, in the *auto sacramental*.

Sacramental *loas* have been defined by Emilio Cotarelo y Mori as "loas sacramentales, así llamadas por anteceder siempre a la representación de los autos en la fiesta del Corpus, y por haberse conservado unidas a estos en las colecciones también escasas que de ellos se formaron" (xxiv). They are some of the most complex and developed examples of the genre, and many of the only examples found after the early seventeenth century. By this later stage, they were no longer short monologues or dialogues, but now included multiple characters, complex plots, and their own setting and intrigue, and often resembled miniature *autos*. Their theme was necessarily overtly or covertly Eucharistic, but they also served a light-hearted function of countering the dogmatic seriousness of the *auto*. It was under Calderón that the sacramental *loa* was developed to its fullest expression. The complexity of his allegories increased to a level similar to that found in the *autos*, and his *loas* began to deal with complex theological issues, introducing the audience to the ideas which were to be presented in the *auto*, and thus preparing them for the lesson at hand. In addition, and perhaps most significantly to the present study, Calderón began to give his *loas* a metatheatrical function, setting

up the following *auto* as a play-within-a-play, often performed either by or for the characters already presented through the *loa*. Due to the convergence of *asunto*, that is of the Eucharistic subject matter common to all *autos*, Calderón's sacramental *loas* could be adapted to be performed before several *autos*, and the same *auto* could have been performed on different occasions preceded by a variety of *loas*, as Ignacio Arellano states in his introduction to the *Loa en metáfora de la piadosa Hermandad del Refugio*:

> Un mismo autor puede llevar atribuidas loas diversas en distintos testimonios, y la misma loa puede ir con varios autos. La relativa brevedad de estas piezas y el poco ceñimiento que en general muestran respecto del tema del auto al que se atribuyen permite fácilmente el cambio o la adaptación. (9)

For example, this *loa* has been preserved in manuscript form along with the *auto* which Arellano maintains it was written to accompany, *No hay más fortuna que Dios* (12). In Calderón's *Autos sacramentales historiales y alegóricos*, however, it precedes *Las órdenes militares*. Later, it was also adapted to be performed before *Psiquis y Cúpido*, in its Madrid version of 1665 (Arellano *Loa*, 11-12). With many copies circulating initially in manuscript form, it is difficult to ascertain precisely which *loa* was written for which *auto*, and whether they were written by the same author at all (7). Therefore, current scholarly practice, except in a few circumstances where both authorship and pairing of *auto* and *loa* can definitively be established, is to study and publish *autos* and *loas* as distinct entities, and the practice of studying the two pieces together as one unit has become practically obsolete.[17]

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[17] See the practice of the separate edition of *loas* and *autos* in the ongoing edition of the complete *autos* of Calderón at the University of Navarra (Arellano, *Loa*, 7 and Ruano de la Haza, *Las órdenes*, 54).

There are nonetheless several compelling reasons why considering Sor Juana's *autos* alongside their *loas* should be a fruitful line of enquiry. Firstly, short theatre, mostly in the form of *loas*, is a particularly significant part of her corpus. According to her seventeenth-century biographer, Diego Calleja, she composed her first *loa* at the age of eight, for the feast of Corpus Christi in Amecameca:[18]

> No llegaba a los ochos años la de la madre Juana Inés, cuando, porque la ofrecieron por premio un libro, riqueza de que tuvo siempre sedienta codicia, compuso para una fiesta del Santísimo Sacramento una *loa* con las calidades que requiere un caba poema. (Calleja 14-15)

The accuracy of this anecdote is questionable. However, the fact that Calleja singles out the composition of a sacramental *loa* as the start of Sor Juana's literary career suggests the perceived importance of the genre to her corpus, even from shortly after her death. She went on to become a composite author of *loas sueltas* for the viceregal palace in Mexico City, for birthdays, weddings and other ceremonial occasions.[19] Her *comedia*

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[18] Augusto Vallejo Villa claims to have identified the *loa* purportedly written by Sor Juana in a Nahuatl manuscript entitled *Mercurio Encomiástico en la excelentísima lengua Mexicana, o Náhuatl hechas en diversos tiempos desde el año 1682 que en Tlayacapa me hizo hacer Don Juan Hipólito Cortéz Quetzalquauhtli y Tequantepehua este Encomio al Santísimo Sancramento.* See *Letras Libres* III.34 (2001).

[19] There are eighteen *loas* by Sor Juana published in her collected works. Five of these were written to precede her own works: in addition to those written for her three *autos*, she wrote one for *Los empeños de una casa* and one for *Amor es más laberinto*. The thirteen remaining ones are *loas sueltas*, and are: *Loa de la Concepción, Loa a los años del Rey don Carlos II (I), Loa a los años del Rey don Carlos II (II), Loa a los años del Rey don Carlos II (III), Loa a los años del Rey don Carlos II (IV), Loa a los años del Rey don Carlos II (V), Loa a los años de la Reina doña María Luisa de Borbón*, *Loa a los años de la Reina Madre doña Mariana de Austria*, *Loa los años del Virrey marqués de la Laguna*, *Loa en las Huertas a la Condesa de Paredes*, *Loa al año que cumplió don José de Cerda*, *Encomiástico poema a los años de la condesa de Galve*, *Loa a los años de fray Diego Velázquez de la Cadena.*

Los empeños de una casa is renowned as a veritable Baroque spectacle of shorter and longer pieces, with the three acts interspersed with a *loa, sainetes* and a *sarao*.[20]

Secondly, when considering the relationship between *loa* and *auto*, the scholar concerned with the works of Sor Juana is placed at a distinct advantage over the scholar of Calderón, with none of the difficulties of matching *auto* to *loa* described above. Her notably smaller corpus of three *autos sacramentales* has continuously been edited and published along with their individual *loas*.

Thirdly, much of the uncertainty surrounding the task of matching *autos* with their *loa* is only encountered by modern scholars due to their knowledge of the extent of Calderón's corpus and of the plethora of editions of his works, either collected in *partes* or in *suelta* editions. For the late seventeenth-century scholar of Calderón, such as Sor Juana, the picture was very different. By the time she was writing her *autos sacramentales* in the late 1680s, only one published version of a selection of Calderón's sacramental plays would have been readily available, the 1677 edition of his *Autos sacramentales, alegóricos e historiales*. In this edition, twelve of his *autos* are printed, all accompanied by their *loa*. Regardless of whether the authorial attribution of these pieces is correct or whether they were continuously performed in the same configuration, as a primary printed source of the master of the *auto sacramental*, they would have provided a logical model for Sor Juana to follow.

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[20] In addition, it would seem that the composition of short theatrical pieces was a significant part of the dramatic production of colonial Mexico. Much of the information available about the theatre of the time relates to *teatro breve*. Fernán González de Eslava (1534–1601), who is generally considered Mexico's first major dramatist, was primarily an author of short pieces of drama, collected in his *Coloquios espirituales y sacramentales y poesías sagradas*. During the "*entremés* controversy" of 1574, a *coloquio* was performed with three *entremeses*, one of which criticised tax reforms in New Spain, resulting in the arrest of several actors (Hardison Londré). There is evidence that by the later seventeenth century many of the plays performed in Mexico City were imported from Spain, but given an introductory *loa* by a local author. This is the case in the 1682 Corpus Christi *auto*, where the *loa* is recorded as having been performed in Spanish and the indigenous language Nahuatl.

Finally, and perhaps most significantly for our understanding of the genre, in this selection of plays Calderón often gives his *loas* a metatheatrical function, setting up the following *auto* as a play-within-a-play, and pointing towards to need to read both *auto* and *loa* not just as two separate pieces, but together as one unit. In addition to the adulatory function of the *loa*, commentators have pointed out its purpose in creating connections between audience and actors, *loa* and play, illusion and reality (Robbins "Folding Space" 81). In the earliest monologic *loas*, the public was addressed directly by the actor on stage, distinguishing actor from spectator, and defining the dynamic between them, while he himself remained between the two, belonging to the world of the stage, yet presenting himself as a "man of the theatre" rather than as a fictional character. Later, in the more sophisticated pieces with multiple characters, a similar process continued to occur with the theatrical space. Without curtains or lighting to arouse interest in the play, the beginning of the *loa* marked the start of the performance. It also announced the transformation of the real space of the stage into the imaginary space it was to portray. As articulated above, the conceit of the play-within-a-play was inseparably connected to the Baroque idea of the world-as-stage, and one of ways in which the *auto sacramental* communicated the world view which lay behind the Catholic doctrine of transubstantiation. Just as that doctrine proclaimed the bread and wine actually to be the body and blood of Christ, so the play-within-a-play topos proclaimed the world not just to be like a theatre, but actually to *be* a theatre, by blurring the line between reality and illusion, when spectators were declared to be actors, and what was perceived as reality was shown to be a performance (Kluge 210).

A reading of the 1677 edition of Calderón's *autos sacramentales* reveals several significant connections between the *autos* and their *loas*. In the *Loa al Santo Rey don*

Fernando, Primera parte, on the theme of the greatest virtue (which Sor Juana later uses in the *loa* to *El cetro de José*), the character Fe announces that several characters will appear in both the *auto* and the *loa*. She stands between the actors and the audience, between the real world of the business of the theatre and the make-believe world of the play, as she is at once a character of the *loa* and the *auto*, and also takes on the the role of an *autor* in distributing roles for the coming *auto*. She gathers the characters around her, and explains how some of them will keep their roles in the *auto*:

> FE. El fin a que os llame,
> aunque a repetirlo vuelva,
> fue, que el día del Señor
> (supuesto que es su clemencia)
> en aplauso se convierta
> del Santo Rey Don Fernando.
> A cuyo efecto en mi idea,
> había imaginado hacer,
> a las dos luces atenta,
> un Auto, que en lo historial
> lo alegórico contenga.
> Y siendo así, que sus obras
> siempre ejercitaron cuerdas
> Fe, Esperanza, y Caridad,
> hagamos nosotros mismos
> nuestros papeles. (Calderón *Autos*, 44)

Her speech incorporates two significant ways of connecting *auto* and *loa.* The characters of the *loa* become the actors of the *auto*. However, the roles they take on are of the same figures, they remain Fe, Esperanza, and Caridad, so there is an added continuity of characters between the two pieces. This latter technique is used again in *El divino Orfeo* with a didactic function. Here, the character Placer appears in both *auto* and *loa*, and indeed it is for his benefit that the *auto* is performed. He states at the end

of the *loa* that he will continue his role through into the *auto*: "Pues el papel del placer tocarme en el auto es fuerza" (334-335). Throughout both *auto* and *loa* he demonstrates a distinct lack of theological awareness, in the *loa* doubting that a celebratory festival, such as Corpus Christi, is the most appropriate way in which to commemorate the Passion and death of Christ:

> PLACER. ¿Cómo siendo
> el misterio que celebra
> vuestra fe la Eucaristía,
> fiel representación tierna
> de muerte y pasión de Cristo,
> es con músicas y fiestas?
> ¿No es este aquel sacramento
> que ayer veneró la Iglesia
> con disciplinas, ayunos,
> lágrimas y penitencias?
> ¿Pues cómo hoy queréis que el llanto
> en música se convierta? (*Loa a El divino Orfeo*, 278-289)

Throughout the first half of the *auto*, Placer continues to display a lack of understanding, demonstrated through the limitation of his speech to interrogatives (vv. 456-57, 548-551, 569-570, 593-597). Gradually, through his questions, he comes to realise the identity of Orfeo as Christ, and of El Príncipe de las Tinieblas as the devil. He considers the parallels between the narrative of Orpheus and Eurydice, and the life and Passion of Christ, and accepts his role of telling this story, seeing the function of providing entertainment and celebration as befitting his name:

> PLACER. Por Dios, que me he de vengar
> del susto y que ha de haber fiesta,
> pues para dar que reír,
> propio oficio del Placer,
> una fábula ha de ser
> la que les he de decir. (*El divino Orfeo*, 621-27)

In a final example, in *La viña del Señor*, a different technique is used to create continuity between the two parts of the play. The character representing the written law, Ley Escrita announces the performance of an *auto* in order to celebrate the fact that both she and Ley Natural have been superseded by grace. In this case, the metatheatrical effect is created in reverse. Rather than distributing roles for the subsequent *auto*, Ley Escrita decides that the preceding discussion between herself and Ley Natural will serve as the *loa* to the *auto* they are about to perform in honour of Gracia. While the audience would already have been aware of their conversation as a performance, the insinuation by Ley Escrita that it was in fact a real discussion that is merely being used as a *loa* raises the question of the distinction between illusion and reality. Either the discussion between Ley Escrita and Ley Natural was a real conversation which is being used a performance, or it was a performance which is masquerading as a real discussion, and there is no way for the spectators to tell with certainty which it is. When Calderón portrays characters who belong to the world of make-believe, yet who believe themselves to belong to life beyond the stage, he raises the possibility that the apparently real world the audience inhabits may well also reveal itself to be as transient as a performance. Examples such as these demonstrate Calderón's development of the *loa* into a self-aware and self-referential integral part of the spectacle of the *auto sacramental*, which Sor Juana was to inherit. In her own courtly and sacramental plays, she adopted and adapted these techniques to achieve a dramatic effect which went beyond anything included in the works of Calderón.

Sor Juana's courtly *loa A los años del Rey don Carlos II (II)* was written to be performed before Calderón's *En esta vida, todo es verdad y todo mentira*. In composing this *loa*, Sor Juana took up several of the techniques described above in the work of

Calderón to link the *loa* to the play it was intended to introduce. As Fe did in the *Loa al santo Rey*, the character Plebe distributes the roles for the coming *comedia* among the protagonists of the *loa*, Majestad, Lealtad, Vida and herself:

> PLEBE. Yo os lo diré; que cansados
> de ver la loa tan prolija
> empiezan ya la comedia.
>
> LEALTAD. No es posible que eso elijan,
> porque no hay quien haga damas,
> porque los que las hacían están ocupados.[21]
>
> PLEBE. ¡Buen remedio! Pues vestidas
> estáis, vosotras podéis
> hacerlas. Pues si me dicta
> bien el magín, la comedia
> todas la tenéis sabida,
> que es una de Calderón,
> que dice que *es, en la Vida,*
> *Verdad y Mentira todo.*
> Y con que tú hagas a Cintia,
> Majestad; y la Lealtad,
> a la persona de Libial;
> Naturaleza, el papel
> que es de Ismenia; y yo y la Vida
> lo que se ofreciere allí,
> estaremos convenidas,
> pues que resulta en obsequio
> de Carlos, todo. (*Loa a los años del Rey II* 485-508)

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[21] In Méndez Plancarte's edition of Sor Juana's complete works, he renders this line "*las* que las hacían están ocupadas" (OC, III: 311, lines 490-491, my emphasis). He corrects the masculine gender found in *Inundación Castálida* (108), justified by the reference in the subsequent verses to the actors using the female form "Pues vestidas estáis, vosotras podéis hacerlas." He accepts that this is also a possible reference to certain female roles being taken on by men, as is insinuated in the following lines from Sor Juana's *sainete segundo* in *Los empeños de una casa,* between the male characters Arias and Muñiz: "¿No era mejor hacer a *Celestina* en que vos estuvisteis tan gracioso, que aún estoy temeroso y es justo que me asombre de que sois *hechicera* en traje de *hombre*?" (*Los empeños* 1259; lines 49-54, my emphasis). Although an investigation into such details would be too laborious to undertake here, the clues they may provide as to the use of male or female actors in female roles in the theatre of Sor Juana would potentially have implications for the questions raised above about the relationship between actor and role in her work. In addition, the consideration of such questions would be of interest to both performance and gender theorists alike.

The metatheatrical conceit works in the same way as those in the works of Calderón, with the idea that the allegories of the *loa* step in to the roles assigned to them, in order to ensure the smooth transition to the *comedia*.

This technique is further developed in the *loas* to her *autos*. In the *loas* to both *El divino Narciso* and *El cetro de José*, when a Hispanic character attempts to convert one or more indigenous characters to Christianity, they suggest the performance of an evangelistic play, which will become the *auto*. In the *loa* to *El divino Narciso*, Religión states:

> RELIGIÓN. De un Auto en la alegoría
> quiero mostrarles visibles,
> para que quede instruida
> ella y todo el Occidente,
> de lo que ya solicita saber. (LN 418-23)

In a remarkably similar manner, in the *loa* to *El cetro de José*, Fe introduces her play, stating:

> FE. En una historia sagrada
> de un auto sacramental
> y alegórico, en que trata
> mi amor hacerte visibles
> las profecías que hablan
> de este sagrado misterio. (LJ 430-35)

In both cases, the audience is presented with a similar situation as that of Calderón's *El santo Rey*, and of Sor Juana's *Loa a los años del Rey don Carlos II*, whereby the characters of the *loa* state that they are going to perform the following *auto*, although here the specific allocation of roles is not mentioned. In addition, Fe and Religión proclaim that the performance of the *auto* is for the instruction of the characters of the *loa*. In addition to the structural connection between *auto* and *loa*, their words suggest

that the subject matter of the *auto* is also relevant to the indigenous characters of the *loa*, and that the two plays are therefore somehow related in content also.

In *El mártir del Sacramento,* the link is slightly different. It is more self-reflexive and slightly more playful. Here, the scene opens on a group of three university students in the course of a debate, when one of the them reveals that he has been commissioned to write an *auto sacramental*, and that he has decided to use the preceding discussion as the *loa* with which to introduce it:

> ESTUDIANTE 3. Y es el caso, que yo tengo
> a mi cargo, hacer un auto
> del divino sacramento
> …….
> Y atendiendo que vosotros
> controvertís del misterio
> lo admirable, quise hacer
> de vuestros discursos mesmos
> la fábrica de mi loa. (LH 298-309)

Here, we see a more advanced version of the conceit used by Calderón in the *loa* to *La viña del Señor*, where a performance is given the status of a real discussion in the minds of its characters, and then later named as a performance by one of them. In the *loa* to *San Hermenegildo*, the third student reveals that some of the characters the other two students had seen before them, which they presumed to be optical illusions or visions, were none other than actors from the troupe about to perform the *auto* (LH 310-19). This goes beyond what Calderón did in the *loa* to *La viña del Señor*.

In this latter piece, when Ley Escrita declares her intention to use the preceding discussion as the basis for her *loa*, this categorises their conversation as a performance, while at the same time raising the possibility that it was in fact a real conversation, which is now being used as a *loa*. In Sor Juana's *loa*, this line between illusion and

reality is further blurred. As above, she presents a discussion which could either be a real conversation used as a performance, or a performance which is presented as a real discussion. Her innovative step is to introduce into the conversation a troupe of actors, who belong to the world of the stage, and who are differentiated from the protagonists of the *loa*. The implication of the inclusion of the "actors" (who belong to the theatre troupe), is that the other characters of the play who do not belong to this group cannot also be actors, and therefore must belong to the real world. This goes against what any spectator will intuit, that everything that occurs on the stage, after the action has begun, is not real, but belongs to the world of make-believe. It thus becomes even harder to tell with certainty whether the discussion among the students was a real conversation, which happened to take place on the stage, or whether this was a performance, which they are being fooled into thinking was a real discussion. In these short extracts, there are already suggestions that Sor Juana took the art of the *loa* from Calderón, and developed its central concerns and conceits beyond what her predecessor had envisaged or achieved.

It could be contended, and to a certain extent is undoubtedly true, that the connection made between *auto* and *loa* is merely a playful conceit, designed for Sor Juana to show off her poetic skills at court, and to provide an additional source of entertainment in an otherwise didactic and dogmatic play. In this case it could also be argued that taking the literal implications of such conceits seriously might lead one to conclusions which would never have occurred either to the author or to the audience of the original piece. This may be the case, and at a remove of over 300 years it is difficult to say with any certainty. However, from the evidence described above, it seems that the tradition of the sacramental *loa*, and its influence on the works of Sor Juana is not one

which should be disregarded without first having been thoroughly analysed. In addition, many of the comic elements in Calderón's *autos sacramentales* also served a secondary, instructive purpose. This is clear from the case of Placer in *El divino Orfeo,* described above, who both serves to construct a clever conceit linking *auto* and *loa*, and as the primary didactic character of the *auto*. It seems short-sighted to dismiss something so significant to the structure of the whole spectacle merely as a means of *delectare*, without also considering its potential implications for the play's function of *prodesse*. Therefore, in the following, I take as one of my central premises the idea that Sor Juana's *auto* and their *loas* are connected in ways in which scholars have not yet begun to understand. By taking each *auto* and its *loa*, and the relationship between the two into account, I hope to provide a more complete and faithful reading of the plays in question as a complete spectacle.

The first two chapters of this study provide an analysis of the two *autos El divino Narciso* and *El cetro de José*, beginning with a close reading of the *auto* itself, focussing on its theological message and the way in which this is conveyed allegorically. These two *autos* are then considered in the light of their *loas*, to see how this affects the conclusions drawn simply from considering the main body of the play. The first chapter, an analysis of *El divino Narciso,* focuses on the central question to have concerned scholars about the play, that is, how Narcissus, known for his pride and self-love, can become a figure of Christ, symbol of humility and selfless love. Here, I contest the idea that Sor Juana's Christ-figure is a strange choice which goes against literary and theological ideas of decorum. In the light of Sor Juana's Ovidian source, and of Golden Age writings on *ingenio*, I argue that her adaptation fits with the Baroque aesthetic demands of literary wit, which allowed Sor Juana to show off her erudition to

the court in Madrid. Her choice of such an apparently unfitting character also proves the possibility of a Christological interpretation of even the most unlikely of pagan myths, a further point in which she shows herself to be an inheritor of Calderón, but in which she goes beyond his achievements in ingenuity and originality. When considered alongside the *loa*, this connection made between the classical world of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* and the Christian gospel also diverges from the tradition of Calderón and is used to make a significant point about *criollo* cultural identity. Sor Juana presents characters performing pagan rituals, which are used by the Hispanic characters to begin to explain the Christian gospel. These are then compared to the ancient myth of Narcissus, which in the *auto* is shown to prefigure Christ. Thus, Sor Juana raises these pre-Hispanic religious practices to the same theological, cultural and historical level as the classical traditions of Greece and Rome were accorded in Western Europe. *El divino Narciso* is thus shown to be a play which is a consummate, theologically orthodox Baroque *auto sacramental*, which nonetheless makes a significant point about *criollo* cultural identity.

The second chapter turns to *El cetro de José*, a play which initially appears to be less complex than *El divino Narciso*, but which nonetheless presents several potential layers of interpretation. The analysis foregrounds the play's concern with the relationship between sight and faith, and its central message of the importance to orthodox Catholic belief of a world in which appearances can belie the true essence of things. The analysis focuses on the juxtaposition between the protagonist José, who is able to use his faith to see things in their dual natures, and the devil, Lucero, who relies on a scholastic model of reasoning, and is constantly hampered by his lack of perception. I argue that the manner in which the epistemological mentalities of these two characters are presented is crucial to understanding both the message of the *auto*

and Sor Juana's engagement with scholasticism, scepticism and empiricism. In this play, Lucero stands for the traditional scholastic model of epistemological discourse, yet his accumulation of knowledge is presented as a source of torment and the cause of his downfall. By contrast, José uses observation of the material world to make judicious choices, and gives a reasoned defence of why natural science confirms, rather than refutes, the doctrine of transubstantiation. Sor Juana continues to uphold the doctrine of transubstantiation, but she does so in a manner which is no longer sceptical towards human perception. She rejects the authority of scholastic logic in favour of empirical enquiry and a positive view of the potential of the human mind, when guided by faith.

In this play, Sor Juana also makes a significant argument in a little-known theological debate. By drawing attention to a particularly obscure verse from Genesis, she presents an ingenious way of resolving the tensions at the heart of a discussion over its correct reading. This, I argue, is the first instance where Sor Juana uses her *autos sacramentales* to touch on a particular question of theological importance to her day, in a manner which does not obscure or hinder the communication of her central doctrinal message. This in turn gives way to a third level of meaning. In the closing scenes of *El cetro de José*, Jacob is portrayed as a man who believed in the coming of the Messiah, and was able to see the significance of prophetic signs of his coming. Through the *loa*, Sor Juana relates this act of faith to the conversion of the indigenous peoples of America, and calls on her audience to exercise the same faith in their belief in the doctrine of transubstantiation, putting her spectators in the same position as the indigenous characters of the *loa*. Like *El divino Narciso*, *El cetro de José* is a consummate, theologically orthodox *auto sacramental*, which once again includes a particular concern with *criollo* identity. Unlike *El divino Narciso*, it attempts to explain

the doctrine of transubstantiation through empirical enquiry. In addition, it brings in a concern external to the demands of the *auto sacramental*, a feature which I shall show is a recurrent characteristic of Sor Juana's religious plays.

In the third chapter, I focus almost exclusively on the *loas* to *El divino Narciso* and *El cetro de José*, and on their engagement with the tradition of the performance of Nahuatl plays in Mexico City. This theatrical tradition had its origins in the evangelistic theatre of the sixteenth century, which were integral to the Spanish mission of the expansion of the Catholic Church. By the mid-seventeenth century, the indigenous communities of Mexico City had appropriated such plays as part of their own cultural heritage, and continued to perform them at religious festivals. This practice was contested by the ecclesiastical authorities of the city, who attempted to outlaw such performances. By closely associating her own *loas* with this practice, Sor Juana passed comment on the status and legitimacy of these plays, presenting compelling arguments against the Church in defence of their continued performance. Understanding this connection is crucial to evaluating the significance of her *loas* to her religious plays, and to the role each of them played in her engagement with the significance of indigenous Nahuatl culture to the construction of seventeenth-century *criollo* identity.

In the fourth chapter, I turn to *El mártir del Sacramento*, a markedly different play to *El divino Narciso* or *El cetro de José*. Through the analysis of its doctrinal function, and concluding that it does not present an orthodox message on the doctrine of transubstantiation, I ask whether it should be considered an *auto* at all. Having demonstrated its fundamental deficiencies in regard to the conventions of the genre, I then ask what its purpose is. Again, turning to its *loa*, I identify the central concern of this introductory piece to be the same as the concern of the *Carta Atenagórica*, that is

the question of the greatest demonstration of Christ's love, and the opinions presented on the matter by the Church Fathers, Aquinas, Augustine and Chrysostom and those presented in Vieira's 1655 sermon. In light of this connection, I then re-read the *auto sacramental* in the context of this debate, and in particular as presenting a similar argument to the one given by Sor Juana in the *Respuesta*. Both the *loa* and the *Carta Atenagórica* deal with the question of the greatest demonstration of Christ's love. Following on from these, both the *auto* and the *Respuesta* can be read as arguments in favour of staying true to one's convictions over blind obedience to authority. In this play, Sor Juana moves away from the Calderonian model of the *auto sacramental* to the extent that the work's classification as such is questionable. Her introduction of an extraneous concern to the work hinders the communication of its central theological message. In addition, one particular point raised in the previous works, which is difficult to reconcile with the Counter-Reformation Baroque view of the world expressed in the *auto sacramental* is her insistence on the potential of humanity, in particular of human perception, as a moral means of making decisions and structuring one's life, even a religious life. Whereas in her previous two *autos* and *loas*, the influence of empiricism, and the associated positive view of human enquiry were reconciled with the doctrinal function of the *auto*, in *El mártir del Sacramento* this is not achieved.

The final chapter therefore draws together these particular strands in the development of Sor Juana's *autos*. It asks why the currents of thought which point to an Enlightenment view of the world are reconciled with Catholic doctrine in *El divino Narciso* and *El cetro de José*, and why this was not achieved in *El mártir del Sacramento.* In order to understand the implication of these conclusions, it asks how

this affects how we should see the position of Sor Juana as the last great author of the Spanish Golden Age, on the threshold between the Baroque and the Early Enlightenment.

In the space of a single work, it is impossible to address all possible questions such complex plays present, and there will remain much analysis to undertake, and many questions to answer. By focussing on the central question of the *auto sacramental* —how it communicates the doctrine of transubstantiation—this study will provide a starting point for further research, both into the *autos sacramentales* and Sor Juana's other works, by grounding the study of Sor Juana's religious plays in their appropriate theological, aesthetic and philosophical context. By placing this study in the wider context of thought on the theological, epistemological and aesthetic trends which define the Baroque and the Enlightenment, it seeks to demonstrate how Sor Juana's *autos sacramentales* are works worthy of study because of their unique position in the theological and intellectual landscape of the seventeenth-century Hispanic world.

~ CHAPTER ONE ~

ECHOES AND REFLECTIONS: THE ETHICS OF WIT IN *EL DIVINO NARCISO*

El divino Narciso has always been considered to be Sor Juana's greatest *auto*, and counted among her best and most significant works. It is the longest of her religious works, and the most complex and detailed of her sacramental plays. In his seminal study, *Las trampas de la Fe,* Paz singles it out for particular praise:

> La obra teatral de Sor Juana, la profana y la sagrada gira en la órbita de Calderón. Sus comedias, sus loas y sus autos sacramentales son planetas y satélites del poeta español pero *El divino Narciso* brilla con luz propia. (468)

As its name suggests, it is a Christianised retelling of the classical myth of Narcissus, who falls in love with his own reflection when he spies it in a pool, is transfixed by it, and wastes away, leaving in his place a white Narcissus flower. Sor Juana draws on the best known version of the myth, found in book three of Ovid's metamorphoses, which brings together the two stories of Echo and Narcissus. Echo, a talkative nymph who is punished for her loquacity by Juno, and can only repeat the last words of others, falls in love with Narcissus. He spurns her love, and leaves her to waste away until only her voice remains, echoing passing sounds. Narcissus, in turn, sees his reflection in a pool of water, and falls in love with it. When he is unable to touch the object of his love, he laments his fate, and also wastes away, leaving in his place the white Narcissus flower.

In Sor Juana's rewriting of the myth, Narciso becomes a figure of Christ, with Eco his demonic counterpart.[22] She adds to these figures a further four significant characters: Naturaleza Humana, a figure of human nature who desires the love of Narciso, Gracia, the figure of grace whose task it is to unite Naturaleza Humana and Narciso; and Soberbia and Amor Propio, two demonic figures who accompany Eco. The dramatic action is centred around the conflict between Eco and Narciso over the love of Naturaleza Humana. As the figure of humanity within a Catholic scheme of fall and redemption, she recalls that she was originally a great beauty, made in the image of God, but that she has been marred by sin, and has lost any resemblance to her former self. Gracia appears to announce to her that if she wants to return to her original unblemished state, she needs to find a pure source of water in which to be washed. Eco, who has been spurned by Narciso, and is now plagued by a jealous love, has resolved not to let Narciso fall in love with anyone other than herself. She therefore makes it her task to prevent Narciso from seeing and falling in love with Naturaleza Humana. As Naturaleza Humana and Gracia set out, Narciso enters dressed as a shepherd, lamenting the loss of his beloved. Each of their own accord, the characters all travel towards a pool, the pool which Naturaleza Humana and Gracia have been searching for. When they arrive, Gracia tells Naturaleza Humana that these are the waters of grace, which are fed by the fount of the Immaculate Conception—the source of salvation in Catholic theology. They therefore have the properties to wash Naturaleza Humana, and to restore her original beauty, so that the image of God is once again recognisable in her. Narciso, meanwhile, has already arrived at the water's edge. When Eco sees this, she realises that her plans have been foiled, and becomes unable to speak, unless it is to repeat the

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[22] In the following, Narcissus and Echo refer to the characters in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, and Narciso and Eco to the protagonists of Sor Juana's *auto*.

words of others. As Naturaleza Humana and Narciso both look into the water, their reflections converge. Naturaleza Humana's reflection is now the image of God, which is also the image of the Christ-figure Narciso, according to the doctrine of the divinity of Christ. When Narciso looks into the pool, he therefore sees Naturaleza Humana's image as his own, falls in love with it, and sacrifices himself for it by diving into the waters. In his place, instead of the white Narcissus flower, there appears the white host of the Mass.

We do not know whether *El divino Narciso* was ever performed in Sor Juana's time, or indeed whether any of her other *autos sacramentales* were. The title page of the *suelta* version of the play, printed in Mexico City in 1690, notes that it was commissioned by the Vicereine, the Condesa de Paredes, for performance at court in Madrid:

> Auto sacramental del Divino Narciso, por alegorías. Compuesto por el singular numen, y nunca dignamente alabado de ingenio, claridad, y propiedad de Frase Castellana, de la madre Juana Inés de la Cruz, religiosa profesa en el Monasterio del Señor Gerónimo de la Imperial Ciudad de México. A instancia de la Excelentíssima Señora Condesa de Paredes, Marquesa de la Laguna, Virreina desta Nueva España, Singular Patrona, y aficionada de la Madre Juana, para llevarlo a la Corte de Madrid, para que se representase en ella.

This note provides an idea of the intended setting for the performance of the play at the royal court in Madrid, which is supported by the dedication to the Spanish royal family in the *loa*. It also allows us to estimate a date of composition of the play. It is probable that the vicereine commissioned the *auto sacramental* in order to take it with her to Madrid in 1688, with the intention of including it with the other papers which were published in *Inundación castálida,* and possibly of having it performed for Corpus Christi of 1689. However, the play is first included in the second edition of this volume,

Poemas de la única poetisa americana, published in Madrid in 1690. This suggests that it was not finished in time to be taken to Spain by the Condesa, and was completed and sent with other texts to be included in the second edition of her works some time in 1689.

The play follows the Calderonian model of the mythological *auto*, which presents a figure of classical mythology as a type of Christ, and uses a divinised version of a classical myth to instruct its audience in a particular aspect of Christian doctrine. By lending a Christian allegorical reading to pagan mythological tales, authors could draw on particular aspects of each narrative to illustrate a particular theological point. Integral to this idea of re-writing Christianised versions of these classical myths is the idea of types and figures of Christ. In each of these examples, the protagonist of the myth is portrayed as a figure of Christ, as one who came before Christ, bore certain similarities to Him, and thus pointed towards some aspect of the salvific work that Christ was later to undertake. For this comparison to work, there must be a logical and natural parallel between Christ and the mythological figure chosen. Several scholars have pointed out the close affinities between Sor Juana's *El divino Narciso* and Calderón's *El divino Orfeo* (A. A. Parker, "The Calderonian Sources" and Cortés Koloffon, "El divino Narciso"). In the case of Orpheus, the most salient point of comparison to Christ is his descent into the world. Orpheus went down into Hades to rescue his beloved Eurydice. Christian doctrine teaches that, after his death, Christ went down into Hell to save the souls of those who had died before his Incarnation and Passion. A comparison on these grounds is thus coherent and aesthetically appealing (Rice, *El divino Narciso* 45). In a further example, *El dios verdadero Pan*, the god of the title is compared to Christ by playing on the ambiguity of his name. In a convenient

linguistic convergence, the god Pan can be understood in Spanish as the god of all things (the Greek *pan* means 'total' or 'all'), or the god of bread (Spanish *pan*). He can therefore be presented a prefigure of Christ, who is the God of all things, but who also makes himself present in the bread of the Eucharist.

In the case of *El divino Narciso*, the parallel between Narcissus and Christ is not so obvious, a point which has concerned a significant number of commentators on the play. They contend that Sor Juana's chosen figure of Narcissus, the proud and self-seeking lover, stands in direct contradiction to Christ, the selfless redeemer of the human race, and that her comparison is at best unorthodox and at worst rather tasteless. Several scholars have raised the question of the orthodoxy of the central figure of Sor Juana's play, including A.A. Parker and Bénassy Berling.[23] The latter notes the "contradiction radicale entre le personnage mythologique et le Sauveur des chrétiens" (385) and takes particular issue with Narcissus' youth as a characteristic which makes him unsuitable as a figure of Christ. She concludes that in the face of the impossibility of creating a loving Narcissus, Sor Juana falters in her rewriting of the myth because "un Narcisse 'doux et humble de coeur' n'est plus un Narcisse" (394). Several scholars have used this point to argue that *El divino Narciso* ultimately fails as an *auto*. This consternation has led several commentators to suggest alternative sources for Sor Juana's play. Bénassy Berling and Alfonso Méndez Plancarte suggest that Sor Juana's Narciso has more in common with Orpheus than with the figure he is supposed to represent (Bénassy Berling 395-97; Méndez Plancarte 516). Paz and Jonathan Ellis have turned to hermetic and mystical texts (Paz 464; Ellis 170-71). However, their

[23] There is a precedent to Sor Juana Christological reading of Narcissus in the German Jesuit Jacob Masen's *Speculum imaginum veritatis occultae*. It is impossible to say whether or not Sor Juana knew this source. For further reading on the figure of Narcissus in the early modern period, see Taylor; Vinge; Genette.

attempts to resolve this tension have led to critical analyses which evade rather than confront the central question they have raised: Why would Sor Juana choose, as her figure of Christ, such an unlikely character as Narcissus?

It is my contention that the solution lies in the text itself, and that Narciso's unlikeliness, his difference to Christ in so many ways, is precisely the point. Sor Juana was steeped not only in the classics, but also in the literature and literary debates of the Spanish Golden Age, a fact which is widely appreciated but rarely seriously taken into account in studies of her works. I argue that Sor Juana's reasons for her choice of Narcissus as a figure of Christ were two-fold. Firstly, the literal and figurative readings of the *auto* were understood to reflect the accidental and substantive natures of the Mass. A significant point to communicate, therefore, was how the elements of the Mass could be the body and blood of Christ, despite the fact that there was nothing in their accidental nature to suggest this. By choosing a character who appeared to be nothing like Christ, and demonstrating that he could in essence be a figure of Christ, Sor Juana made a stronger argument for this than she could have done using a figure who bears immediate similarities with Christ. Secondly, I argue that her choice of Narcissus as a figure on which to base her *auto* was informed by Golden-Age debates on the nature and exercise of wit and erudition. Because of the tensions between Narcissus and Christ, the success of Sor Juana's play depended on a complex and dextrous manipulation of her sources. This gave her the opportunity to display to her audience her abilities in an important area of Baroque aesthetics. A major reason for Sor Juana's choice of Narcissus as a figure of Christ was the potential it presented for her to demonstrate her wit.

In the opening words of his *Agudeza y arte de ingenio* (1642), Gracián advises his reader that his treatise is to be devoted to the art of the literary expression of wit: "He destinado algunos de mis trabajos al juicio, y poco ha el *Arte de Prudencia*: éste dedico al Ingenio, la agudeza en arte." Sebastián de Covarrubias defines *ingenio* as "una fuerza natural del entendimiento, investigadora de lo que por razón o discurso se puede alcanzar en todo género de ciencias, disciplinas, artes liberales y mecánicas para defenderse del enemigo y ofenderle." Writing in 1611, *ingenio* is for him most closely connected to the sciences, and particularly to that which we would still today categorise under the term *ingeniería*. According to Mercedes Blanco, throughout the Renaissance and Baroque the term became more frequently applied to the same intellectual skill expressed in the arts, and in particular poetry, where it became inextricably linked to two further terms, *agudeza* and *conceptos*. "Válese la agudeza," Gracián continues, "de los tropos y figuras retóricas, como de instrumentos para exprimir cultamente sus concetos" (I: 45). He defines a *concepto* as "un acto del entendimiento que exprime la correspondencia entre dos objectos," where objects are to be understood as mental ideas, not necessarily physical things (Blanco 5). *Ingenio*, therefore, is the faculty of the mind which allows one to make connections between objects (*conceptos*) and then to express these connections using a variety of rhetorical tropes (*agudezas*).

This idea of connections, or correspondences, is crucial to understanding *El divino Narciso*. It is also precisely the point on which previous commentators writing on *El divino Narciso* have stumbled. We may take as an example Robin Rice's comparison between Calderón's Orfeo and Sor Juana's Narciso:

> Orfeo es el candidato mitológico idóneo para representar y transformarse en Cristo en un auto sacramental. La música, la cítara y su metamorfosis en cruz, el descenso a los infiernos son componentes

> que hacen la comparación con Cristo muy lógica, incluso pictóricamente muy coherente.
>
> El caso de Narciso, no era tan fácil. Emblemáticamente, Narciso no poseía una tradición que transcendía lo vano y lo superficial. Por el contrario, representa los peligros de sobrevalorar lo terrenal en lugar de lo espiritual. Por esto, Sor Juana tenía que hacer un esfuerzo tremendo para conciliar el Narciso profano con el Narciso sagrado que se transforma en Cristo. (*El divino Narciso* 45)

As do others before her, Rice articulates a criticism of *El divino Narciso* on the grounds of aesthetics and decorum. Whereas the correspondences between Orpheus and Christ are clear and therefore provide the ideal basis for a *concepto*, those between Narcissus and Christ are sorely lacking, and thus any comparison between the two will be forced. However, this relies on a problematic understanding of Gracián's art of *ingenio*, in which he consistently maintains that the most advanced forms of *agudezas* find correspondences in the most unlikely places, resolve tensions between apparent paradoxes and contradictions, and consistently require of both writer and reader the ability to resolve complex intellectual problems with speed and dexterity: "Le sens d'une pointe … réside dans le mouvement provoqué chez le sujet qui doit *chercher quelque chose à déchiffrer* sous l'aspect immédiat du discours ou des choses" (Blanco 250, emphasis mine). This is precisely the task which is required of the readers or the audience of *El divino Narciso*. Sor Juana directly poses the question of how a narcissistic Christ is possible in the opening scene, cited above, where Naturaleza Humana proposes to present the story of Narcissus to see whether his narrative is reconcilable with Christian truth (AN 113-24). The answer lies in a close reading of both the *auto* and its Ovidian source, paying attention to the way in which Sor Juana weaves the characters together and draws surprising parallels between Ovid's verses and Biblical and cultural representations of Christ. She does this in such a way that,

when the correspondence seems most untenable and it appears that the parallel will break down, she brings together all the threads of her narrative and in a dramatic twist of genius provides the definitive solution to the conundrum she has apparently set herself.

The *concepto* which lies at the heart of the work is the connection made between Narcissus and Christ as two figures who fall in love with their own image. Both take on the role of the suffering lover, spurned by their beloved and separated from her by a small but insurmountable distance, which causes them unspeakable pain. Narcissus spies his own reflection in a pool, and falls in love with it, but is thwarted by the impossibility of being united with the object of his love. He is the ironic parody of the frustrated lover; the object of his love who spurns him is none other than himself. The object of Christ's love is humanity, who is made in His image, but the distance created between them by humanity's sinful rejection of her creator prevents them from being united. The portrayal of Christ as a suffering lover is the central conceit of a large body of Golden-Age poetry, originating in the provençal tradition of the *amour courtois*. Thus far, therefore, there is nothing particularly original in the correspondence between Narcissus and Christ as suffering lovers. Indeed, several passages of the *Metamorphoses* which describe Narcissus' laments also lend themselves particularly well to a Christological interpretation, a fact which has gone unnoticed by almost all commentators on the play.[24]

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[24] Two studies have previously made textual connections between Sor Juana's *auto* and her Ovidian source. Robin Rice focuses exclusively on the first half of the narrative, and therefore does not draw out the full implications of the interaction between the two texts (*El divino Narciso*). Amy Fuller makes several significant parallels between *El divino Narciso*, the *Metamorphoses* and biblical passages, but goes no further than to demonstrate that Sor Juana had a close knowledge of both her source text and its potential biblical referents ("Sor Juana's *El divino Narciso*").

In the following lines, Narcissus recognises that his death will ultimately be of profit to himself and to his beloved (his reflection), as it will allow them both to enter the afterlife:

> nec mihi mors gravis est posituro morte dolores;
> hic qui diligitur vellem diuturnior esset,
> nunc duo concordes anima moriemur in una (*Metamorphoses* III. 471-473)

> Nor is death sad for death will end my sorrow;
> Would he I love might live a long tomorrow!
> But now we two—one soul—one death will die (Melville 65)

In Narcissus' words, death will both unite him with his beloved, and extend the latter's life. For the Christian, it is through Christ's death and resurrection that one finds both union with God and eternal life. According to Scripture, Christ's death physically undid the separation between man and God, by tearing in two the curtain in the temple of Jerusalem which surrounded the Holy of Holies, which symbolised the renewed relationship between God and humankind. At the same time, the curse of death was reversed by Christ's sacrifice, thus ushering in the Christian hope of resurrection and eternal life.

The third line of the above passage can also be interpreted sacramentally with regard both to death and to spiritual union. In the Eucharist, the death of Christ is mysteriously re-enacted, and the communicant is seen to die to himself and to sin in order to be resurrected into the life of Christ. In his *Memorial de algunos efectos que el Santísimo Sacramento de la Eucaristía causa en el alma*, Alonso de Chinchilla explains this as follows:

> El Señor se une con ella [el alma] con un modo admirable y de tal manera la atrae a sí, y la transforma, que no queda ser imaginada unión más perfecta, pues es donde el alma verdaderamente y

> realmente se une con Dios y es más perfectamente transformada en él que una gota de agua que se echa en una vasija grande de vino…. Allí es donde el Verbo eterno nace en el alma, y el espíritu pierde toda la desemejanza y viene a hacersele semejante y por esta semejanza se llama una. (120-122, qtd. in Poppenberg, 283-284)

Immediately following the lines cited above, when Narcissus tries to touch the water of his reflection, thus blurring the image which transfixes him, he beats his breast in grief:

> pectora traxerunt roseum percussa ruborem,
> non aliter quam poma solent, quae candida parte,
> parte rubent, aut ut uariis solet uua racemis
> ducere purpureum nondum matura colorem. (III. 482-485)

> Then in his grief he tore his robe and beat
> His pale cold fists upon his naked breast,
> And on his breast a blushing redness spread
> Like apples, white in part and partly red,
> Or summer grapes whose varying skins assume
> Upon the ripening vine a blushing bloom. (Melville 65)

The reference to the colours red and white are significant here, as they are often used as symbols of the Passion to denote the red blood in contrast to the purity of Christ's body. They are also present in the Eucharist in the red wine and white host. Although not directly described in any of the Gospels, this iconography is a recurrent topos used throughout Christian visual and literary art, and developed in the Spanish Golden Age by several poets. In José de Valdivielso's *romance* "A la corona de espinas" he conflates the red of the cloak in which Christ is mockingly dressed with the red of the blood which also clothes him:

> Cuando como a rey de burlas
> la real púrpura le visten,
> siendo púrpura su cuerpo
> por la sangre que le tiñe. (lines 25-28, qtd. in Mayo 51)

Similarly, in Lope de Vega's "A los azotes," (*Obras poéticas I*) the disciple John uses the metaphor of the lily and the carnation to describe the red blood which stains Christ's white body:

> ¿Qué es aquesto, Jesús mío?,
> ¡ay de los ojos que os ven!
> De azucena os habéis vuelto
> tan deshojado clavel (lines 31-34, qtd. in Mayo 61)

In contrast to Lope's flowers, Ovid describes Narcissus' bruised skin by comparing it to the ripening grape which takes on a purple shade. While a less frequent topos than the rose, the lily or the carnation, this can be read in an equally symbolic manner with the grape being the Eucharistic fruit and its juice, turned to wine, becoming the blood of Christ. In addition, the other fruit mentioned is the apple, traditionally used in western iconography as the fruit Adam and Eve eat from the tree of knowledge of good and evil, thus forming with the grape two symbols which frame the narrative of fall and redemption, the entrance of sin into creation and its defeat through the death and resurrection of Christ.

In *El divino Narciso,* the correspondence between Christ and Narcissus through their respective identities as suffering lovers is drawn out most explicitly in Narciso's soliloquy, one of the poetic passages for which the play is noted. His speech draws on imagery from the Old Testament (AN 1180-1235), particularly from the Song of Songs (AN 1236-1305) and the prophets (AN 1135-39). In the tradition of Jewish and Christian scriptural hermeneutics, this poem has been attributed multiple levels of meaning. In addition to the literal interpretation of erotic desire expressed from one human lover to another, these passages have been interpreted allegorically as an expression of Yahweh's desire for the faithfulness of Israel, and typologically as

prefiguring Christ's love for the Church and for the human soul. This last interpretation is particularly prominent in the opening stanza which takes the form of Christ the Good Shepherd addressing His beloved lost sheep, for whom He is prepared to leave His flock and rescue her:

> NARCISO. Ovejuela perdida,
> de tu dueño olvidada,
> ¿adónde vas errada?
> Mira que dividada
> (Canta:)
> de mí, también te apartas de tu vida. (AN 1131-35)

In the *auto*, Narciso addresses these lines to Naturaleza Humana, allegory of the human soul, who desires the love of Narciso but who knows that he rejects her because of her sinfulness (AN 205-14). She is the figure of humanity who was made in the image of God and therefore bore a resemblance to Narciso, the figure of Christ. Her original beauty has been marred, such that Narciso will no longer recognise his image in her, and she seeks a spring in which she may be washed of her sins and restored to her original beauty (AN 269-71).

Naturaleza Humana's desire to be transformed creates the impulse for the development of the action of the play as she searches for a spring in which to be washed clean. Anyone familiar with the original myth will know that it is at the spring that Narciso, too, is bound to arrive, and that it is here that the dénouement of the piece will take place. The dramatic tension is created by Eco, the figure of the devil, who is spurned by the love of Narciso and becomes jealous of his desire for another. She reveals that she was the one who tempted Naturaleza Humana to sin, and thus that she is in such a debt to Narciso that they can never be reconciled (AN 413-32). Eco's quest to prevent Narciso ever seeing Naturaleza Humana is driven by jealousy and her fear

that Narciso will recognise his muddied image in Naturaleza Humana and will love her once again (AN 451-62).

The movement of the various characters towards the pool is reflected in the changing scenery. From scene six, a spring appears in the corner of the stage, and gradually moves forward until it is centre-stage. Its presence is a stark reminder to anyone familiar with the Ovidian narrative of the conclusion of his tale, of the pool in which Narcissus sees his reflection and into which he throws himself in order to be united with his image.[25] The presence of the pool, and the repeated allusions to it in the text, remind the audience that the comparison drawn between Narciso and Christ must founder, if brought to its logical conclusion. The pool is the site of Narcissus' definitive act of self-love, his comically tragic death which is brought about when his pride leads him to succumb to a destructive illusion. There is little in his act from which one could draw a comparison to Christ, whose death is interpreted in Christian tradition as the ultimate act of self-sacrifice and selfless love. Commentators have been right to identify this parallel as troubling, both textually and theologically. But Sor Juana never seeks to shy away from her comparison, regardless of its potential failure. As the play moves towards its conclusion, and the spectators are left guessing as to how this conundrum is to be resolved, she seems to encourage them in their confusion. Indeed, as if to tease those who see no way out of her dilemma, she draws the closest parallel yet between Ovid's Narcissus and her own Narciso-Cristo, lifting words directly from her mythical source. As he looks into the waters, Narcissus cries out to the surrounding woods:

> "ecquis, io silvae, crudelis" inquit "amavit?"
> scitis enim et multis latebra opportuna fuistis

[25] For further reading on the significance of the pool, see Bénassy Berling (400-13) and Checa.

ecquem, cum vestrae tot agantur seculae vitae,
qui sic tabuerit longo meministis in aevo?
et placet et video, sed quod videoque placetque
non tamen invenio (tantus tenet error amantem!) (III.442-47)

And cries 'You woods, was there ever love more cruel!
You know! For you are lovers' secret haunts.
Can you in your long living centuries
Recall a lad who pined so piteously?[26]
My joy! I see it; but the joy I see
I cannot find' (so fondly love is foiled!) (Melville 64)

In a particularly close imitation of the source text, just before arriving at the spring, Narciso laments:

NARCISO. Selvas, ¿quién habéis mirado,
el tiempo que habéis vivido,
que ame como yo he querido,
que quiera como yo he amado?
¿A quien, en el duradero
siglo de prolijos días,
habéis visto, selvas mías,
que muera del mal que muero? (AN 1446-58)

Just at the point at which it seems obvious that the differences between Christ and Narcissus are so great that the parallel between Narcissus and Narciso-Cristo is untenable, Sor Juana draws them closer together with this direct imitation of the source text. However, she is forced to make a significant change in her words. In the original, Narcissus asks the woods whom they have seen to love like he does, and whom they have witnessed fade away ("tabuerit"). The answer here is Echo. Ironically, it is because Narcissus first spurned her love for him that she fades away, destined to repeat for ever the last sounds of those whose words pass through the woods. The word chosen

[26] Although Melville here translates "tabuere" as "to pine", the literal significance of the Latin, which is important to the discussion below, is "to fade away", or "to be petrified".

perfectly fits her fate, as it means both to "fade away", which normally leads to death, and "to be turned to stone". Moreover, it has particularly strong associations with the Petrarchan tradition, and is used to describe the suffering of the lover consumed by unrequited love. All of these are apt descriptions of Echo. In addition, the loss of water described by the process of petrification juxtaposes Echo's fate with that of Narcissus, who is driven to his suffering by an overabundance of water. However, in Sor Juana's text, this description cannot be used to describe Eco. With the inversion of the chronology of events in the *auto*, Eco has not yet suffered her final fate. The restrictions on her voice have just been put in place, and she has had to be restrained by Amor Propio and Soberbia, who hide her from sight behind a tree trunk, but she has not in any sense faded away. Sor Juana's Narciso, instead, asks directly who the woods have seen to "die" from a love like his. The response here can no longer be Eco, as she has not died. The irony which is central to Narcissus' question is lost. Even if Eco had at this point turned to stone, Narciso's suffering is not self-centred and blind to the same suffering he has caused in others. The only possible answer to Narciso's question is Christ, yet it no longer carries any trace of irony. Christ is the figure with whom Narciso has consistently been compared throughout the play; the audience knows that his fate and Narciso's should be reconciled. It is in their death or fading away, in Christ's sacrifice on the cross and in Narciso's selfish obsession with himself, that the two characters most strikingly diverge. Despite this, by asking such a question, Sor Juana points to the fact that it is through their deaths that the two characters will be reconciled. It remains to be seen how such a reconciliation can possibly be achieved.

The answer is to be found in her construction of what Gracián terms a "careo condicional," a comparison which works to a certain extent, but then requires a clever

twist in order to be brought to its full conclusion. This, he argues, requires greater *ingenio* from the writer as well as the reader:

> Es tanta la valentía de algunos ingenios, que llegan a discurrir lo que no es, como se ve en este modo de sutileza. Acontece algunas veces no estar ajustada del todo la correspondencia y conformidad entre el sujeto comparado y el término con que se compara, y entonces, o la acaba de formar el discurso o la exprime condicionalmente. (I: 163).

He continues to give the example of what he terms "uno de los mayores conceptos que hasta hoy se han admirado"—the figure of a woman with a one-eyed child, figures of the fully-sighted Venus and the blind Cupid:

> Bizco niño, da advertido
> Tu vista a tu bizca madre,
> Y así harás que el ser os cuadre,
> Ella Venus, tú Cupido.

He then explains how it works:

> Consiste su agudeza en ajustar la conformidad, para que siendo él ciego y ella con vista entera, se comparen a Venus y al Amor, y nótese que si ya en realidad estuviera el caso, que el niño fuera ciego, y la madre con perfecta vista, aunque fuera ingenioso el careo con Venus y Cupido, aun lo es más desta suerte, por artificio de inventar la conformidad. (I: 165-66)

His example and its explanation could equally well apply to the respective choices of Orpheus and Narcissus as two different figures of Christ in the *auto*. The former is comparable to the seeing mother and blind child as figures of Venus and Cupid; his journey into the underworld to save Eurydice presents a neat parallel to Christ's descent to Hell. Narcissus, in contrast, more closely follows the model of the one-eyed figure of mother and child. He does present certain similarities to Christ and therefore is an acceptable point of correspondence. However, as with the one-eyed figures, there needs

to be some intervention, some movement made within the figure for the comparison to be fully realised. Both author and reader are called on to perform a more complex task. As Arturo Zárate Ruiz notes, "Comparisons between extreme cases lead reason to detect subtle similarities or distinctions between cases. It is in these subtle distinctions apprehended through wit that discernment gains precision, and the mind makes clearer sense of its objects of understanding" (1). Indeed, Sor Juana herself notes the greater admiration towards correspondences built on apparently weaker foundations: "Sobre sólidas bases no es tanto de admirar la hermosura de una fábrica, como la de que sobre flacos fundamentos se ostenta lúcida" (*Carta Atenagórica* 1423; para. 1). Blanco echoes this impression of superiority created by a complex figure over a more simple one:

> C'est donc un aspect essentiel de l'agudeza que la possibilité de prendre appui sur le défaut même d'une figure, qui dans son propre énoncé, déclare son inadéquation. (266-67)

As she explains, *agudezas* are at their most complex and best when they draw on the inherent weaknesses in the comparison between the two objects. By incorporating these into the correspondence, the writer highlights the difficulty he has overcome, and therefore produces greater admiration in the reader.

Further examples and exposition of these transpositions are detailed in chapter XVII of Gracián's treatise. They are achieved by manipulating the meaning of words or an act in order to turn a situation into the opposite of what it was, to bring the possible out of the impossible, or to make an unacceptable solution satisfactory. They must not appear like some *deus ex machina* introduced from nowhere, but rather must be drawn out of the very weakness of the comparison, using the tools already at one's disposal at the introduction of the problem. For Sor Juana, the solution needed to transform the proud Narcissus into the selfless Christ lies in the element which has become the focal

point of the stage, and towards which the audience knows the dramatic action is drawn: the spring. In a twist on the Ovidian narrative Narcissus finds himself at the water's edge alongside Naturaleza Humana, who has been guided to the spring by the allegorical figure of Gracia. She explains that this is the spring of grace, which washes the sins of humankind and restores them to the true image of Christ. Her description identifies the spring with the source of the river flowing from Eden (Genesis 2.6), with the spring evoked in the Song of Songs (4.12), and with the river seen in a dream by Mordecai, which he interprets as symbolising Esther (Esther 10.5-6):

> GRACIA. Aquésta es de los Cantares
> aquella fuente sellada,
> que sale del Paraíso,
> y aguas vivificas mana.
> Éste, el pequeño raudal
> que, misterioso, soñaba
> Mardoqueo. (AN 1031-37)

Esther has traditionally been seen as a type of Mary for her role in saving the Jewish people from massacre by interceding before the King. In addition to being Esther, therefore, the spring is also Mary. According to Catholic doctrine, Mary was preserved from sin through the Immaculate Conception, and was thus able also to give birth to the sinless Christ, who would become the source of grace for the salvation of humankind. The fount, therefore, symbolises the purity of Mary, and the coming of Christ, and is able to restore original beauty through reflection in its waters:

> NATURALEZA HUMANA. Ya sé que ahí se entiende Esther
> y que, en Esther figurada
> está la imagen divina
> de la que es llena de Gracia.
> ¡Oh, fuente divina, oh pozo
> de las vivificas aguas,

pues del primer instante
estuviste preservada
de la original ponzoña,
de la transcendental mancha,
que infesta los demás ríos:
vuelve tú la imagen clara
de la beldad de Narciso,
que en ti sola se retrata
con perfección tu belleza,
sin borrón su semejanza! (AN 1043-58)

This skilful incorporation of the spring of the original myth to become central to the development of the action of the play can also be traced back to the original text, where the spring is also noted for its pure, unblemished state:

fons erat inlimis, nitidis argenteus undis,
quem neque pastores neque pastae monte cappelae
contigerant aliudque pecus, quem nulla uolucris
nec fera turbarat nec lapsus ab arbore ramus (III. 407-10)

There was a pool, limpid and silvery,
Whither no shepherd came nor any herd,
Nor mountain goat; and never bird nor beast
Nor falling branch disturbed its shining peace (Melville 63)

Sor Juana times the arrival of Naturaleza Humana and Narciso at the spring so that they both look into the waters at the same time. When Naturaleza Humana and Gracia arrive at the spring, the stage directions instruct that they should position themselves between the reeds, "de manera que parezca que se miran" (scene VIII). Narciso then arrives from the other side of the stage, places himself at the water's edge, and also looks into the pool. What he sees in the water is not his own reflection, but the reflection of Naturaleza Humana, which has been cleansed by the waters of the Immaculate Conception. Her appearance has been transformed through its convergence with the reflection of Gracia, and has now been restored to its original beauty, to the image of

God, and therefore to the image of Narciso, who now sees it as his own. As Eco in her opening soliloquy feared he would, he falls in love with the image he sees.

For this to work optically, Naturaleza Humana and Gracia must be standing on opposite sides of the water, so that when they both look into the water, their reflections converge, as it is the dual effect of the waters of the Immaculate Conception and the figure of Grace which transforms the reflection of Naturaleza Humana to her true image. Narciso and Naturaleza Humana must be side-by-side, each facing inwards towards one another (Naturaleza Humana is hidden by the reeds, such that Narciso remains unaware of her presence).[27] Their two lines of sight form a "v" shape, meeting at the point of their reflections, such that they appear superimposed and indistinguishable. With one subtle movement, Sor Juana has triumphed over the seeming impossibility of creating a Narcissus in the image of Christ. She has transformed the monstrosity of pride into the beauty of sacrificial love, putting in place the final piece of the puzzle which reveals exactly how she was able to create and sustain the most unlikely of parallels between Narcissus and Christ.

Moreover, there are yet further levels of meaning behind this already complex figure. In addition to being dramatically and theologically ingenious, Sor Juana's addition of Naturaleza Humana into the scene at the pool introduces another level of figurative significance. The shape of the two lines of sight, of Narciso and Naturaleza Humana, which form a "v", as they both look into the water when standing on a diagonal, logically become an "x" when reflected in the water. When Narciso plunges

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[27] The relationship between Sor Juana's knowledge of scientific developments and her literary works is a particularly under-researched area. As detailed below, she understood the physics and optics involved in the functioning of the magic camera, as detailed in Athanasius Kircher's *Ars magna lucis* (1646), and it is probable that this work, along with others, such as Johannes Kepler's *Astronomiae pars optica* (1604) informed her description of this scene. Although it falls outside of the scope of this study, a precise analysis of the physics involved in this scene would shed much light on Sor Juana's knowledge of the science behind reflections.

into the water and breaks the reflection, his body follows his line of sight, and extends one of the lines of the "v" below the surface, thus also beginning to extend the "v" into the "x." Taking into account the curvature of his body as he dives, this figure is better represented by a Greek "χ" (*chi*). This is the first letter of the Greek appellation of Christ, "χριστος" (*Christos*). It is used in particular to stand for the crucifixion, with its shape reflecting the bars of the cross. Etymologically, it is at the root of the poetic and musical figure of chiasmus in which crossing patterns of sounds, words or ideas are employed, often used symbolically in reference to the Passion.

Thus, it creates a symbolic reflection of what is happening on stage, where the moment of union itself represents the crucifixion; it is the moment of death of Narciso and the point of union between Narciso and Naturaleza Humana and therefore between Christ and humanity. It is also the point at which Narcissus and Narciso-Christ are most fully reconciled and therefore the culmination of the *agudeza* developed throughout the play.

By perfectly joining the two figures, Sor Juana shows that the story of Christ can be found in the myth of Narcissus. She demonstrates what Naturaleza Humana predicted in the opening scene to be true—the dark shadows of the myth of Narcissus do indeed draw out the clear light of Christ. By extension, Sor Juana also proves that Naturaleza Humana was correct in the second point of her speech and that God places foresight of the great Christian mysteries in pagan pens:

> NATURALEZA HUMANA. Pues muchas veces conformes
> divinas y humanas letras,
> dan a entender que Dios pone
> aun en las plumas gentiles
> unos visos que asomen
> los altos misterios suyos. (AN 125-30)

If the Christian narrative of human salvation can be found in classical pagan mythology, then each reference to the original myth refers not only to the story of Christ in the *auto*, but to the Incarnation of Christ, to his historical life and death. The pagan myth is shown to foreshadow the Christian gospel, but it needs to be drawn out by Christian writers such as Sor Juana in order for its true meaning to be made clear.

Returning to the discussion of allegory in the introduction of this study, Christ is shown to be the golden kernel, hidden within the silver shell of pagan mythology. Indeed, Naturaleza Humana alludes to this concept when she speaks of Sinagoga providing the body of the story and Gentilidad the clothes with which to dress it. Likewise, Gentilidad herself proposes that she give the material substance of her story, for it to be filled by Sinagoga with another soul, another meaning:

> GENTILIDAD. Yo, aunque no te entiendo bien;
> pues es lo que me propones,
> que sólo te dé materia
> para que tú allá la informes
> de otra alma, de otro sentido
> que mis ojos conocen,
> te daré de humanas letras
> los poéticos primores
> de la historia de Narciso. (AN 140-48)

Again, her speech highlights the distinction between the inner and the outer, here in terms of matter and spirit ("materia" and "alma"). While she can give the gift of the story of Narcissus, Sinagoga can give it a meaning which she herself does not yet know.

The idea that the subject of the allegory, Christ and the gospel, forms the inner kernel of the *auto*, and that its associated narrative becomes its shell, is related to Gracián's conception of the relationship between subject and adjunct in the creation of *agudezas*. In chapter IV of the *Agudeza y arte de ingenio*, Gracián describes the

relationship between the subject of the *concepto*—the object of which one strives to speak—and each of its attributes one seeks to express as being like a circle:

> Es el *sujeto* sobre quien se discurre y pondera … uno como centro, de quien reparte el discurso, líneas de ponderación y sutileza a las entidades que lo rodean; esto es, a los *adjuntos* que lo coronan, como son sus causas, sus efectos, atributos, calidades, contingencias, circunstancias de tiempo, lugar, modo, etc. y cualquier otro término correspondiente. (Agudeza I: 64)

If we apply this principle to the *auto*, the *sujeto* at the centre of the circle must be Christ, as the one of whom the *auto* ultimately seeks to speak. From Him radiate an infinite number of associations, characteristics, actions, biographical details or theological doctrines. If their number is infinite, and they emanate from the subject in all directions, the circle must be conceived of as a sphere. From these associations, certain points on the sphere, which Gracían terms the *adjuntos*, also apply to Narcissus. These include the love for his own image, the willingness to die for love, or the leaving of a white object in commemoration of his death. The art of creating an *agudeza*, which in the case of the *auto* is the divinised re-writing of the story of Narcissus, consists in elaborating on the connections made between the *sujeto* and the *adjuntos*, and between each of the *adjuntos*:

> Valos careando de uno en uno con el sujeto, y unos con otros entre sí; y en descubriendo alguna conformidad o conveniencia, que digan, ya con el principal sujeto, ya unos con otros, exprímela, pondérala, y en esto está la sutileza. (Agudeza, I: 64)

These links between the *adjuntos*, and their connection to the centre, which form the structure of the allegory of the *auto*, can be represented visually through the figure of the sphere:

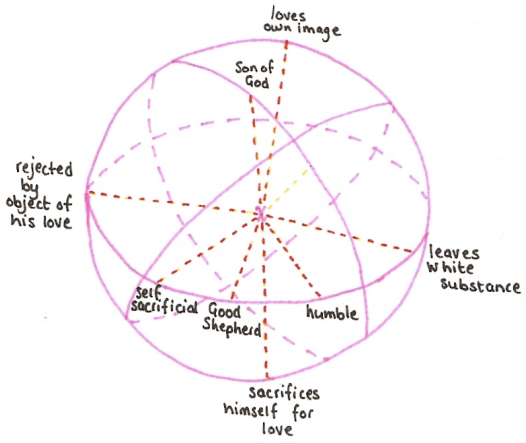


Fig. A. The sphere of the *auto*

Here, the outer shell of the sphere is the myth of Narcissus as told in pagan mythology. Although in the myth there may be present several elements which can be seen as the *adjuntos* of Christ, it remains a pagan myth. When told on its own it is devoid of the Christian significance which connects it to the centre, it remains an empty shell. The writer of the *auto* must draw out the *líneas de sutileza* which connect the myth to the subject, Christ. They must demonstrate that, when read in the light of Christian history, Christ is at the centre of the myth, just as He is the substance of the Eucharistic elements when their accidents of bread and wine are perceived according to the tenets of Catholic dogma. Furthermore, when many myths are rewritten in this way, as they were in the tradition of the *auto*, Christ's presence is not restricted to individual stories. Rather, He is shown to be present in all classical culture, thus affirming His position as the one "for whom and by whom all things exist" (Hebrews 2.10).

The presence of God at the centre of a sphere, with the created order emanating from Him, is also expressed in the *Respuesta*:

> Todas las cosas salen de Dios, que es el centro a un tiempo y la circunferencia de donde salen y donde paran todas las líneas criadas. (*Respuesta* 1466; para. 12)

In addition, the image of the sphere of creation is taken up in the text of the *auto* to express the vision of the complexity of creation being like a text, which describes the perfection of the created order:

> GRACIA. De sus altas glorias eran
> esos orbes cristalinos
> coronistas, escribiendo
> con las plumas de sus giros.
> Anuncio era de sus obras
> el firmamento lúcido. (AN 1965-70).

Already in these lines, Sor Juana suggests that the presence of Christ as the centre of all creation is not restricted to the pagan cultures of western antiquity. Here, the sphere which she describes is not the conceptual sphere of the narrative or even the culture she specifically represented in *El divino Narciso*. It is rather the sphere of the universe, which encompasses "all things." In particular, when the *auto* is studied alongside its *loa*, another culture is also shown to have had Christ at its centre, when read with the knowledge of Christianity.

In the *loa* to *El divino Narciso*, two American characters, Occidente and América are seen celebrating the Aztec feast of *Teocoalo*, which involved a period of fasting, followed by eating a figure of a deity made from amaranth seeds. When two Spanish characters, Celo and Religión, arrive on the scene, they try to convert Occidente and América to Christianity. After Celo has tried to achieve this through violent force, Religión begins to try and persuade them of the truths of Christian religion through words, each to no avail. Occidente is persistent in maintaining his pagan devotion to "El gran Dios de las Semillas." His faith, he claims, relies on the evidence he sees that his god creates, saves, and sustains the peoples of the Americas, and he doubts that the Christian God can bring such benefits:

OCCIDENTE. Es un Dios que fertiliza
los campos que dan los frutos;
a quien los cielos se inclinan,
a quien la lluvia obedece
y, en fin, es el que nos limpia
los pecados, y después
se hace manjar, que nos brinda.
¡Mira tú si puede haber,
en la deidad más benigna,
más beneficios que haga
ni más que yo te repita! (LN 250-60)

Religión immediately recognises the similarity between the deity Occidente describes and the attributes of the Christian God, in particular in the Eucharist, and announces therefore that the pagan god is but a distorted version of the Christian God:

RELIGIÓN. ¡Válgame Dios! ¿Qué dibujos,
qué remedios o qué cifras
de nuestras sacras verdades
quieren ser estas mentiras?
¡Oh cautelosa serpiente!
¡Oh áspid venenoso! ¡Oh hidra,
que viertes por siete bocas,
de tu ponzoña nociva
toda la mortal cicuta! (LN 261-69)

She goes on to explain to América and Occidente that it is the Christian God who creates and sustains the earth and all it produces. She also addresses their doubts by asserting that the Christian God can be touched by the hands of the priests in the form of the host (LN 330-37), that this form is made from the precious elements of blood and grain (LN 348-367), and that finally, this God offers himself to be eaten in the Mass (LN 368-76). Occidente's statement that he will only believe Religión if he sees this

with his own eyes leads Religión to suggest the performance of an evangelistic play.[28] This play is *El divino Narciso*, which becomes a play-within-a-play performed by the Spanish characters of the *loa* for the instruction of América and Occidente. When asked about her choice of subject matter for the *auto*, Religión justifies herself by stating:

> RELIGIÓN. Porque
> si aquesta infeliz tenía
> in ídolo, que adoraba
> de tan extrañas divisas,
> ……..
> sepa que también había
> entre otros gentiles, señas
> de tan alta maravilla. (LN 425-34)

Religión expresses the intention that Occidente and América will see the connections between the classical mythological tale and the Christian ideas she has been trying to explain to them. At the same time, they should also see the parallels between their own pagan rituals and the Christian rite of the Eucharist. By understanding both of these, they should come to understand that their beliefs also show "señas de tan alta maravilla", but that they must convert to Christianity in order for the true meaning of their rituals to be fulfilled.

Furthermore, several features of the text add another sphere of reference, another culture which is incorporated into the history of salvation, this time the pagan antiquity of the Old Testament. After a series of tableaux of Old Testament scenes

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[28] Several critics have commented on the sources for Sor Juana's *loas* to *El divino Narciso* and to *El cetro de José*. Sabat de Rivers cites Torquemada's *Monarquía Indiana* as the only source Sor Juana herself mentions, but she also comments on other potential sources to which she would have had access, through her fellow intelectual Sigüenza y Góngora, who owned a large collection of pre-hispanic manuscripts, and himself cites Herrera's *Historia General* (1601–1615), Acosta's *Historia natural y moral de las indias* (1590), and Bernal Díaz del Castillo's *Historia Verdadera*. See *En busca* 289.

accompanied by choral singing, in the first act of the play, the chorus calls out for the coming of the Messiah, chanting:

> CORO 1. ¡Abrid, claros cielos,
> vuestras altas puertas,
> y las densas nubes
> al justo nos lluevan! (AN 583-86)
>
> CORO 2. ¡Ábranse las bocas
> de la dura tierra,
> y brote, cual fruto,
> el salvador de ella! (AN 591-94)

Using the metaphor of water, which comes both from the sky and the ground, they call for Christ in his dual nature: divine, as the rain from above, and human, as erupting from the ground. The passage is well known as the *rorate coeli*, which is used in the liturgy of the Mass. It is sung antiphonally, as it is here, as an antiphon at Vespers, and appears particularly frequently in Advent offices associated with the Virgin Mary, including the Feast of the Expectation of the Blessed Virgin. It opens:

> rorate coeli de super et nubes pluant justum
> aperiatur terra et germinet salvatorum

This is a quotation from the Vulgate translation of Isaiah 45.8 which has been interpreted in Christian tradition as a prophecy of the Incarnation. It draws a parallel between water and the two natures of Christ: as divine, and therefore coming from the sky, and human, and therefore coming from the earth. The verses quoted appear in a passage which refers to the Israelites' deliverance from Babylonian captivity, and the restoration of the city of Jerusalem. According to Isaiah, this will be brought about not by an Isrealite, but by Cyrus, King of Persia, making this one of the Old Testament instances where the salvation of God's people is brought closer through a foreigner.

As the deliverer of the Israelites, Cyrus therefore is a type of Christ and a potential reference for Narciso. In one of only two references to him by name, in Isaiah 44.28, Cyrus is denoted as the Lord's shepherd. The Vulgate reads, "qui dico Cyro pastor meus es," and the Spanish, "que llamo a Ciro, mi pastor." In keeping with the pastoral style of *El divino Narciso*, Narciso is also mentioned as appearing "de pastor galán." As seen above, with *El verdadero dios Pan*, similarities between names, or puns on them, were frequently used as the source of comparison between pagan and Christian characters. Here, there is a resemblance between Narciso, Ciro, and Cristo, whereby both Narciso and Ciro can be seen as types of Christ. When this parallel with Ciro is taken into account, Narciso can therefore also be seen as representative of the foreigner, and of salvation coming through foreign civilisations and cultures. Sor Juana has thus extended the references to cultures in which the seeds of salvation can be found from the pagan Greeks to the Old Testament, and now to the pagan East.

The message here is that each of these civilisations to which the play refers, classical antiquity, pre-Hispanic America, and the ancient Persians, is pagan, sinful, and in need of redemption through Christ. However, Sor Juana also demonstrates that they are redeemable, that beneath the appearance of paganism, there is a kernel of Christian truth which must be revealed. The prominent inclusion of pre-Hispanic America in the *loa* is of particular significance. By comparing the practices at the time of the conquest and colonisation of the Americas with the pagan myths of classical antiquity, Sor Juana brings the status of the indigenous cultures and religious practices of the Americas to the same theological level as those of classical antiquity. In the context of the *auto sacramental*, it is important to remember that this comparison has a particular theological function; she compares the two civilisations in terms of their inclusion of

elements which can be read retrospectively as figures of Christian belief. She makes it clear that both of these cultures fall outside of Christendom, and as such are in need of redemption. She does this in such a way as to align herself with, rather than to exclude herself, from the imperial project. By drawing on pre-Hispanic America alongside classical antiquity as an area of her knowledge which gives testimony to her erudition, she acknowledges her origins, her association to the Americas, and her *criollo* identity, as different to those of the intellectuals of Europe, yet equal to them in literary erudition. She constructs herself as a thinker and writer who does not simply have exotic appeal, but as one whose knowledge extends beyond the expected categories of western thought. In this, she does something different to her peninsular predecessors when they portrayed the Americas on the stage. When she uses the religious and cultural history of the Americas in a similar way to that in which she uses classical antiquity, she asserts their equal status as legitimate sources of inspiration, as well as examples of Christian theology *avant la lettre*. Nonetheless, the indigenous characters which she represents are conceptual ideas, characters on a stage portraying events from which Sor Juana was as far removed chronologically as those Spanish authors of the earlier seventeenth century were geographically. The effect is to incorporate these figures into the imperial project of the expansion of Christianity, and in doing so, to implicate herself into this project too.

Sor Juana's presentation of herself as a literary intellectual through the performance of such works was nonetheless a potentially dangerous game. However, it was one which, for the most part, she knew how to play. However, there remains, in this analysis, one central figure whose significance to the play is yet to be considered: Eco, antagonist to Narciso and figure of the devil. Once Sor Juana had demonstrated her

literary abilities to the court, Eco is the means by which she ensured that she remained within the bounds of the correct ethical use of her intellect. In Ovid's version of the myth, Echo is a talkative young nymph who is punished for her loquacity when her incessant chatter distracts Juno from witnessing her husband Jove lying with the other nymphs. Juno's curse silences Echo's independent speech, and reduces her to repeating the final words of others when she hears them (III: 357-75). In the *auto*, she becomes the demonic character Eco, accompanied by two demons, Soberbia and Amor Propio. Here, her fate is adapted to fit the biblical narrative of Lucifer. Her initial punishment, the parallel to Echo's silencing by Juno, is described as her banishment from heaven for having tried to take the place of Christ (AN 373-97). Sor Juana relates this to the traditional Christian belief in the fall of Lucifer, described in Isaiah 14.12-15. Both Echo and Eco are punished at the beginning of their tale for having attempted to trick a deity, and for both of them their action results in separation from Narcissus/Narciso and causes their miserable state.

In the *auto*, Eco's silencing comes later than it does in the myth, occurring at the point at which she realises that Narciso has fallen in love with Naturaleza Humana, and therefore that her plans have been foiled (AN 1318-35). She suffers the same fate as Echo, and is only able to repeat the last words of others, but proves herself to be much more creative in this than her Ovidian counterpart. In the *Metamorphoses*, Echo is merely able to repeat the final words of others, and her influence over this is restricted to the selection of the portion of speech she echoes:

> forte puer comitum seductus ab agmine fido
> dixerat: "ecquis adest?" et "adest" responderat Echo.
> hic stupet, utque aciem partes dimittit in omnis,
> voce "veni!" magna clamat: vocat illa vocantem.
> respicit et rursus nullo veniente "quid" inquit

"me fugis?" et totidem, quot dixit, verba recepit.
perstat et alternae deceptus imagine vocis
"huc coeamus" ait, nullique libentius umquam
responsura sono "coeamus" rettulit Echo
et verbis favet ipsa suis egressaque silva
ibat, ut iniceret sperato bracchia collo;
ille fugit fugiensque "manus conplexibus aufer!
ante" ait "emoriar, quam sit tibi copia nostri";
rettulit illa nihil nisi "sit tibi copia nostri!" (III. 379-92)

It chanced Narcissus, searching for his friends,
Called "Anyone here?" and Echo answered "Here!"
Amazed he looked all around and, raising his voice,
Called "Come this way!" and Echo called "This way!"
He looked behind, and, no one coming, shouted
"Why run away?" and heard his words again.
He stopped and, cheated by the answering voice,
Called "Join me here!" and she, never more glad
To give her answer, answered "Join me here!"
And graced her words and ran out from the wood
To throw her longing arms around his neck.
He bolted, shouting "Keep your arms from me!
Be off! I'll die before I yield to you." (Melville 62-3)

In contrast, Sor Juana's Eco goes one step further. In addition to choosing which portions of speech she repeats, she also puts together the words she has echoed to form new utterances, using the words of her own demons, Soberbia and Amor Propio, as well as those of Narciso to express her own pain and suffering. When she is first silenced, Soberbia and Amor Propio are confused as to what has happened to her, and she is left to explain her fate through their final words:

SOBERBIA. Tente, pues yo te tengo.
ECO. Tengo.
AMOR PROPIO. Refiere tu ansiosa pena.
ECO. Pena.
SOBERBIA. Di la causa de tu rabia.

ECO. Rabia.
……...
SOBERBIA. ¿Ese agravio me hace a mí?
ECO. A mí.
AMOR PROPIO. ¿Así por ella me agravia?
ECO. Me agravia.
SOBERBIA. Pues brote la rabia
de mi furia insana;
pues a una villana…
ECO. Quiere, A mí Me agravia.
SOBERBIA. Juntemos estas voces, que cortadas
pronuncia su dolor despedazadas,
que de ellas podrá ser nos enteremos
por entero del mal que no sabemos.
AMOR PROPIO. Mejor es oírla a ella,
que las repite al son de su querella.
ECO. Tengo Pena, Rabia,
De ver Que Narciso
A un Ser Quebradizo
Quiere, A mí Me agravia. (AN 1390-1439)

In the following passage, which occurs immediately before Narciso throws himself into the pool, Eco continues to distort the meaning of the words of others for over 150 lines. Through the same echoing pattern both Narciso and Eco simultaneously express their unattainable desires and the torment which they are suffering. The speech which is formed from the echoes is made to apply alternately either to Eco, or to Narciso, or to both:

NARCISO. Es insufrible el tormento
ECO. *Tormento*.
NARCISO. de los dolores que paso
ECO. *Paso.*
NARCISO. en rigor tan insufrible;
ECO. *Insufrible*
NARCISO. pues en mi pena terrible
y en dolor de que muero,

no gozando lo que quiero,
ECO. *Tormento Paso Insufrible*.
……...
MÚSICA Y NARCISO.*Tormento Paso Insufrible,*
Pues Mi Hermosura Cabal
El Amor Hizo Mortal,
Sujeta, Humana, Pasible. (AN 1470-1513)

In the passage from Ovid, the comical misunderstanding which arises from Echo's speech serves to highlight the irony of the correspondence between Echo and Narcissus as jilted lovers; the suffering that Narcissus causes her through his rejection is what he is on the point of bringing about on himself through his own self-love. In *El divino Narciso,* Narciso's echoed words highlight the similarity between Eco and Narciso's similarity as characters who suffer because of a rejected or unattainable love, hers of Narciso, his of Naturaleza Humana. Nonetheless, the ironic tone is again removed and Eco's repeated words serve to demonstrate the huge gulf between the two characters. In a reversal of the respective characteristics of the original myth, here it is Eco who loses love because she is only able to love herself, and Narciso who laments the lost love of another:

NARCISO. Pues sin conocer tu error,
de tu Amor Propio guïada,
andas solamente errada,
LOS DOS.*Viendo que quiera tu amor.*
NARCISO.¡Si ves que siempre he de amar
ECO. *Amar*
NARCISO. y que he de estar en un ser;
ECO. *Un ser.*
NARCISO. que aunque juzgas inferior
ECO. *Inferior.*
NARCISO. el objeto de mi amor
que tu soberbia desdeña,
mi propia bondad me enseña. (AN 1574-86)

While both Echo and Eco manipulate the words of others in order to overcome a hindrance, Eco displays greater dexterity in her ability to exploit the ambiguity of others' words, and to use these creatively to express her desires in an eloquent manner. In transforming the meaning of the words of others in order to overcome a restriction placed on her own verbal abilities, she becomes the creator of her own *agudezas*, putting herself in an almost authorial position. Indeed, in her opening soliloquy, she refers to herself as the narrator of the story, to see whether her fate is bound to be the same as Echo's in the *Metamorphoses* (AN 365-67).

Eco's role as an author-figure has not gone unnoticed by critics, who have seen in her a reference by Sor Juana to her own situation. In Eco's taciturn fate, they have noted an uncanny premonition of her own renunciation of secular learning shortly after the play was published.[29] Even those, such as Stephanie Merrim, who are reluctant to accept such a neat parallel, propose that Eco's importance to the play is in her gender, in her position as a silenced woman, a fate she sees her sharing with Sor Juana. However, I believe there is a crucial difference between Sor Juana and Eco, which all scholars have ignored, and which not only refutes their claims that Eco is a figure of Sor Juana, but also leads to a better understanding of the attention to detail with which the character of Eco is crafted. This difference lies in the purpose for which each of them use their creative abilities.

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[29] See Judith Kirkpatrick, *The Word and the Woman.* Kirkpatrick states: "Eco is in fact not silenced but reduced to the creative 'echoing' of primarily male language in order to express herself. She is placed in this position as a woman who dares to break out of masculine cultural norms and framing … Satan and woman do share a common 'tragedy' in Sor Juana's estimation. They have both been silenced, or at least had their voices altered, by male authored texts represented by the scriptures.… Sor Juana's Eco is not a negative figure associated with Satan through evil. Eco and Sor Juana are joined by the mutual bond of having been silenced by men and through the necessity of discovering a way to speak in spite of that control. Eco's primary 'sin' is that of being a woman in a culture dominated by men." (62-3)

For Sor Juana as much as any writer, authoring an *auto sacramental* for the court in Madrid was an almost unparalleled opportunity for displaying one's poetic skill in front of a powerful audience. More than a task of authoring a didactic play, this presented a chance to demonstrate one's ability to find ingenious ways of staging the doctrine of transubstantiation. For Sor Juana, a poet unknown on the peninsula at the time she wrote *El divino Narciso*, the opportunity of having her *auto* performed at the Spanish court was a chance to seal her literary reputation. The way to do so was to demonstrate her ability to go beyond her models, to show herself to be even more adept in her poetic and dramatic skills than Calderón, the master of the genre, had been. In her successful use of an unlikely Christ figure, she demonstrated her ability to take a Calderonian model, yet to go beyond his literary achievements.

However, the aim of the *auto* remained to instruct its audience in theological matters, a task which was normally prohibited to women, following the Pauline teaching on the matter (1 Timothy 2.12). As such, the commission to write an *auto sacramental* was somewhat of a double-edged sword for a nun such as Sor Juana. In addition to being an opportunity to display her literary talents, it also potentially invited criticisms of pride, conceit and of overstepping the boundaries of what was acceptable for a woman. Her portrayal of Eco, I suggest, was a way of pre-empting such criticism, and relied on a specific contrast between the way in which she uses her literary abilities, with the way in which Eco deploys hers. This juxtaposition can only be understood through a good understanding of the ethics of wit.

Blanco argues that the use of *ingenio* always involved on some level a confrontation, as it served in some manner to show one's strength above the weakness of another. Its use, therefore was potentially morally dangerous. The determining factor

in whether a particular use was right or wrong, according to a strict Christian ethic, was the choice of one's opponent:

> Du choix de l'adversaire dépendra évidemment que cette règle paraisse orthodoxe ou diabolique. Si on prend pour ennemi le péché, l'hérésie, les forces du mal, l'éthique du combat pourra rejoindre un certain catholicisme militant.… Si l'ennemi est simplement le prochain, systématiquement regardé comme rival, il deviendra plus difficile de sauver l'orthodoxie de cette éthique. (276)

By choosing to use her literary abilities to write an *auto sacramental*, an orthodox defence of Catholic doctrine in service of the crown, Sor Juana aligns herself with those who seek to use their wit in the fight against Protestant heresy. In contrast, Eco uses her wit to rival Narciso, or Christ, and to put herself in his place, and will do anything to prevent anyone else usurping her plans. In her opening soliloquy, she describes her true nature:

> ECO. Ser esposa de Narciso
> quise, e intenté soberbia
> poner mi asiento en su solio
> e igualarme a su grandeza,
> juzgando que no
> era inconsecuencia
> que fuera igual suya
> quien era tan bella (AN 384-92)

It is in this sense that her characterisation as "la naturaleza angélica *réproba*" (my emphasis) is fitting. Her wit, her ability to connect and manipulate words, are all good. However, these are associated with her other attributes of pride and self-love through the demonic figures Soberbia and Amor Propio and are put to use purely in her own interests. Thus, these positive traits become evil, and will, ultimately, be silenced by the victory of Christ. Sor Juana uses the figure of Eco not as a means of projecting her own

predicament, but as a means of skilfully arguing for her own orthodoxy, and to defend herself from potential accusations of pride or self-ambition, the very attributes most often associated with Narcissus.

In addition, these are the two vices of which the Bishop of Puebla accused Sor Juana in the *Carta de sor Filotea,* and of which Sor Juana sought to defend herself in both the *Carta Atenagórica* and the *Respuesta*. In particular she argued against the Bishop's accusation that her commitment to the study of literature, the arts, and the sciences were signs of vain ambition which should be disregarded in favour of reading the Bible, and developing her own Christian education. These things, Sor Juana argued in return, far from distracting her from Godly devotion, were the very epitome of it. All creation has its source in God, she argued, and the lines and correspondences between parts of the created world point back to Him. The observation and investigation of these correspondences therefore could lead to a greater knowledge and understanding of both Creation and its Creator (*Respuesta* 1466; para. 12). This task, wrote Sor Juana, is what she dedicated herself to in her youth:

> Aunque no estudiaba en los libros, estudiaba en todas las cosas que Dios crió sirviéndome ellas de letras, y de libro toda esta máquina universal. Nada veía sin refleja; nada oía sin consideración, aun en las cosas más menudas y materiales; porque como no hay criatura, por baja que sea, en que no se conozca el *me fecit Deus*, no hay alguna que no pasme el entendimiento, si se considera como se debe. (1474; para. 27)

By searching for correspondences in the world, in literature, in mythology, and in biblical sources, and bringing them together in the *auto sacramental*, she is effectively continuing this task. In this sense, the creator of *agudezas* is one who seeks to reflect the creativity of God, presenting to others microcosmic linguistic spheres which they

can then consider and probe, and see in them the correspondences of the created order. This is precisely what she has done with the myth of Narcissus—she has devoted her intellectual and literary creativity to probing the pagan narrative, finding a Christological thread to draw out from it, and thereby has made her literary endeavours serve her theological understanding, and that of others, as they are challenged to probe her text to find the many layers of meaning within it.

It is clear that *El divino Narciso*, in contrast to what several commentators have concluded, does succeed as an *auto sacramental*. It is well-written, the allegories are detailed, coherent and sustained, and it consistently displays an understanding of creation which embraces multiple levels of meaning, the literal and the transcendent, the pagan and the Christian, the fallen and the redeemed. In some ways, it goes beyond anything Calderón ever achieved, in particular in the use of the *loa*, and Sor Juana's incorporation of the Americas into the narrative of redemption. The piece is also more original in its choice of protagonist, and more complex in its manifestation of her wit in making this parallel work. *El divino Narciso* illustrates in practice both aspects of Sor Juana's theoretical discourse on allegory. It uses concrete images to instruct its audience in a particularly complex and abstract matter of theology. It also encourages them to consider further the narrative performed before them, and to allow its intricacies and complexities to open their minds also to increase their knowledge of the divine order in creation. It demonstrates an understanding of the world, and of history, as allegorical, as both pagan and fallen, and at the same time redeemed by Christ. The central figure of Naturaleza Humana, her marred figure and the barren landscape in which she finds herself, ground the *auto* in an understanding of creation as fallen, humanity as sinful, and therefore of both as in need of redemption through Christ in the Mass. The work

also displays an engagement with the significance of allegory to human intellectual, creative, and theological endeavour, and demonstrates a confidence in both writer and reader to probe for connections and to use the many levels of interpretation to aid their understanding of the divine. It therefore reflects Sor Juana's concern with the use of one's intellect, expressed through her writings on allegory, with the potential for human learning while also constituting a defence of the way in which she had used hers.

However, this remains centred on an acceptance of the human propensity to pride, and warns of its dangers through the figure of Eco. In this way, in *El divino Narciso*, Sor Juana sustained the vision of a fallen creation and sinful humanity, always at the mercy of those who succumb to the sin of pride which is necessary to the dramatic and theological function of the *auto*. This Baroque vision of *El divino Narciso* is nuanced when considered in the light of its distinctively American *loa*. Its comparison between the pagan rituals of the Aztecs and the mythological tales of classical antiquity is substantively different to what any peninsular dramatist sought to achieve. In addition, through the character of Eco, it also makes a point about Sor Juana's intellectual abilities, and presents a theologically and aesthetically grounded justification for putting her wit to use in the service of the Church through the composition of an *auto sacramental*. Sor Juana's *El divino Narciso* does indeed, in many ways, surpass even the *autos* of Calderón. The work is a characteristic piece of Baroque aesthetics and Counter-Reformation theology, as demonstrated in its many juxtapositions: between fall and redemption, ugliness and beauty, speech and silence, paganism and Christianity, Europe and America. It is a complex piece worthy of further investigation. In certain aspects, its complexity goes beyond even what scholars until now have noted, I have revealed several particular lines of investigation which warrant

further attention. Returning to Paz's assessment of the piece, the question which now poses itself is whether it is an exception among her *autos sacramentales*, or whether certain of the characteristics identified in the above study can also help to further our knowledge of her these plays, and provide us with a more coherent picture of her religious dramaturgy.

~ CHAPTER TWO ~

SEEING IS BELIEVING: THE LIMITS OF SCEPTICISM IN *EL CETRO DE JOSÉ*

El cetro de José is in many ways markedly different from *El divino Narciso*. Firstly, even less is known about the circumstances of its composition. It was published for the first time in 1692 in the second volume of Sor Juana's collected works, *Segundo tomo de las obras de soror Juana Inés de la Cruz*. This volume, like her previous work, includes a collection of her writings in different genres and styles; among them are counted poetry, short plays, her poem *Primero sueño,* and her three *autos sacramentales* (*El divino Narciso* is reprinted in this volume). It bears no indication of when or where it was intended to be performed, if indeed it was written with performance in mind. It has also received significantly less attention than *El divino Narciso*. Nonetheless, it is a piece which raises significant questions which are yet to be answered in an adequate manner. *El cetro de José*, while remaining an orthodox *auto sacramental*, departs from the Calderonian model in significant ways. It explicitly brings to the fore Sor Juana's ideas about knowledge, in particular how it should be acquired and how best it should be used. In doing so, it presents a radical departure in the manner in which the doctrine of transubstantiation is presented in the *auto*, which is then applied to a theological question outside the direct concern of a typical sacramental play, namely the correct translation of a particular verse of Genesis. As she did in *El divino Narciso*, Sor Juana

demonstrates her wit in her ability to reconcile two apparently incongruous arguments through a subtle shift in perception. In this play, her concern with epistemology, and her particular presentation of the doctrine of transubstantiation both point to changes in her model of the *auto* when compared to *El divino Narciso*. Whereas the dynamic of the latter piece was rooted in the tension between sin and redemption, these ideas are replaced in this play by a more positive view of the potential of human knowledge and creativity when it is applied in an ethical manner and guided by faith.

El cetro de José is a dramatisation of the story of Joseph and his brothers from the book of Genesis.[30] Chapters 37 to 50 narrate the story of the favourite of the twelve sons of Jacob, who is sold into slavery by his brothers after his father's favouritism provokes their jealousy. In Egypt, after being entrapped by his master's wife, Joseph is imprisoned, but is released when he is able to interpret several of the Pharaoh's dreams. When he correctly predicts a seven-year period of abundant harvests, followed by seven years of famine, he is put in charge of overseeing the country's food supplies. When the crisis spreads across the land, his brothers come to Egypt to ask for grain. Joseph recognises them, but tests them by planting a silver goblet in one of their sacks, and accuses his sibling of stealing it. The brothers protest his innocence, offering to be punished in his place, thereby demonstrating their changed character. After Joseph reveals his identity, they return for their father and are given land to inherit in Egypt. The book ends with Jacob on his deathbed, blessing his sons (47.31).

The story of Joseph was a popular source for dramatic adaptations in the Spanish Golden Age (McGaha *The Story of Joseph*; Peña Fernández), and Calderón had used the story as the basis for one of his later *autos*, *Sueños hay que verdad son*. As the

[30] As above, the anglicised name Joseph refers to the historical character of the Old Testament. The Spanish name José refers to the protagonist of the *auto*.

title suggests, this latter play focuses on the role of Joseph's dreams in the narrative, and the few commentators who have appraised Sor Juana's work have followed this model through a particular interest in her writings about knowledge and dreams (Martínez San Miguel; McGaha). However, one of the notable things about Sor Juana's adaptation is that José's dreams do not feature particularly prominently in her drama. Rather, her *auto* focuses on the conflict between her protagonist, José, and the play's devil figure, Lucero.

Just as Narciso in *El divino Narciso* was a type of Christ, so is José in *El cetro de José*. According to the four-fold model of scriptural exegesis, biblical passages can be interpreted on four different levels: the literal, in which the historical sense is foregrounded; the typological, where the prefigurative relationship between Old and New Testaments is emphasised; the moral, which should inform one's present actions; and the anagogical, which relates to the end of time. Particular passages of the Old Testament can therefore be read typologically as prophesying the coming of Christ in the New Testament. In the narrative of Jonah, which Jesus himself references as a sign (Matthew 12.40), Jonah's three days in the belly of the great fish are seen to foreshadow Christ's three days in the grave. Several passages from the psalms and prophets can be read as foretelling the events of the Passion (Isaiah 43 being a notable example). In Exodus, a plague of snakes is sent on the Israelites and God commands Moses to make a brass snake on a pole, which the people can look upon and be saved from their bites (Numbers 21.4-9), an action which can be seen as a figure of the cross of crucifixion and its healing power. Significantly to the plot of *El cetro de José* and to the concern of the *auto*, the provision of manna to sustain the people of Israel in the wilderness prefigures the gift of Christ's body in the bread of the Mass to sustain the Church

(Exodus 16). Joseph is a figure of Christ through his actions in saving the people through the provision of bread during a famine, as he foreshadows Christ's victory over death and His gift of His body as bread in the Mass.

In Sor Juana's adaptation, she introduces two new characters: Lucero, a devil-figure who is accompanied by four demons, Inteligencia, Ciencia, Conjetura and Envidia; and Profecía, who represents the spirit of God, and guides José's actions. The plot of the play revolves around Lucero's attempts to kill José, as he sees in him a threat to his own power. He discerns that there is something threatening about this figure, even that he foreshadows someone greater, but cannot quite work out why he is so afraid of him. He therefore attempts several ruses in order to bring about José's death, including inciting his brothers to kill him and tempting José to fall for the seductive tricks of his master's wife. However, José is guided by Profecía, who identifies herself as the spirit of God, and guides his thoughts in such a way as to evade Lucero's traps. José finally overcomes his trials to become the saviour of the Egyptian people, and enters the city triumphantly, carrying the sceptre of the title, on which is placed a loaf of bread. This symbol of his provision of food during the famine is also the final and clearest sign of his status as a type of Christ, and of Christ's salvific function in the Eucharist. On seeing his triumph, and realising that he has failed, Lucero flees, leaving the play to close on Jacob blessing his sons, and prophesying the coming of Christ.

Central to the doctrinal message of the piece is the idea of seeing "a dos visos" 'in two ways', of being able to distinguish between the appearance and the essence of things, in order to believe in the doctrine of transubstantiation. This ability is what distinguishes José from Lucero, and what determines their respective success and downfall. It is also a skill which is required of the audience in order to interpret the

auto. All *autos* rely on their audience's ability to read both the literal and the figurative level of the drama. To do this, they must know the rules of this process of reading on two levels and decipher the respective function and significance of each of the characters on stage. The ability to see the literal plot of the *auto* and to interpret its figurative meaning (which is then confirmed in the closing scene) is closely linked to the requirement of worshippers of the Mass to see the Host as it is presented to them and to perceive it in both accident and substance.

Throughout the play, Sor Juana insists on Lucero's inability to see the dual nature of things. He can see them as they appear, he can sometimes deduce that their appearance may hide their true identity, but he is never able to decipher quite what that true identity might be, or to tell the difference between the two. From the beginning of the play, he and his companions attempt to infer a transcendent meaning from the dramatic action they witness. Lucero is clear that he is aware of God's intention to redeem humankind and that he understands that this will mean his demise (AJ 65-71). He also senses that José will play a role in this. He therefore calls on Inteligencia, Ciencia and Conjetura to assist him in working out why he fears José:

> LUCERO. Y más, ahora, este prodigio nuevo
> de ese hermoso mancebo,
> a quien ahora visteis que inhumanos
> vendieron sus hermanos
> (que no sé qué en él veo,
> que ni lo dudo bien, ni lo creo),
> ¿qué tipo o qué figura,
> como a quien ve de lejos la pintura,
> descubre misterioso?
> Y pues el atenderlo es ya forzoso,
> de ti Ciencia, me valgo,
> para ver si inferir podemos algo. (AJ 79-90)

As one who looks at a painting from a distance, Lucero can make out that José is in some way a threat to him and even that he may represent something else, but he cannot make out the details to work out that José is a type of Christ. Throughout the action, he repeatedly vents his frustration at his lack of intuition. All the clues and signs that are presented to him get him no closer to working out how his fate is connected to José. Early in the play, a series of Old Testament tableaux presents prophecies about the redemption of humanity through Christ. Lucero hears God's prophecy to Adam and Eve and notes in particular the fact that a woman's heel will break his neck (AJ 165-168; Genesis 3.15). He is able to think of all the things the heel could symbolise without ever comprehending its true meaning that his power will be destroyed through the son of a woman, Mary. In a particularly significant scene, which unites several of the themes of the play, Ciencia reveals to Lucero that José's name worries her, as it means "*Aumento de Dios*" (AJ 299-301). This confounds Lucero, who realises that God is infinite and therefore presumes that he cannot be augmented. Conjetura approaches understanding of the meaning of his name when she announces that the only way this would be possible would be for God to take on another nature. This, she reveals, is too complex for Lucero, or even Inteligencia, the source of his knowledge, to understand (AJ 307-17). None of them intuit what the audience presumably realises, that José's name confirms him as a type of Christ and alludes to two particular characteristics of Christ. Firstly, it refers to the doctrine that in the Incarnation, God takes on a human nature in addition to his divine being. Secondly, it refers to Christ taking on the accidents of bread and wine in order to become fully present in the elements of the Mass. Thus, the Incarnation, the death of Christ, and his presence in the Eucharist are all foreshadowed in the person of José, but this once again lies beyond the grasp of Lucero, even with the

aid of Inteligencia, Ciencia and Conjetura. At the end of the play, all Lucero is able to conclude is that the object of his fears "es Josef y no es Josef" (AJ 1387) and that he does not fear "lo que es él / sino que a otro represente" (AJ 1395-96). Nonetheless, he still remains convinced (against what any member of the audience will intuit) of Inteligencia's insistence that "éste es sólo un hombre" (AJ 822).

Lucero's inability to comprehend who José is, or what he represents, is closely tied to how he acquires and uses knowledge, an aspect of the play which is commented on at length by each of the characters. Early in the play, Lucero states that God chose to grant him knowledge as a torment, to make him aware of his own fate. He was allowed to be constantly accompanied by Inteligencia, he states, "porque en mí fuese más tormento / tener tan perspicaz entendimiento" (AJ 39-40), and he presumes that God granting him the presence of Ciencia "no fue blandura ni clemencia" (AJ 61). He also acknowledges that his ability to accumulate knowledge, which is often his greatest torment, belies an inability to exercise wisdom:

> LUCERO. Pues Dios, como y cuando quiere,
> me turba el conocimiento
> o el discurso me entorpece?
> Porque aunque es natural dote
> la Ciencia en mí, que perderse
> no pueda, puede a lo menos
> minorarse, obscurecerse,
> cuando Dios intenta que algo
> ignore yo, mayormente
> aquella parte que toca
> a los secretos celestes,
> que llaman Sabiduría:
> la cual no quiere que entre
> en alma malvada, y menos
> en mi espíritu rebelde. (AJ 1240-54).

This is the crucial difference between Lucero and José; one is restricted to having knowledge, the other is granted wisdom.

The distinction between the ethics of their respective uses of knowledge is ensured by the presence of the two personifications, Envidia and Profecía. Lucero's desire for knowledge, as well as the torment it causes him, is born out of envy. He wishes to accumulate knowledge merely in order to increase his own power, and therefore prevent José's victory. In this way, he is comparable in certain regards with Eco, whose use of wit is driven by envy and pride. In addition, José's knowledge is guided by Profecía, who speaks to him and enables him to interpret dreams, but also guides him to use his knowledge in such a way that it serves God, and to perform actions which point to the coming of Christ. Moreover, the two characters, and their use of knowledge, are also distinguished through two very different approaches to perceiving and interpreting objects and events. Of particular note is the choice of Ciencia, Conjetura and Inteligencia, in addition to Envidia, to accompany Lucero. As personifications of the parts of Platonic epistemology, they represent knowledge acquired through rational discourse. They describe themselves as belonging to the world of ideas, but having taken physical form for the purpose of the play. In the opening scenes, when they present a series of Old Testament tableaux, these scenes are said to be the product of Ciencia's mind:

> CIENCIA. Y pues tiene retórica licencia
> de fabricar, la Ciencia,
> sus entes de razón, y hacer posible
> representable objeto lo invisible. (AJ 113-16)

Later, Conjetura identifies herself as an idea who has taken visible form:

CONJETURA. Buscando vengo al Lucero,
como si de él me apartara
ya nunca. Mas (como queda
ya la licencia asentada
de hacerme visible objeto),
como precisa substancia
de su ser me porto. (AJ 1011-17)

While the characters observe and interact with the world of the play, their attempts to interpret it rest purely on their use of logic. Either Ciencia or Inteligencia present to Lucero an event, and then it falls to Conjetura to interpret it.

The most striking example of their reliance on logical enquiry is in their attempts to interpret José's actions when the brothers arrive in Egypt looking for grain. When the brothers arrive, although he recognises them as his brothers, José immediately accuses them of being spies, in order to test their changed character. When the demons witness what has happened, they presume that he must either have been deceived into thinking they were spies, or he must be unjustly treating them as such, either of which would put into question his identity as the Messiah. Inteligencia reports the events to Lucero:

INTELIGENCIA. Lo que yo he visto en Josef,
es que ha mentido, o se engaña:
pues ha llamado de espías
a sus hermanos, y manda
que los tengan en prisiones
mientras la verdad declaran.
Mas aquí la Conjetura
está, que es lo que buscabas. (AJ 1041-48)

Lucero immediately wants to know which of the two crimes José is guilty of, and turns to Conjetura to try and make sense of his actions, and their implications for Lucero.

Conjetura's answer displays the hallmarks of the scholastic method of reasoning. She first lays out the dilemma, which is that José either is lying, or he has been deceived.

CONJETURA. Tu proposición es que
o José miente, o se engaña,
pues o ignora, o sabe que
son sus hermanos. Si alcanza
que lo son, con fingimiento
como a enemigos los trata,
diciendo que son espías,
y afirma cosa tan falsa
por tres veces. Y si ignora
que lo son, es cosa clara
que padece engaño, pues
que lo son. (AJ 1055-66)

She then reconciles these two propositions into a whole by means of logical analysis, arguing that, whichever of these is true, it shows José to be guilty in some way. He must either be unjust, if he is lying about his brothers' identity, or he must not be prophetic, as he is unable to see their true identity.

CONJETURA. En que, por ambas
partes arguyendo, infiero
o su culpa o su ignorancia:
pues si ignora, no es profeta;
y no es justo, si lo alcanza.

INTELIGENCIA. Fuerte es tu argumento, porque
es un dilema, que abraza
negación y afirmación;
mas mi ciencia no se sacia
ni se quieta mi inquietud
sin ver cuál es la culpada
de las dos. (AJ 1066-1077)

At the end of the play, this approach to knowledge proves to be fruitless, as Lucero and his companions remain unable to work out the true significance of José's actions.

It falls to Profecía to correct the demons, when she informs them that Conjetura's solution is wrong, and that neither of the two options she presents are correct. She explains:

> PROFECÍA. El espíritu de Dios
> soy, a quien Josef acompaña,
> de Profecía; y porque veas
> que tú eres el que te engañas
> cuando lo arguyes de culpa
> o lo acusas de ignorancia,
> te aviso que en uno y otro
> incurres, pues tiene clara
> ciencia de ser sus hermanos,
> y cuando espías los llama,
> no de la verdad lo entiende,
> sino de la semejanza. (AJ 1085-96)

Profecía presents an explicit explanation of how the brothers can be both spies and brothers. In their appearance, the men have all the hallmarks of being spies—their physical traits, their language, their nationality—all of these mark them out as men who have arrived from Canaan to spy on the Egyptian grain stores. José recognises this, and uses their appearance in order to carry out his plan. Therefore, he cannot be unjust in his treatment of the men. However, neither is he deceived by their appearance, for he knows them truly to be his brothers. Ultimately, his behaviour towards them as if they were spies is a necessary step for their true nature to be revealed, and for them to be treated according to their true identity.

As the play progresses, it becomes clear that there is another point which proves to be a source of confusion for Lucero, and where he again stumbles in recognising the

possibility of something having two natures. Throughout the play, the imagery of bread is frequently repeated, in its connection to Christ. Its first mention appears in the tableau scene of the Garden of Eden, when God states to Adam that "costarate el pan / el sudor del rostro" (AJ 136-37). This consternates Lucero, who exclaims, "¿Qué pan ha de ser éste, / que es menester que tanto sudor cueste?" (AJ 143-44). On a literal level the bread refers to the physical sustenance for which Adam will now have to toil. On a figurative level it can also be taken to refer to the body of Christ, which redeems mankind through both the Passion, where the sweat of the brow refers to the physical sufferings of Jesus, and in the Eucharist, in which his body becomes bread. After José correctly interprets Faraón's dream, he is welcomed into the city on a triumphal chariot as one who is capable of divine miracles, despite his humble appearance. This prefigures Jesus' triumphal entrance into Jerusalem during Passover, when he is welcomed by the crowds as the Messiah (Mark 11.1-11; Matthew 21.1-11; Luke 19.28-44; John 12.12-44). As José comes to open the granaries, which will save the people from famine, he is greeted with a paraphrase of the Lord's Prayer, "Padre eres de nuestra patria, / y como tal, padre nuestro. / ¡Danos el pan cuotidiano!" (AJ 929-31). In this is revealed the particular way in which José is a type of Christ. Just as Christ saves humanity through the sacrifice of His body on the cross, and sustains them through the gift of this same body in the Mass, so José saves and sustains the people of Egypt through the provision of grain, which is turned into bread. As José enters the stage, he carries the sceptre of the title, which appears for the first time in the play, with a loaf of bread on its tip, symbolising his salvific power, and providing an additional sign of the connection between him and Christ.

The significance of the bread is made most obvious in the central scene of the play. After José's brothers arrive in Egypt and José has accused them of being spies, he sends them back to Canaan for their youngest brother Benjamin, in order to test the truth of their story. On their return, they are welcomed by José's butler to a banquet prepared in their honour. When he announces that before they eat, his master is to come and wash their feet, it becomes clear that the meal is a figure of the Last Supper, at which Jesus washed the feet of his disciples. Once they are seated around the table, the scene becomes a final tableau, paused in time, while Profecía explains its significance:

> PROFECÍA. Esta mesa es de otra mesa,
> y estos doce de otros doce,
> figura en que se conoce
> de Dios la cierta promesa.
> ¡Venid a la mesa, venid a la mesa!
> Ésta, por la Profecía
> puesta por figura está;
> mas la otra dispondrá
> la eterna sabiduría. (AJ 1161-69)

In particular, she interprets the bread as follows:

> El pan aquí, con afán,
> es sustento y es comida;
> y allá será el Pan de Vida,
> cuando deje de ser pan. (AJ 1170-74)

This is the first overt reference to transubstantiation, and in particular to the doctrine that the bread loses its substance as bread, in order for it to be changed into the substance of Christ's body. At this point it is changed from a source of physical sustenance into a spiritually and eternally sustaining source of life, as Poppenberg explains:

> La transmutación eucarística tiene dos momentos: por parte del pan, la destrucción de este—«Deus enim destruit panem, dum desinit eum conservare». Por parte del cuerpo de Cristo, no es transmutación sino «adductio»; Dios no se convierte en el «esse sacramentalis» sino que lo adopta al transmutar el pan en sí mismo, «per mutationem panis in ipsum». (210)

In dramatic, as well as figurative terms, this scene is in many ways the culmination of the play. Not only does it mark the reunion of Joseph with his brothers, but it also explains, with remarkable concision and theological complexity, the connection between the bread José provides for the people of Egypt, the Last Supper, the Passion of Christ, and the Mass the play is there to celebrate.

When Christ instituted the Eucharist, he designated the bread and wine as objects which already were his body and blood, although they had yet to be sacrificed on the cross. During the Mass, the elements are consumed in the belief that they have become the body and blood of the risen Christ, which are the same substance as was sacrificed on the cross, and which were already mysteriously present in the bread and wine of the Last Supper, before the Passion occurred. Thus, in sacramental terms, the sacrifice of the Last Supper, the sacrifice of the Cross, and the sacrifice of the Mass, are one and the same. As Carranza de Miranda states in his *Comentarios*:

> Jesucristo sacerdote … había de hacer sacrificio de su cuerpo y de su sangre en especie de pan y de vino, primero sacramentalmente, como lo hizo en la cena postrera con sus discípulos, y después realmente en su propia figura, como lo hizo en la cruz. El uno y otro es un mismo sacrificio, aunque en diversas figuras. (II. 205)

Thus, this scene of the banquet for the brothers becomes a figurative representation of the Last Supper, the Passion, and the Mass. Each of these events brings about a chronological rupture, a point at which the extra-temporal and cosmic Deity enters human time and space, and in so doing brings together the whole human narrative of

fall and redemption. This is conveyed through the break in the action of this tableau scene. As José holds the raised bread, time is paused while Profecía musically narrates the scene. The dramatic break underscores the crucial importance of the scene, and shows it as the culmination of all that has gone before it and as ushering in all that comes after it, both in literal and typological terms. On the literal level, José's provision of bread to his brothers completes the action set in motion by their selling him into slavery in the opening scene. As a symbol of his victory over adversity, and therefore of his reunion with his family, it ushers in the history of the Israelites in Egypt, the Exodus, and the genealogy from which the Messiah will come. On a figurative level, the institution of the Eucharist foretells Christ's victory over sin, whose entrance into creation was portrayed in the tableau of Adam and Eve at the beginning of the play. As God's gift of his own continued presence through Christ in the Eucharist, it heralds a new relationship between God and humankind.

As should be the case for a scene of such dramatic and theological portent, this also marks the greatest point of Lucero's confusion and despair. When he witnesses the scene, he is utterly dumbfounded:

> LUCERO. ¿Qué enigmas, cielos, son éstos?
> ¿Qué otra mesa? ¿Qué otros doce
> han de ser éstos? ¿Ni cómo,
> si que es convite propone
> que hará la sabiduría,
> sin mentar otros más nobles,
> manjar sólo nombra el pan? (AJ 1183-89)

He expresses particular confusion about the nature of the bread and the mystery of how it stops being bread, and takes on another essence, as articulated by Profecía, above:

LUCERO. Y no que, antes, dice que
el pan (¡oh qué confusiones!)
ha de dejar de ser pan.
Y si acaso se interpone
la corrupción, para que
otra nueva forma tome,
repudiada la primera,
ya después se transforme,
no quedará pan. Pues ¿cómo
que un pan de vida propone?
Dejar de ser pan el pan,
fácil es, si se corrompe
y admite otra forma: que es
conforme al natural orden
que tiene Naturaleza
en todas sus sucesiones.
¿Pero ser pan, y no pan?
¿Quién éstas contradicciones
podrá concertarme? (AJ 1203-21)

In these few lines, Lucero articulates the main stumbling block to his comprehension of José as a figure of Christ; he is unable to see that things can have two natures, for this goes against the logical arguments presented to him by his companions, as well as against the laws of nature.

His weakness is revealed in his interpretation of the bread distributed to the brothers at the banquet, or to the disciples at the Last Supper, or to the partakers of the Mass. He is unable to comprehend how it can stop being bread, while at the same time continuing to be so. In her answer to him, Profecía draws a particularly significant

comparison. She compares the dual nature of the bread in the Eucharist with the dual identity of the brothers as brothers and spies:[31]

> PROFECÍA. Los hermanos de José,
> uno son, y otro parecen:
> pues son de verdad hermanos,
> y espías en lo aparente,
> porque el que todo lo puede, puede
> separar la substancia del accidente. (AJ 1225-30)

Even with this explanation, Lucero and his companions remain unable to understand anything more than the fact that José and the bread on his sceptre are a threat to them. They finish by admitting defeat and fleeing the stage:

> LUCERO. Inteligencia, aunque no
> entiendo, de lo que ha dicho,
> más que un horror, un espanto,
> de las espigas y trigo,
> no me atrevo a esperar más,
> pues en mi pesar colijo
> cuán terrible será el fin,
> de quien es tal el principio.
> ¡Huyamos!
>
> INTELIGENCIA. Ya yo vencida
> respeto de lo que he visto,
> siendo el abismo mi cárcel,
> juzgo mi centro el abismo.
> Para mí no habrá descanso;
> pues siempre me martirizo
> si con lo que miro, aquí,
> allá con lo que imagino.

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[31] In this, there may be a comment being made on Protestant understandings of the Eucharist. In the context of the Counter Reformation, the specific choice of Lucero's name (over the alternatives of Lucifer, or el demonio) is perhaps no coincidence, possibly chosen for its similarity to "Lutero," the Hispanic form of "Luther," who denied the doctrine of transubstantiation. In several contemporary treatises and sermons, the Eucharist is presented as one of the most powerful signs of Christ's victory over the devil and as the Church's most powerful weapon in its spiritual battle against evil. Thus, any attacks on the orthodox understanding of the Mass can be seen as coming from the devil, as he attempts to weaken its hold on him. On all sides of the disputes on the nature of the Eucharist which marked the sixteenth and seventeenth-century reformations of the Church, alternative understandings of the Eucharist are often characterised as coming from the devil (see Poppenberg 170-71).

CONJETURA. Yo no sirvo aquí ni allá:
pues tener nunca ha podido,
adonde está la evidencia,
la Conjetura ejercicio. (AJ 1580-1599)

Profecía's comparison, along with Conjetura's final words, are key to understanding a particularly significant message of the play. By connecting the nature of the bread in the Eucharist with the nature of the brothers as spies, Profecía demonstrates that, despite Conjetura's arguments, each of them can have two natures.

Profecía disproves not only Conjetura's conclusion, but also her method of reasoning, as applied both to the brothers, and to the Eucharist. She demonstrates the scholastic method of logical reasoning to be deficient, particularly when combined with the sin of Envidia, which leads to the accumulation of knowledge, to the arrogant demonstration of one's own powers of reasoning, rather than to a humble search for wisdom and truth. By connecting the brothers and the Eucharist, she also proposes another method for thinking about the doctrine of transubstantiation: through the observation of the material world. Profecía effectively states that the bread of the Eucharist can be bread, and not bread, in the same way that José's brothers could be spies, and not spies. In each case, the brothers and the bread are one thing in appearance and another in essence.

She thus defends the doctrine of transubstantiation through comparison to an observable phenomenon of the material world. She points to a situation, entirely within the bounds of the laws of nature, and perfectly imaginable in the everyday world, in which an object, in this case a person, can be seen to have two natures, one in appearance and one in substance, without these two contradicting one another. This demonstrates a significant shift in thinking on Sor Juana's part. Her play, in so far as its

central message concerns the promotion of the doctrine of transubstantiation, is entirely orthodox. Nonetheless, it departs from standard seventeenth-century arguments for transubstantiation in that it argues that belief in the doctrine should not be based on reliance on a particular scholastic syllogism, nor on the authority of the Church. Rather, it should be believed because of its ability to stand up to empirical scrutiny, because it is possible to point to real, observable instances in the material world where things can be one thing, and not be that thing at the same time. Sor Juana thus presents a defence of the doctrine of transubstantiation that is empirically, not dogmatically or logically based. The doctrine of transubstantiation still requires faith, because it goes against what experience tells us is most often true. Sor Juana does not advocate at this stage pure reliance on the senses, for they can still be deceptive as to the true nature of things. Nonetheless, through a combination of careful observation of the world, and making connections between one experience and another, it is possible to overcome such sensory deception, and to arrive at divine truth.

This insistence on the possibility of things having two natures at once is also central to another concern presented by the *auto*, which falls beyond the usual scope of a sacramental play. On this point, it is necessary to return to the title of the play, and the prominence it gives to José's sceptre. This is not an obvious choice of title for a Joseph *auto*, and it does not appear to have any precedent in any of the other contemporary adaptations of the story. Neither does it appear to have any particular prominence in the drama, until the final scenes. In the closing scene of the play, we find José, his brothers and his father reunited in Egypt, with Jacob on his deathbed. José has once again reappeared with his sceptre, and after Jacob has blessed his eleven brothers, he turns to José and kisses the sceptre, still topped with a loaf of bread, and states:

JACOB. Te pusieron
la empresa también en trigo
en el fastigio del cetro,
que adoro por sacro tipo
del más alto Sacramento
que los venideros siglos
adorarán, y por quien
el vaso dirá elegido,
de mí hablando, que «muriendo
en la fe, adoré el fastigio
de tu vara», adonde veo
tanto misterio escondido. (AJ 1567-78)

In his speech, Jacob emphases that he is worshipping José's sceptre as a figure of the Mass, given that it is symbolic of José's redemption of the people of Egypt through the provision of grain, and therefore has been adorned with a loaf of bread on its tip. In this manner, he is worshipping in type what the coming generations will adore in sacrament. He then goes on to cite Genesis 47.31, saying that the coming generations will tell of his death, and will particularly mention his worship of Joseph's sceptre.

Sor Juana's inclusion of this verse, alongside an explanation of Jacob's actions, is particularly noteworthy in reference to a theological debate about the correct translation of this particular verse in the Old Testament, which had been discussed since the time of the Church Fathers.[32] In Hebrew, the word used for the object to which Jacob directs himself as he prays his final words, *hmmtth*, can either be vocalised *hammittah* ("the bed") or *hammatteh* ("the sceptre"). The Septuagint, on which the New Testament is based, uses the latter for its translation. This is then cited by Paul in the New Testament: "By faith, Jacob, when he was dying, blessed both the sons of Joseph,

[32] The significance of this passage is signalled by McGaha, the only critic to my knowledge to have noted it. His reading of its significance is opposite to mine, as he concludes that it was Sor Juana's aim to emphasise Paul's error, and therefore to undermine at the same time his unreliability on matters of the place of women ("The Fragmented Subject" 159-160).

and worshipped the tip of his sceptre" (Hebrews 11.21). In contrast, Jerome's translation in the Vulgate renders the verse "adoravit Israel Deum, conversus ad lectuli caput," having Jacob worship God while bowing towards the head of the bed.

This raises a linguistic and theological conundrum. While the Septuagint appears to portray Jacob performing an idolatrous act by worshipping Joseph's staff, the correction provided by the Vulgate undermines the authority of the New Testament, as it implies that Paul had used an erroneous translation (Attridge 336). In this passage, Sor Juana proposes a solution which will reconcile the two arguments. Her crucial move is to place the loaf of bread on José's sceptre. The bread is an appropriate symbol for José, as it represents his salvation of the people of Egypt through the provision of grain. However, as has been made clear throughout the play, the bread which José provides to the people of Egypt is also a figure of the Host, and of salvation through the body of Christ in the Mass. Thus, the bread on the top of José's staff takes on a similar typological function. In this way, the sceptre is transformed from being simply a staff, which it indeed would have been idolatrous for Jacob to worship, into a figure of the Eucharist, which Jacob can be seen to have worshipped in type. He has perceived that it is both the symbol of José's triumph, which in turn is a sign of the future coming of Christ, and of the bread of the Eucharist. Sor Juana has reconciled the two apparently dichotomous strands of thought about the translation of Genesis.

Through her interpretation, the reading given by Paul can be seen to be correct, without entailing an accusation of idolatry towards Jacob, which it was previously thought this would imply. Her awareness of the debate, and its relevance to the play, is then made explicit in an aside by Profecía:

PROFECÍA. (Pero por si algún curioso
quiere averiguar prolijo
la erudición, en lo que
del Cetro dejamos dicho,
sobre el Génesis, Rabí
Moisés nos lo dejó escrito,
citando el lugar de Pablo
sobre "adorar el fastigio."
Y aunque no se debe en todo
dar crédito a los Rabinos,
como aquesta circunstancia
no puede para perjuicio
a ningún dogma, antes bien,
en el acomodaticio
sentido, a la devoción
puede ayudar, me he valido
de ella.) (AJ 1622-38)

This kind of lengthy aside is not unusual in the works of Sor Juana, and often serves to point her audience or her reader to a particular concern, debate, or idea her work addresses. In this case, by leaving the specific mention of the controversy until the end of the play, she ensures that she has had the chance fully to present her solution before explicitly mentioning that she intends to address the issue. Anyone aware of the controversy, and who would have understood her solution to it, would likely have inferred her reference to it through the title and the prominence of the bread-topped sceptre throughout the play. Nonetheless, there is nothing until the end to suggest incontrovertibly that she is presenting an opinion on this theological debate. As a woman religious in viceregal New Spain, presenting an opinion in writing on a theological matter would have been a bold and daring move, as it would have been seen to contravene the Pauline dictum that women should 'be silent in the churches' (1 Cor. 14:33-35). As in *El divino Narciso* the orthodoxy of the message of the *auto* ensures

that she is protected from criticism; anyone who takes issue with her resolution of the dilemma can be answered by arguing that she is merely presenting and defending the doctrine of transubstantiation.

This would not have been the only time that Sor Juana presented such opinions as to the correct theological stances of the Church Fathers. In the *Respuesta*, she criticised the opinion presented by Vieira on the question of the "mayor fineza de Cristo," which he argued superseded those of Augustine, Jerome and Chrysostom on the matter. In response, Sor Juana defended the stance taken by Augustine. When placed in this context of a theological debate, the purpose behind *El cetro de José* becomes clearer. Using a reference to the sceptre as the title of her play, Sor Juana demonstrates to her fellow theologians her awareness of this debate. Just as *El divino Narciso* raised the question to anyone with knowledge of her source text of how she was going to reconcile Narcissus and Christ, *El cetro de José* raises the question of how she is going to defend the interpretation of Genesis 47 as Jacob worshipping the sceptre. As she did in *El divino Narciso*, her solution is not revealed until the culminating point of the play, and again she uses a subtle but ingenious shift of meaning to resolve the conundrum she has set herself. Conforming as she did before to Gracián's advice that such solutions should be drawn out of the material already presented, rather than being introduced at the last moment, she brings to the fore the theme of bread, a significant thread already woven throughout the play. By placing a loaf of bread on Joseph's sceptre, a bread which she has shown to be an appropriate symbol of Joseph and a foreshadowing of Christ's salvific act in the Eucharist, Jacob's act is transformed from being idolatrous worship of a staff to being a figure of devotion to the Mass. Thus, Sor Juana defends the

interpretation of Genesis given by the writer of the letter to the Hebrews without compromising his, or her, orthodoxy.

As with *El divino Narciso*, this is not the final message of her *auto*. After the death of Jacob, Profecía goes on to explicitly connect his faith with the demand on the audience to believe in the power of the Eucharist. Jacob maintained his belief despite having died several hundreds of years before Christ's birth. Likewise, the audience must believe in the presence of Christ in the Mass even when it might go against what their senses and rational minds might lead them to. Drawing on the frequently used imagery of light and dark, her words take on the spiritual significance of the forces of evil fleeing in front of the light of the victory of Christ over sin, as symbolised in the Eucharist. Furthermore, the particular image of the light dawning also refers to the previously used metaphor of José being a "viso" of Christ. As more light is shed on his character, its significance as a figure of Christ becomes clearer and dispels the darkness of the Old Testament narrative in which it had been shrouded:

> PROFECÍA. Y vosotros, ya no hijos
> de Jacob, que el Sacramento
> entre figuras y visos
> vieron, sino hijos de luz,
> pues ya las sombras se han ido,
> y cumplido las figuras
> de los sacros vaticinios
> que dije en tantos profetas,
> y ya, trascendiendo siglos,
> la que allá fui Profecía,
> a ser aquí Fe he venido,
> sin que cause disonancia:
> pues un acto es de Fe mismo
> dar crédito a lo futuro,
> que dársela a lo no visto;

pues lo mismo es creer en Dios
que creer porque Dios lo dijo,
creyendo allá contra el tiempo,
y aquí contra los sentidos… (AJ 1603-21)

Jacob was required to believe without proof that the things he saw were signs that God would redeem the world. The audience too is required to believe without visible evidence that Christ takes on the accidents of bread and wine in the Eucharist and that the elements before them contain His real blood and body. These two things require the same faith, for the one not letting one's position in time impede one's faith and for the other, not relying on immediate sensory perception to obtain true knowledge of the substance of the elements. Profecía's instruction to believe "contra los sentidos" may at first appear to contradict the conclusions drawn above about Sor Juana's defence of the observation of the world as a means to knowledge, including theological knowledge. However, each of these should not be misunderstood. The doctrine of transubstantiation does go against what our senses immediately perceive to be true—an object which appears to us as bread must be believed to be something else in substance. The senses can be deceived, and thus belief in transubstantiation can only occur "contra los sentidos". However, when guided by faith, as José is, it is possible to rectify the deception of the senses in some cases by putting together many different experiences of the material world. These can then be judged together, and each can be used to correct a deception possibly created in another instance. It is the combination of using a variety of experiences, and judging these together, led by faith, which provides the key to understanding and to knowledge.

Sor Juana provides an example of this process in the *Respuesta*, when she describes an occasion on which she stood in the dormitory of the convent, and observed

that the lines of the walls appeared to run diagonally, towards a point, and that the far wall appeared much smaller than the near wall. She was able to correct this misleading sensory information with her knowledge that the walls ran parallel, and that the two walls were of equal size. Rather than conclude therefore, that the world is one of deception and trickery, and that all sensory information is potentially flawed, she is able to put the two experiences together, and come up with something approaching the principles of the visual pyramid.[33]

> 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 lo próximo: de donde infería que las líneas visuales corren rectas, pero no paralelas, sino que van a formar una figura piramidal. Y discurría si sería ésta la razón que obligó a los antiguos a dudar si el mundo era esférico o no. Porque, aunque lo parece, podía ser engaño de la vista, demostrando concavidades donde pudiera no haberlas. (*Respuesta* 1474, para. 27)

In the example derived from her own experience and the one she formulates in *El cetro de José*, Sor Juana points to observable instances in the material where the information we receive by sight belies what is true. José's brothers may look like spies, but they are brothers. The walls of the dormitory may look as if they run diagonally, but they run parallel. From this, it is not inconsistent to state that, according to observable principles of the material world, the elements of the Eucharist may look like bread and wine, but

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[33] Doubtless Sor Juana was already familiar with this principle through her reading on the subject of optics, demonstrated above. Her presentation of herself as ignorant of this is part of the rhetorical structure of the text, in which she has frequent recourse to the humility topos. What is significant here is the method she describes of using her intellect to differentiate between two different sensory experiences of the same reality, and to deduce sound principles from potentially deceptive sensory information.

they are in the body and blood of Christ. People can therefore be called to believe against their senses, in a way which is still consistent with empirical observation.

The demand for people to believe against "contra los sentidos" is also compared to the demand placed on Jacob to have faith "contra el tiempo", to believe in Jesus as the Messiah, despite not having the knowledge granted to those born after the Incarnation. This demand for faith, before awareness of the Gospel, points the reader, or the audience, back to the introductory *loa.* Here, four personifications of virtues—Fe, Naturaleza, Ley Natural and Ley de Gracia—presented as colonisers of the New World, discuss what they would like to institute in commemoration of their conversion of the Americas. Each of their suggestions is closely connected to their character: Naturaleza proposes the abolition of human sacrifice, Ley Natural the institution of monogamy, and Ley de Gracia the replacement of idolatry with the worship of the image of Christ (LJ 101-43). Fe concedes that the best proposal is Ley de Gracia's. She adds that, being Faith, she can improve on it and present for worship not only the image of Christ but Christ himself in true substance in the Eucharist, otherwise known as the "mystery of faith":

> FE. Digo que, aunque soy la Fe,
> que los misterios abraza
> todos, con una especial
> denominación la llaman
> a la sacra Eucaristía
> «Misterio de la Fe», con tanta
> propiedad que, si me pintan,
> por divisa me señalan
> un Cáliz con una Hostia;
> y así, por más acertada
> acción tengo el colocar
> una forma consagrada,

que no es colocar la imagen
sino la propia Substancia. (LJ 151-64)

Thus, starting in the *loa* there is an explicit distinction made between image and substance, a theme which runs throughout the *auto sacramental*. Fe goes on to explain that her suggestion encompasses all those given previously, as the sacrament of the Mass will purify the altars of human sacrifice, the knowledge of the authority of God in marriage will prevent the dissolution of unions, and it places Christ himself, rather than an image on the altars suggested by Ley de Gracia (LJ 165-83).

Fe instructs the others to call on the heavenly hosts to descend to their altar, but to their consternation it is an indigenous woman who appears to them, rather than angels or manifestations of divine power. She challenges their presumption that there has been a true conversion to Christianity among the pagan peoples (LJ 232-60). She warns them of the importance of human sacrifice to the peoples of the Americas, and questions why changing the object of their worship from the Aztec pantheon to the one Christian God precludes performing human sacrifices to Him:

IDOLATRÍA. Antes hay mayor razón,
porque si a deidad más alta
se debe mejor ofrenda,
¿por qué tú quieres privarla
de ese culto? Pues el yerro
no en el sacrificio estaba,
sino en el objeto, pues
se ofreció a deidades falsas;
y si ahora al verdadero
Dios quieren sacrificarla,
pues el error fue el objeto,
mudar el objeto basta. (LJ 289-300)

Ley Natural, Naturaleza and Gracia immediately take offence at her proposition and attempt to explain the various ways in which the practice of human sacrifice offends each of them, though Idolatría remains unconvinced. It is not until Fe questions her reasons for holding her sacrificial practices in such high esteem that she begins to make headway in convincing her of the acceptability of Christian doctrine.

When asked, Idolatría states that she has two reasons for defending the practice of human sacrifice:

> IDOLATRÍA. La primera es el pensar
> que las deidades se aplacan
> con la víctima más noble;
> y la otra es que, en las vïandas,
> es el plato más sabroso
> la carne sacrificada
> de quien cree mi nación,
> no sólo que es la substancia
> mejor, mas que virtud tiene
> para hacer la vida larga
> de todos los que la comen. (LJ 347-57)

Fe counters that the Eucharist not only fulfils but supersedes these requirements. The Eucharist presents the most noble of sacrifices, given that Christ is both human and divine. In addition, partaking of the Eucharist gives more than a long earthly life—it gives eternal life after this one (LJ 394-407). Idolatría is intrigued as to how God can become flesh in Christ and then become bread and wine in the elements of the Mass, and how this could have such portentous effects. Fe responds that the best way in which to answer her is to present a play, the *auto El cetro de José*, which will show Idolatría the prophecies that speak of this sacred mystery (LJ 433-35). Fe focuses on the two aspects shown above to be at the centre of the message of this *auto sacramental*: the

importance of the distinction between image and substance which is at the heart of the doctrine of transubstantiation, and the tracing of a prophecy of the Eucharist to both the Old Testament and Aztec ritual, which advocates for the need for faith. Thus, thematically and didactically, the *auto* and *loa* are shown to form one unit, in which the purpose proposed in the *loa* is fulfilled in the *auto*.

This awareness of a connection between *auto* and *loa* leads to a reappraisal of the final scenes of the *auto*. As stated above, Profecía's closing soliloquy is addressed directly to the audience, reminding them that they have moved beyond the era of prophecy when Jacob believed in the coming redemption of humankind and have now entered the age of faith. They have been blessed with knowledge of the Incarnation and with the presence of Christ in the Eucharist. Despite these visible signs, faith is nonetheless required to accept the doctrine of transubstantiation. If we turn back to the *loa*, and consider the fact that the *auto* is supposedly performed for the edification of Idolatría, and therefore by extension for the pagan peoples of the Americas, for whom she stands (LJ 267-70), then Profecía's words can also be seen to be addressed directly to this internal audience. In contrast to the distinction between the Old Testament patriarchs and seventeenth-century Christians, here the passage from prophecy to faith will be seen not over millennia, but over the course of the play which is about to be performed. In the *loa*, Idolatría stood by the practice of human sacrifice, and questioned the veracity of Fe's claims. She was thus comparable to the "sons of Jacob," those who could only see "through a shadow darkly," but who waited expectantly for these prophecies to be fulfilled, believing "contra el tiempo." Having been taught the significance of the Eucharist and shown how she can be redeemed through Christ's presence in the bread, she becomes one of the "hijos de luz," in possession of the truth,

of whom faith in the doctrine of transubstantiation, "contra los sentidos" is required (AJ 1600-51).

If taken one step further, then Sor Juana can be seen to be making a point about the status of indigenous religious practices in the Americas. By comparing Mexica beliefs with Old Testament Judaism, she argues for the presence, *avant la lettre*, of aspects of Christian truth in American pagan practices. She demonstrates that these rituals were figures of Christian rites, foreshadowed the preaching of the Gospel in the Americas, and thus prepared the way for it. If the play was intended for a Spanish audience, whether in Madrid or at the viceregal court in Mexico City, this has a further implication. Profecía's speech calls for her listeners to observe the material world and to find in it signs that things can be perceived "a dos visos." The is the task required both of the indigenous character of the *loa* from two centuries earlier and from Sor Juana's contemporary Spanish audience. She thus follows the arguments of those, such as Bartolomé de las Casas and Francisco de Vitoria, who defended the spiritual status of the *indios* and declared them to be capable of faith and salvation in the same manner as their European colonisers. All of them are called to observe the world, and guided by faith, to use their observations to overcome the deception of their senses, and to see how things can be perceived in two natures, in appearance and in substance.

In this regard, *El cetro de José* continues a trend already established in *El divino Narciso*. When considered in the light of the *loa*, the message of the *auto* becomes once again applicable beyond its immediate audience, and comments on the religious and cultural history of the Americas. In addition, in both works Sor Juana uses the *autos* as a means of communicating external ideas and concerns. In *El divino Narciso*, she presented a defence of her use of her literary abilities in the service of the court and

Church, and an argument for her licence to write plays on theological matters. In *El cetro de José*, the argument is more overt. It is simultaneously more integral to the structure and dramatic development of the play, and more extraneous to the usual demands and concerns of the *auto*.

In some ways, this contributes to the weaker points in the play, and particularly to the ending of the play. The resolution of the dilemma of the sceptre is coherent with the rest of the action and with the visual theme of bread. In dramatic terms, however, the resolution of the play appears somewhat jolting. With the action having built up around the question of whether Lucero will eventually learn to perceive the world in its dual nature, the reader or viewer naturally expects this to be resolved in the final scenes, one way or another. Instead, this crucial element of the plot is left hanging, and the appearance of Jacob blessing his sons seems to break the expected flow of the action. Additionally, it is possibly the need to make her argument on this matter incontrovertible, or at least difficult for any of her superiors to argue against, that leads to her excessive repetition of the idea of seeing "a dos visos". It certainly seems that this point is made much more strongly and didactically than anything in *El divino Narciso*, and that this lack of subtlety distinguishes *José* from her mythological play. Despite these weaknesses, the introduction of an extraneous argument into the *auto* is an original and ingenious device which ought to be further studied. As I shall argue below, it is even more crucial to *El mártir del Sacramento*, and to understanding the theological and aesthetic concerns behind the development of Sor Juana's *autos sacramentales*.

In other ways, *El cetro de José* is a remarkable drama. It is, to my knowledge, truly original in its argument for belief in the doctrine of transubstantiation through

empirical observation of the material world. As a result of this, it also begins to move away from a sceptical view of the world and of human perception, and towards a greater confidence in human intellectual ability. The senses can still be deceived, but this can be mitigated by comparing a variety of observations, and by judiciously assessing them. In *El divino Narciso*, Sor Juana drew a distinction between using one's knowledge and creative ability in the service of God and the Church, and using this in a self-seeking manner for one's own advancement over others. In *El cetro de José*, as demonstrated above, she differentiates between knowledge and wisdom. Lucero, who relies on rational knowledge to thwart God's plans, is ultimately foiled. His knowledge is insufficient to work out the identity of José, is motivated by envy and a desire for power, and therefore is more of a torment than a gift. In contrast, José is able to perceive the two natures of things because he relies not just on his own rational knowledge, but lets himself be guided by faith and by observation of the world.

The message of each play is clear: knowledge is not of itself a bad thing. It has the potential to be used for evil purposes, but these will always be thwarted. Instead, in order for its full potential to be realised, it is to be used in the service of God. It is to be acquired by making connections between different experiences, and as José demonstrates, knowledge gained through observation of the material world, when guided by faith, can be used in the service of theology, to discern divine truths and to aid one's faith in the doctrines of the Church:

> Con esto proseguí, dirigiendo siempre, como he dicho, los pasos de mi estudio a la cumbre de la sagrada teología; pareciéndome preciso, para llegar a ella, subir por los escalones de las ciencias y artes humanas, porque ¿cómo no entenderá el estilo de la reina de las ciencias quien aún no sabe el de las ancilas? (*Respuesta* 1464; para 11)

Sor Juana's defence of human learning is also relevant to another, potentially more problematic, aspect of *El cetro de José*. In *El divino Narciso*, her defence of her own use of her literary abilities was presented in sharp contrast with the excessively loquacious Eco, and in the context of the visual and poetic presentation of sinful Naturaleza Humana in the landscape of a rugged and barren world, whose marred state and need for redemption drove the action. This dynamic provided the impulse for the ingenious resolution of the play, and ensured its dramatic impact. There is no such figure present in *El cetro de José*. The plot of the *auto* depends on the interaction between three allegorical characters: the figure of Christ, the figure of the devil and the figure of humanity. In *El cetro de José*, the figures of Christ and the devil are clear in José and Lucero, as discussed above. Significantly, the allegory of human nature is not so clear-cut. With the lack of a named or explicitly marked character to fill the role, the only real candidates are José's brothers. At certain points in the action, they could be taken to stand for the twelve disciples. This is made most clear in the scene of the Last Supper, in which Profecía notes that they are "de otros doce / figura" (AJ 1162-63). As the heads of the twelve tribes of Israel, for which Jesus' choice of his number of disciples stands, this is a standard typological reading of the brothers' role, according to the model of four-fold exegesis.[34] However, this figurative meaning is only made clear in this one scene, and their role in the opening of the play, in which they sell Joseph into captivity, is not really reconcilable with the traditional role assigned to the disciples. Their role as representative of humanity is somewhat clearer, though never specifically

[34] There is a slight issue of calculation here. In Genesis, the brothers number twelve in total, including Joseph: Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Zebulun, Issachar, Dan, Gad, Asher, Naphtali, Joseph and Benjamin. At the Last Supper, there would have been thirteen present—twelve disciples and Jesus himself, who was descended from the tribe of Judah (Matthew 1.1-16). For the purposes of allegorical significance, Sor Juana appears to disregarded this detail.

mentioned in the text. The brothers betray José and cut off their relationship with him, but later are saved through his provision of bread, and in the final scenes are restored to their status as brothers. Their actions and relationship to José thus echo those of humanity and Christ in the Christian narrative of fall and redemption.

This dual figurative meaning of the brothers as disciples and as humanity is not handled as dextrously as the examples of similar multiple levels of significance found in *El divino Narciso*. Indeed, the two emphases never quite come together neatly in one scene. In addition, while their significance as disciples is made evident both scenically and through the commentary provided by Profecía, their standing for humanity is never made entirely clear. The lack of a clear figure of humanity, presented as sinful and in need of redemption, is a further contributor to the dramatic weakness of the play. Without such a figure to stand at the centre of the tension between Christ and the devil, their struggle becomes more focussed on their respective strength and ability, with much less at stake than when the fate of a third character is dependent on the outcome of their conflict. More significant, are the theological implications. The figure of humanity is necessary to the *auto* because its central message is one of sin and redemption. It demonstrates to the spectators their need for salvation through the Mass because of their affinity with the figure of sinful humanity at the centre of the drama. Without her, the play simply cannot have the same impact on its audience.

This raises a significant question: Why is there no figure of humanity at the centre of Sor Juana's *auto*? If this is merely a deficiency of this particular *auto*, then its significance may be reduced to an unusual weakness in Sor Juana's writing. This is a feature which is much more noticeable, and has far more significance to the plot of the *auto* in her final work, *El mártir del Sacramento*. It is also a question which is pertinent

to the *loas* to *El divino Narciso* and *El cetro de José*. Being so closely related in subject matter, they warrant a more detailed study before moving on to the analysis of the final *auto sacramental*. In the figures of Idolatría, América and Occidente, they provide the clearest examples, apart from Naturaleza Humana, of figures of sin and the need for conversion and redemption. They are also used to make another argument for the defence of a positive view of the potential of human creativity and intellectual engagement. The studies of both *El divino Narciso* and *El cetro de José* have argued for the need to consider these two plays, not only alongside the *loas* which accompany them, but in terms of these plays as plays-within-a-play, in which the *auto* can be seen as being performed to the characters of the *loa*. This connects the plays to the evangelistic plays of the sixteenth century, which were performed with the purpose of converting the peoples of the Americas, just as the *autos* ostensibly are for América, Occidente and Idolatría. The following chapter explores Sor Juana's knowledge of the practice of early evangelistic plays, and her purpose of incorporating this into her art of writing *autos sacramentales*.

~ CHAPTER THREE ~

THE *LOAS* TO *EL DIVINO NARCISO* AND *EL CETRO DE JOSÉ*: NAHUATL THEATRE AND *CRIOLLO* CATHOLICISM

On 9 March 1698, in the Parish of Santiago Tlatelolco, Mexico City, the Nahua governor Gabriel Gonzales and five other high-ranking officials of local government presented a request to the authorities of the parish; they asked to be given permission to celebrate the Feast of the Passion by performing a *nezquitil*, a religious play, which they pleaded had been their ancient custom since the founding of the parish. The response from the ecclesiastical authorities, from the Parish Priest fray Miguel Camacho Villavención, supported by a previous decree from the Archbishop of Mexico, Don Francisco de Aguiar y Seijas, could not have been clearer. The *indios*, in all parishes across Mexico City had been prohibited from performing any type of religious play which involved any of them dressing up and playing the role of Christ, the Virgin Mary, or any of the saints, and to this there was to be no exception.

Those who sought to outlaw the performances cited three central concerns. Firstly, they raised the fact that the evangelistic function of such plays was now redundant, given that both actors and audience were now largely Christian, at least nominally. Secondly, they were concerned about breaches of decorum during the performance of the plays, with the most frequently cited complaints being indecency and drunkenness from the actors. Thirdly, they suspected that the *indios* remained

inclined to superstitious practices, and excessive enthusiasm in their devotion, through too great an identification between the actor and the part they were playing. They insisted in particular on the prohibition given to *indios* playing the part of Christ, citing instances of the actor being stripped naked and whipped until he bled, or to taking on the role of St Peter denying Christ. Villavención mentioned further instances of *indios* censing and kissing the actor playing Christ, and doing the same with the bread that was to be used in representations of the Eucharist. There were reports of the audience and actors taking the bread away with them, and keeping it as a relic, and of doing the same with the fake blood which flowed from the actor's side when Christ was pierced on the cross, collecting it in cloths and vials, and using it as a curative medium.

To put an end to such superstitious practices, their celebrations were to be restricted to a procession of images of the Passion. The priests reasoned that this would be far less susceptible to idolatrous and indecent behaviour. This conflict, between the indigenous population of Mexico City and the Catholic Church over the performance of Nahuatl drama went back to at least 1673, when Don Fray Payo Enríquez de Rivera, Archbishop of Mexico, Viceroy of New Spain, and patron of Sor Juana, had ordered the prohibition of the performance of religious plays in the same parish of Santiago Tlatelolco.[35]

The plays which were the subject of the controversy had their origins in the early evangelistic performances by the mendicant friars of the sixteenth century. First introduced in the 1530s, these evangelistic plays were short, simple pieces which were

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[35] Documentation is in the *Archivo General de la Nación*, Bienes Nacionales (hereafter AGN), vol. 990, exp. 10 (hereafter 990.10) and 1076.9. I am grateful to Louise Burkhart for pointing me to this source material, and to Jonathan Truitt for providing me with his transcriptions of the letters. Held at the *Archivo General de la Nación*, Mexico City, the documents are not longer accessible due to their poor condition. They are documented, and analysed in Sell, Burkhart, et al.4.6-9 and Truitt.

intended to instruct the *indios* in the basic tenets of the Christian faith. With a plethora of native languages to deal with, even the most skilled linguist relied on the use of visual means to complement his verbal explanations. In addition, several friars had identified the use of images, pictograms and approximations of dramatic representations in Nahua religious culture. They deduced from these that the *indios* already had a tradition of visual instruction, and that drama would therefore be an appropriate manner by which to teach them.

Early in their history, the translation, composition, and performance of these plays required the assistance of native speakers, usually as translators and actors. The friars and the *nahuatlatos* assisting them adapted what was essentially a Spanish genre to the demands of an American audience. The brothers had learnt the value of couching new ideas in familiar terms, and their translators were eager to incorporate elements of their own culture into these foreign plays. Thus, the settings, cultural practices, costumes and historical references were either nuanced or radically changed from their Spanish precedents or biblical referents to be set in a distinctly American landscape instead. This coding of unfamiliar concepts into terms more familiar to the indigenous population was seen as key to the successful transmission of ideas to the new converts in the Americas. As Jerry Williams states of the early missionary theatre:

> La clave para comprender los hechos enigmáticos y extraños es codificarlos dentro de los términos culturales existentes, tales como conceptos metafóricos, historias religiosas, o narrativas.… De esa manera, al misionero le era posible explotar las semejanzas metafóricos entre los autos y la vida cotidiana de los indios. (61)

As Louise Burkhart states, this practice had a secondary effect, in that it appeared to legitimise the inclusion of certain cultural practices within the new expression of Christianity that was being shaped in the New World:

> It was a theater of transformation, in which Christian narratives were accommodated to the Nahuatl language and given local nuances via word, costume and gesture. The sacred beings of Christianity appeared in Nahua guise and spoke to their fellow Nahuas. The local church patio, sacred heart of the community, became Bethlehem, Jerusalem, Assisi, Eden. Christianity slipped from the friars' controlling grasp; Nahuas negotiated directly with sacred forces that governed their conflicted, colonized reality. (Burkhart *Holy Wednesday* 48)

From the earliest days of the performance of evangelistic plays, Americans and Spaniards were involved in this process of adaption and acculturation.

An example of this transformation is found in the early Nahuatl play, "The Sacrifice of Isaac" (Sell, Burkhart and Wright, vol. 1),[36] written sometime before the beginning of the seventeenth century and performed until at least the end of that century. The original narrative was modified to make its didactic message of God's rejection of human sacrifice clearer to a native audience. It also omitted the discussion of other issues, such as Abraham's polygamous practices, which may have resulted in inadvertently condoning practices the Christian authorities were attempting to repress. In other details, the play was also made to fit the cultural milieu in which it was to be performed, and certain details were made recognisable and familiar to an indigenous audience. As Cornyn remarks, the setting is far more American than Hebrew:

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[36] Only some of the Nahuatl plays have original titles. Therefore, I follow the practice of Sell and Burkhart and refer to all of them using the English title given in the translation of these plays. These are usually taken from the opening lines of the play (see Sell and Burkhart I: 4).

> The Patriarch of the Jews gives a great banquet to which lords and princes are invited. When they meet at the feast, they treat one another with all the ceremony of the court of the ancient Mexicans. They are received in a great banquet hall elaborately decorated with flowers. Warlike trumpets are stationed in the dining room which is filled with many chairs, to furnish them with the pleasures of song and instrumental music which were the delight of the Aztec nobles.
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> The atmosphere of the banquet hall is much like that of the court of Moctezuma in the latter days of the empire, with its omnipresent music, flowers, and ceremony. It is a long call from this elaborate setting of the dining room to the historical picture of the white bearded patriot of a semi-nomadic people receiving his herdsmen friends in his tent on the edge of the desert. (Cornyn, folios 24-25)

In addition to the transferral of the banqueting scene to a specifically Nahua context, detached from its original Middle Eastern setting, *The Sacrifice of Isaac* also presents Abraham as a *tlatoani*, or lord of an *altepetl*, the Mexica local and ethnic political entity, which made up the empire of Mexico Tenochtitlan.

Through reference to the *huehuetlatolli* ("speech of the elders") style of discourse, both Abraham and Sarah are shown to command a linguistic style that was the preserve of the *pipiltin*, or Nahua sophisticated nobility. As Viviana Díaz Balsera remarks, by showing Abraham as an élite Nahuatl speaker, he is "inserted into the linguistic world and system of the Nahuas." She comments:

> As a sophisticated, polite, ceremonious Nahua lord of an *altepetl*, the semi-nomadic biblical character of Abraham is conferred a new context, a new layer of meaning, a new reading, never to be entirely the same again. And by effectively inserting Abraham within indigenous social conventions, categories that harked back to the pre-Hispanic past, the Nahuas display themselves as able to couch and accommodate the foreign models within their own cultural paradigm. ("A Judeo-Christian Tlaloc" 214)

Initially, this cultural adaptation was practised by those on both sides of the linguistic and cultural divide, by priests and the *nahuatlatos*. As the years went by, and with increasing numbers of the indigenous population now converted to Christianity, even if only nominally, the purpose of the evangelistic plays became redundant. Nonetheless they continued to be performed among Nahua communities, no longer as evangelistic tools, but rather as a means of actively commemorating their own entry into Christian history, and of continuously affirming and legitimising their collective Christian identity. It is to this continued practice that Gabriel Gonzales and the *alcaldes* appeal in their request for permission to continue performing these plays, which they now consider to be part of their own cultural heritage.

By the late seventeenth century, and the time Sor Juana was writing, these plays had been performed in Mexico City for over a century, and indeed were one of the most popular forms of public entertainment during religious festivals. They were staged out-of-doors, on the patios of some of the most prominent churches of the city, and in smaller parishes in the surrounding towns. When, as a young playwright, she wrote her first play, a short piece in praise of the Most Holy Sacrament, she would have seen as many plays in Nahuatl as she had in Spanish. As Vallejo Villa comments about this *loa* "si la llegó a escribir, estaría en náhuatl, pensando que Amecameca era un pueblo predominantemente de indios" (81). Georgina Sabat de Rivers explains this influence further:

> Cuando Sor Juana se sentó a escribir, a partir de 1680, sus autos sacramentales con sus loas, los criollos habían nacido mexicanos por dos o tres generaciones (Sor Juana pertenecía a la segunda generación dentro de su familia) y ya existía en la Nueva España una tradición de respeto por el pasado indio y de cariño, aunque fuera paternalista, por los indios contemporáneos; a través de ese contacto les era familiar el

> habla náhuatl; Sor Juana conocía esa lengua, que probablemente había aprendido de su "nana" o en su contacto con otros niños en la hacienda de su madre. El teatro religioso, que aprovechaba la tradición teatral-musical azteca en la evangelización de los indios, tenía también una larga tradición: "el sentido de sus ideas, el ritmo y el paralelismo de sus frases, así como las metáforas y símbolos de extraordinaria fuerza, recordarán también invocaciones e himnos de otras culturas." Como en el caso de los autos sacramentales que se importaron de España "el teatro perpetuo del mundo náhuatl" coincidía con fiestas religiosas; Sor Juana funde en sus loas la tradición calderoniana, que conocía a la perfección, con la precortesiana. (*En busca* 280)

If Sabat de Rivers is correct in her historical explanation for Sor Juana's familiarity with the traditions of Nahuatl culture, it would seem highly unlikely that she would have remained unaware of the debates surrounding the legitimacy of the performance of Nahautl plays in her own day. The arguments involved some of the most eminent members of the clergy in Mexico City, including a representative of each of the parishes within the Spanish-controlled centre of the city. One signatory was the priest of the church of San Pablo, located only a few streets away from Sor Juana's convent. This prominent church was also one of the major locations for public performance of religious plays (fig. B). Furthermore, Sor Juana's encloistered life was no hindrance to her participation in the major intellectual, theological and political discussions of her day, and she used her plays as a creative space in which to voice her opinions on a range of matters. In the *loas* to her *autos*, her choice of the conversion of the Americas as subject matter, as well as her allusions to the performance of evangelistic plays suggests a connection between her plays and the debates occurring at the time she was writing them. It is my contention that an understanding of the history of Nahuatl drama and its status in late seventeenth-century Mexico City can shed light on our understanding of

Sor Juana's *loas*, demonstrating how they engaged with a significant theological and social dispute of her day.

The most obvious reference to Nahuatl drama in the works of Sor Juana comes in the *loas*, or prologues, to her *autos El cetro de José* and *El divino Narciso*, through their setting in early sixteenth-century America, through their characters, made up of Spanish colonisers and pagan Americans, and through their plots, which involve the attempted conversion of the indigenous characters by the Spaniards, first by force and then through discussion and persuasion. The setting of both *loas* is evoked through indigenous music and dances, and through the traditional costumes of the pagan characters. The use of a New World setting is not unique to Sor Juana, and is certainly not confined to American plays, nor does it in and of itself suggest a knowledge of and reference to Nahuatl theatre. Nonetheless, there are three specific ways in which Sor Juana's portrayals of the New World differ significantly from those of her contemporaneous peninsular playwrights, which together suggest an added influence from indigenous works.

Firstly, she uses American characters and practices as a means to articulate Catholic teaching on the Eucharist. As described in the preceding chapters, Sor Juana introduces the Catholic message of both *El divino Narciso* and *El cetro de José* with a portrayal of indigenous rituals in the *loas*. Both of these plays are orthodox presentations of the doctrine of transubstantiation. In *El divino Narciso*, Sor Juana makes consummate use of a variety of biblical and classical sources to construct an orthodox *a lo divino* reading of the myth of Narcissus, drawing most closely on Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. From the unlikely source of Narcissus, she fashions a conventional yet complex Christ figure. The point of convergence of the two figures, Christ and

Narcissus, is the reflection in the pool, where both, gazing into the waters, see and fall in love with their own mirror-image, Narcissus with his own physical reflection, Christ with Humanity, restored to the image of God through the waters of grace. Narciso sacrifices himself for the sake of Humanity, and leaves in his place the white host of the Eucharist. In *El cetro de José*, the doctrine of the presence in the Eucharist of the real body and blood of Christ is communicated through José's ability to see things "a dos visos." When his brothers arrive in Canaan from Egypt, he sees them both as they appear, as spies, and as who they truly are, his brothers (AJ 1085-96; 1225-30). Thus, the audience is reminded of the need for them too to perceive the Eucharist "a dos visos," both as it appears in the accidents of bread and wine, and in its true substance as the body and blood of Christ—the ability that the devil Lucero is notably seen to lack.

In the *loas* to both plays, Sor Juana portrays indigenous characters performing pagan rituals, before several Christian characters attempt to persuade them to convert, and announce the performance of the coming *auto*. By introducing her exposition of Catholic doctrine with a portrayal of an indigenous ritual, and thus evoking the transition from paganism to Christianity in the Americas, Sor Juana reflects the continuity from one belief to another. In both *loas*, the performance of the *auto* is presented as a necessary tool in the conversion from paganism to Christianity. She thus evokes the significance of the tradition of evangelistic theatre in the history of Nahua culture, and its status as an artefact and tool of legitimisation of their entrance into Christendom.

The second point where Sor Juana's *loas* and Nahuatl evangelistic theatre converge is found in her presentation of characters belonging to a specific ethnic or religious group who also allude to particular historical figures. In his sixteenth-century

account of pre-Hispanic Nahuatl farces, Herrera describes the actors as "contrahaciendo a otras naciones en el traje, y lengua, haciendo del borracho, loco o viejo, moviendo de esta manera a risa a los circunstantes" (3: 212). Horcasitas, who equates these farces more-or-less with European drama, explains how this may have worked on-stage:

> El náhuatl posee muchos dialectos y acentos locales y es posible que los truhanes se rieran del acento de los tetzcocanos, tlaxcaltecas o naciones del Valle de Puebla. También podrían haber imitado a gente de lengua totalmente extraña: otomíes, matlatzincas, totonacos y huaxtecos, por ejemplo. (44-45)

As we will consider below, the arrival of the Spanish presented the opportunity to portray a new foreign nation on the stage. In several plays either written in Nahuatl or translated into the language, powerful rulers who abused their power were often portrayed in the guise of particular historic Spaniards.

In Bartolomé de Alva's translation of Mira de Amescua's "The Animal Prophet and Fortunate Patricide" (Sell, Burkhart and Wright, vol. 3) he gives to each of the originally European characters an identifiably Nahuatl name, often with political significance.[37] Thus, Irene becomes Malintzin, an early interpreter for the Spaniards and Cortés' mistress; in the place of Alejandro we have Colhua Teuctli, suggesting a local ruler or lord; and instead of Vulcan, Tizoc, the seventh ruler of Tenochtitlán (Sell, Burkhart, and Wright 3: 42). In the case of "The Colloquy of how the Fortunate Saint Helen Found the Precious and Revered Wooden Cross" (Sell, Burkhart, and Wright vol. 4), we find parallels created between both specific historical figures and historic locations. Louise Burkhart reads the play as a "Tlaxcalan view of conquest, if we take

[37] The Nahuatl play is a translation of the Spanish *comedia El animal profeta* by Mira de Amescua, though it is attributed in the translation to Lope de Vega. A trilingual (Nahuatl / Spanish / English) edition of this play exists in Sell, Burkhart, et al. vol. 3

victorious Constantine, the wise pagan ruler, as on some level evoking his conquest-era Tlaxcalan counterparts, while Maxentius represents the Mexica and Rome Tenochtitlán" (Sell, Burkhart, and Wright 4: 36). In "The Three Kings" (Sell, Burkhart and Wright vol. 3), a drama performed for the feast of the Epiphany, likely written in the sixteenth century and performed until the late seventeenth, Burkhart identifies how Herod is portrayed as a "rude and duplicitous Spaniard," meant to signify Hernán Cortés, and the three Kings as "noble and courteous pre-Conquest lords, or like the proto-Christian colonial native and mestizo elites liked to imagine their ancestors had been" (Burkhart "Meeting the Enemy" 17). In the play, when Herod learns of the birth of Jesus, announced to him as the birth of a new king, he interprets this as a threat to his rule, and flies into a rage. He intersperses his Nahuatl speech with Spanish curses with which to insult his priests, using the Spanish term "diablo" over the Nahuatl *tlacatecolotl*, and twice calls them "judiazos," threatening to turn them into "chicharrones" (Sell, Burkhart, and Wright 1: 129). His Spanish identity is also indicated by the excessive use of his personal name. Nahuas avoided direct use of names, seeing it as aggressive and rude, and as such, the Magi are never referred to by their names in the playtext, only in the stage directions. Herod's name, by contrast, appears seventeen times in the character's speeches, and in one case he even refers to himself using his own name, thus associating himself with a Spanish practice unacceptable to Nahua ears (Sell, Burkhart, and Wright 1: 127; Burkhart "Meeting the Enemy" 16-17). Meanwhile, the speeches of the Magi mimic passages from Sahagún's book of oratory, recorded from the speeches of the installation of a new ruler (Burkhart "Meeting the Enemy" 21). Burkhart assesses that, at the end of the play, the association

between the Magi and indigenous practices shows them to be "pre-Conquest elites pledging fealty to Christ as their new legitimate ruler." She concludes:

> The [final] scene can be read as representing the Nahuas' noble ancestors accepting Christianity, of their own free will and in accordance with their own prophecies, in direct fealty to Christ himself rather than to any Spaniard acting in his name. (Burkhart "Meeting the Enemy" 22)

In a similar manner to the parallel between Herod and Cortés, and the portrayal of the Magi as Nahua nobles who accept Christianity, the conquistador Celo in the *loa* to *El divino Narciso,* who tries to convert the indigenous Occidente and América through violence and outbursts of rage, has been understood by commentators to represent Hernán Cortés (Glantz *Borrones* 180). The American characters, by contrast, bear striking similarities to the Nahua / Magi of *The Three Kings*. They use their rational capabilities and discursive skills to question Christian beliefs, articulating their concerns in an eloquent and courteous manner, before becoming receptive to the opinions presented by Religión and Celo, and agreeing to the performance of the *auto*. In both these regards, there are clear indications that Sor Juana was aware of the history of evangelistic theatre in Nahuatl. However, the most significant and complex point of interaction between the two is made clear in the structural connections she makes between the *loa* and the subsequent *auto*.

As stated in the opening analysis of the *loas* (cited on page 46), the *autos El divino Narciso* and *El cetro de José* are introduced using a distinctive metatheatrical conceit (LN 418-22; LJ 430-435). They are both presented as evangelistic plays to be performed for the characters of the *loas* in the manner of the pieces performed in Nahuatl during the sixteenth century as a means of basic catechetical instruction for the

indios. When considered further, the statements given by Religión in the *loa* to *El divino Narciso* and Fe in the *loa* to *El cetro de José* demonstrate a certain tension in the structure of the play. The piece they propose to perform is at odds with the requirement of the situation. An evangelistic play has a very different style, function and aim from an *auto*. The latter is a complex piece, designed to explain the Catholic doctrine of transubstantiation and to reinforce the faith of those who already believe, which requires an advanced theological and literary knowledge. The former uses simple narratives and basic language to explain to a non-Christian or neophyte audience the basic tenets of Christian doctrine, and assumes no prior theological knowledge. The play that is actually presented, the *auto*, would therefore not have been an appropriate piece for the indigenous audience to whom it is ostensibly to be performed. But neither would the educated Spanish audience, who evidently has little in common with the supposed American spectators of the piece, have required the teachings of a simple evangelistic play.

The identification of such a tension raises the question of how far one should take this in an analysis of the play. In one sense, the introduction of the Americas to her *loa* is a conceit created by Sor Juana to play with her audience and to exploit her own position as an American curiosity through the introduction of an element of exoticism into her works. In this case, taking seriously the literal implications of such a conceit would lead one to conclusions that would never have occurred to either the author or the audience of the original piece. Nonetheless, the *autos sacramentales* have a didactic function, and Sor Juana's are no exception. In many cases, even their most comic elements also serve a secondary, instructive purpose. Therefore, to dismiss something so significant to the structure of the whole spectacle merely as a means of *delectare*,

without also considering its potential import to the play's function of *prodesse*, seems shortsighted.

If we turn back to the statements given by Religión and Fe in which they justify the performance of an *auto*, the plays to which they refer could be interpreted on the one hand as being applicable to an *auto*, and on the other as pertaining to an evangelistic play. The ambiguity of their speeches would have reminded the audience of the similarities between the two genres. Both the *auto* and the evangelistic play provided an exposition of Christian doctrine by visual means. As stated above, the use of sight is central to both *El cetro de José* and *El divino Narciso*. For Narciso, the recognition of the image of God in the figure of Naturaleza Humana leads him to sacrifice himself for her sake. For José, his ability to perceive the dual nature of things, to see them "a dos visos," gives him the upper hand over his demonic opponents. Equally, the audience was encouraged to see the dual nature of things in order to have faith in the doctrine of transubstantiation. In the evangelistic plays, the mendicant friars continuously stressed the need to teach the *indios* through visual means, both to overcome linguistic challenges and because they were perceived to learn better through sight.

This attention to sight, both in spreading the gospel using evangelistic theatre among those unfamiliar with it, and in deepening theological understanding using an *auto* among those already converted or born into the faith, is worth noting, as it runs counter to received teaching dating from the early days of the Church, which preferred words over images. Augustine's *De doctrina christiana* argued that Christian teachers and preachers were to make use of rhetorical techniques to encourage action which were consistent with the Gospel. In *De catechizandis rudibus*, more concerned with the

instruction of the unconverted, he remained more sceptical of the use of elaborate rhetoric, but still encouraged basic verbal instruction. In the Spanish context, a similar distinction is upheld in Luis de Granada's *Ecclesiasticae Rhetorica* and *Breve tratado en que se declara de la manera que se podrá proponer la doctrina de nuestra santa fe y religión christiana a los nuevos fieles*, the latter aimed specifically at instructing priests and missionaries on how best to convert the peoples recently encountered in the Indies (Abbott 9-17). Both Augustine and Granada took as given that, while the details of how they approach a particular group may vary, both the conversion of non-Christians and the instruction of the converted would happen through verbal arguments. In a certain regard, this is unsurprising. Both writers were following Biblical precedent, where from the creation myth of Genesis to the proclamation of the Gospel in the New Testament, the spoken word takes primacy in the revelation of God to mankind.

In practice, reliance on the spoken word was found not always to be the most effective means of spreading the Gospel. Before the advent of printing, speeches to large crowds would have remained the fastest and most effective way of transmitting a message. Nonetheless, the use of visual devices in the instruction of the masses was often an equally effective way of conveying religious teaching to a largely illiterate population. Medieval cathedrals and churches were replete with symbolic imagery which communicated the Christian story through architecture, stained glass windows, statues and paintings. With the development of printing, images continued to be used both as a didactic tool and a means of propaganda. At the time of the evangelisation of the Americas, the mendicant friars turned to visual tools as their primary means of conversion and instruction, using drama as well as didactic images. In doing so, they responded to the challenge of the real work of evangelisation among a linguistically

diverse part of the world, rather than the idealised view presented by Granada, who had never set foot in the Indies.

The reasons for this development, along with the most extensive evidence of this approach, are given by the Franciscan Diego Valadés in his 1579 work *Rhetorica Christiana*. Valadés was a *criollo* author with direct experience of working with indigenous neophytes. The work is primarily a treatise on rhetoric, with a focus on the function and use of memory, but Valadés devoted significant parts of it to describing the use of images in the evangelisation of the Americas. In the fourth chapter, Valadés demonstrated a prime example of the implementation of such techniques among the Mexica in the recording of time and history. While there was a thriving oral culture of poems, songs, myths and speechmaking, Valadés also noted that the Mexica and other peoples also used elaborate paintings and codices in order to record history and communicate with one another, without possessing a Latin, or equivalent, alphabet, as described more recently by Miguel León Portilla:

> It is clear that the Nahuas could write in an unequivocal manner the date, in precise years and days, of any event. Furthermore, with their phonetic system of representation, they could point out the place where each event occurred as well as the names of those who participated in it. They also indicated pictographically numerous details about the event whose record was being committed to paper. Last they were capable of reducing abstract concepts about their religious doctrines, myths and legal ordinances to symbols with their ideographic writing. (69-70)

Valadés described this process in detail, stressing how the Mexica transmitted messages without the need for script, using instead symbols and figures, or dyed threads, arrows or different types of beans in a variety of colours (*Retórica* 233-35). And, he added, this practice was unsurprising:

> Es cierto que todo aquello que nuestros sentidos o nuestro entendimiento pueden percibir en el amplio campo de las cosas naturales, de todo ello podemos echar mano, para significar algo determinado, del mismo modo que lo expresan los vocablos.… Pero de todo lo que diré, lo que es muy admirable entre todo lo admirable, es que aunque sean tan estúpidos por haber nacido en un clima tan pesado, sin embargo, redactan, siguiendo con método, sus efemérides, calendarios y anales. (235)[38]

In addition to this natural propensity towards the use of images and pictures to record and recall information, as Valadés perceived it, the preference for visual images over oral messages had another distinct advantage among a linguistically diverse group. As Abbott has more recently remarked:

> As linguistically adept as many of the Franciscans undoubtably were, Valadés recognises that the power of words is not without limits. Not all friars mastered the native languages, and some even persisted in preaching in Latin to Indians untrained in that language. Moreover, explaining Christian theology and Catholic hierarchy to the Mexica proved especially elusive. (48)

These factors together, Valadés recounted, prompted the earliest Franciscan missionaries to turn away from purely oral communication to the native peoples, and to tend instead towards the use of visual communication:

> Viene al caso hacer mención de esas ediciones y grabados que con tan grande aceptación de todos se han estado publicando…. Siendo así que nosotros mismos fuimos quienes hemos descubierto ese arte, y lo hemos promovido, con frecuentes ayunos y desvelos, y orando de rodillas ante Dios nuestro Señor … Por lo cual los religiosos, teniendo que predicar a los indios, usan en sus sermones figuras admirables y hasta desconocidas, para inculcarles con mayor perfección y objetividad la divina doctrina. Con este fin tienen

[38] All citations are taken from the translations provided by Tarsicio Herrera Zapién in *Retórica Cristiana.* References to images refer to the 1579 edition, Valadés *Rhetorica.*

> lienzos en los que se han pintado los puntos principales de la religión cristiana. (*Retórica* 237)

This method, he concluded, had proved extremely effective among the *indios*:

> Se descubrió que este método era sumamente apto, porque el éxito alcanzado en la conversión de las almas por medio de él fue muy consolador. Pues siendo [los indios] hombres sin letras, olvidadizos y amantes de la novedad y de la pintura, así ese arte para anunciar la palabra divina fue tan fructuoso y tan atractivo, que una vez que se terminaba el sermón, los mismos indios se ponían a comentar entre sí aquellos figuras que les habían sido explicados. (237)

The decision to evangelise using images is validated by the success Valadés saw in the education of the *indios*, and his description singles out their enthusiasm for the new faith as much as their increased learning.

In addition to the written advocation of the use of visual stimuli in instructing the *indios*, Valadés also provided several examples of the illustrations used in their teaching. These elaborate engravings, drawn by Valadés himself, are some of the best-known features of the work. They include the pictorial alphabets, which use variously European and American objects to demonstrate both the shape of the letters of Latin script and images of objects starting with the relevant letter (fig. C). Another set of illustrations demonstrates the political and ecclesiastical hierarchies instituted in the New World to govern the inhabitants of these new territories. Using a similar model, Valadés also included an exemplary family tree used to instruct the *indios* in the moral correctness of monogamous families (fig. D). The work is a persuasive defence of the use of visual, rather than oral means of communication in spreading the Christian gospel in the Americas.

Valadés' arguments were by no means universally accepted, as demonstrated by the letters between the Nahua of Tlatelolco and the ecclesiastical authorities of Mexico City. Throughout their communication, the opponents of the performances of Nahuatl theatre conceded that visual instruction was necessary in the early years of the conquest, in order to present to people the mysteries of faith when there was a great variety of languages spoken among them. By the late seventeenth century, they had become redundant, for all the *indios* spoke Spanish. Moreover, they were now by large Christian, and no longer required the basic instruction they had in the early years of the conquest. Thus, the priests evoke Augustine's advocation of the use of rhetorical skills in the persuasion of Christian audiences, and argue that there was no longer any reason for the Nahua to be instructed using any other sense than that of hearing, which they view to be appropriate to a more advanced level of faith.

A further argument presented by Valadés could have been useful to the Nahua, and it is useful too in understanding the implications behind Sor Juana's turn to evangelistic drama as a source of inspiration. Valadés' work was not intended for direct use in the instruction of native peoples. Rather, its intended audience was to be found in the Old World; it was meant as an account to Spain of the conversion practices implemented by the Franciscans in the New World, and to inform and educate them about religious and social customs found and studied there. Here again, Valadés made extensive use of images. Richly illustrated scenes detail manifold aspects of the life of the *indios*, including their practices of agriculture, fishing astronomy, trade, homemaking and sacrificial rituals. Other illustrations concern the evangelistic and didactic practices of the Franciscans. Another highly detailed diagrammatic scene shows priests and missionaries receiving confessions, baptising, discussing confession

and penitence, preparing for marriage and giving theological instruction (fig. E). The illustrations demonstrate the use of images in instruction, as they depict the use of *lienzos* by the Fathers. One of the images is devoted entirely to illustrating this practice, showing a priest with a row of images of biblical narrative, pointing to them as he explains the content of each (fig. F). Thus, in addition to advocating for the use of images in instruction through his text, Valadés applied his advice by demonstrating this practice through pictorial representations, intended not for a pagan or neophyte audience, but for the educated Christians of Spain (Alejos-Grau 163-65). Both textually and visually, he advocated that a technique developed in the Americas for the education of the *indios* should be applied to Christians in Spain, demonstrating that this should not be confined to basic Christian instruction, but has far reaching uses. As Valadés states in his prologue:

> También a su tiempo traeremos ejemplos tomados de los sucesos de las Indias, entre cuyos habitantes no sólo vivimos, sino que estuvimos encargados de ellos; creemos que esto no solamente servirá de solaz sino que será algo provechoso, ya que en ellos se apreciarán claramente los principios, el desarollo y la aplicación práctica de la retórica. (*Retórica* 27)

The point Valadés makes here is significant. By producing a work that not only extolled the virtues of the didactic use of images for the *indios*, but that also applied this technique in its instruction of its readers in Spain, he affirms the legitimacy of teaching by visual means in America and Spain, both to the unconverted and to long-standing Christians. He touches on precisely the point made by the ecclesiastical authorities in their indictment of Nahuatl drama and provides the counter-argument to it: visual instruction should not be restricted to the unconverted. It is a useful means of teaching to all, regardless of the stage of their faith.

His argument also brings us back to Sor Juana, and the apparent tension between the respective methods and aims of evangelistic and sacramental dramas. In her introductions to the *autos* presented in the *loas*, particularly in the words of Religión in the prologue to *El divino Narciso*, Sor Juana repeatedly employs visual vocabulary:

> RELIGIÓN. Pues vamos. Que en una idea
> metafórica, vestida
> de retóricos colores,
> *representable* a tu *vista*,
> te la *mostraré*; que ya
> conozco que tú te inclinas
> a objetos *visibles*, más
> que a lo que la fe te avisa
> por el oído; y así
> es preciso que te sirvas
> de los *ojos*, para que
> por ellos la fe recibas. (LN 401-12, emphasis mine)

In this passage alone, Sor Juana includes five references to the use of sight. In *El cetro de José*, the choice of semantic field is not as prominent, but the reference to sight is nonetheless quite clear when Fe states her intention of making Old Testament prophecies "visible" (LJ 433, cited on page 46). In both cases, these passages are significant, as they provide the point of connection between *auto* and *loa*, and are central to the conceit created of presenting the *auto* as an evangelistic play. These passages also provide the link between the real and imagined spaces of the *auto sacramental*; the real audience of the court, and the imagined American audience; the real space of the Spanish theatre, and the imagined space of the Americas; the real play of the *auto*, and the imagined play of the evangelistic drama.

In each case, the connection between the two is, as Sor Juana's language suggests, their equal reliance on visual means to instruct their audience. Thus, Sor Juana

presents a very similar message to that of Valadés, one which counters the arguments of the ecclesiastical authorities of Mexico City, and which reconciles to a certain extent the tension between the form and function of the *auto* and the evangelistic play. By foregrounding the visual nature of the *auto* and the evangelistic drama, she reminds her audience of another commonality between them. Both the evangelistic plays of the early Americas, and the sacramental dramas of Corpus Christi are examples of instances where the church had sanctioned the use of visual imagery to communicate doctrine. The difference is that the Spanish church continued to approve of the use of *autos* to instruct educated audiences in complex theology, while in the Americas, indigenous groups were being told that didactic plays were only appropriate for presenting simple matters of doctrine to neophytes. This connection therefore nullifies the argument given by Villavención that Nahuatl drama should no longer be performed on the grounds that it teaches through visual imagery, which is to be reserved for the illiterate and unconverted. By effectively placing the evangelistic theatre in the same rhetorical category as the *auto sacramental*, she demonstrates that if the visual imagery of the latter can be considered an orthodox and fruitful source of instruction, it is incongruous to prohibit the performance of Nahuatl drama purely for that reason. Thus, she ties together the practices of the *auto sacramental* and of evangelistic theatre. They each have different aims, and different intended audiences, but the method of the one is applicable to the other; what has been learned in Mexico, to echo Valadés, is also useful in Spain.

In this, it is crucial to take into account the repeated description of the Nahuatl plays in question as "cultural artefacts" by the Nahua élites. These plays had their origin in the time of the conquest—the same period in which Sor Juana's *loas* are set. They are

therefore part of the cultural heritage on which Sor Juana and her fellow *criollo* intellectuals were able to draw in order to present their American identity as founded on a cultural and religious history as ancient as that of Europe. Just as the indigenous Americans of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries had used evangelistic plays to narrate and to legitimise their entry into Christianity, so Sor Juana incorporates the plays into her own works as a means of narrating and legitimising the continued participation of the *criollo* class in the imperial project. By defending their continued performance, she supports the continued commemoration of the entrance of the Americas into Christendom, in the same way that her own *loas* present these events at a remove of over a century and a half.

If we consider, in addition, the metatheatrical implications of the presentation of the *auto* as a play-within-a-play, then in a sense, the real audience, the educated élite of Mexico City or the court at Madrid, become actors; they are placed in the role of the indigenous characters to whom the play is ostensibly presented. In addition, it is likely that the actors playing the indigenous character of the *loa* would have taken on a role within the *auto*, making the conceit of the *auto* being a play performed by the characters of the *loa* ever more real. In this case, the real audience, the court in Madrid or the élite of Mexico City, would effectively be receiving theological instruction on a level that requires an already complex doctrinal knowledge from people who only a moment before had appeared to them as *indios*, considered to be their theological inferiors, and who, during the process of colonisation, they had set out to teach. Thus, the audience's position of power and superiority is brought into question by unsettling their perceived position within the dynamic of power and instruction.

In the context of the Baroque spectacle, this is a game played with the audience, a demonstration of Sor Juana's dramatic dexterity, of her ability to confuse perspectives by blurring performance and reality, and of bringing into question that which once seemed all too certain. It also unsettles the claims of those who would put the seventeenth-century *criollo* intellectuals in the same category as the sixteenth century unlettered *indios* the Spaniards had sought to convert. By first highlighting the origins of both the Americas and Spain in pagan traditions and history, through the comparison between classical mythology and Aztec ritual, and then placing her Spanish audience in the position of the *indios* of the *loa*, she reminds all present of the fact that all of them, regardless of where they were born, are inheritors of a tradition which had to be incorporated into Christendom through conversion, whether that tradition be the classical civilisations of Europe or the ancient empires of the Americas.

To return to the request of Gabriel Gonzales and the other Nahua elders, their petitions went unheeded. After the negative response in 1698, a second decree of 1704, this time signed by at least seven other parish priests, reiterated the prohibition of the performance of religious plays in Nahuatl. It is likely that the tradition continued regardless of the authorities, and indeed several examples of plays which also have their roots in the evangelistic drama of the sixteenth century are still performed today.[39] In writing her *loas*, Sor Juana turned both to the late seventeenth-century Nahuatl drama of Mexico City, and to its source in the missionary practices of the mendicant friars. This reference to indigenous and early colonial practices permeates not only the *loa*, but the *auto* too, through the connections created between the two pieces. These create multiple levels of meaning, and add a playful, witty dimension to the seriously didactic message

[39] The best known of these plays is the Iztapalapa Passion Play, performed each year in Mexico City. See Trexler, *Reliving Golgotha.*

of the *auto*, when read alone. That *auto* and *loa* also come together to enter into several theological, literary and historical debates of the sixteenth century, on the nature of the *indios*, the significance of indigenous religious practices in Christian history, and the legitimacy of the performance of Nahuatl drama, is further testament to Sor Juana's skill and versatility. As with so many of her works, the apparent simplicity of the *loas* to her *autos sacramentales* belies an impressive demonstration of Baroque wit, an ability to reconcile two apparently disparate ideas in a way that makes a powerful argument in an aesthetically pleasing manner. Sor Juana was an author who delighted in engaging with the world around her, and it should therefore come as no surprise that the consideration of such a significant cultural phenomenon as Nahuatl drama should shed so much light on her dramatic works. Sor Juana scholarship is made only weaker by neglecting such historical background, and further research is required in order to ascertain its full influence on her works.

Through the analyses of *El divino Narciso* and *El cetro de José* and their *loas*, it has become clear that a distinctive feature of Sor Juana's *autos* is that they consistently engage with many more issues than that of Eucharistic doctrine. They present lucid arguments about the ethics of wit, about particular points of theological debate and about the best methods of conversion and persuasion for Christians in Spain and the Americas. In each case, Sor Juana manages to reconcile these other concerns with the primary purpose of her *auto*, which remains instruction in Eucharistic doctrine. Through her *loas*, in a similar manner to her *autos*, her arguments for the continued performance of evangelistic plays as Nahua cultural artefacts display a positive view of human creative endeavours. Here again, the presentation of this view of human potential is intricately tied to humanity's need for redemption. The dramatic development of *El*

divino Narciso revolves around the sinful nature of Naturaleza Humana and her need for redemption. In *El cetro de José*, Sor Juana reminds her audience of the need to faith in order to be saved by Christ's salvific actions on the cross and in the Mass. However, this is undermined through the lack of a character who represents human nature. In the *loas*, the defence of the continued performance of Nahua plays is placed within a theological scheme which nonetheless still stresses the need for conversion from pagan practices, and for the acceptance of, and belief in, Christian doctrine. Any argument Sor Juana might be presenting here remains within the framework of orthodox Christian belief and aids the function of the *auto*. In Sor Juana's final *auto sacramental* considered in this thesis, *El mártir del Sacramento*, the difference in aim between the traditional purpose of the *auto* and the argument she wishes to present becomes too great for the two to be reconciled. Nonetheless, it is the disjunction between these two aims which perhaps reveals most about the distinctiveness of her *autos*, and how these often neglected works can shed light on other aspects of her literary corpus, and on the development of her theological thought.

~ Chapter Four ~

This Is not My Body: Authority and Disobedience in *El mártir del Sacramento, San Hermenegildo*

El mártir del Sacramento is the most neglected of Sor Juana's three *autos sacramentales*, and those commentators who have considered the play have been divided over its literary merits. Méndez Plancarte held it in high regard, ranking it only second in artistic value to *El divino Narciso* (OC, III. lxxviii). In contrast, Paz judged it as a rushed and unpolished piece of work, of which he remarked rather scathingly, "Es obra a la que se ven los andamios y a la que le faltan dos o tres ventanas y una escalera" (454). Among later critics, the play has fared little better. It has only been the subject of three articles over the past two decades, which between them provide a helpful analysis of the play's sources, its generic definition, and its place within the context of the Golden-Age revival of Visigothic history (Daniel; Fuller; Worley). Most significantly, several scholars have touched on the question of whether the play should be considered an *auto* at all. It is not in any real sense allegorical, it is difficult to see what exactly it communicates about Catholic dogma and, most crucially, the depiction of the Eucharist in its closing scene is fundamentally problematic. Knowledge of the complexity and quality of Sor Juana's other two *autos* suggests that a hasty dismissal of the faults of the play may be premature, and that a more in-depth analysis of this little-known play may shed further light on the development of her writing of *autos*

sacramentales and of her theological thought. Indeed, this study of the play reveals its central concern to be very different to the usual *asunto* of the *auto*, but closely related to several other of Sor Juana's writings. Rather than teaching about Eucharistic doctrine, the message the play appears to communicate is one about the difference between truth and obedience, and about the individual ability to discover and fulfil one's vocation.

The source of the play is the sixth-century Spanish history of Hermenegild, a visigothic prince whose conversion from Arianism to Catholicism sparked a rebellion against his father's kingdom. This narrative is used to explore the conflict between orthodoxy and heresy, in particular the beliefs which arose from the condemned teachings of the fourth-century Alexandrian priest, Arius.[40] Arius was dissatisfied with the intellectual presentation of the Christian doctrine of the Trinity to his philosophically minded peers, and sought to reconcile Christian doctrine with Platonic philosophy (MacCulloch 213). If, as Plato imagined, God is eternal and unknowable, one ultimate and self-sufficient principle, then Jesus, known to us as a historical figure through the Gospels, cannot be this same God. God the Father and God the Son cannot be one and the same. The Son, as Arius presents him, is not eternal, and does not have exact knowledge or understanding of the Father. He was created from nothing by the Father, before the creation of all worlds. He is not God, but neither is he a human like all others—he is unique among creatures, and therefore mediates between humanity and God (Wiles 7; Chadwick 65; MacCulloch 213). Arius' ideas met with vehement opposition, most notably from his Bishop, Alexander, and the Bishop's secretary and

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[40] Although recent scholarship has begun to reject the terms "Arian" and "Arianism," citing their origin as polemical, derogatory terms, and their resulting inaccuracy as descriptors of "the movement of thought in the fourth century which culminated in the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed," I retain the use of the terms here and throughout to refer to the adherents of Arian Christianity in the sixth century, who would have been known under this term (see Hanson xvii-xviii, Wiles 4-5, and R. Williams I).

later successor, Athanasius. Athanasius objected that there are only two categories of being, the Creator and creation, and if Christ is not the former, then he can only have been the latter. If this is the case, any worship offered to him is therefore blasphemous idolatry. If Christ is only God's mediator in the creation and redemption of all worlds, then his role can only be the result of God being either unwilling or incapable of undertaking the work of creation and salvation himself. Athanasius maintained that in this way, Arius' view failed to grasp what was unique about Christianity—that God, the same being who created the universe, makes himself man in order to redeem it (Wiles 8).

By 318, the dispute between Arius and his Bishop had spread throughout Alexandria, and both sides began to rally allies from around the Church. In an attempt to stabilise the quarrelling factions of the Church in the East, in 325 the Emperor Constantine summoned a council at Nicaea to resolve the conflict. The creed that emerged from this council, and which is still used as a statement of orthodoxy throughout Eastern and Western Christendom, the Nicene Creed, explicitly denounces what it concluded was the Arian heresy, by stating that the Father and Son are "of one substance" (*homoousios*), a statement which was further ratified at the later Council of Constantinople in the year 381 (Ware 143-144; MacCulloch 219). Arius and his followers had been summarily defeated, and Arius was excommunicated.

However, for several hundred years after Arius, Arian Christianity flourished outside of the imperial church, further north among the "barbarian" tribes of the Goths and Vandals. Eusebius of Nicomedia, one of the Bishops who had defended Arius and his followers, had begun a mission across the northern frontier, translating the Bible into Gothic, and encouraging the growth of Arian Christianity. As these tribes gained

power, they rapidly came to see their distinctive Trinitarian theology as a marker of their racial and cultural differentiation from Rome, and defended their faith in the face of the Nicene Christianity of the Roman Empire (MacCulloch 221). By the sixth century, they had secured a pact with Rome which gave them governance of large parts of the Spanish peninsula, making them a ruling minority over the largely Catholic population.

Hermenegild, subject of *El mártir del Sacramento*, descended from this line of Goths and Arian Christians. Little is known with certainty of his life, or of the rule of his father Leovigild.[41] The information we do have comes from one contemporary source, the chronicle of John of Biclarum, a Gothic Monk and later Bishop of Gerona. His account was later elaborated on by Isidore of Seville for his own longer chronicle in the 620s, which in turn served as the primary source for the later histories by Gregory of Tours and Gregory the Great.[42] The existence of only one primary source makes

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[41] Here and henceforth, the historical figures on whom the play is based are referred to using the anglicised versions of their names (Hermenegild, Leovigild etc.). The Spanish versions of these, used by Sor Juana, refer to the names of the characters in her play (Hermenegildo, Leovigildo etc.).

[42] Commentators have proposed differing opinions as to the most likely source for Sor Juana's play. Méndez Plancarte suggests S. Gregorio Magno's *Diálogos*, or Pedro de Ribadeneyra's *Flos Sanctorum* (1599) (OC, III: 564). Daniel argues that her most likely source was Juan de Mariana's *Historia general de España* (1601) ("Baroque Martyr auto*"* 101). Fuller provides an extensive overview and thorough analysis of possible sources, including the sixth century sources mentioned above, and the later sixteenth century sources. She includes Florián de Ocampo's *Los cinco primeros libros de la crónica general de España* (1553), Mariana's *Historia* and Esteban de Garibay's *Los cuarenta libros del compendio historial de las crónicas, y universal historia de todos los reinos de España* (1571), citing Ocampo and Mariana as the accounts whose version of events most closely match those in Sor Juana's play ("Rebel with a Cause" 901-903). In her conclusion, Fuller also mentions the resurgence of popularity of the Hermenegild story as part of the movement to reclaim Spain's Visigothic heritage in the seventeenth century, citing the example of Manuel López Ponce de Salas' *Vida de San Hermenegildo* (1680). In this regard, Daniel references the other popular dramatic works on the subject from this period, including Lope's *La mayor corona,* Juan de la Hoz y Mota's *El primer blazón de España, San Hermenegildo* and Calderón's *El primer blazón católico de España*. On the basis of the lack of printed copies of any of these plays at the time Sor Juana was writing, he excludes the possibility of their being any direct influence on her *auto*. Nonetheless, a thorough comparison of the works, which is outside the bounds of the present study, could provide a fruitful line of analysis.

attestation of its accuracy difficult. Nonetheless, it is possible to establish with a degree of certainty at least some of the events that led to the death of Hermenegild.

By all accounts, Hermenegild's father Leovigild was a strong ruler. He succeeded where no other king had before him in stabilising his hold over a large part of the Spanish peninsula, leaving only small regions outside of his control (Thompson 63). He was the first Spanish king to "wear a crown, to sit on a throne, and to have coins minted in his image" (McKendrick 22). Having secured such a powerful and stable kingdom, he was naturally keen to see it passed without trouble to his sons, which was not a foregone conclusion in a monarchy in which succession was elective rather than hereditary. In 579 he named his two sons, Hermenegild and Recarred, as co-rulers of the kingdom (Thompson 64), giving each of them a territory to govern. The elder son, Hermenegild, was given the southern territories, including Seville, Cordoba and Granada. In the same year, Leovigild married Hermenegild to a Frankish princess, Ingund, who was the granddaughter of Goswinth, Leovigild's second wife and Hermenegild's step-mother. Ingund was a Catholic, and despite Goswinth's best (and from all accounts rather brutal) attempts to convert her to Arian Christianity, she remained staunch in her beliefs. When they moved to Seville, Ingund also succeeded in converting her husband, Hermenegild, with the help of a monk, Leander, the brother of the above-mentioned chronicler Isidore of Seville. Hermenegild's conversion signified an act of rebellion against his father, to which the king was expected to respond with military force.[43] Leovigild was slow to react, preferring to concentrate on seeing off a

[43] The motivation behind this act of rebellion remains unclear. While Gregory the Great and Gregory of Tours sought to present this as an act of religious conviction on the part of Hermenegild, political and familial factors may well also have played a part. Indeed, Collins questions whether his conversion took place before the rebellion, or afterwards, as late as 582 (Collins 58).

Basque threat in the north. When he moved south he swiftly took control of his son's territories. In 582 he began to prepare for war and commenced the siege of Seville in 583. The city fell in 584, but Hermenegild had already fled the city. Leovigild rapidly gained control of the surrounding territory, including the city of Cordoba, where Hermenegild had taken refuge, and took his son captive. The rebel prince was exiled to Valencia, but later must have been moved to Tarragona, where he died in 585.

According to John of Biclarum, he was killed by a man named Sisbert, though many of the details surrounding his death remain unclear. We cannot say with any certainty why he was killed, who Sisbert was, why he had been moved, or who else was involved. Roger Collins puts forward the possibility that Hermenegild had attempted to forge an allegiance with the Franks, and was killed on the orders of his father or his brother in order to prevent this (Collins 60). His hagiographers, Gregory of Tours and Gregory the Great, present his death as his martyrdom. They express no doubt that Leovigild was responsible for the murder of his son. Gregory the Great reports that on Easter 585 an Arian bishop (disguised as a Catholic priest) brought Mass to Hermenegild. When Hermenegild saw through the ruse, he refused to receive the Eucharist, and instead abused the Bishop, for which he was put to death. His refusal to cave to the Arian heresy, even in the face of death, secured his position as a Catholic martyr (Thompson 73). After Leovigild's death in 586, Hermenegild's younger brother, Recarred, acceded to the throne, and shortly afterwards converted to Catholicism. The Visigothic kings of Spain were thus united with Rome, and now adhered to the same religion as their largely Catholic population. The story of Hermenegild, and the actions of his brother Recarred, are therefore a watershed in Spanish history, and mark the beginning of Spain as a Catholic nation.

Sor Juana's play, *El mártir del Sacramento*, condenses the events of 579-584 into five short acts. The historical action begins with Hermenegildo in a dilemma. Torn between obedience to his father and defence of his faith, he is trying to decide whether to declare rebellion against his Father, King Leovigildo. As he considers his options, an ambassador visits him, and tries to persuade him to stay loyal to Leovigildo and to renounce his Catholic faith. To do this, he presents an account of the Gothic kings as a long line of strong, successful rulers who have been blessed by God, and questions why Hermenegildo should want to turn his back on this glorious past and on the chance to be Leovigildo's successor. Hermenegildo sends him away without having made a decision. On his departure, Leandro, the Catholic priest, returns from a diplomatic mission to the Byzantines, to try and secure a promise of support in the case of a civil war. In a twist on the historical accounts, he reports that they have agreed on the condition that Hermenegildo give them his wife and son as hostages, which Ingunda, his wife, obediently accepts. Hermenegildo is thrown into turmoil when he realises that rebellion against his father could result in the loss of his wife and son.

At the same time, Leovigildo receives a visitor of a more oneiric kind. Fantasía presents to him a vision of Spain, and the glorious line of Gothic kings, warning him that their success has only been a result of their adherence to Arian doctrines, and that if he does nothing about Hermenegildo's conversion, he puts the future of the royal line at risk. Leovigildo therefore calls on his ambassador and his Bishop. The Bishop is presented in the guise of the allegorical character Apostasía, who advises Leovigildo to begin an attack on Hermenegildo's territory immediately. Only Hermenegildo's brother, Recaredo, counsels caution, and suggests to Leovigildo that he try to exert paternal and royal authority in a less dramatic manner first. Apostasía wins this dispute, and

Leovigildo calls for his armies to be prepared, with only Recaredo left to articulate his premonition of the bloodshed that is to come.

The action then moves to the siege of Seville, apparently already quite advanced, as Hermenegildo decides that the city is suffering purely for his sake, and that he must escape in order to put an end to the people's plight. As he flees the city, he runs into Recaredo, who convinces him to go to their father and beg for mercy. He does this, but Leovigildo is not convinced, and has Hermenegildo chained and taken to a tower, in order to test his loyalty. Leovigildo turns his thoughts to the succession of the kingdom, which will naturally pass to Hermenegildo. He worries that he can no longer trust his eldest son to continue a strong monarchical line. Apostasía suggests that he present Hermenegildo with the sacraments, to see whether he will receive Mass from him. If he does, he argues that Leovigildo will be able to trust his repudiation of Arianism. If he does not, he will know that he is untrustworthy, and that he needs to be put to death, which Apostasía willingly volunteers to take into his own hands. When Apostasía arrives at the prisoner's cell, Hermenegildo is warned by the allegorical character Fe not to receive the Eucharist. When he refuses the Archbishop's offer, and is warned of his father's orders to put him to death, he willingly offers himself as a sacrifice in defence of the mystery of the Sacrament. The scene closes as Hermenegildo receives his mortal wound, and a host and chalice are revealed.

All this makes for a rather strange *auto*. In some ways, *El mártir del Sacramento* conforms better to some of the formal conventions of the genre than do Sor Juana's other two *autos*. Its title places the Eucharist at the fore. In terms of its staging, it is written to be performed on four *carros*, following the post-1640 Calderonian convention, in contrast to *El divino Narciso*, which is written for a stage. Nonetheless,

the outline of the plot reads more like a history play, with little relevance to the sacraments until the final scene. Moreover, there are other formal elements which have prompted scholars to criticise the categorisation of the play as an *auto*. Gerald Flynn objects that *El mártir del Sacramento* cannot be an *auto*, because it is written in three acts (itself an erroneous assertion—it is written in five) (78). Méndez Plancarte objected to its classification, according to its sub-title, as an *auto historial alegórico*, and preferred the term "auto de santos" (lxxi). Lee Daniel agrees with his rejection of the given sub-title, but suggests an alternative designation of a "Baroque Martyr-*Auto*" (105). Flynn's objection can be responded to on the grounds that both of Sor Juana's other *autos* are written in five acts, and that this does not prevent them from fulfilling the essential task of an *auto* as detailed above. Méndez Plancarte and Daniel give too much weight to the sub-title, given that we cannot be sure whether Sor Juana applied this description to the *auto* herself, and that in the case of Calderón's *autos*, the descriptors "*sacramental*" / "*alegórico*" / "*historial*" appear to have been applied somewhat indiscriminately.

All three scholars express some unease at the categorisation of the play, yet none of them quite lay their finger on why. Nonetheless, they do raise two significant points: that the unquestioning acceptance of *El mártir del Sacramento* as an *auto sacramental* is perhaps mistaken, and that defining how and why it differs from accepted conventions is key to understanding its dramatic purpose. In order come to a better explanation of the extent to which *El mártir del Sacramento* conforms to the model of the *auto*, I will consider several definitions of the genre provided by both seventeenth-century playwrights and by modern critics.

Taking the prominence of faith in the play, and its clear repudiation of heresy, it does appear to conform to the definition of the *auto* given by Lope in the *loa* to *El dulce nombre de Jesús*, where it is defined as follows:

> LABRADORA. ¿Y qué son autos?
> VILLANO. Comedias
> a honor y gloria del Pan,
> que tan devota celebra
> esta coronada villa,
> porque su alabanza sea
> confusión de la herejía
> y gloria de la fe nuestra,
> todas de historias divinas. (*Obras*, II.141)

The title of *El mártir del Sacramento* places devotion to the sacraments at the fore, the play culminates in a scene which has the Eucharist at its centre, and closes with the unveiling of the host and chalice. Its overt purpose is to affirm Catholic doctrine over heresy, and to celebrate the place of Catholicism in the history of Spain. The play opens with a monologue given by Fe, in which she elaborates on the centrality of the sacrament of the Mass to Christian belief, and the necessity of faith in order to believe in transubstantiation, the message that we have seen to be central to *El cetro de José* (AH 80-121). She then calls for the four virtues of Verdad, Misericordia, Justicia and Paz, and challenges them to resolve an apparent dilemma. Although they are all moral virtues, which can be raised to Christian virtues through faith, they appear in many ways to contradict one another. The presence of peace can mean a lack of justice, and the exercise of mercy can neglect truth. She therefore asks each of them to use their different characteristics to influence Hermenegildo to exercise his faith, promising a reward for the one who is most effective. Each aware of her attributes, they decide to divide into pairs to increase their chances of success: Justicia with Verdad and

Misericordia with Paz. This tension is resolved in the closing scene, where Fe returns to explain that the four virtues have been reconciled in Hermenegildo's sacrifice. He has remained true to his faith, but is at peace with his father; by giving himself willing to a martyr's death, justice has been served, and at the same time he has ensured mercy on his people by putting an end to warfare.

VERDAD. Y pues Hermenegildo,
de virtudes ejemplo,
nos hizo a todas una,
¡como una nos portemos!
Y puesto que en su muerte
se llegó el feliz tiempo
en que Misericordia
y yo nos encontremos,
la Paz y la Justicia
aquel místico beso
se den, que signifique
nuestro vínculo eterno. (AH 1921-32)

In this passage, Hermenegildo is likened to Christ, whose Passion resolves the paradox between being obedient to justice and true to faith. *El mártir del Sacramento* fits Lope's definition of an *auto* in a number of its aspects: it is concerned with Christian virtue, it places the Eucharist at the fore, and it presents a clear defence of Catholic orthodoxy.

If we turn to a later, and more fully developed definition of the *auto* from Calderón, the categorisation of the play becomes less certain. In his *loa* to *La segunda Esposa*, another Labradora articulates his now well-known definition. *Autos* are, she proclaims:

LABRADORA. Sermones
puestos en verso, en idea
representable cuestiones
de la Sacra Teología,

que no alcanzan mis razones
a explicar ni a comprender
y el regocijo dispone
en aplauso de este día. (*Obras completas*, III: 427)

As A. A. Parker comments on this definition: "That the *autos* are liturgical, or devotional, drama is the first point that emerges" (*Allegorical Drama* 65). According to this definition, viewing *El mártir del Sacramento* as a versified sermon on the exemplarity of a Catholic martyr and the necessity of faith seems acceptable enough. The problem arises when one considers the second qualification of these "sermons," that they express in visible form questions of sacred theology that reason cannot comprehend or explain—that they provide specifically "dogmatic instruction" (65). This raises several questions. What, in particular, is Sor Juana teaching here about the Eucharist, in the way that *Narciso* taught it as an expression of divine love, and *El cetro de José* as something that requires faith in the possible dual nature of things in order to be understood? What does it teach about transubstantiation? And how does it do this in a way that will encourage the audience to participate more fully in their own worship of the Sacrament? How does it connect San Hermenegildo's rejection of the invalid Mass to the audience's own devotion? And if it does none of the above, then why does it not?

In order for the playwright to go beyond the presentation of an exemplary story, and to achieve Calderón's demand to present unfathomable sacred mysteries in a tangible manner, she must go beyond the world of narrative, and beyond the world of secular drama. It is clear from her two other *autos* that Sor Juana more than grasped this fact. Indeed, the playwright must turn to a "sacramental world," described by Bruce Wardropper as "a scale of values, a concept of reality and time, an attitude to history—all of which are different from, and may be opposed to, the 'real' world of the secular

theatre." The key way to achieve this, he argues is through the dual concepts of allegory and timelessness (1196-97).

The centrality of allegory to *El divino Narciso* and to *El cetro de José*, and indeed to many of Sor Juana's works, is discussed at length, above. Almost all definitions of the *auto* by modern scholars include the use of allegory. Ángel Valbuena Prat defines it as "una composición dramática (en una jornada) *alegórica* y relativa, generalmente, a la comunión" (7, my emphasis). In her study of the *autos* of Calderón, Kurtz demonstrates the playwright's theory of allegory to be fundamental to the development of the genre. Poppenberg argues that the Mass must be understood allegorically, as an event which both carries meaning itself and points towards the transcendent events of the Passion, and that therefore any sacramental drama must also be allegorical:

> Esta conjunción entre la forma alegórica y el contenido eucarístico viene a sugerir que Calderón apuntaba con sus reflexiones hacia la cuestión de la forma literaria del complejo eucarístico, es decir, la del auto sacramental mismo. (236)

This is where the first major stumbling block in defining *El mártir del Sacramento* as an *auto sacramental* appears, for the play is not in any true sense allegorical. It certainly includes several characters that are conventionally understood as allegories: Fe, Verdad, Justicia, Paz, Misericordia and Fantasía. However, I would more rightly define these characters as personifications of virtues; they do not, in any real sense, have a literal and a figurative meaning, such as is found in the characters of *El divino Narciso* and *El cetro de José*. The other character of note in this context is Apostasía, whose name suggests a potential allegorical reading. However, to all intents and purposes, he is simply the Arian Archbishop. He does not, in any real way, stand for Arian Christianity

as a whole, or have any other figurative meaning. Throughout the play, the character of Apostasía functions in exactly the same way as Leovigildo or any of the other historical characters.

This leads to a second point of note. As A.A. Parker points out, "for the dogma [of the Redemption] to be dramatised, therefore, Humanity, Grace, Satan, Guilt, Judaism, Paganism and God himself must become dramatic characters" (*Allegorical Drama* 66). The dramatic structure of the *auto* necessarily revolves around the dynamic between God, humanity and the devil, in which the devil, ultimately in vain, attempts to prevent a union between God and humanity. We saw this demonstrated in *El divino Narciso* and *El cetro de José*, and it is also at the heart of every Calderonian *auto*. Here, no such structure exists. It is true that the ending, with the death of Hermenegildo and its subsequent explanation, could be seen to represent the Passion of Christ, and Hermenegild could therefore be considered the type of Christ, the God-figure of the play. However, even reading the gloss on the final scene given by Verdad, the reference to Christ appears as an explanation given post-factum, with no logical build-up to this conclusion.

> VERDAD. Y pues Hemenegildo,
> de virtudes ejemplo,
> nos hizo a todos una,
> ¡como una nos portemos!
> Y puesto que en su puerte
> se llegó el feliz tiempo
> en que Misericordia
> y yo nos encontremos,
> la Paz y la Justicia
> aquel místico beso
> se den, que signifique
> nuestro vínculo eterno. (AH 1921-32)

Throughout the rest of the play, there is nothing to indicate that Hermenegildo should be read as a type of Christ. There is also no obvious candidate for any character to represent humanity, the human soul, or human nature. Apostasía could possibly be seen as the devil-figure, as Fuller argues ("Rebel" 896), but he bears nothing of the usual traits attributed to him. He does not have the controlling "authorial" role, he does not influence the action in any way that goes beyond what could be expected of any normal character, and he is not portrayed as having the kind of limited but prescient knowledge characteristic of Lucero and Eco in Sor Juana's other *autos*.

Central to the allegorical nature of the *auto* is the inclusion of an allegorical Eucharistic action (Wardropper 1203). As Kurtz describes, "The *auto* usually ended with what is termed a 'discovery,' a ritual disclosure of a host and chalice that merges play into liturgy" (2). That is, the representation of the Eucharist at the end of the play, whether this takes the form of a staging of the Last Supper, of the Passion, of a prefiguration of the Eucharist or of an actual Eucharistic meal, must be readable allegorically. It must make it clear that what the audience sees before them is a literal portrayal of a Eucharistic meal, while also being an allegorical portrayal of the Last Supper, of the Passion, and of every Eucharist ever celebrated, including all those which the audience members have participated in, or will do in the future. This brings us to the concept of timelessness, as it is in the representation of the Mass that the drama transcends the boundaries of time:

> History is telescoped in the concept of the sacrament; past, present and future merge. Far-distant points of time converge in the one point of the sacrament. Although the historic acts that gave rise to the sacrament took place, perhaps, at intervals of centuries, they unite to renew themselves in the present time, when the sacrament is

> administered, and they anticipate the future bliss of the communicant. (Wardropper 1198)

Once again, on this point, *El mártir del Sacramento* falls short, and this on two counts. Firstly, the Eucharistic scene at the end of the play only functions on one temporal plane —the historical one. It is in no way made to relate to the Last Supper, to the Passion, or to the everyday experience of Christian devotion to the Mass. Secondly and crucially, the reason it cannot (and not just does not) fulfil this function is that its key point is that the Eucharist is not celebrated; the priest is an Arian, in the play a heretic, and therefore the Mass he presents to Hermenegildo is not valid:

> HERMENEGILDO. Víbora ingrata que rompes
> de la Iglesia el blando seno,
> lastimando con tus dogmas
> todo su místico cuerpo:
> tampoco yo responderte
> quiero a todos los misterios,
> sino sólo al que propones
> y yo recibir no quiero
> de ti, pues no puede ser
> verdadero Sacramento. (AH 1835-44)

Where the point of the scene is the lack of a valid Eucharist, and nothing of the liturgy of the Mass is reflected in the action, the scene cannot have any significance within the scheme of a sacramental drama beyond its literal interpretation; it cannot be a sign of Eucharistic devotion. With this crucial and deciding fact, *El mártir del Sacramento* cannot be understood as an *auto*, as it does not have a sacramental function. It would be easy, as others have done, to put this down to a deficiency in the play, to a lack of skill. Nonetheless, we have seen in *El divino Narciso* and *El cetro de José* Sor Juana's consummate abilities in writing *autos*. It seems, therefore, that such a conclusion would

be to dismiss too prematurely other possibilities. Instead, rather than dismissing the play on the grounds that it does not communicate the dogma of the Eucharist, a more productive approach seems to be to turn the question around and to ask what message it conveys instead.

As mentioned above, the play opens with Fe calling to the four virtues Justicia, Misericordia, Paz and Verdad and challenging them each to encourage Hermenegildo's constancy and faith. She hopes that if these different and sometimes opposing virtues each try to influence him, the result will be so much the greater, and Fe asks them to show her which one of them will have the greatest effect (AH 156-71). In order to try and influence the actions of Hermenegildo, each of the virtues appears to him in his dreams:

> MISERICORDIA. Honrar Hermenegildo,
> a los padres, Dios manda
> dando a la natural
> mayor autoridad su ley sagrada.
> ¡Pausa, pausa!
> ¡Deja el estruendo¡ ¡Cesen las armas!
>
> VERDAD. El mismo Dios te dice
> que a poner vino espada
> entre el padre y el hijo
> cuando la división es por su causa.
> ¡Marcha, marcha!
> ¡Deja el sosiego¡ ¡Toma las armas! (AH 190-201)

The virtues begin to affect Hermenegildo's thinking, and he is left questioning where his loyalties should lie:

> HERMENEGILDO. Pero siendo él arrïano
> y yo católico, y tanta
> la multitud que me sigue,

¿será bien desampararla,
dejando expuesto el rebaño
a la sangrienta matanza
del lobo, que el voraz diente
tiña en inocente grana?
¿Será esto Justicia? No;
porque la Justicia manda
amparar al desvalido.
…….
Más ay!,
qué interiores consonancias
de diferentes Virtudes,
en dos mitades el alma
me dividen, y acá en mí
una guerra civil traban,
sin saber cuál obedezca? (AH 285-304)

This conflict between commitment to the truth and obedience to authority is a central theme of the play. It is repeatedly dramatised as both an internal and external struggle, and is the driving force behind the development of the action, as both Daniel and Fuller have identified (Daniel "Baroque Martyr-*Auto*" 111; Fuller "Rebel" 903). The moral complexity of the issue is demonstrated by the fact that both Misericordia and Verdad use conflicting biblical arguments to support their position, the former citing from Exodus 20.12 "honour thy father and thy mother," and the latter from Matthew 10.34-36, in which Christ promises that he has come to earth "not to send peace, but a sword" and to "set a man at variance against his father."

Hermenegildo's internal battle is also reflected externally in the persuasive arguments from the two opposing sides: Geserico, his father's ambassador, reminds him of the glorious history he will be betraying; and his own priest and ally, Leandro, encourages him with news of Byzantine support. This dilemma is not restricted to Hermenegildo, and it is also paralleled in the subsequent scenes when Leovigildo is also

presented with the glorious history of his royal lineage, this time through his vision of España, who convinces him of the need to defend his throne and his succession (AH 1078-88). Her words are further reinforced by Apostasía, who convinces Leovigildo of the need to declare war on his son (AH 1176-82). In this case, the opinion which draws him in the other direction comes from Recaredo, Hermenegildo's brother, who advises him to be lenient:

> RECAREDO. Señor advierte,
> antes de resolverte
> con mi hermano a tan grande rompimiento,
> que en él causa osadía el ardimiento
> juvenil y la falta de experiencia,
> y que estar de tu parte la prudencia
> es justo que te cuadre,
> por la razón de rey y la de padre. (AH 1197-204)

Apostasía's side quickly wins out, and disregarding the concerns of his son, Leovigildo declares war on Hermenegildo.

At this point in the play, it seems that both Leovigildo and Hermenegildo have decided to defend their beliefs, at the cost of family ties. The virtues reappear, arguing over the crown which has been promised to the one who influences Hermenegildo the most. Verdad declares that she and Justicia are currently exerting most influence over Hermenegildo, as he has now rebelled against his father:

> VERDAD. Pero en cuanto al ejercicio,
> no me podrán negar que
> han sido en Hermenegildo
> la Verdad, por esta vez,
> y Justicia, las que más
> llegan a resplandecer:
> pues la Paz abandonando,

en defensa de la Fe,
con su mismo padre rompe. (AH 1319-27)

Her certain victory is brought into question when they see Hermenegildo escaping the city in order to put an end to the siege. At this stage, Paz declares victory, but is rebutted by Justicia who claims Hermenegildo's actions were taken out of necessity rather than conviction (AH 1357-69).

The competition between the virtues is again thrown open when Hermenegildo returns to his father to ask for mercy (AH 1518-24). Now imprisoned, Hermenegildo swears allegiance to faith, the virtue above all others:

HERMENEGILDO. La Fe que adoro, sola
es la herencia que estimo.
De nada me lastimo,
pues ella se acrisola.
¡Piérdase en hora buena el laurel godo,
que con tener mi Fe, lo tengo todo! (AH 1749-54)

The conflict is finally resolved when he refuses to receive Mass from the Archbishop, and is martyred in the final scene. Fe declares that in his action all the virtues are satisfied and restored to one another; Hermenegildo has remained true to his faith yet avoids further disloyalty to his father and king. Thus, she argues, the dilemma posed at the beginning of the play has been resolved neatly and in an ingenious way.

In this, *El mártir del Sacramento* differs little from the other two *autos*. In each, a dilemma set at the beginning is resolved at the end of the play—how to reconcile Narcissus and Christ, how to reconcile Paul's reading of Genesis with accusations of idolatry. I suggest that here this claim remains slightly unconvincing. Fe's interpretation of events does make sense, on a logical level. It also highlights the complexity of the dilemma at the heart of the play: such issues cannot simply be resolved one way or

another without problem, and there often exists a "third way" solution which balances both sides. However, this ultimately does not strike at the heart of the issue. From the start, the debate between the virtues appears as a gloss on the real conflict at hand—Hermenegildo's internal struggle between faithfulness to the truth and obedience to authority. From a dramatic point of view, this is a far more interesting dilemma than the one posed by Fe, as it concerns the motives and actions of an actual character. When seen in this light, the conflict is firmly resolved in favour of truth. While his acceptance of his own death ends the rebellion against his father, and therefore brings about peace for the people under Hermenegildo's rule, Hermenegildo has nonetheless refused to do any of the things that would truly bring him back under his father's authority. He has refused to recant his Catholicism, to serve as a loyal Arian subject and ultimately to succeed his father as king and ensure the continuation of the line of Arian monarchs. In all of these, Hermenegildo's adherence to his Catholic faith wins out over his sense of obedience to his father and sovereign. In a play that claims to be an *auto*, or indeed any work performed in the environment of the Counter-Reformation Hispanic world, the orthodoxy of Catholic doctrine must be upheld at all costs. The added commentary of how this is achieved by peaceful means is a neat and intelligent addition, but it does not convince as the central argument of the play.

If this reading makes sense of the play, as a piece that purports to be an *auto*, while in reality dealing with very different issues, this raises several questions. If the primary purpose of an *auto* is to give instruction in Catholic Eucharistic doctrine, and this one does not, then what instead is its aim? If Sor Juana wanted to write a history play or a morality play about truth and obedience, then why did she present it as a sacramental drama? I suggest that to answer these questions, we turn to the play's *loa*,

an approach that has already proved useful in the analysis of *El divino Narciso* and *El cetro de José*.

The *loa* to *El mártir del Sacramento* is markedly different to the two *loas* previously considered, those to *El divino Narciso* and to *El cetro de José*. Rather than an exotic, colonial setting in the early days of the Encounter, the stage opens to two students, leaving a university classroom, engaged in a lively debate about the opinions of Augustine and Aquinas on some as yet undisclosed matter of theology. A third student enters the stage and demands to know what they are arguing about. They reveal that the matter under discussion is the question of Christ's greatest demonstration of his love, the "mayor fineza de Cristo." The first student explains his conviction of the correctness of Augustine's position, that the greatest demonstration of Christ's love was his death for humankind, on the grounds that this was the act which caused Him the most suffering. The second student responds that he follows Aquinas' teaching, that Christ's greatest demonstration of love was to give Himself for humankind in the Mass, reasoning that Christ's death was necessary for salvation, but His gift of the Eucharist went above and beyond the necessary, and therefore was the greater act of love. Having heard both of their arguments, the third student declares that he has something to show them that will answer both of their positions.

At this point, soldiers rush onto the stage, carrying the pillars of Hercules, declaring that they will plant them in the ground to mark the ends of the earth, the point at which there is "non plus ultra" 'nothing more' for men to discover. As they leave the stage, the students are understandably confused, and ask the third student to explain what they have just seen. Before he can continue, Christopher Columbus and a group of soldiers appear on stage, and they are portrayed as just having arrived in the Americas.

They declare that, contrary to what was proclaimed in the previous scene, there exists "plus ultra," more lands beyond the pillars, and that they have discovered them.

The students become ever more perplexed, asking the third student how this strange scene is related to their discussion. An explanation is given through the appearance of the allegorical Música, accompanied by two choirs, each echoing the arguments presented by one of the students. The first choir summarises the position of the first student: "El morir, en mi entender, agota de amor la fragua" (LH 355-56), to which the second choir responds "Échese su amor al agua, y verá que hay más que hacer" (LH 357-58). The third student explains:

> ESTUDIANTE 3. No haber más mundo creía
> Hércules en su blasón,
> mas se echó al agua Colón
> y vio que más mundo había.
> Así cuando se entendía
> que el llegar a padecer
> era el sumo poder
> la empresa mayor que vieron,
> se echó al agua, y conocieron
> que quedaba más que hacer. (LH 366-76)

His answer, and the relevance of his demonstration, depends on the ambiguity of the phrase "echarse al agua." For Columbus, the literal act of throwing himself to the water and sailing across the Atlantic allowed him to discover that there was more of the world beyond what was then known. For Christ, who had already foretold his coming suffering, it was in the act of using the water to wash his disciples' feet that he showed there were greater things to come.

The third student's answer leans in favour of the second student, and the greatest demonstration of Christ's love being in the institution of the Eucharist. His explanation

also brings in a third possible answer to the question of Christ's greatest demonstration of his love, proposed by Chrysostom, that it was in the act of humility of washing the feet of his disciples that Christ's love was shown at its greatest. From this point, the students then engage in a lengthy discussion of the order of events at the Last Supper, to determine whether the third student's proposal stands up to scrutiny. Despite the first student's objection, the third student convinces them that the foot washing took place before the institution of the Eucharist, and that the Eucharist must therefore be the greater of the two acts. Having convinced the other two students, the third student announces that all that remains is for them to dedicate the coming play to the King and the royal family, and to ask their mercy for its failings. He defends his choice of subject matter as fitting for an *auto* at court, as it is deals with both regal and sacred matters, and the three students proclaim the start of the *auto*.

The *loa* is closely connected to the concerns of another text by Sor Juana, the *Carta Atenagórica*, in which she deals with this issue of the "mayor fineza de Cristo" (Rice, "La loa" 80). In both texts, she discusses and evaluates the views of Augustine, Aquinas and Chrysostom on the matter. The aim of the *Carta Atenagórica* was to dispute the assessment of these views presented in Vieira's sermon of 1655 (see p.17-18). Vieira maintained that Christ's greatest demonstration of his love was seen in his request to his followers to love one another, rather than to return his love, because this entailed Christ's willing submission to suffering unrequited love. He argued his point by making a subtle change to Chrysostom's argument, stating that Christ's "mayor fineza" was seen not in the actual washing of the disciples' feet, but in the command Christ gave them to wash each other's feet:

> Pruébalo con aquellas palabras: *Et vos debetis alter alterius lavare pedes*. De donde infiere que Cristo no quiere que le correspondamos ni que le amemos, sino que nos amemos unos a otros; y dice que es la mayor fineza de Cristo ésta, porque es fineza sin interés de correspondencia. Para esto no trae pruebas de Sagrada Escritura, porque dice que la mayor prueba de esta fineza es el carecer de pruebas, porque es fineza sin ejemplar. (*Carta Aténagórica* 1434; para. 47)

Vieira concluded that the command to the disciples to emulate Christ's action was proof of His desire not to have His love reciprocated, but for it to be shared among his disciples.

Sor Juana's objection to this argument forms the core of her letter. She retorts that not only did Christ want his disciples to return His love, but that this desire was itself a demonstration of His love. Supporting her assertions with several Biblical commands, to love God with all of one's heart, mind and soul, she argues that within the command to love one another is contained the command to love God. It is through love for God, and therefore the desire to obey Him, that one is led to love one's neighbour. She elaborates by suggesting that since Christ had no need for humankind to return his love, his not requesting them to do so would have been no sacrifice on his part, and therefore was not an act of love. Rather, he asked them to love Him for the sake of their fellow men, as the result of loving Christ would be also to love their neighbour. She demonstrates this through the example of Peter, who when asked whether he loved Christ, responded in the affirmative, and was therefore asked to look after Christ's flock:

> Examina Cristo a Pedro de su amor y dícele: *Petre, amas me*? Responde Pedro con aquellas ardientes ponderaciones que brotaba su encendido corazón, que sí y que pondrá la vida por su amor. Veamos para qué es este examen tan apretado de Cristo. Sin duda que quiere

> que Pedro le haga algún gran servicio. Sí quiere. ¿Y cuál es? *Pasce oves meas*. Esto es lo que quiere Cristo: que el amor de Pedro sea suyo, pero que la utilidad resulte en las ovejas. Bien pudiera Cristo decirle a Pedro, y parece que era más congruente: *Pedro, ¿amas a las ovejas? Pues apaciéntalas*; y no dice sino: *Pedro, ¿me amas a mí? Pues guarda mis ovejas*. Luego quiere el amor para sí, y la utilidad para los hombres. (1441; para. 62)

She argues that the concept of free will is crucial to this process. If the effect of Christ's love is a gift to men, in that they go on to love their neighbours, why does Christ not just give this freely, but instead requires men to love Him first? Sor Juana answers that by giving humankind the responsibility of approaching God first, it becomes their choice whether or not to return God's love. She argues that this liberty of will is itself a gift from God:

> Pues ahora, de la raíz de esta libertad nace que no basta que Dios quiera ser del hombre, si el hombre no quiere que Dios sea suyo. Y como el ser Dios del hombre es el sumo bien del hombre y esto no puede ser sin que el hombre quiera, por eso quiere Dios, solicita y manda al hombre que le ame, porque el amar a Dios es el bien del hombre. (1441; para. 64)

Her emphasis on free will is central to her own proposal of what she claims to be the "mayor fineza de Cristo." She argues that the greatest demonstration of divine love is in its being withheld from humankind when its gift would do more harm than good, because of our weaknesses, an idea she terms "beneficios negativos:"

> La mayor fineza del Divino Amor, en mi sentir, son los beneficios que nos deja de hacer por nuestra ingratitud. Pruébolo. Dios es infinita bondad y bien sumo, y como tal es de su propia naturaleza comunicable y deseoso de hacer bien a sus criaturas. Más, Dios tiene infinito amor a los hombres, luego siempre está pronto a hacerles infinitos bienes. Más, Dios es todopoderoso y puede hacerles a los hombres todos los bienes que quisiere, sin costarle trabajo, y su deseo es hacerlos. Luego Dios, cuando les hace bienes a los hombres, va

> con el corriente natural de su propia bondad, de su propio amor y de su propio poder, sin costarle nada. Claro está. Luego cuando Dios no le hace beneficios al hombre, porque los ha de convertir el hombre en su daño, reprime Dios los raudales de su inmensa liberalidad, detiene el mar de su infinito amor y estanca el curso de su absoluto poder. Luego, según nuestro modo de concebir, más le cuesta a Dios el no hacernos beneficios que no el hacérnoslos y, por consiguiente, mayor fineza es el suspenderlos que el ejecutarlos, pues deja Dios de ser liberal—que es propia condición suya—, porque nosotros no seamos ingratos. (1445; para. 68)

She supports her argument with biblical examples, noting Christ's declaration that it would have been better for Judas had he not been born, and using this as evidence that Christ repented of having given him the gift of life. Despite it going against divine nature not to create, it would have been a greater act of love not to have created Judas, knowing what would come to him after his betrayal of Christ:

> De manera que se arrepiente Dios de haber hecho beneficios al hombre que han de ser para mayor daño del hombre. Luego es mayor beneficio el no hacerle beneficios. (1447; para. 72)

In all of this, she argues that while God gives grace that we might know of his acts of love, and therefore seek to return that love through acts of service, we are free to decide whether we accept God's love. If we do, this creates a disposition in which God can freely give, trusting that His gifts will be well used, thus turning the "beneficios negativos" into positive ones:

> Y así juzgo ser ésta la mayor fineza que Dios hace por los hombres. Su Majestad nos dé gracia para conocerlas, correspondiéndolas, que es mejor conocimiento; y que el ponderar sus beneficios no se quede en discursos especulativos, sino que pase a servicios prácticos, para que sus beneficios negativos se pasen a positivos hallando en nosotros digna disposición que rompa la presa a los estancados raudales de la liberalidad divina, que detiene y represa nuestra ingratitud. (1448; para. 73)

While both dealing with the same theological issue, and also evaluating the arguments of Augustine, Aquinas and Chrysostom, the *loa* and the *Carta Atenagórica* conclude in different ways. While in the *Carta Atenagórica* Sor Juana puts forward her own argument, against those proposed by the Church Fathers and by Vieira, in the *loa* the students decide in favour of the orthodox Catholic position—that the greatest demonstration of Christ's love is to be found in His leaving His Body and Blood for the Church in the Eucharist.

Throughout both the play and the letter, Sor Juana stresses the need for reason, logical argumentation and reflection in order to come to a conclusion. In the *loa*, it is the third student, who asserted his authority from the beginning (LH 69-74) who carries the argument. Despite this authority, he makes it clear that he wishes to give both younger students the opportunity to present their views, and debate them articulately:

> ESTUDIANTE 3. Ésta no es cuestión de voces,
> sino lid de los conceptos;
> y siendo juez la razón,
> que será vencedor, pienso,
> el que más sutil arguya,
> no el que gritare más recio,
> En ninguna parte tanto,
> como en las escuelas, creo
> que es el que lo mete a voces
> el que tiene más mal pleito. (LH 23-32)

This point is further emphasised when he insists that both students repeat their arguments in order better for him to choose between them:

> ESTUDIANTE 3. Yo os estimo la atención;
> mas, aunque escuché allá dentro
> la cuestión, quiero que aquí
> la repitaís, porque quiero

ver cual de los dos arguye
con mejores fundamentos:
lo uno porque si el dejarla
es sólo por el obsequio
de mi atención, no es razón
que quedáis mal satisfechos,
cediendo a la autoridad,
no a la razón, el derecho,
Y lo otro, porque también
servirá a mayor intento
(que no diga por ahora),
sólo el notable asiento
de que a mí también me importa;
y así, id entrambos diciendo. (LH 83-100)

In the end, it is the third student whose arguments prove the most convincing. He eventually sides with the second student, to declare that Christ's *mayor fineza* was in the sacraments, but the reasons he articulates for this go above and beyond anything the younger scholar was able to propose. By using his imagination (and the resources of the theatre troupe he knows to be at hand), he is able to construct a witty dramatic argument for this position. By presenting the two scenes of Hercules and Columbus, which apparently bear little connection to the question at hand, and then demonstrating how they are related to the respective significance of the Passion and the Eucharist, he advances his argument by means of a subtly ingenious conceit—the technique he advocated in his opening lines, above.

The conceit Sor Juana chose to present the similarities between Hercules and Columbus, and between Christ's actions, also sheds light on a further connection between the *loa* and the *Carta Atenagórica.* A parallel between the two is created on the basis that the actions of both Columbus and Christ can be described using the phrase "echarse al agua" (LH 369), as they both involved contact with water. Columbus set sail

across the Atlantic, and Christ put His hands into the water to wash His disciples' feet. Through the parallel with Hercules, Sor Juana demonstrates that the significance of Columbus' actions was to demonstrate the existence of a world beyond Hercules' "non plus ultra." In this sense, the action of "echarse al agua" was merely the precursor to the momentous event of the discovery of the Americas. If Christ's action of washing his disciple's feet is a parallel to Columbus' voyage across the Atlantic, then the event that follows it should also be of greater significance than the action itself. Following this logic, if the institution of the Eucharist came after the foot washing at the Last Supper, then the Eucharist must be of greater significance, and thus a greater demonstration of Christ's love. The first student asks the third student to defend the order of events at the Last Supper (LH 379-88). Through a lengthy discourse citing several of the Church Fathers and other theologians (LH 391-457), the third student demonstrates that it did, and asks the first student if he is convinced by his argument, and believes that the Eucharist is of greater significance than the foot-washing. The latter responds that he was before, but that he wanted someone else to be convinced of it too: "quiero que alguno, que escucha, quede también satisfecho" (AH 459-60).

The arguments presented by the third student explicitly reject Vieira's arguments about "la mayor fineza de Cristo," as they refute the idea that the foot-washing was the greatest event of the evening of the Last Supper. This can only remain speculation, but it seems possible that the "person listening" to whom the first student alludes is someone who was involved in the *tertulia* at which Sor Juana presented her own arguments on the "mayor fineza de Cristo" and who arguments she wished to discredit (see *Respuesta* 1424; para. 1). It is possible that the argument presented is here is one which was discussed on this occasion, but that Sor Juana did not include it in her letter.

Furthermore, given the similarity in theme between the two works, it would be surprising if they were not explicitly connected, and it would therefore seem highly likely that the "person listening" is in someway connected to the debate—potentially the Bishop himself. The *loa*, therefore comes to a different conclusion to the *auto*, and emphasises the orthodoxy of its argument that the greatest demonstration of Christ's love is found in the institution of the Eucharist, a fitting message for a *loa* to an *auto sacramental*. However, it follows the *Carta Atenagórica* in its rejection of Vieira's arguments.

Both the *Carta Atenagórica* and the *loa* were succeeded by lengthier and more substantial texts—the *loa*, as already mentioned, by the *auto*, and the *Carta Atenagórica* by a subsequent letter—the *Respuesta.* As with *El divino Narciso* and *El cetro de José*, at a first glance the *loa* appears to have little to do with the subject matter of the *auto*. And yet the text itself makes explicit connections between the two. It ends with the dedication of the *auto* to the King, stating that the choice of subject matter is fitting for the court, as it deals with both regal and sacred matters. More interestingly, after Hercules and Columbus have appeared on stage, the first two students confusedly ask the third how he made this strange scene appear before their eyes. The third student admits that he has been commissioned to write an *auto sacramental* about the martyrdom of St Hermenegild, and that on hearing their discussion he decided to make that the subject of his *loa*. He therefore arranged for the troupe of actors for his *auto* to play the parts required. The connection made between the *loa* and *auto* is an ingenious one, recognised by the students as a clever trick. Moreover, it demonstrates that there is a clear intended connection between the *loa* and the *auto*, and that it may be wise not to read the two entirely as separate entities.

The connection between the *Carta Atenagórica* and *La Respuesta* is also revealing about Sor Juana's purpose in writing *El mártir del Sacramento*. In both of these texts, Sor Juana presents a strong argument about the conflict between truth and obedience, the necessity of using one's freedom and reason to decide on a course of action that is faithful to one's convictions, and the potential consequences of doing so. If the parallel I suggest between *El mártir del Sacramento* and its *loa*, and between *La Respuesta* and the *Carta Atenagórica* is correct, this provides a compelling argument for why Sor Juana would have written a play about the tensions between truth and obedience, and done so in the guise of an *auto sacramental*.

After requesting a copy of the arguments Sor Juana had presented during her *tertulia* on the greatest demonstration of Christ's love, the Bishop of Puebla published her letter and followed it with a response, the *Carta de sor Filotea* written under the pseudonym of a fellow sister from Puebla. In it, he praises (not without a touch of irony) the subtlety and erudition of the arguments she had presented to refute Vieira, and notes that such talents could only be a divine gift. He then goes on to reprimand Sor Juana for not having used this gift more profitably in the service of divine letters, rather than having dedicated herself to poetry and other secular literary arts. Although he concedes that he did not believe women should be prohibited from learning, he is careful to state that this always had to be done out of obedience, and always must be directed at spiritual growth, rather than at learning for learning's sake, which he classifies as vanity: "ciencia que no alumbra para salvarse, Dios, que todo lo sabe, lo califica por necedad" (*Carta de sor Filotea* 1453; para. 8). He thus exhorts Sor Juana to concentrate on her spiritual life, so that God might change the negative spiritual gifts he

has thus far been according her (following Sor Juana's argument) into positive spiritual gifts. Commenting rather ironically on her argument in her previous letter, he asserts that the withholding of spiritual gifts—that which Sor Juana had termed God's greatest demonstration of His love—to him seem more of a punishment:

> Estoy muy cierta y segura que si V. md., con los discursos vivos de su entendimiento, formase y pintase una idea de las perfecciones divinas (cual se permite entre las tinieblas de la fe), al mismo tiempo se vería ilustrada de luces su alma y abrasada su voluntad y dulcemente herida de amor de su Dios, para que este Señor, que ha llovido tan abundantemente beneficios positivos en lo natural sobre V. md., no se vea obligado a concederla beneficios solamente negativos en lo sobrenatural; que por más que la discreción de V. md. les llame finezas, yo les tengo por castigos: porque sólo es beneficio el que Dios hace al corazón humano previniéndole con su gracia para que le corresponda agradecido, disponiéndose con un beneficio reconocido, para que no represada, la liberalidad divina se los haga mayores. (1454; para. 14)

Sor Juana responded in kind, with a letter to the pseudonymous Sor Filotea, in which she defends her dedication to her life of both secular and religious learning. Taking advantage of the Bishop's literary ruses, she capitalises on his choice of pseudonym and his ironic praise of her arguments by crafting the tone of her letter as if she were writing to a close fellow sister, and by assuming the position of the humble recipient of praise and admiration. She specifically takes issue with the idea that secular learning is divided from divine learning, and she responds to the accusation that she has let the former rule her life to the detriment of the latter. Her letter is a highly rhetorical, cleverly constructed piece of writing, through which there nonetheless runs a clear narrative in which she describes her life of letters as a vocation. She recounts her life in such a way that demonstrates that her inclination towards academic pursuits has come

about almost in spite of herself, thus showing it to be a response to a calling from God, rather than a pursuit of her own desires:

> Lo que sí es verdad que no negaré (lo uno porque es notorio a todos, y lo otro porque aunque sea contra mí, me ha hecho Dios la merced de darme grandísimo amor a la verdad) es que desde que me rayó la primera luz de la razón, fue tan vehemente y poderosa la inclinación a las letras, que ni ajenas reprensiones—que he tenido muchas—, ni propias reflejas—que he hecho no pocas—, han bastado a que deje de seguir este natural impulso que Dios puso en mí: Su Majestad sabe por qué y para qué; y sabe que le he pedido que apague la luz de mi entendimiento dejando sólo lo que baste para guardar su Ley. (*Respuesta* 1461; para. 6)

She presents herself as one who has followed God's guidance, and who, through reason, prayer and judgement, has chosen to dedicate herself to a life of learning. She argues that she has employed her knowledge in the service of God, and that it has helped her to understand more of the Bible and of divine mysteries. Contrary to the accusation levelled at her by the Bishop, she has not made her pursuit of secular knowledge to be queen over her theological learning, but rather the other way around:

> Con esto proseguí, dirigiendo siempre, como he dicho, los pasos de mi estudio a la cumbre de la sagrada teología; pareciéndome preciso, para llegar a ella, subir por los escalones de las ciencias y artes humanas, porque ¿cómo no entenderá el estilo de la reina de las ciencias quien aún no sabe el de las ancilas? (*Respuesta* 1464; para. 11)

Sor Juana's letter is shaped by a conviction of the importance of secular learning in the aid of theology and, perhaps even more prominently, of the significance of shaping one's life according to the certainty of one's calling, discerned through God's guidance with the use of reason, rather than according to obedience to one's superiors, against what one believed to be true. In this, Sor Juana was clear that choosing to define

one's life in this way would bring persecution. In one section of the letter, she describes how her inclination to writing, which she presents as a vice, has garnered her much praise, but that this has led to jealousy and to persecution, just as Christ, when he gave signs that he was the Messiah, suffered persecution and finally death:

> Algunas veces me pongo a considerar que el que se señala—o le señala Dios, que es quién sólo lo puede hacer—es recibido como enemigo común, porque parece a algunos que usurpa los aplausos que ellos merecen o que hace estanque de las admiraciones a que aspiraban, y así le persiguen.… Y si no, ¿cuál fue la causa de los fariseos contra Cristo, habiendo tantas razones para contrario? (*Respuesta* 1469; para. 18, 20)

Although these are somewhat vain arguments, which place herself on a part with Christ, she nonetheless places her readers, and her accuser, in a difficult situation, should they wish to refute her. Having argued that her dedication to learning is her calling from God, if they continue to accuse her, they place themselves in the position of the Pharisees who condemn Christ.

In this regard, the *Respuesta* presents a similar message to the one we saw to be at the heart of *El mártir del Sacramento*. Both revolve around a character who has been presented with an option either to obey their superiors or to remain true to their conviction of their vocation. In both cases, they use God's guidance, through observation of their own lives, through reason, and through the influence of the virtues, to decide to act in the cause of what they perceive to be good rather than evil. Both decide against acting out of obedience and against their convictions, and are condemned for it. The difference lies in the likely interpretation of the two texts. While the *Respuesta* sets out to be a polemical piece of writing, composed as a defence against a potentially serious accusation by an ecclesiastical superior, *El mártir del Sacramento*

presents itself as an *auto*, a defence of orthodox Catholic doctrine. Consequentially, while the readers of the *Respuesta* may well have continued to disagree with Sor Juana's arguments about her own life, her right to learn, and her right to engage in theological disputes, it would have been very difficult for any spectator to object that Hermenegildo took the wrong course of action, and should have been obedient to his father instead. By composing the *loa* on the same theme as the *Carta Atenagórica*, and incorporating similar arguments, Sor Juana creates the possibility of a parallel between their two subsequent texts, the *auto* and the *Respuesta*, in a subtle and ingenious manner. In this sense, the listener whom she wishes to convince with arguments in the *loa* could also be seen to be addressed by the *auto*, if in a more oblique manner.

With this suggestion of an alternative reading of *El mártir del Sacramento*, the question of chronology must be addressed. If this reading is plausible, then *El mártir del Sacramento* must have been written at least after the publication of the *Carta,* and its response from the Bishop, and around the same time that the *Respuesta* was written. Previous commentators have all dated the play to between 1680 and 1688, taking the dedication to "nuestra reina, que el Cielo felices años nos guarde" (LH 470-71) to refer to María Luisa de Borbón, the first wife of Charles II, who died in February 1689. Those who have stated this opinion include Méndez Plancarte in his notes to the *Obras Completas* (III: 563), Robin Rice ("Loa" 79), and Georgina Sabat de Rivers (*En busca* 315). Merrim proposes that *El cetro de José* and *El mártir del Sacramento* are both studies for *El divino Narciso* ("Mores geometricae" 110). Sabat de Rivers argues that *El mártir del Sacramento* was the first of the three *autos sacramentales* to be written, her argument based on the respective interest in the plays in questions of American identity:

> Pienso que debió escribirlos en ese orden ya que en las loas que los preceden, se advierte un interés creciente por cuestiones americanas relacionadas, en la primera, con el llamado Descubrimiento, y en las otras por el impacto de la presencia de los conquistadores en el mundo azteza. (*En busca* 311)

These various opinions can remain little more than speculation, without concrete evidence for the date of composition of performance for each of the plays. Nonetheless, I believe that it is possible to give a little more accuracy in estimating the date *El mártir del Sacramento* was composed by taking into account the its connections to the above cited texts.

I believe that the content of the *loa* and the theme of the *auto* incontrovertibly connect the play with the debate on the "mayor fineza de Cristo," on which Rice also partly bases her analysis of the piece. It is quite probable that Sor Juana formulated an opinion on this matter in the years before the publication of the *Carta Atenagórica*, as there is no evidence to suggest how many times she discussed the matter with others. Nonetheless, if *El mártir del Sacramento* was written specifically in response to the publication of the *Carta Atenagórica*, and around the same time that Sor Juana was penning the *Respuesta*, then this suggests a much later date of composition than has previously been suggested. With the knowledge of Sor Juana's abilities to write sacramental plays displayed in *El divino Narciso* and *El cetro de José*, it seems implausible that she would have deviated from this model in such a significant manner as she does in *El mártir del Sacramento* without good reason. As for the dedication to the queen, Charles remarried in August 1689, after the death of his first wife in February, and there is no further information to suggest that the dedication of the play could not refer to his second wife, thus dating the play sometime after 1689. *El mártir del Sacramento* was published for the first time in the second volume of Sor Juana's

works, in Spain in 1692; the earliest date that appears on it is the *censura* of 18 July 1691. The *Carta Atenagórica* was published in 1690, and the *licencia* is dated November 1690, and it was also included in the *Segundo tomo*. The *Respuesta* was published in 1691, and is dated to February of that year. In view of the fact that the *Carta Atenagórica* was included in the *Segundo tomo*, assuming that the decision for its inclusion was only made after its publication, it seems possible that Sor Juana would have had time to write the *auto sacramental* and have it sent to Spain between November 1690 and July 1691. The short space of time between the publication dates of the *Carta Atenagórica* and the *Respuesta* demonstrates that it was possible for her to write and arrange the publication of a work in a short space of time. The additional time to have her work sent to Spain seems to be plausibly accounted for in the space of the five months between February and July of 1691. This would have meant that she was writing on a tight schedule, a fact which may well account for some of the weaknesses of the play. Its apparently rushed nature is remarked by Octavio Paz: "Según parece, por la prisa de enviarlo a Madrid, no tuvo tiempo de limarlo. Es obra … hecha de prisa y a la que afean descuidos estéticos e imperfecciones morales" (455).

In several significant ways, there is a development here from *El divino Narciso* and *El cetro de José*. A crucial difference between the two plays studied in chapters one and two is the diminishing importance accorded in their plots to the figure of humanity or human nature. Whereas in *El divino Narciso*, Naturaleza Humana is a central character, whose portrayal conforms entirely to the orthodox view of humanity as sinful and in need of redemption, in *El cetro de José* the identification of the figure is more problematic, with the only possibility being his brothers, though I have shown this not to be entirely convincing (see pages 130-131). While they demonstrate sinful actions in

selling their brother, they are not consistently portrayed has having a sinful nature, and indeed are shown to have changed their behaviour of their own accord, rather than through the redeeming work of Christ. *El mártir del Sacramento* lacks a figure who stands for humanity or human nature, and thus the triadic distribution of Christ-devil-humanity falls apart, presenting yet another way in which this play cannot be considered an *auto*. Furthermore, through the play's connection to the *Respuesta,* this development, and the absence of a figure of human nature in the play, becomes even more significant to Sor Juana's theological thought.

In both the *Respuesta* and *El mártir del Sacramento*, Sor Juana insists on the human ability to discern and fulfil one's vocation, even when this involves great sacrifice. The message each of these works contains about humanity is essentially positive; it presents a view of human nature which stresses its potential and ability, rather than its fallen nature and need for redemption through Christ and the Mass. As a result, the work can no longer present the Baroque world view which informed *El divino Narciso*. Unlike other *autos*, the play does not work on a literal and a spiritual level, it makes no distinction between the appearance and essence of things, and it is not set in a world in which sin and destruction give way to redemption and restoration. It no longer has at its centre an understanding of humanity as sinful and creation as fallen.

On the one hand, it does not need these things, because its primary purpose is not to communicate the doctrine of transubstantiation. It therefore does not need to promote the necessity to see things in their dual nature, or to remind people of the deceptiveness of their senses. On the other hand, there is no way it could present these things, because without a vision of sinful human nature and fallen creation, the *auto* cannot fulfil its fundamental allegorical function, as allegory was understood by the

writers of the Counterreformation. Neither can it therefore support orthodox Catholic doctrine, which is dependent on the dynamic between creation, fall and redemption. Whereas *El divino Narciso* had this dynamic at its centre, informing the development of the action and the message of the play, in *El mártir del Sacramento* it is entirely absent. In its place is a clear message about the necessity of remaining firm in what one believes to be true, even if this means disobedience to authority.

El mártir del Sacramento is a rather rushed work, with severe deficiencies when compared to Sor Juana's other two *autos sacramentales*, *El cetro de José* and *El divino Narciso*. As I have shown above, it even lacks almost all defining features of an *auto sacramental*. It is not allegorical, in the true sense of the word. It has no real Christ figure, no devil, and no character to take the place of humanity. Its teaching on the necessity of faith to believe the doctrine of transubstantiation is unclear and unconvincing. However, it does contain a powerful message about the conflict between truth and obedience, and the necessity of using one's freedom and reason to decide on a course of action which is faithful to one's convictions, and the potential consequences of doing so. It does so in a way that no Catholic could object that, in this particular case, was the right thing to do. When we take into account the *loa*, and its connection to the *Carta Atenagórica* this message is placed into the context of a significant debate in the life and works of Sor Juana. By choosing as the theme of the *loa* the controversy over Christ's greatest demonstration of his love, she links the *auto* to the debate of the *Carta Atenagórica*, and to her own contribution in the ongoing discussion of the matter. For this, she was accused of overstepping her position as a woman religious, of involving herself in matters of no concern to a woman, and of having the insolence to attempt to override the arguments presented by an eminent Jesuit priest. She was instructed to

obey her superiors by renouncing secular letters, and concerning herself instead with religious devotion. In this context, the *auto* makes a similar argument to that of her letter in response, the *Respuesta*. Both texts argue for the primacy of reason, of freedom, of conviction of one's vocation over blind obedience to authority. In her letter, her arguments are couched in particularly careful terms, skilfully veiled behind highly complex and detailed rhetorical flourishes. In *El mártir del Sacramento*, they are presented more directly, for in this case it is their true subject that is presented in a rather oblique manner.

Even in a weaker work, Sor Juana demonstrates her rhetorical skill, her theological knowledge, and her prodigious ability to draw together seemingly unrelated matters, thus illustrating her wit. However, it is in this work that she comes perhaps closest to undermining orthodox Catholic doctrine. *El mártir del Sacramento* also demonstrates a significant shift in thinking away from the allegorical world view central to *El divino Narciso*, and central to the Baroque. When considered alongside her other *autos sacramentales*, *El mártir del Sacramento* is crucial to understanding the developments in Sor Juana's theological and aesthetic development. Together, they provide the key for understanding not just the central theological conflict of her later years, but they also question our understanding of Sor Juana as a quintessentially Baroque author. *El mártir del Sacramento* lacks any of the features which would identify Sor Juana as espousing the ways of seeing, thinking and believing which we have come to associate with the Baroque. As the final chapter will discuss, they are replaced with currents of thought which can more readily be associated with new ways of thinking and seeing the world that were taking hold across Europe and the Americas in the second half of the seventeenth century. By considering all three of Sor Juana's

autos sacramentales together, it is possible to trace the development of such thought and practice in her dramatic writing, in a way which should nuance future appraisals of Sor Juana as the last great author of the Spanish Golden Age, and should enable scholars to see in her religious plays the waning of one aesthetic, theological and philosophical view of the world, and the rise of another.

~ CONCLUSION ~

DESENGAÑADA DEL MUNDO: SOR JUANA AND THE EARLY ENLIGHTENMENT

Sor Juana's *autos sacramentales* are unique among works of Hispanic literature. They are formed through the study of the Calderonian tradition of sacramental plays, and draw on the themes, dramatic models, language, and theology of the Spanish master. They demonstrate Sor Juana's advanced knowledge of theology, her command of the *auto sacramental*, and her engagement with some of the most influential minds to have shaped the Hispanic Baroque. In the previous chapters, I analysed each of the individual plays and demonstrated how each of them presents the doctrine of transubstantiation. In doing so, I also identified several currents of thought which run throughout them all, and which display particular developments in Sor Juana's theological and literary thought. In this final chapter, I consider these conclusions together, and argue that they challenge the way in which we have come to understand Sor Juana's *autos sacramentales* as purely Baroque works. Instead, I suggest that considering them also as works of the early Enlightenment forces us to reassess Sor Juana's position as a late seventeenth-century writer, and the presence of Enlightenment thought in the Hispanic world.

El divino Narciso displays the hallmarks of a Baroque epistemological, theological, and aesthetic mindset. In it, Sor Juana foregrounds the ingenious

reconciliation of opposites, of sin and redemption, paganism and Christianity, Narcissus and Christ, death and resurrection, presented through a sensuous mythological world of rocky landscapes, green forests and flowing springs, to the accompaniment of music and long lyrical soliloquies. At its centre is the fallen nature of creation and the sinfulness of humankind, and of the redemptive power of Christ in the Mass. However, this is not a play which could have been written by Calderón. The introduction of the Americas in the *loa*, and the connection made between Nahuatl and classical mythology marks the work as distinctively *criollo*. The juxtaposition Sor Juana created between her own use of her intellect and that of Eco displays how Sor Juana was required to present a self-defence of her circumstance as a woman religious writing on theological matters. Her ingenious use of reflections in the final scenes is testament to her interest in the science of optics, which points not only to her formation in Baroque thought and tastes, but also to an engagement with developments in the sciences more closely associated with a move towards modern concerns.

El cetro de José is a markedly different play. Gone are the sumptuous details of set and staging, and the imaginative potential of the world of nymphs, lovers and fallen angels. The tone is decidedly more didactic, more intellectually focussed, and the action proceeds in a more heavy-handed manner. It remains an orthodox work of Catholic sacramental theology, with its insistence on the need to see things "a dos visos." On a cursory reading, it appears even to uphold the sceptical mindset of the Baroque, as it seems to presuppose a mistrust towards sensory information, and repeatedly affirms the need to believe in the real presence of the body of Christ in the Mass, despite what one's senses may deduce. The orthodox message that belief in transubstantiation requires believers to override their sensory impressions is countered by an original

argument about how this may be achieved. Sor Juana uses the story of José and his brothers to demonstrate that things can be one thing in appearance and another in essence, and that this is entirely consistent with observable experiences in the material world. This empirical argument for belief in transubstantiation takes the piece in a decidedly modern direction. In addition, Sor Juana uses this play as a vehicle for another theological argument, this time concerning the interpretation of a verse of Genesis. Again she reconciles two apparent opposites using an ingenious conceit. Such introduction of an extraneous concern to the plot is a particular hallmark of Sor Juana's art of writing *autos sacramentales*. Again, in this play, the connection between the representation of Nahua practices in her *loa* and the message of the *auto* ties the work to particularly American concerns. In both *El divino Narciso* and *El cetro de José*, the connection between the *loa* to Sor Juana's *autos sacramentales* and the *autos* themselves demonstrates the extent to which her dramatic theory and practice draws on the tradition of Calderón. Yet Sor Juana developed his models and techniques in order to create her own distinctive approach. The *loas* are important objects of study not only as significant works in their own right, but because they add an additional layer of meaning to the *autos*. They introduce another extraneous concern into the world of the *auto*: the performance of Nahua theatre in seventeenth-century Mexico City. This engagement with Natuatl theatrical traditions demonstrates Sor Juana's use of her American past as a crucial part of the formation of her *criollo* identity.

Finally, *El mártir del Sacramento* departs from the model of the genre as defined by seventeenth-century scholars to such an extent that it can no longer truly be termed an *auto*. In particular, the lack of figures representing humanity, Christ or the devil, as well as the absence of any truly allegorical plot or character suggest that the play is not

a true *auto*. Most strikingly, the culmination of the drama in the presentation of an invalid Mass prevents the play from fulfilling its sacramental and didactic function. In this case, the introduction of an extraneous concern overwhelms the action and theological message to such an extent that it prevents the play from truly being an *auto*. The allegorical world view, the reconciliation of opposites, the dynamic between Christ and the devil, between sin and redemption, and between death and resurrection which characterised the Baroque nature of *El divino Narciso* are entirely absent.

In the progression from *El divino Narciso* to *El mártir del Sacramento*, three features stand out as particularly significant. These become increasingly pronounced across the three plays, and define the originality of Sor Juana's works. Firstly, her engagement with epistemology distinguishes her from her Baroque predecessors and demonstrates a familiarity with theories of knowledge and of learning more consistent with the patterns of thought which emerged around the time of the early Enlightenment. Secondly, her use of mythology, its juxtaposition alongside representations of the American past, and its significance to *criollo* identity define Sor Juana's *autos sacramentales* as particularly American works. In them, she engages with the traditions of the peninsula, but departs from them and innovates on them in significant ways. These two issues come together in the third, most crucial departure in Sor Juana's *autos* from an orthodox model. Through her works, there is a gradual rejection of a world view based around the dynamic of fall and redemption. The figure of sinful humanity disappears, and in its place comes a defence of the potential of human enquiry and creativity.

These three features of Sor Juana's *autos sacramentales* challenge the way in which we view Sor Juana as a quintessential figure of the Hispanic Baroque, and as the

last great poet of the Spanish Golden Age. The identification of patterns of thought, in both the sciences and theology, which are more consistent with the ideas of the early Enlightenment, means that Sor Juana's writings also challenge the way in which we perceive the transition between the Baroque and the Enlightenment in the Hispanic world, in particular in the interaction between religious and scientific thought. *Autos sacramentales* differ from the kind of deistic religious texts more frequently considered in the context of the Enlightenment. They deal with a particular aspect of Catholic theology often associated with the kind of dogmatism which is thought to be anathema to the central tenets of the movement. The engagement with empirical thought in Sor Juana's works, therefore, has the potential to redefine the way in which we perceive the interaction between religion and science as a defining feature of Enlightenment thought. These three features—her engagement with epistemology, her use of classical and American mythology, and her rejection of a view of humanity as sinful—are crucial to understanding of Sor Juana's *autos sacramentales* within her historical context.

Both *El divino Narciso* and *El cetro de José* comment on how knowledge should be acquired, and how it should be put to use. In *El divino Narciso*, Sor Juana draws a contrast between her role in using her knowledge and wit in the service of the Church, and Eco, who employs hers purely for self-seeking purposes and is punished for it. In *El cetro de José*, the most striking contrast in the uses of knowledge is drawn between José and Lucero. With the aid of Profecía, José is able to perceive his brothers both as spies and as brothers, and to use this knowledge in order to save his family from famine and to reunite them in Egypt. In contrast, Lucero seeks to accumulate knowledge for his own gain, yet this causes him continuous torment. He describes Ciencia as his "tormento más severo" (AJ 102) and his knowledge as his greatest punishment from

God. This representation of his own intellect is reinforced by the choice of the different parts of scholastic discourse as demons to accompany him. Together, Ciencia, Conjetura, Envidia and Inteligencia attempt to accumulate knowledge about José, and therefore to work out who he is or what he signifies. Their efforts are in vain, and thus they represent the dangers of accumulating knowledge without putting it to sound moral use.

The accusation of a vain approach to learning simply for its own sake, or for arrogant and self-seeking purposes, rather than putting it to sound use, is also the subject of one of Sor Juana's poems, *Acusa la hidropesía*. In it, she writes:

> El discurso es un acero
> que sirve para ambos cabos:
> de dar muerte, por la punta,
> por el pomo, de resguardo.
> Si vos, sabiendo el peligro
> queréis por la punta usarlo,
> ¿qué culpa tiene el acero
> del mal uso de la mano?
> No es saber, saber hacer
> discursos sutiles, vanos;
> que el saber consiste sólo
> en elegir lo más sano. (61-72)

In a scheme in which God is still the source of all knowing, she demonstrates the power of the intellect through the metaphor of the spear, but warns against its ill-use. She places the responsibility for the ethical exercise of knowledge firmly in the hands of the one to whom it has been given, and then states what constitutes its good use: in its best form, learning gives us the ability to choose what is good and moral, but in its worst form it is used to demonstrate one's rhetorical abilities in the name of vanity and pride. In the poem, she employs the metaphor of a tree, a reference to the Tree of Knowledge,

where if the leaves are allowed to grow unimpeded, the abundance of branches prevents the healthy growth of fruit:

> Si culta mano no impide
> crecer al árbol copado,
> quita la sustancia al fruto
> la locura de los ramos. (97-100)

In the same manner, the unimpeded accumulation of information can be an impediment to its moral use. As Icarus found, overconfidence in one's abilities can lead to hubris and to pride, which detract from the ability to make prudent and judicious choices. In her analysis of these verses, Hill remarks on Sor Juana's explicit denunciation of scholastic formal logic:

> One's mental discourse should not follow scholastic formal logic and dialectics. Cramming the margins of one's mind with Greek and Latin authorities—the piling up of ideas through sophistic twists—might testify to one's interpretative plasticity, but such discourse did not make one a philosopher. (Hill 44)

The thoughts Hill articulates in *Acusa la hidropesía* could apply equally well to *El cetro de José*, in particular to the demonic figures. The most obvious connection between the ideas presented in *Acusa la hidropesía* and the demonic figures of *El cetro de José* comes further in the poem when Sor Juana refers to the productions of the mind using the language of aborted births. In both the poem and the play, she uses the same metaphor to present the dangers of the unrestrained accumulation of knowledge. In the poem she states:

> ¿De qué sirve al ingenio
> el producir muchos partos,
> si a la multitud se sigue
> el malogro de abortarlos? (109-112)

In *El cetro de José*, this is presented in a somewhat more literal fashion, in the description of the relationship between the demonic characters. Lucero is married to Inteligencia, but has his two daughters, Conjetura and Envidia, with his mistress Ciencia. Inteligencia is barren, and Ciencia, too is said to have produced "abortos," after which Envidia became Lucero's preferred vice (AJ 27-56). Thus, as in the poem, scholastic discourse is shown to be both figuratively and literally fruitless when accompanied by the vice of envy. Throughout the play, Lucero's knowledge has been repeatedly described as a curse on him and a torment. Several scholars who have studied the play have taken this to be a comment on Sor Juana's position as a learned woman in a society which didn't allow her to employ her intellect to its full potential (McGaha "The Fragmented Subject"; Daniel "Satan as Character"). In previous chapters, I have argued against this kind of conclusion. At this stage of her literary career, Sor Juana was the favoured poet of several highly powerful and influential patrons, she was commissioned to write an *auto sacramental* for the Spanish court, and she used her literary talents to express complex arguments on theological and social matters. The image of Sor Juana as an oppressed and silenced women, for whom her talent was a torment because of restrictions placed on her due to her gender, is not one which fits with the facts of most of her life. In the context of her intellectual development, and the changes in the mentality of the period, it makes more sense to view the presentation of Lucero as criticising the traditional scholastic epistemological discourse.

This interpretation is further supported when we reconsider the role of José as a contrast to Lucero. As stated in the analysis of *El cetro de José*, one of the defining features of the play is the opposition between Lucero, who is unable to see "a dos

visos" and José, who is able to. In contrast to Lucero and his companions, who stand for scholasticism, José stands for the new empirical methods of enquiry. Rather than seeking to accumulate knowledge for its own sake, José uses observation of the world around him, aided by Profecía, in order to come to certain conclusions, and to use this knowledge for his well-being and that of others. By recognising that his brothers appear as spies, but are in fact his brothers, he is able to set in place a series of events which lead to their return to Egypt with their Father, and to his family being saved from famine. Thus, in yet another way, José uses his knowledge in a prudent and ethical manner: he makes judgements according to what he observes, and in such a way which tests, but upholds, the doctrines of faith. Observation is presented as being superior to the Aristotelian model, as is knowledge for the sake of faith to knowledge for its own sake.

El mártir del Sacramento makes a further point about the acquisition of knowledge, and how it is used. Here, reliance on the observation of the world and on the information received through the senses is differentiated from reliance on authority and revelation. This contrast between empiricism and revelation is also seen in the writings of Sor Juana's contemporaries. In his *Libra astronómica y filosófica*, Carlos de Sigüenza y Góngora warns against following established authorities without question: "quien tiene entendimiento y discurso jamás se gobierna por autoridades, si les faltan a estas autoridades las congruencias" (40, no. 76). Furthermore, in the field of mathematics, even the expertise of Aristotle or Ptolemy are to be disregarded in favour of proofs and demonstrations:

> advierto que ni su reverencia [Aristóteles], ni otro algún matemático, aunque sea el mismo Ptolemeo, puede asentar dogmas en estas

> ciencias, porque en ellas no sirve de cosa alguna la autoridad, sino las pruebas y la demostración. (123, no. 252)

The message of *El mártir del Sacramento* is that Hermenegildo should remain faithful to his own conviction that Catholicism is the true faith, and not rely on the authority of his father and king to convince him that he should return to the Arian creed. This message is reflected throughout the *Respuesta* in Sor Juana's insistence that she be able to discern her own vocation through observation of her own interaction with the world around her. She argues that this is a more reliable manner of distinguishing God's call than simply relying on the authority of her superiors to instruct her in appropriate behaviour according to her gender.

Her argument that observation is a means to knowledge, and in turn to faith, is particularly significant. Here, Sor Juana shows a clear departure from the sceptical modes of thought characteristic of the Baroque. Hill notes that Sor Juana's thought was particularly influenced by the French philosopher Pierre Gassendi, often cited by Sigüenza y Góngora, and who was committed to countering the radical thought of Descartes and to reconciling empirical enquiry with Christian morality, through his own version of Christian Epicureanism. His views on knowledge bear remarkable similarities with those Sor Juana presents throughout her *autos.* They both articulate a desire to overcome the limits of scepticism, a defence of the utility of learning, an ethical disregard for the accumulation of knowledge without putting it to use, and a rejection of the acquisition of knowledge by authority or revelation, in favour of learning through experience, observation and rational enquiry. In his *Disquisitio* Sigüenza y Góngora defended the idea that appearances can belie essence (in the manner that the brothers' appearance as spies belies their true identity, and that the

accidents of the Eucharist belie its true substance), but asserted that this can be corrected when a variety of sensory input are judged by the intellect.

Sor Juana demonstrates this process in the *Respuesta*, where she makes certain observations about the world, realises that her senses are being tricked somehow, and then further observes and analyses in order to transform a deception into a better understanding of the world. Of particular note is the example she gives of observing the walls of the convent dormitory (cited on page 122), where the appearance that the walls run diagonally to one another contradicts what she knows to be true, that they run parallel. From this, she deduces the principle of the visual pyramid, which states that parallel lines will appear to run diagonally towards a point, when viewed from a 90 degree angle. In this example, she assesses the information gained through two different sensory experiences (the visual impression that the walls run on a diagonal, and the tactile impression that they run parallel), judges between them (deeming the tactile experience to override the visual one), and uses the apparently contradictory experiences to deduce a principle, and thereby learns more about the order of creation and the human mind.

In this way, she demonstrates that the potential deception of the senses is no longer a hindrance to using observation of the world as a means to increase knowledge and understanding. Rather, through the judicious comparison between multiple sensory experiences, such deceptions can be corrected, and indeed can serve to give a more precise understanding of certain phenomena. In this way, she demonstrates a clear departure from the dominant sceptical mode of thought of the Baroque, typified by the distrust of the senses, and a wariness of the human mind's propensity to be duped by sensory information. This, in turn, leads to an acceptance that there are also elements of

the workings of the cosmos which remain hidden from the human mind. Given that the world, as it appears to the senses, is no longer considered as an illusion, an advanced form of visual trickery, this unattainable knowledge is no longer such a concern. The world has been shown to work according to sound and consistent principles (even when these are initially difficult to discern). Even when we encounter experiences which appear to deceive the senses, and for which no empirical explanation can be found, we can trust that such experiences do fit within the order of the cosmos, and that any apparent deception comes from our lack of understanding, rather than their own deceptive nature. The parts of knowledge available to us, as well as those which aren't, are both part of the divine plan. As Gassendi states in his *Disquisitio*:

> What we can know is this or that property of this substance or nature when it lies open to observation and is perspicuous in experience, and we do not thereby penetrate into the inner substance of nature—just as when looking at bubbling spring water, we know that the water comes from a certain source but do not thereby direct a keen look into the interior and discover that subterranean source. So, it seems, the good, all-powerful God established when he founded nature and left it to our use. For he revealed to us whatever is necessary for us to know about things by granting them properties through which we could know them and by granting us various senses to apprehend them and an interior faculty to make judgements about them. But he willed that the internal nature and, as it were, source be hidden because we do not need knowledge of it. (*Opera* 3: 312b, qtd. in Lolardo 232)

In this manner, Sor Juana's *autos sacramentales* depart from Baroque thought in two significant ways. By refusing to see scepticism as a problem, they embrace the observation of the natural world as a means to knowledge of divine truths, at the same time as they accept that sometimes such observations will give sufficient knowledge to have faith in a particular doctrine, without the need to go beyond it.

In their unwillingness to accept a sceptical distrust in the world, and in their defence of an empirical mode of enquiry as a manner of approaching the divine, with faith in the limits of human knowledge, Sor Juana's *autos sacramentales* walk what Hill has termed the *via media* of the Hispanic Enlightenment. They still uphold orthodox Catholic doctrine, but they use the new philosophy to do so. In this regard, the influence of Gassendi, already noted by several scholars, is significant. Unlike other Enlightenment thinkers, such as Descartes, Gassendi's works were never indexed. Indeed, he objected to much of Descartes' thought as anti-Christian, and argued for the role of faith in filling the gaps of uncertain knowledge. In this way, Sor Juana's adoption of the new philosophy in writing her *autos sacramentales* should not be conceived of as radical, dangerous or unorthodox. Nor should we assume that the aim of her writings was to counter the authority of the Church. Rather, it presents further evidence for the case argued by Hill that the Catholic Enlightenment of the Hispanic world, which takes faith into account rather than arguing against it, should be reassessed as significantly different to, yet no less important than, the Christian or secular Enlightenment of the rest of Europe, which is more frequently cited as the successor to the Baroque on the road to modernity.

The awareness of the influence of modern epistemologies on Sor Juana's *autos sacramentales* also sheds light on other aspects of their structure and content I have already touched on, in particular, her use of mythology and the presentation of the *Indias* and the *indios*. Hill makes a significant comment on the use of mythology in *Primero sueño*, and how it differs from previous uses of mythology in the Renaissance and Baroque. She writes of a

> distance which one could call modernity, between the allegorical interpretation of Greek and Roman fables or myths performed during the Renaissance and the Baroque, and Sor Juana's interpretation in *Sueño*. The search for Christian origins led renaissance humanists to follow in Augustine's footsteps, repossessing pagan literature.… One thereafter interpreted them as one did the Old Testament (whose histories they proved) observing the method that Augustine had set out in *On Christian Doctrine*.… Late Baroque scholars did not abandon this exegesis. (50)

As shown above, this is precisely what Sor Juana does with the myth of Narcissus; she reinvests it with Christian meaning through a particularly Baroque use of literary wit. Through the inclusion of the Americas in the *loa*, she then extends this demonstration of Christian truth in pagan mythology to pre-Columbian ritual, too. As Hill emphasises, this Baroque use of mythology is still an important part of its function in the *auto*. Hill goes on to state that in the late Baroque, mythology also took on a modern function. Her explanation of this new purpose for mythology nuances our understanding of the use of Ovid in *El divino Narciso*.

> In Sor Juana's *Sueño* such fables or myths have a conspicuously modern function as she invests them with the new philosophy.… Greek and Roman myths contained the physics and metaphysics of their times, but Sor Juana was not interested in their content *per se*. She instead used them to grasp the imperceptible (say, how the imagination or phantasy operated) from the perceptible (e.g., shadows of objects cast on the ocean's surface). (50)

Hill highlights in particular the connection between mythology, the new science of optics and the relationship between the perceptible and the imperceptible. All these things we saw to be central to Sor Juana's concept of allegory (see pages 20-32). It is clear from several of her writings that Sor Juana was familiar with both the theory

behind the new science of optics and several of the new experimental practices which led to the development of the science.

As shown above, in the *Respuesta* she demonstrates a knowledge of geometrical perspective, through her description of working out the theory through observation of the lines of sight in the convent dormitory. This is also seen in *Primero sueño,* through her discussion of the optical illusion created by the pyramids. Her knowledge of optics is further demonstrated in the ending of *El divino Narciso*, and in the conceit she develops which allows for Narciso to look into the pool and see Naturaleza Humana as his own reflection. The original myth of Narcissus required a very basic understanding of one principle of optics, reflection. For her twist on the story to work, Sor Juana needed a much more advanced understanding of the science of optics, of angles, reflection and refraction, to find a way in which two objects could appear as one reflection on a flat surface. She knew exactly how each of the characters needed to be placed around the pool, so that their reflections would converge, and gives the necessary instructions in her stage directions. From her understanding of how this perceptible process works, she was able also to give a scientifically based analogy for one of the great Christian mysteries—how sinful humanity can be restored to the image of God through the forgiveness of sins.

The reconciliation of pagan myths with both modern physics and Christian metaphysics achieved in *El divino Narciso* is a second way in which Sor Juana's *auto* also reconciles the new philosophy with orthodox Christianity. According to Hill and Robbins, the late Baroque and Enlightenment in the Spains is not characterised by the kind of radical thinking we have come to associate with the Enlightenment as it was expressed in much of western Europe by thinkers such as Descartes, who were censored

in the Hispanic world. Indeed, central to the vision of a Hispanic Enlightenment posited by both critics is the idea that in the Spains, the new philosophy was reconciled with, rather than opposed to, a Christian vision of the world. Returning to the *loas* to *El divino Narciso* and *El cetro de José*, which connect Aztec mythology and ritual with Christian faith and belief, we can see another way in which Sor Juana achieves this integration of faith and the new philosophy.

In his *Syntagma*, Gassendi provides two arguments for the existence of God, the first, the argument from universal anticipation, which claims that men "have some *notitia* of God impressed by nature itself" and the second, the argument from the spectacle of nature, which is derived from observation of the natural world (*Opera* 1: 290a-b). He states that the majority of people have some kind of innate knowledge of God, whether the Christian God or not, and that this itself is evidence for God's existence. He also argues that men acquire a notion of God by observing the order of the cosmos, and inferring from its ordered nature that it must have some cause and origin. In the *Proem* to his *Syntagma*, he refutes Epicurus' contention that the aim of natural philosophy is to eliminate religious superstition, and instead argues that its goal is to point humankind towards the divine (Lolardo 239-241):

> *Physiologica* is the [subject] that, by contemplating the nature of things in general, draws the conclusion from the magnitude, variety, disposition, beauty and harmony of its wonders that there is a most wise, powerful, and good God [*Numen*] by whom the universe is governed…and therefore natural reason leads us to recognise that the excellence and beneficence of this God should be shown a reverence that is religion itself. (*Opera* 1: 128b, qtd. in Lolardo 240)

This argument is central to Sor Juana's reasoning in the *Respuesta* that she should be allowed to continue her pursuit of secular learning because it leads her to understand

and to contemplate the divine. In relation to her *autos sacramentales*, it is also present in the debates on religion and ritual found in the *loas* to *El divino Narciso El cetro de José*, in the Hispanic characters' explanations of Christianity to the *indios* of the *loas* to *El divino Narciso* and *El cetro de José*. In both *loas*, the pagan characters are portrayed as already having some notion of the divine, and a desire for devotion to their god, thus providing an example of the argument for the existence of God from universal anticipation. Furthermore, in the *loa* to *El divino Narciso*, Occidente describes his understanding of God as derived from his observations of the natural world; he knows there is a God because each season the rain comes to fertilise the fields, which then produce fruit (LN 250-53). Significantly, his argument is made not simply from deducing from the fact of the existence of rain, or the production of fruit, but it implies that he has come to his conclusion by observing the cause and effect relationship between the rain and the harvest, and noting the regularity with which these events take place in perfect sequence. He therefore infers from this that there must be some kind of divine being to order and sustain such a system.

The significance of the *loas* to understanding the influence of natural philosophy on Sor Juana's works goes beyond the argument in them for the existence of God. As articulated in chapter three of this thesis, through the metatheatrical conceits of the *loas* and their connection to the practices of Nahuatl theatre, Sor Juana frequently confuses the positions of the indigenous characters on stage and that of her Spanish audience. Considering the writings of her contemporaries on both sides of the Atlantic, the idea of putting Spaniards in the position of the *indios* of the Americas is far from unique to her. Robbins has noted how, in his *Libra astronómica*, Sigüenza y Góngora complains at the impression that certain Europeans seem to have of the intellectuals of New Spain,

classing them as behind the times, and putting all those from the New World, whether *indios* or *criollos*, in the same category of the unlearned:

> Piensan en algunos partes de la Europa y con especialidad en las septentrionales, por más remotas, que no sólo los indios, habitadores originarios de estos países, sino que los que de padres españoles casualmente nacimos en ellos, o andamos en dos pies por divina dispensión, o que aun valiéndose de microscopios ingleses apenas se descubre en nosotros lo racional. (85, no. 166, qtd. in Robbins *Arts* 235)[44]

On the other side of the Atlantic, Spaniards themselves were also comparing their fellow countrymen with the *indios* of the Americas, and casting other Europeans as the new *conquistadors* of philosophy and the sciences. Cabriada, in his *Carta Filosófica, medico-quimérica* of 1687, states:

> Que es lastimosa y aun vergonzosa cosa, que como si fuéramos indios, hayamos de ser los últimos en percibir las noticias y luces públicas que ya están esparcidas por toda la Europa. (230-231, qtd, in Robbins *Arts* 277)

While Cabriada used such a comparison to shame his compatriots into taking an interest in new scientific developments, Sor Juana's comparison has a different purpose. Her inversion of the traditional teaching roles of *indios* and Spaniards in the *loas* combines the rhetorical approaches taken by Sigüenza y Góngora and Cabriada, yet goes beyond them both. In the *loa*, the Spanish audience has been placed in the position of those being taught, the traditional position of the *indios*. The *indios*, meanwhile, are given the role of performing the didactic play, thus putting them in the position of the sixteenth-

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[44] This clear distinction that Sigüenza y Góngora makes between the *criollo* intellectuals of the seventeenth century, and the indigenous inhabitants of the Americas of the sixteenth century supports the arguments made in chapter three about the use of American themes and materials as a symbolic and retrospective empathy with indigenous cultures, whose aim was for the *criollos* to align themselves with the imperial project, rather than to distance themselves from it. In no sense do either Sor Juana or Sigüenza y Góngora identify themselves with their contemporary *indios.*

century Spaniards who catechised the Americas. At the same time, Sor Juana the *criolla* maintains her position of authority as the author of both the *loa* and the *auto*. As a *criolla*, she places herself conceptually as far as possible from the position of the *indios* as the receivers of Christian instruction. She thus defends Sigüenza y Góngora's stance and refutes any equation made between sixteenth-century *indios* and seventeenth-century *criollos* like herself. At the same time, she plays on the perceived backwardness of Spain's intellectual achievements noted by Cabriada. By inverting the Spanish accusation to which Sigüenza y Góngora responds and casting the Spaniards as those who are associated with the *indios*, she shows herself and her fellow *criollos* to be equal to or ahead of Spain in intellectual achievements.

Sor Juana's interaction with the new philosophy and new sciences of the late seventeenth century bring us back to her definition of allegory, particularly as it is used in the *autos sacramentales*. As noted in the introduction to this thesis, she presents human observation and intellectual reflection as integral parts of the process of creating and interpreting allegory in her discussions of the device in *El divino Narciso*, *El cetro de José*, *Neptuno alegórico* and the *Respuesta* (see pages 20-32). In these texts, she stresses how the device can make connections between different aspects of the material world, demonstrating it to be part of a complex sphere at the centre of which is the divine mind. In the transition from *El divino Narciso* to *El cetro de José* and *La Respuesta*, allegory goes from being a means of transforming the world, as this was understood in the Baroque, to being a means of observing and understanding the world, a purpose far better aligned with the ideas of Enlightenment. This is made most clear in the descriptions of allegory given in *El mártir del Sacramento*, where Sor Juana provides a strikingly original definition of the device. In the *loa*, she describes the

workings of allegory in a manner which departs significantly from the metaphors of painting and theatre which she and her contemporaries had previously used. The third student explains how he is going to present to the other two students an allegory, although he begins by giving them two options. The first is to present to them the figures of his story using "natural magic":

> ESTUDIANTE 3. Ya sabéis que mis desvelos
> a naturaleza apuran
> los más ocultos secretos
> de la magia natural,
> y que con mis ciencias puedo
> fingir, ya en las perspectivas
> de la luna de un espejo,
> o ya condensando el aire
> con los vapores más térreos;
> o ya turbando los ojos,
> mostrar aparentes cuerpos.[45] (LH 171-182)

This passage is replete with the vocabulary of the new science of optics, derived particularly from Gassendi's writings. Hill has already described how Sor Juana uses such ideas in *Primero sueño*, and a summary of the ideas presented there is useful here:

> In a discussion of vision and mirrors, telescopes and glass plates, Gassendi noted the differences or distortions produced by concave and convex surfaces. Concave mirrors, for example, present things as bigger than they normally appear to the eye. Convex mirrors present the same objects as smaller than they would normally appear. He explained that the concave mirror reflects onto the eye more rays from the object than the eye alone would receive from the object, and the convex reflects fewer rays than the eye would normally receive.

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[45] Although Kircher's influence on Sor Juana's work is well-documented, to my knowledge no critic has identified this passage as specifically related to the magic lantern. Sabat de Rivers (1998) and Méndez Plancarte (1951) only mention its reference to "natural magic" and to Kircher. However, the reference to the mirror reflecting light (using the metaphor of the moon), to smoke and vapour (which were produced by the devices) and the ability to show "apparent figures" all point to the reference to this invention.

> But flat mirrors present things exactly as they appear to the eye. (Hill 62)

In particular, Sor Juana is referring to the device of the magic lantern, which is explained in detail by the Jesuit Athanasius Kircher in his *Ars magna lucis et umbrae*, whereby light from a lantern is projected onto a mirror, then onto a coloured slide which appears in enlarged form on the wall of a darkened room (Fig. G). In this passage, Sor Juana demonstrates not only awareness of Kircher's device, or of Gassendi's knowledge of optics, but the ability to put the two together to explain how Kircher's device works. The reference to the "luna de un espejo" is the concave mirror of the magic lantern, which served to enlarge the image on the glass plate for projection onto the wall. The "vapores," are the condensed air, the steam which is produced by the lantern and escapes from the box in which it is held. The effect is for the eyes to be "turbados," altered from their natural way of seeing things, such that they perceive the figure projected onto the wall much larger than it appears on the plate, and giving the impression that an object is present. The illusion is created by a mere trick of the light, but this can be explained and controlled through a knowledge of physics and optics. The senses are deceived, but the deception is controlled by human invention, and has a scientific explanation.

In the *loa*, the third student then goes on to offer them an alternative option, which is to present an allegorical drama and for them to use their imaginations in order to make sense of its meaning:

> ESTUDIANTE 3. Y cuando aquesto no pueda,
> demos que el entendimiento
> con alegóricos entes
> hace visibles objetos.
> Y eligiendo lo segundo,

si no admitís lo primero,
os pretendo mostrar…(LH 183-89)

Here, the purpose of presenting the image of the magic lantern, and its relation to allegory, becomes clearer. The student presents an alternative to being shown the images of the magic lantern, that is to make visible objects from allegories, by use of the imagination. Thus, there is an implicit connection made between allegory and the magic camera, in a similar way to the connection made between painting and the theatre in *El divino Narciso* and *El cetro de José* (see pages 27-28). In each case, an original imperceptible idea or object (the concept of the allegory or the slide for magic lantern), must go through a particular process where light is shed on it (the imagination, or the magic lantern), and it is transformed into something that can be perceived by the human eye (the "visible object" of the allegory, or the projection of the slide on the wall). As with the painting, there is a significant interplay between light and dark; the projection of light in a light room would render nothing, again the dark is necessary to make the colours of the figures of the projection visible (Kircher 673). However, there is a significant development between this articulation of allegory and the descriptions given above. In the introduction, I argued that Sor Juana's definitions of allegory pay particular attention to the mental process of the creation of an allegory, as well as to the uses of allegory in encouraging people to think further about the order and connections within creation, which serve to point them to the divine. In the definition given in *El mártir del Sacramento*, this is taken further, as the process, either of the magic lantern or of the "entendimiento", is made central to the definition. Allegory is no longer an image which is revealed, whose primary purpose is to teach others a doctrinal truth. Rather, it is there to encourage people to think for themselves about the connections

between a concept and its visible representation, and therefore about the connection between the material and the metaphysical worlds.

The comparison between the magic lantern and allegory is further made in the *auto* itself, where Fantasía appears to Leovigildo to present him with a vision of the visigothic past. This time, the use of the magic camera prevails over the use of the imagination, and I suggest that Sor Juana actually intended for the device to be used on stage as a scenic device:

> FANTASÍA. La imagen de tu propia Fantasía,
> que en ella impresa estoy tan vivamente,
> que parezco aparente
> cuerpo, que de aire forma vapor craso,
> pues la imaginación suele hacer caso;
> y más ahora, con la conveniencia
> que a alegóricos entes da licencia,
> sin violar a la Historia su pureza,
> pues no añade ni quita a su entereza
> el que, suspenso en tu melancolía,
> a ti te hable tu propia Fantasía. (AH 876-86)

In each case, an otherwise invisible object is made visible, either through the mechanical process of the magic lantern, or through the imaginative process of the creation of an allegory. In addition, a subtle comment is made here about those who would be suspicious of the potential of the new sciences to usurp old ways of reasoning and learning.

The description of the darkness required for the magic lantern to work is particularly associated with the night ("desvelos," "ocultos," "luna") and with the sinister activities which happen during this time ("ocultos secretos," "magia natural"). The result of these nocturnal endeavours is presented as deceptive ("fingir," "turbando los ojos," "aparentes cuerpos"). By defining the magic lantern as a device which has

been developed through natural magic, which is associated with darkness and the night, and whose aim is to trick the senses, Sor Juana appears to be playing on the fears and doubts of those who would be suspicious of the new sciences as potentially threatening to Christian belief. Her description has an ironic tone, when she suggests that if the other students (and by extension the audience) are unhappy with her first suggestion, they may use their imaginations to construct allegorical objects instead. By comparing allegory to the magic lantern, she undermines the potential suspicion shown towards the former, and mocks the fearful attitude to such developments.

The two students to whom the third student addresses this have spent the preceding scenes discussing a particular point of scholastic theology (the "mayor fineza de Cristo"). Thus, the students stand for those who would likely be opposed to the new science. They have been trained in the old epistemological mentality of acquiring knowledge through authority, and putting this to use in rather obtuse academic disquisition—a method we have seen Sor Juana oppose already through the characters of Eco and of Lucero with his demonic companions. Sor Juana's comparison of allegory to a magic lantern is remarkably original and decidedly modern. Its development on the metaphors previously used, of painting and the theatre remains within the same field of the visual arts, but takes this in an ingenious direction. She is also mocking all those who would be suspicious of the use of such devices, and the sciences behind them. By associating such figures with students of the Jesuit schools, and by presenting such objections within the religious context of the *auto sacramental*, she particularly singles out those who would be opposed to such innovative techniques because they might be a danger to Christian faith.

The influence of the new sciences in Sor Juana's thinking, and in particular in her composition of *autos sacramentales,* affects the interpretation of their theological message in a fundamental way. As stated above, the inclusion of elements tied to the early Enlightenment in *El divino Narciso* and *El cetro de José* does not prevent the two plays working as *autos sacramentales*. Nonetheless, there are certain aspects of the Catholic faith integral to the *auto sacramental* which become difficult to reconcile with the implications of the new philosophy, and in particular with the transition from a Baroque to an Enlightenment view of humanity and human potential. As detailed in the opening chapters, the Baroque world view on which the *autos sacramentales* are based is dependent on an equivocal and dynamic view of the world between vanity, death, and decay, and between redemption, resurrection, and eternity. An integral part of this is understanding creation as fallen, and humanity as sinful and in need of redemption. As demonstrated in *El divino Narciso*, this is the dynamic upon which the development of the *auto* depends; sinful humanity must be redeemed by the love of Christ, in spite of the devil's efforts to prevent this. In contrast, the Enlightenment represented a significant departure from this world view, even in its most moderate of manifestations. Concomitant with the turn away from scepticism towards a more confident approach to epistemology is a move away from the vision of humanity as being primarily categorised by its sinful nature. This accounts for the tendency in Sor Juana's *autos sacramentales* to move away from a model which is primarily based on a vision of sinful humanity, but which thereby causes problems for the dramatic and theological quality of her religious plays. While *El divino Narciso* maintains a clear and evocative vision of sinful humanity at its heart, *El cetro de José* begins to move away from this model, with no discernible figure to represent human nature. As previously noted, while

at this stage it does not prevent the *auto* from fulfilling its doctrinal function entirely, it does detract from it, and reduces the conflict between the figures of Christ and the devil to a struggle for control, rather than a truly dramatic battle for the soul of another being. In *El mártir del Sacramento*, the figure of sinful humanity disappears entirely, and the conflict between Christ and the devil is also absent.

It is now possible to explain how the lack of a figure of sinful humanity is also closely connected to the failure of *El mártir del Sacramento* not only as an *auto*, but also as an allegorical play. At the end of the Baroque, the world was no longer understood as an illusion, where the appearance of things to the senses goes against their true substance and in which revelation is therefore necessary to know the true essence of things. Instead, the world was presented as an environment where reality could be perceived through careful observation, using a variety of senses and comparing experiences. Thus, it was no longer a world which needed to be reordered through the promise of redemption and resurrection, which we have seen to be one of the primary purposes of allegory in the *auto sacramental*, and in the Catholic art and literature of the Baroque more widely. As we have seen through Sor Juana's writings, allegory continues to have a purpose, as a means of observing and analysing the way in which the world works, and the way in which the physical world relates to the metaphysical world, and of presenting those areas of knowledge which by divine will remain hidden to us, but it is now a means of understanding, rather than transforming, the material world of historical reality.

This raises the question of why this development in thought poses particular problem to the dramatic development of *El mártir del Sacramento*, while in her other *autos* Sor Juana manages to reconcile the new philosophy with the presentation of

Catholic doctrine. If, as I argue in chapter four, *El mártir del Sacramento* is understood in the context of the debate which informs the *Carta Atenagórica*, the *Carta de sor Filotea* and the *Respuesta*, then it is also to be understood as having been written in a very different rhetorical mode. Whereas the other two *autos* remain works whose primary purpose is to present the doctrine of transubstantiation, written in an environment in which Sor Juana had a considerable amount of freedom to read, write and publish, *El mártir del Sacramento* is written from a defensive position, in response to particular accusations. With a better understanding of the significance of the new philosophy to Sor Juana's thought and to her faith, it becomes clearer why she needed to defend herself from accusations that she should abandon secular pursuits. This also explains why her doing so precluded the possibility of writing an *auto* which conforms to the norms and expectations of the genre.

The accusation of the *Carta de sor Filotea*, as stated above, was to persuade Sor Juana to abandon secular learning in favour of devotion to God and to pursuing the way of perfection. Sor Juana, in contrast, argued that secular learning was integral to her faith. Through the observation of the world and its workings, she understood how the world is ordered, and therefore found evidence for a divine creative and ordering mind behind it. As she makes plain through *El cetro de José*, observing the way the world works does not undermine Christian doctrine, but provides a means to prove and defend it. On a personal level, the study of the cosmos, its observation and understanding through secular learning was integral to her well-being, as it enabled her to make judicious choices, and to pursue the life of pleasure as understood and presented in Gassendi's Christian epicureanism:

> It is not an unbroken succession of drinking-bouts and of revelry, not sexual love, not the enjoyment of the fish and of other delicacies of a luxurious table, which produce a pleasant life; it is sober reasoning, searching out the grounds of every choice and avoidance, and banishing those beliefs through which the greatest tumults take possession of the soul. Of all this the beginning and the greatest good is prudence. Wherefore prudence is a more precious thing even than philosophy; from it spring all the other virtues, for it teaches that we cannot lead a life of pleasure which is not also a life of prudence, honour and justice; nor lead a life of prudence, honour and justice which is not also a life of pleasure. For the virtues have grown into one with a pleasant life, and a pleasant life is inseparable from them. (qtd in Hill 48)

For her own well-being, therefore, she declared that she must be allowed to continue to engage in secular learning, and not be confined to the religious duties of prayer, fasting, charity and study of the scriptures in a way that was merely obedient to authority.

This defence of her need and right to learn is inseparably tied to her optimistic vision of the potential of human learning, such that the one cannot be defended without reference to the other. Whether this be done overtly and discursively, as in the *Respuesta*, or dramatically and more implicitly in *El mártir del Sacramento*, it has to be done within a context which strongly defends an optimistic view of the possibility of human enquiry and moral judgement. This required an optimism in human potential which could not be reconciled with the traditional structure of the *auto*, which is predicated upon an understanding of humanity as sinful, helpless and fallible, not as creative, capable and confident in their own intellectual potential. If *El mártir del Sacramento* was written with the same purpose as *La Respuesta*, to defend Sor Juana's position as an intellectual and woman religious, who had the authority to determine her own vocation, it therefore could not function as an *auto sacramental*.

The influence of Enlightenment thought on the works of Sor Juana has implications which go beyond the understanding of her *autos sacramentales*. For the most part, she has been considered as the archetypal literary figure of the Spanish American Baroque, without much consideration of how she engaged with the scientific, philosophical and theological currents that had become an ever stronger force in European intellectual life since the mid-seventeenth century. Until now, the significance of the new science and the new philosophy to Sor Juana's writings has only really been considered in relation to her philosophical poem *Primero sueño*, with brief reference to the *Respuesta* and the *Carta Atenagórica*. The two studies by Hill and Robbins provide a counterpoint to some of the major trends in Sor Juana studies, but their conclusions have yet to be significantly appreciated or taken into account within the wider body of scholarship. I hope that by demonstrating that the influence of such currents of thought is also crucial to understanding her religious plays, other commentators will give further support to this important critical approach to the works of Sor Juana. In purely chronological terms, it makes sense to question the designation of Sor Juana as a purely Baroque author. Almost all of her most significant works were written after 1685, many of them almost a decade after the accepted close of the Spanish Golden Age in 1681. By this time, Enlightenment thought had been spreading across Europe for nearly half a century, and some of the most significant works we have come to think of as foundational to the early Enlightenment had been published for several decades.

The acceptance of Sor Juana as a Baroque figure and the lack of attention towards more modern currents in her thought and writing is also symptomatic of the historiography of the Enlightenment in the Hispanic world. While historical criticism has tended to assume that Spain and Spanish America were all but forgotten by the new

scientific trends, recent scholars have demonstrated that this was far from the case (Hill 21-25). Hill argues that the image of the Hispanic world as tied to backwards thinking by the constraints of the church and crown, and in the case of the Americas by dint of geographical distance and cultural inferiority is inaccurate and historically biased. Her book *Scepters and Sciences in the Spains* concludes that several intellectuals, including Sor Juana, not only were influenced by, but also contributed to, the development of Enlightenment thought as they "charted a middle course between scholastics and moderns in Spain and Spanish America" (1). She thus argues for a re-conceptualisation of the terms of late Baroque and Enlightenment culture, in a way that would allow for the inclusion of the Hispanic world, where the intellectual developments in philosophy and the sciences did not run counter to, but rather worked alongside, a dominant Catholic ideology, and where developments on the western side of the Atlantic not only kept pace with, but at times overtook, those on the peninsula:

> That New Spain in the seventeenth century "was not prepared to take the leap into modernity" and that Sor Juana was "trapped by her faith" are part and parcel of a reductionist history of science in which modernity is an apparition in the skies of seventeenth-century France. A rational reconstruction of Sor Juana's natural philosophy proves that such views owe less to reason and experience and more to the imagination than she did. (Hill 25)

Indeed, the known breadth of Sor Juana's reading, her collection of scientific instruments, and her references throughout both her secular and religious works to scientific developments, suggest that scholars should pay closer attention to the influence of natural philosophy in Sor Juana's thoughts and writings, as it has the potential to inform our understanding not just of the content of her works, but also of

her attitude towards intellectual enquiry, learning, knowledge and writing. As Robbins states in reference to her secular works:

> In Sor Juana's work, we see the cristalization of a new attitude towards intellectual enquiry in general and knowledge in particular, a change which is evident above all in her attitude towards the sceptical position regarding the impossibility of secure knowledge and in her abandonment of the traditional epistemological terms of the period. (*Arts* 238)

In Sor Juana's *autos sacramentales*, and in *El cetro de José* in particular, we see this new attitude to be applied not just to her secular writings, but also to those which defend Catholic doctrine, which are defined almost entirely by the very notions Sor Juana rejects, namely scepticism and traditional scholastic epistemologies.

The extent of the influence of such patterns of thought beyond Sor Juana's secular writings to her *autos sacramentales* is significant in three particular ways. Firstly, it challenges the way in which we perceive her position at the end of the Baroque, and her position within the canon of Golden-Age literature. Secondly, it challenges the assumption that the Hispanic world was somehow left behind the rest of Europe in the development of Enlightenment thought, and that the Americas lagged even further behind than this. Finally, it challenges the notion that the thought of the Enlightenment was incompatible with religious faith, in particular the dogmatic assertions of Counter-Reformation Catholicism.

Sor Juana is often considered as the last great author of the Spanish Golden Age, and is often interpreted as the archetypal figure of the American Baroque. However, as I have shown, the unquestioning designation of Sor Juana as a Baroque author has constrained rather than promoted the critical analysis of these plays. It has resulted in a lack of scholarly appraisals which are consistent with the intellectual climate of her

time, which pay close attention to the texts themselves, and which reconcile her authorship of typically Baroque plays with her adherence to and promotion of new currents of epistemological thought. As with many intellectuals in any period where paradigms are shifting, Sor Juana and her contemporaries demonstrate, Janus-like, clear traces of what in retrospect can be seen as "old" ways of thinking and what will subsequently by confirmed as "new" ways.[46] Simply by the fact that she chose, or was requested, to write *autos sacramentales*, Sor Juana demonstrates the influence of Baroque thought in her works. In the way in which she supersedes the models given to her by her predecessors, and infuses the genre with new aesthetic and epistemological models, she affirms her position among the modern thinkers of the late seventeenth-century Hispanic world. She remains the inheritor of Calderón, Góngora, Gracián and Quevedo, but she also has her eyes firmly fixed on the era beyond, and demonstrates thereby the end of the Baroque, but also the beginnings of Enlightenment. Her works demonstrate that, despite what has often thought to be the case, the Spanish world was receptive to the new science, to new philosophy and epistemology. They also suggest that, as with previous movements of intellectual thought, in the case of the Hispanic world, we may do well to look to literature, rather than philosophical texts, to find where these ideas were being discussed and disseminated.

The acceptance of Sor Juana as a figure who is considered among the greatest and most versatile writers of the Spanish Golden Age, and yet who engaged with the modes of thought of both the Baroque and the Enlightenment, also challenges the way in which we perceive the influence of Enlightenment thought to the Hispanic world, and vice versa. Both Hill and Robbins concur that it was in the New World, outside of the

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[46] For a discussion of Sigüenza y Góngora as a Janus figure, much of which could equally apply to Sor Juana, see Trabulse's *Ciencia y religión en el siglo XVII* 1974.

universities, (where the traditional Aristotelian way of thinking was still used and defended), that the new philosophy took the strongest hold, and was allowed to flourish. As a thinker and writer who was entirely taught by herself, or through correspondence with her contemporaries who were sympathetic to the new ways of thinking, Sor Juana's writings present strong evidence for arguing in support of this idea. This, in turn, nuances they way in which we perceive Sor Juana's intellectual formation, and her position as a woman religious and woman intellectual. Traditionally, her lack of formal education, her preclusion from the world of the university and the Jesuit institutions is seen as a disadvantage. Nonetheless, if we take into account the opinions of those scholars to have worked on the matter of the development of the new philosophy in the Spains, her unique position can be seen as a strength, rather than a weakness.

A feature of the new epistemology discussed above was its stress on the utility, rather than the accumulation of knowledge. Several of her contemporaries articulate that this is best achieved through actual experience, rather than theoretical learning (Robbins *Arts* 250). This echoes Sor Juana's own writings in the *Respuesta*, that knowledge is best acquired through experience of the world, rather than through the authorities taught in the universities. Particularly notable is her famous quip that "si Aristóteles hubiera guisado, mucho más hubiera escrito" (*Respuesta* 1476; para. 29). By contrasting the knowledge gained through the practical experience of the world with knowledge gained through Aristotelian syllogism, as she did in *El cetro de José*, she defends her manner of learning as a better path to the ethical use of knowledge than the traditional formation given in the universities. I suggest that her unique position as a woman intellectual in the New World was not in fact always what hindered her, but one factor of many which enabled her to go beyond the currents of thought tied to the past.

Finally, these conclusions refine statements made by Hill and Robbins, who have argued that although the ideas of the Enlightenment were an integral part of late seventeenth-century Hispanic thought, in the field of theology, Aristotelianism remained the prevailing approach to knowledge until well into the eighteenth century. Sor Juana's *autos sacramentales* demonstrate that the new philosophy was not only compatible with theology, but indeed could aid and further its study. Rather than consigning theology to being the discipline where Aristotelianism remained the norm, Sor Juana's *autos sacramentales* combine science, philosophy and theology. Sor Juana demonstrates the use of the new philosophy to defend the doctrine of transubstantiation, rather than merely employing it to discuss the existence of God, a question which would remain reconcilable with Enlightenment thought among all but the most radical for over a century to come. She thus reconciles the new philosophy with the central tenet of the Counter-Reformation, a doctrine often thought to be entirely dependent on, and symptomatic of, scholastic thought, and which tied the Catholic Church not only to the Baroque, but to Medieval thought. In doing so, Sor Juana's *autos sacramentales* challenge our understanding of the significance of theology to her thought and writing, but also the way we conceive of the relationship between Catholicism, Baroque and Enlightenment in the late seventeenth-century Hispanic world.

The conclusions reached in this study of Sor Juana's *autos sacramentales*, *El divino Narciso, El cetro de José* and *El mártir del Sacramento* call for a reconsideration of Sor Juana as a figure of the Baroque and of her position and influence as a woman writer, as an author of religious literature, a scientist, a philosopher and a theologian. The conclusions of this thesis present strong support for the argument that at least until the events of 1690–1691, Sor Juana had the freedom and the capacity to engage with

Golden-Age thought on poetics, philosophy, theology, cultural and linguistic identity, often surpassing her forerunners and models in her displays of wit and erudition. They show her to have been orthodox in her theology, and consummate in her negotiation of the boundaries of what could be said explicitly, and what decorum required to be articulated implicitly, or spoken in private but not printed in public. It is only when others transgressed such boundaries on her behalf, as did the Bishop of Puebla, that she was forced into a position of defence, which limited her literary abilities, and compelled her to defend as best she could a stance which she believed to be entirely consistent with Catholic theology. The significance of empirical enquiry to her theology has never before been appreciated, but it is crucial to understanding how the events of the final years of Sor Juana's life, and the texts she wrote during that time, fit together. It also demonstrates the extent of the influence of the new philosophy on her thought and writings, and demands a reassessment of her position within the Baroque canon. Furthermore, her confidence in her ability to reconcile the new philosophy with one of the most scholastic tenets of Catholic doctrine forces us to reconsider the way in which we conceive of a Hispanic and a Catholic Enlightenment. Her plays suggest that we need to look further for other examples, in literature, philosophy or the sciences, of those who also attempted to reconcile transubstantiation with rational enquiry, and their significance to the way we understand the development of Enlightenment thought in Europe and the Atlantic world.

Most simply, and yet most crucially, I argue that all of Sor Juana's *autos sacramentales* should be considered as significant works in her corpus; they are as significant to understanding her mind and writings as the *Carta Atenagórica* and *Respuesta*, *Primero sueño*, or *Los empeños de una casa*. Studied alone, with or without

their *loas*, following the theological and aesthetic conventions of the *auto sacramental*, they are each plays which merit further study. Read together, with the continuities and connections between them taken into account, they provide an unparalleled opportunity for the study of the development of Sor Juana's theological, literary, dramatic and epistemological thought, and affirm her position as the last great writer of the Spanish Golden Age.



Fig. B. Fig. B. Map of Mexico City from 1749, showing the convent of San Jerónimo, parish boundaries and signatory churches. *La ciudad de Mexico en 1749. Reproducción de un plano de la época* (Ediciones Arte Mexicano: Mexico, 1949). Reproduced with permission of the Library of Congress, Washington, DC.
Key: 1. Viceregal palace 2. Cathedral 3. *Coliseo* playhouse 4. Royal Hospital of the Indies 5. Church of San Pablo 6. Church of San Pedro 7. Church of Santiago Tlatelolco 8-13. Jesuit colleges. 14. Convent of San Jerónimo

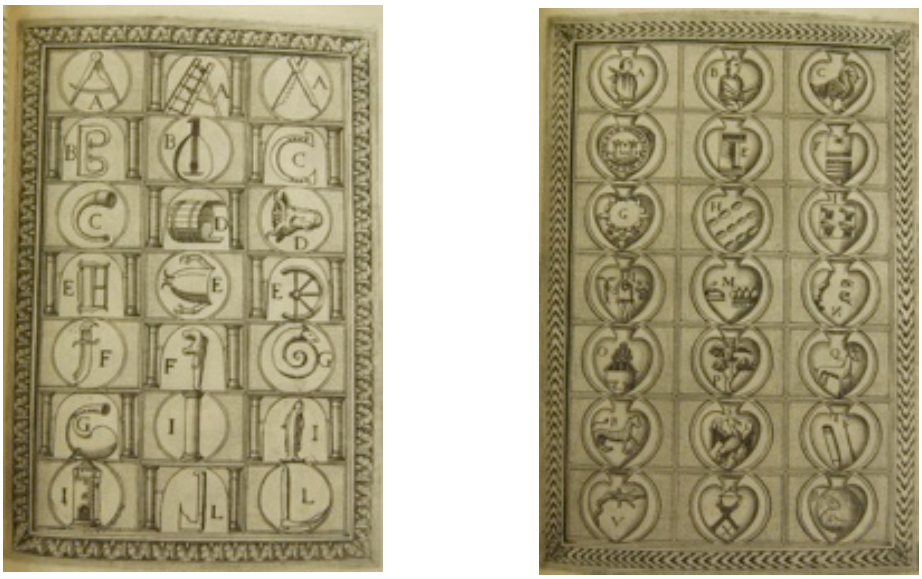


Fig. C. European (l.) and Aztec (r.) phonetic alphabets, plates from Diego Valadés, *Rhetorica Christiana.* Plates following p.100. Reproduced with permission of the Bodleian Library, Oxford.



Fig. D. Ecclesiastical and political hierarchies of the New World, plates following p.180.



Fig. E. Visual instruction on the Spanish Missions, plate p.207.



Fig. F. Priest using *lienzos* to instruct his congregation, plate p.211.

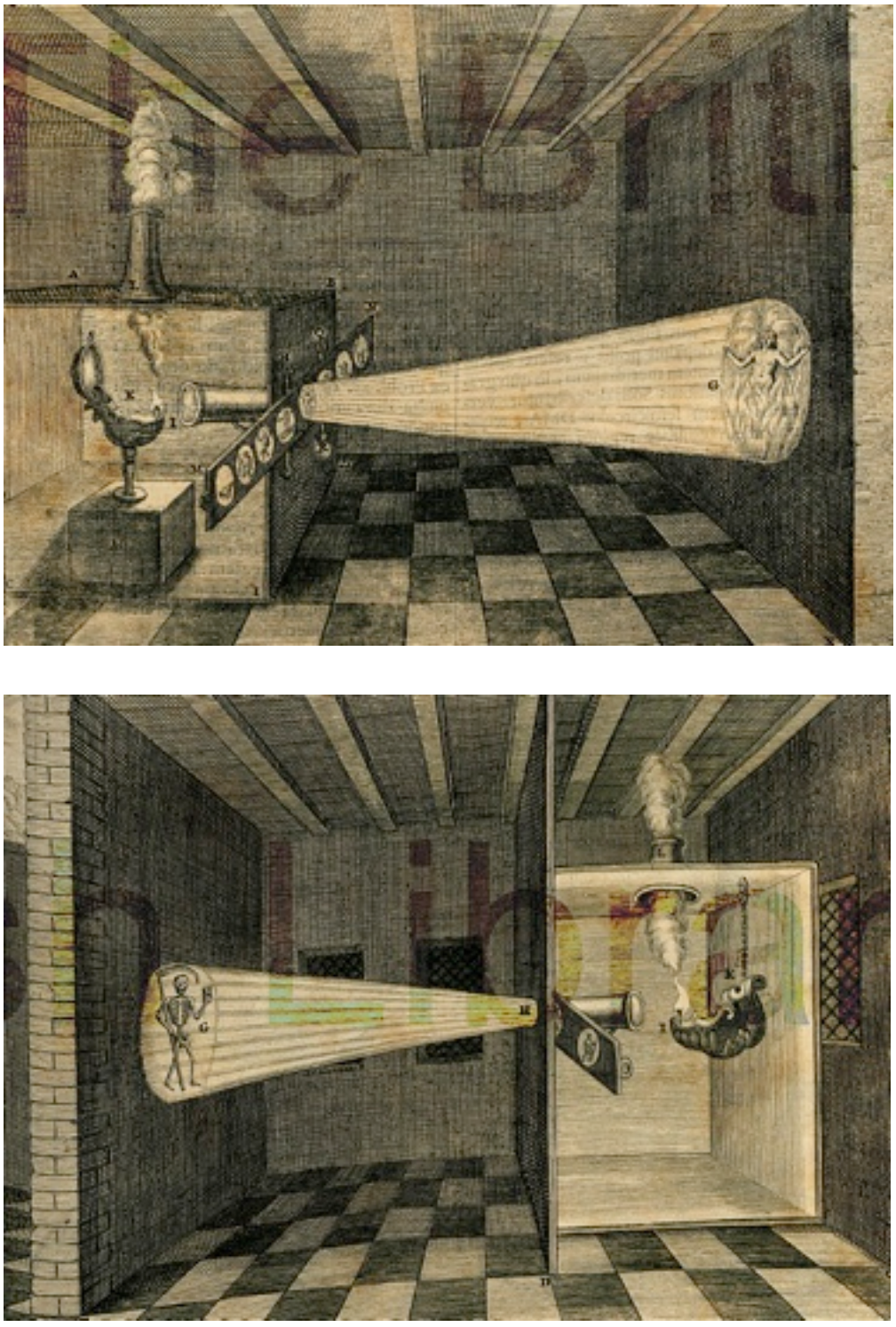


Fig. G The Magic Lantern. Kircher, Athanasius. *Ars magna lucis*. Amsterdam, 1671. 768-769. Reproduced with permission of the British Library

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