Nepantla as her Place in the Middle: Multilingualism and Multiculturalism in the Writings of Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz

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DEDICATION

Para Natalia

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ABSTRACT

In this dissertation, I analyze a selection of Sor Juana's works in the context of bilingual and bicultural studies. I infer that the author's language acquisition and cultural sensitivity were interrelated, both affecting the other and influencing her writing. I argue that her bilingualism correlated with her cultural sensitivity and sympathy towards marginalized groups. In her works, the author employs a variety of strategies to denounce discrimination and repression as well as rhetoric that promotes tolerance of other cultures and resistance to oppression. I explore these strategies in her texts and apply relevant theory in order to fully analyze their implications. I study the circumstances of each individual language and culture referenced as well as the phenomenon of multiculturalism itself.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz stands out as one of the most celebrated and studied authors of the colonial period and is among the most influential female intellectuals in history. Scholars have conducted extensive studies on her erudition, influences, writing style, and ascribed feminism. However, one of the most fascinating features of the colonial period, its multilingual and multicultural nature, is often ignored in Sor Juana research. The author wrote in a variety of languages, including Spanish, Latin, Nahuatl, Portuguese, Galician, Euskera, Bozal (Spanish spoken by the slaves of the time), as well as in intriguing mixtures of two or more languages. The inclusion of more than one language in a text may seem superficial as a characteristic but multilingualism and language choice reveal fascinating implications surrounding the author's cultural sensitivity and identity. As Doris Sommer states in the introduction to her anthology, *Bilingual Games*, "More than one language per person means more than one way to eat, dress, pray, cure, dance, think" (10). Bilingualism tends to cultivate a meticulous understanding of other cultures and values and often leads to double-consciousness and a composite sense of identity.

In this dissertation, I analyze a selection of the author's works in the context of bilingual and bicultural studies. I infer that Sor Juana's language acquisition and cultural sensitivity were interrelated, both affecting the other and influencing her writing. As Hamers and Blanc state in their fundamental study, *Bilinguality and*

Bilingualism, language is a part of culture but there is no simple cause-and-effect relationship between them – they are in constant interplay (2). The author's bilingualism affected her interest in distinct cultures, while the latter encouraged and facilitated her language learning. Scholars argue that bilingualism correlates with heightened sensitivity and cultural awareness (Edwards 248), which is evident in the case of Sor Juana. In her writing, the author employs a variety of strategies to denounce discrimination and repression as well as rhetoric that promotes tolerance of other cultures and resistance to oppression. I explore these strategies in her writings and apply relevant theory in order to fully analyze their implications. I study the circumstances of each individual language and culture referenced as well as the phenomenon of multiculturalism itself.

It is first necessary to discuss the sociological implications of language use in a multicultural society. In colonial New Spain, Spanish was viewed as the language of the civilized while indigenous languages and African Bozal Spanish would indicate a lack of intelligence and decreased social status. Any speech other than that of the hegemonic culture was deemed inferior. Modern research has shown, however, that all languages and language dialects are of equal linguistic value in that they all have the potential to serve equal functions and adapt to any necessary use (Edwards 60). Linguists have dismissed the "inherent value" hypothesis, which suggested that some languages or dialects are of higher linguistic worth than others. As Hamers and Blanc explain, the stereotypes and prejudices that a group forms towards another are linked to cultural and ethnolinguistic perceptions of each

group. Individuals and groups may be evaluated, positively or negatively, according to the language or language variety that they speak. The "standard" or "legitimate" variety is esteemed while other forms of speech are stigmatized (129). Researchers have confirmed the "imposed norm" principle, which asserts that if one language is valued more than another it is because it is spoken by the group with the most prestige or status. Language attitudes are in fact prejudices towards certain groups of people (Edwards 57). Linguistic studies have proven that stereotypes of a social or ethnic group affect the perception of the language of that group, which then affects the attitudes towards individual speakers of that language (Appel 16-8).

We can see then, how language and marginalization are inherently connected. The case of bilinguals, however, is different. Hamers and Blanc state that bilinguals are less likely to maintain language stereotypes than are monolinguals. Acquiring a competence in a second language can modify ethnolinguistic attitudes and enhance positive perceptions of the other group (133). Walter Mignolo notes that "as people become polyglots, their sense of history, nationality and race become as entangled as their languaging" (236), indicating that speaking another language gives a person a new perspective into the foreign culture, which is true in the case of Sor Juana, as she not only includes subaltern languages in her works, but also themes of tolerance and understanding of other cultures. Recent psychological research shows that although adults suffer interference from their own perspectives when reasoning about other people's beliefs, bilinguals are less susceptible to this egocentric bias than are monolinguals.

Bilingual language production requires constant monitoring of the target language in order to minimize interference from the competing language, strengthening a bilingual person's executive control system (Rubio-Fernández and Glucksberg 211). I show in this dissertation that Sor Juana used her writings to defend and celebrate marginalized groups and I explore how her bilingualism and biculturalism were interrelated. As Hamers and Blanc clarify, the relationship between bilinguality and cultural identity is reciprocal: bilinguality influences the development of cultural identity, which in turn influences the development of bilinguality (121). In the early 1900s, Benjamin Lee Whorf advocated for his linguistic relativity principle, now often termed the "Sapir-Whorf hypothesis", which suggested that speakers of different languages conceptualize and experience the world differently. As Hill explains, the studies of language and culture cannot be separated (382). Language shapes, and is shaped by, the nature of our knowledge (400).

For this reason, those that speak multiple languages are often understood to possess multiple cultural identities. In the introduction to *Bilingual Games*, Doris Sommer discusses the alternate identities that bilingualism produces in its subjects (6) and explains that bilingualism leads to double-consciousness (10). According to Luna, Ringberg, and Peracchio's study, "One Individual, Two Identities: Frame Switching among Biculturals", bicultural bilinguals may feel like a different person when speaking a different language because they have distinct cognitive frameworks associated with each language and culture. Each framework may consist of different values, behaviors, worldviews, and identities (279). In a recent

survey of multicultural Japanese women, participants reported differences in behaviors and personas depending on which language they used. One woman reported that she felt more outgoing while speaking English and attributed the difference in personality to the features of the English language. Another stated that she felt she could be more aggressive while speaking English, but preferred to act polite while speaking her native Japanese (Hemmi 87). The changing attitudes of these bilingual women when switching codes reveals their multiculturalism and multiple cultural identities. In *The New World Border: Prophecies, Poems & Loqueras for the End of the Century*, Chicano writer Guillermo Gómez-Peña also explains that like many others, he is a member of multiple communities and wears "different hats (or masks) at different times, and sometimes more than one at once". In his art, he explores the "labyrinths of identity" (80), again emphasizing the fact that multilingualism and multiculturalism have intriguing effects on identity and cultural consciousness. Hamers and Blanc add that bilingual development can lead a person to renounce the cultural identity of the mother-tongue group and adopt that of the second-language group (11). Although Sor Juana didn't reject her Spanish heritage, I remark in this dissertation how she embraced the cultural identity of the three civilizations in question and in some cases felt herself to be a part of ethnic groups outside of her own.

Life History

Juana Ramírez de Asbaje was born in San Miguel Nepantla, a village in Popocatépetl, 60 kilometers southeast of Mexico City. According to Calleja's

biography[1], she was born November 12, 1651 (16) but it is now believed that a certificate of baptism dated December 2, 1648 belongs to her[2]. The certificate was found in the parish of Chimalhuacán, the jurisdiction to which Nepantla belonged and records the baptism of a girl child: "Inés, daughter of the Church", with godparents Miguel Ramírez and Beatriz Ramírez, the brother and sister of Juana Inés's mother, Isabel. The phrase "daughter of the Church" indicates that she was an illegitimate child since her parents were not formally married (Paz 65; Flynn 14). Juana's mother was Isabel Ramírez de Cantillana, daughter of Spanish parents, born in Ayacapixtla and her father was Pedro Manuel de Asbaje from the village of Vergara in the province of Guipúzcoa in northern Basque Country, Spain[3] (Nervo 39). Doña Isabel Ramírez's will confirms that she is the mother of six children, five

[1] For the study of Sor Juana's life, researchers have relied primarily on two texts: the *Respuesta a Sor Filotea de la Cruz*, a letter written by Sor Juana known in English as *The Answer* or *The Response*, and the biography written by Jesuit priest Diego Calleja after her death in 1700. Scholars also have access to her certificate of baptism, her will, the wills of her mother and sisters, some contracts of purchase and sale, and her profession of faith. The *Response*, however, is not an autobiography; it is a defense and leaves out several key details about her life, such as the time spent in the court. Although Calleja, Sor Juana's contemporary, did not know her personally, he knew some of her friends and he shared correspondence with her through letters. It is believed that their relationship began when the nun wrote him in praise of one of his poems. The priest Calleja avoids any details that could harm her reputation and attributes the different stages of her life as parts of the ascent toward saintliness (Paz 64). He makes a point to falsely identify her as a legitimate child, explaining that Isabel Ramírez and Pedro Manuel de Asbaje were married and that their children were legitimately born (Calleja 16-7) and makes no mention of her half-siblings or her step-father.

[2] González Obregón discovered hidden "hieroglyphs" on the painting of Juana Inés by Miguel Cabrera in 1750. Three inscribed stanzas contain what appear to be random letters capitalized throughout the verses. However, a closer look reveals that the capitalized letters are Roman numerals. When added together, the sums of the stanzas are: 44, the number of years that Sor Juana lived, 1651, the year in which she was born according to Calleja's biography, and 1695, the year that she died (Obregón 266-7). We could consider the painting a clue to the true birth year of Sor Juana, but it is possible that Cabrera based his information on that recorded by Calleja.

[3] Juana Inés appears to have had a distant relationship with her father, if she even knew him at all. In her writing, she never mentions any of her father's relatives and rarely mentions her father. In most cases, Sor Juana used her maternal last name: Doña Juana Ramirez, and sometimes Doña Juana Ramirez de Asbaje. The name "Doña Juana Ines de Asbaje" appears on only one occasion, in one of her earliest poems, written at 20 years of age when she was still living in the viceregal palace (Paz 65-66).

female and one male, all illegitimate, the first three conceived with Pedro Manuel de Asbaje and the other three with Captain Diego Ruiz Lozano.

Juana exhibited a passion for learning at a young age. At the age of three, the child convinced one of her older sister's teachers to give her lessons (Calleja 17; "La Respuesta" 830). She knew how to read and write by the time she was six or seven and asked her mother to send her to the university dressed as a man, but was rejected (Calleja 19; "La Respuesta" 830). Juana educated herself by studying in her grandfather's library without her family's knowledge ("La Respuesta" 830; Paz 82). While learning Latin, she disciplined herself by cutting her hair and if she had not mastered the material by the time it grew back, she would cut it again ("La Respuesta" 831; Calleja 20-1). Juana Inés never received formal schooling and as she states in "La Respuesta", her only teachers were mute books (833).

At around the age of 8 or 10, Juana was sent to live with relatives in México City (Calleja 20; Paz 86). It is unknown why she was sent away from her family, but one can suspect that her departure is related to the arrival of a new man in her mother's life, Diego Ruiz Lozano, who came to be the father of her three younger siblings. It is also unknown whether her other two sisters were also sent away to live with relatives or if they remained on the ranch (Paz 86). At around the age of 15, her aunt and uncle sent her to live at the viceregal palace. The viceroys, Antonio Sebastián Álvarez de Toledo Molina y Salazar and his wife Leonor Carreto, Marquises of the Mancera, took a special liking to Juana and became her protectors (Calleja 22; Nervo 54). According to Calleja, the Marquis once gathered some 40

educated men of various professions from the university and the city to ask the seventeen-year-old Sor Juana questions related to their professions, all of which she was able to answer, greatly impressing Álvarez de Toledo (22).

At the age of 19, Juana joined the convent of San José de las Carmelitas Descalzas but the order was severe and she renounced after three months. A year and a half later, she took her vows in the convent of San Jerónimo, reserved strictly for *criolla* women and known for the mildness of its discipline (Nervo 54; Paz 66, 99). At the time she took her vows, Juana Ramirez claimed that she was the legitimate daughter of Pedro de Asbaje and Isabel Ramirez. In 1672, Diego Ruiz Lozano placed his two daughters in the convent under the care of their "cousin", Sor Juana, who was actually their half-sister. Sor Juana also referred to herself in a professional document of 1669 as the "Legitimate daughter of don Pedro de Asbaje y Vargas Machuca and of Isabel Ramírez"[4] (reproduced in Obregón 268). This goes to show that although the rules of lineage were strict, they were rarely enforced (Paz 118).

Scholars have long debated Juana's reasons for becoming a nun. According to Octavio Paz, 20th century Mexican writer and author of *Sor Juana or the Traps of Faith*, it is evident that Sor Juana was a sincere Catholic. However, her decision to join the convent could have been due to any number of worldly considerations. The religious life offered both economic security and social respectability (Paz 104). Pascual Buxó reminds us that the convent was the only place in colonial society that

[4] Original quote: "Yo soror Juª ines de la chruz hija legitima de don pº de asvaje y bargas machuca Y de Isabel rramires". Translation and modernization of spelling mine.

would allow a woman to study (62). Sor Juana herself mentions in *The Response* that given her rejection of marriage, joining a religious order was the least unpleasant and the most decent choice that she could make and that it would give her the opportunity to study without interruptions (831). Her decision to become a nun has always been a controversial topic among critics, some attributing her entrance into the cloister to her spirituality and considering her a "mystic nun", while others claim that she was a non-believer and made the decision based on purely practical reasons (Flynn 11-13).

Sor Juana served in the convent of San Jerónimo as a bookkeeper and treasurer. She was reelected twice and held the position for nine years (Paz 121; Nervo 61). On two occasions, Juana's sisters selected her to be abbess, a position that she rejected (Nervo 61; Xirau 6). The sisters were allotted several hours of free time during each day, during which Sor Juana dedicated herself to reading, studying, and writing. She read encyclopedias and treatises on mythology, philosophy, jurisprudence, and history (Paz 129). She claims in the *Response* to have studied a great variety of subjects, adding that what she didn't understand from one field of study could be explained metaphorically through clarifications of a different author **said** in a seemingly unrelated field (832-3). According to Calleja's biography, she owned 4,000 books, comprising the largest library in New Spain (36).

In 1690, at the petition of the bishop of Puebla, Manuel Fernández de Santa Cruz, Sor Juana wrote the "Carta atenagórica" (Athenagoric Letter), a critique of a sermon of Antonio Vieira, a Portuguese theologist. Fernández de Santa Cruz

published the critique along with a letter under the pseudonym "Sor Philotea", prasing Sor Juana's work but criticizing the fact that she diverges from her role as a nun and woman by participating in scholarly activities. She answered with the famous *Response* declaring that she would not renounce secular reading and writing. This letter that defends the intellectual rights and capabilities of women has become Sor Juana's most studied work, often considered the first feminist writing of Latin America.

In 1693, after a series of traumatic events in Mexico, Sor Juana returned to her old confessor, Antonio Núñez de Miranda, who she had dismissed a decade earlier as he was unsupportive of her academic interests. She wrote a general confession of her nonreligious life that signaled the termination of her secular writings (Calleja 37). The document is still conserved and is titled "Protest signed with the blood of her faith and love for God, at the time of abandonment of human studies"[5] (Pascual Buxó 86). In 1694, she surrendered her books and instruments to Archbishop Aguiar y Seijas to sell and the proceeds were used to aid the poor (Calleja 38; Flynn 24). Although many Catholic biographers as well as other critics attribute this sudden change to a spiritual decision of the sister to dedicate her life to Christ (Pascual Buxó 84), some scholars suggest that she was the subject of a secret trial, accused by the Archbishop of Mexico, Francisco de Aguiar y Seijas of heresy, insubordination, and "activities incompatible with her state" (Kirk 360). Luis Leal also suspects that her critique of Vieira fell into the hands of the

[5] Translation mine. Original document title: "Protesta rubricada con su sangre de su fe y amor a Dios, al tiempo de abandonar los estudios humanos"

Inquisition, forcing her to abandon intellectual writing (14). According to Elías Trabulse, the secret episcopal trial took place on April 2, 1693 and the archbishop's goal was to stop her from writing both secular works and theological pieces (146). She was found guilty and forced to abandon her intellectual activities. Scholars have suggested that for this reason she was forced to sell her books and many of her works were lost (Kirk 360).

In April of 1695, an epidemic[6] broke out in the convent of San Jerónimo, killing a large number of nuns (Calleja 41). Sor Juana cared for her sisters, contracted the illness, and died on April 17 at 46 years of age (Calleja 43). At the time of her death, Sor Juana left behind 180 unpublished volumes of select works and fifteen collections of writings including secular and religious verses, indicating that she had not in fact renounced from scholarly activity, but had discreetly continued to study and write[7] (Trabulse 149, Luciani 157). None of these works were published and have since been lost.

Historical context

Sor Juana lived in the viceroyalty of New Spain, which was located in what is modern day Mexico. During the American colonial period, Europeans found themselves in close contact with cultures completely different from their own.

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[6] The nature of the disease is unknown (Paz 464).

[7] Although many Sor Juana scholars consider her final years a tragedy, Frederick Luciani suggests that she intentionally fashioned a new religious image of herself, removing herself from the public sphere so that she could read and write at her own discretion in private. She indicated in several of her texts that she disliked the fame that came with her success as a writer and suggested that she longed for solitude, autonomy, and silence (Luciani 157). Her apparent renunciation from secular writing would have freed her from obligatory commissioned works and allowed her to write for pleasure.

Although the Spanish dominated society in economic, political, and cultural terms, whites actually made up a minority of the population of New Spain. An estimated 25 million indigenous people inhabited what is now Mexico at the time of the arrival of the Europeans in 1519, though this number was reduced to about 1.5 million by the year 1600 due mainly to disease and harsh working conditions (Richmond 2-3). The majority of intercultural studies of the region focus on contact between the Spanish and the indigenous while the African cultural element, which was also pertinent to Latin America's cultural formation, is often ignored. African slaves accompanied the Spanish from the beginning of the Conquest and participated in the fight against indigenous resistance. While the majority of Africans at the time of the invasion worked as domestic servants and business assistants, some Blacks served as conquistadors who traveled about the colonies claiming territories in the name of Spain. Because the majority of Africans arrived as slaves and were considered inferior, Spanish writers consistently ignored their central role when writing about the Conquest (Restall *Seven Myths* 53). By 1640, New Spain alone had imported over 150,000 African slaves (Proctor 15). Historians disagree on the demographics of the viceroyalty's population and they varied greatly throughout the colonial period but it is certain that slaves and their descendants made up a considerable part of Mexico City's population until at least the early eighteenth century (Von Germeten 73).

Given the large existing indigenous population and the introduction of numerous African slaves, Mexico City housed the most racially diverse population of

the Spanish colonies (Cope 7). The exchange between several groups with different sets of social, political, and religious values often meant an imposition of the dominant society's values and the displacement of the weaker group (Lavrin 305). The Spanish disseminated their ideology of racial hierarchy known as the *casta* system, which consisted of the Spanish at the top, *castas* or mixed race people in the middle, and Indians and Africans at the bottom. Racism was prominent among colonial Europeans, who marginalized any non-whites and attempted to force indigenous and African peoples to assimilate to what they believed was the only acceptable culture. Nevertheless, the encounter did not result in complete annihilation of indigenous cultures as is sometimes believed, nor were African slaves stripped of their values and traditions. As Asunción Lavrin explains, the degree that each ethnic group maintained its cultural identity depended greatly on the relative independence that it would have from other societies. For example, in remote geographical areas, indigenous civilizations conserved many of their distinct cultural characteristics while Spanish culture dominated the cities (306). Spanish law shows evidence of a doctrine of two separate commonwealths: one for the Spaniards in the cities and another for the Indians in smaller towns and villages. Consequently, many indigenous elements remained untouched by outside influence (Lockhart 3). African cultures left their mark both in cities and in rural areas where slave workers outnumbered Europeans (Lavrin 306). Rather than assume that the dominant culture replaced the others, we must consider this encounter an exchange of languages, ideas, and traditions. As Lavrin maintains, they influenced each other

mutually (306). According to Matthew Restall, a leading historian on colonial Latin America, the indigenous often considered those practices derived from the Spanish culture not as European but as their own. He states that the "borrowing" of Spanish cultural elements indicates not native culture loss but rather adaptability (*Seven Myths* 128). In addition to the imposition of dominant discourses and "contamination" of subaltern values, we find evidence of reverse cultural assimilation, in which subaltern groups influenced the hegemonic culture. The effect of marginalized groups on the dominant culture, however, is sometimes difficult to analyze due to the fact that documentation of such encounters is most commonly recorded in the dominant language and implies a one-sided interpretation of events (Moraña "Barroco y conciencia criolla" 234). In addition, cultural groups often practiced syncretic forms of traditions in which each group understood concepts to be their own, ignoring the fact that the other group interpreted the ideas differently. James Lockhard, expert in Nahua history and culture, terms this phenomenon "Double Mistaken Identity" and claims that the misconception was at the root of cultural interaction between groups.

The writings of Sor Juana reflect Mexico's multicultural state by including both Nahuatl and *Bozal* Spanish spoken by Africans, as well as allusions to cultural practices of both groups. Evangelization, although originally thought to completely transform the religious beliefs of the indigenous, resulted mainly in a mixture of elements from several religions, adapting Catholic beliefs to already existing non-Christian traditions (Cope 5). The author's life circumstances exposed her Nahua

and Afro-Mexican culture. As I show in my research, this contact shaped her opinions of these ethnic groups and caused her to refute common prejudices. She learned the languages of both groups and was able to better understand and appreciate their cultures.

Aside from the cultural contact that Sor Juana experienced through personal relationships, she was introduced to a third culture through her studies of Latin and classical writings. She was also exposed to the classical culture by means of secondhand references, as allusions to antiquity were common for erudite early modern authors. It was also customary for vernacular works to be translated into Latin in order to reach a greater number of international learned readers (Helander 7-8). As James Farrell observes, classical rhetoric predominated the colonial period as well. Many American writers saw their rhetorical situations, which included their purpose, their audience, and themselves, in classical terms. Authors often selected classical pseudonyms and relied on classical allusions and analogies (415-6). Farrell states that classical analogies were not merely ornamental but served as metaphors, providing depth for contemporary events (435). This is true in the case of Sor Juana, as she uses ancient legends to gain perspective on issues contemporary to her time. In *El divino Narciso,* the Greek mythological character Narcissus represents Jesus Christ while Echo represents the devil in an attempt to explain the mystery of Christ's sacrifice for mankind. In *Neptuno Alegórico*, the author compares Tomás de la Cerda, the newly entering viceroy, to the Roman god Neptune in order to glorify his virtues. As discussed in Chapter 4, Sor Juana employed classical rhetoric and

references to ancient culture, along with the Latin language, revealing her multilingualism and multiculturalism in the classical realm.

The Baroque Style

In addition to the colony's historical context, the writing conventions of the 17th century are relevant in the interpretation of Sor Juana's texts. The work of Juana Inés was for a long time considered part of the Spanish literary tradition and "accidentally situated" in New Spain and the social situation of the viceroyalty was considered irrelevant to interpretation of her texts (Moraña "Barroco y conciencia criolla" 231). The European style of the time, from the middle of the 15th Century until the end of the 17th, was the Baroque[8], characterized by picturesque detail, vitality, and dynamic styles (Picón-Salas 121-2; Roggiano 5). The Baroque style was adopted in the Americas but was, in itself, distinct. Called "*Barroco de Indias*" by Picón Salas in 1944, it is most distinguishable by the tension between racial, cultural, and religious groups. America was physically different from Spain and the American Baroque is conscious of each region's geography (Picón-Salas 134). The "Indian Baroque" of Latin America has been characterized as exaggerated and even as a parody of the trending European style. According to Paz, the Mexican Baroque was an exaggeration of its Spanish models and like all artistic imitations, attempted to surpass the original (59).

Alfredo A. Roggiano suggests the existence of an indigenous Baroque, citing Alejo Carpentier, who stated that America's art has always been Baroque (3). He

[8] Its name comes from a reference to "baroque pearls", which are those of irregular or non-spherical shape. The term was initially used in a derogatory sense to denote the peculiar excess of adornment in art and literature.

disagrees with "Eurocentric" critics who believe that the use of the Baroque in America was a simple imitation of Spanish authors (4). Roggiano cites Pedro Henríquez Ureña, who was one of the first to identify America's baroque as different. He calls it an "ultra-Baroque", with reference to the fact that while the characteristic elaborate embellishment was decreasing in Spain in the 16th Century, it was increasing in America (Roggiano 8). Also increasing in Baroque America was the development of a "*criollo*[9] spirit" known as *criollismo*. The *criollo* sector of society grew progressively in wealth, prestige, and political power but felt undercompensated by the Spanish Crown, causing the formation of a distinct social consciousness (Moraña "Barroco y conciencia criolla" 235-7). Critics such as Gerard Flynn, biographer of Sor Juana, characterize the writer as more Spanish than Mexican (11) and believe that her work belongs in the Spanish rather than the Latin American literary canon (13). However, as I aim to prove in this dissertation, Sor Juana's experience as a *criolla* was different than that of a Spaniard and the double-consciousness produced by her exposure to other cultures shaped her identity in a way that is reflected in her works.

Mariano Picón Salas identified Sor Juana's work as producing "like no other a strange confluence of all of the values and enigmas of the Baroque era"[10]. Topics of philosophy, music, and mathematics all contributed to the Baroque content of her intellectual work. The critic states that she expressed exceptionally the artificiality and repression of the American Baroque. Unlike her contemporary Caviedes, who

[9] Criollos were people of Spanish descent, like Sor Juana, born in America.
[10] Translation mine. Original quote: "…como en ninguna otra una extraña confluencia de todos los valores y los enigmas del siglo barroco."

hid themes of repression and deceit behind mockery, Sor Juana proudly defends her views with logic and metaphysics (142-6).

Sor Juana Criticism

Although little work has been done on Sor Juana's bilingualism, cultural identity, and defense of the marginalized, the Mexican nun is one of the most studied figures of Hispanic literature. She has been known since her own time as "*la décima musa*" or "the tenth muse" because of her incredible talent as a writer. After her death, however, her works were ignored for nearly 200 years. Scholarly works dedicated to her texts began to emerge in the 1900s, beginning not with a critic but with the Mexican poet Amado Nervo, who published the biography and critical study, *Juana de Asbaje* in 1910. Ramón Xirau, Julio Jiménez Rueda, Fanchón Royer, and Gerard Flynn contributed informative biographies on Sor Juana in the mid-twentieth century, the works of Royer and Flynn being of the first important studies in English dedicated to the author, including translations of selections of her writing and other documents related to her life. Octavio Paz published in 1988 an extensive study on the Hieronymite titled *Las trampas de la fe* or *The Traps of Faith*. Paz relates in the prologue that the study is a blend of history, biography and literary criticism (vi). Recent critics, such as Amanda Powell, Electa Arenal, and Stephanie Merrim, focus on the nun's condition as a female intellectual with progressive ideas that can be analyzed through the theoretical framework of feminism. Since Sor Juana was an intellectual, her works were often influenced by other writers, including Spanish as well as Classical authors such as Virgil, Horace, Ovid, and

Lucan. Scholars continue to investigate the writer's influences, making for a large body of research dedicated to such studies. Other critics have chosen to focus on the mathematical foundations of the nun's texts[11] while others focus on philosophical elements[12]. As the historico-political context of her work cannot be ignored, there is a great deal of research analyzing the political implications of her texts[13]. Given her status as a nun and the spiritual nature of much of her work, critics have also concentrated on religious interpretations of the nun's writings.[14]

Chapter Outlines

In my study, I choose to diverge from the common feminist and erudite assessments of Sor Juana's work and instead focus on the multilingual and multicultural implications of her texts. I divide my project into three sections: the indigenous, the African, and the classical components of Sor Juana's multilingual and multicultural writing.

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[11] See Dixon, Paul B. "Balance, Pyramids, Crown, and the Geometry of Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz". *Hispania* 67 (1984): 560-6 and Williamsen, Vern G. "Forma simétrica en las comedias barrocas de Sor Juana Inés". *Cuadernos Americanos*, 224 (1979): 183-93.

[12] See Pfandl, Ludwig. *Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz, la Décima Musa de México; su vida, su poesía, su psique*. Ed. Francisco de la Maza. México, D.F.: UNAM, 1963, Stroud, Mathhew D. "The Desiring Subject and the Promise of Salvation: A Lacanian Study of Sor Juana's *El divino Narciso*". *Hispania* 75 (1993): 204-12 and Brescia, Pablo A. J. "Raíces filosóficas en las rosas de Sor Juana y de Borges". *Sor Juana y su mundo: una mirada actual*. Mexico, D.F.: Universidad del Claustro de Sor Juana, 1998. 153-9.

[13] See Maiso González, Jesús. "Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz y el desastre cultural y político de la Contrarreforma hispana". *Sor Juana y su mundo: una mirada actual*. Mexico, D.F.: Universidad del Claustro de Sor Juana, 1998. 310-21 and Sokol, Alina. "Unequal Words: Sor Juana and the Poetics of Money in New Spain". *Early American Literature* 41.3 (2006): 455-71.

[14] See Sabat de Rivers, Georgina. "El tema bíblico de Adán y Eva en la obra de Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz". *En busca de Sor Juana*. Mexico, D.F.: Facultad de Filosofía y Letras, UNAM, 1998. 133-50, Bénassy-Berling, Marie-Cécile. "La religión de Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz". *Sor Juana y su mundo: una mirada actual*. Mexico, D.F.: Universidad del Claustro de Sor Juana, 1998. 34-8, and Egan, Linda. "Un ángel caído como abogado del diablo: La demonología de Sor Juana". *Sor Juana y su mundo: una mirada actual*. Mexico, D.F.: Universidad del Claustro de Sor Juana, 1998. 193-206.

Chapter 2 analyzes Sor Juana's works that include Nahua language and/or culture. I argue that Sor Juana's relationship with indigenous individuals instilled in her an appreciation for their language and culture that is reflected in her writing and that she used her status as a writer to advocate for the defense of the indigenous people. I also discuss the implications of language use and religious syncretism in these texts. The first works discussed are the *villancicos*, which are poetic compositions that were sung during church services. I examine a section of a *villancico* written entirely in Nahuatl, as well as two *villancicos* that are bilingual in that they include both Spanish and Nahuatl. I also analyze the *loas*, introductory theatrical pieces for two of Sor Juana's plays: the *Divine Narcissus* and *The Scepter of Joseph*. I identify religious syncretism in the works and argue that the plays support and celebrate indigenous traditions that were systematically disdained by the Spanish. My analysis indicates that Sor Juana intended to use the dramatic works to influence Europeans to become more accepting of Nahua ways of life. The last work I study in the chapter is the play *Aplaúdese la fineza que el señor hizo en quedar sacramentado con los hombres*[15] along with its accompanying *loa*, *Loa satírica mixta de una comedia representada en el atrio de la iglesia del convento dominico de Nuestra Señora de la Asunción de Amecameca en la festividad de Corpus Christi*. Both

[15] To my knowledge, the title has not been translated to English by any other scholar. It roughly translates to "May We Applaud the Act of Kindness that the Lord did in becoming Sacramented with Men". Since there is no official translation, I will continue to refer to the work with an abbreviated version of the Spanish title: *Aplaúdese la fineza*, and to the *loa* as *Loa satírica*, the shortened version of the *loa*'s title, used also by Salvador Díaz Cíntora. The title of the *loa* translates to "Mixed Satirical *Loa* of a *Comedia* (Play) Represented in the Atrium of the Church of the Dominican Convent of Our Lady of the Assumption of Amecameca in the Festival of Corpus Christi".

are written in a mix of Spanish and Nahuatl as a defense of Indians' rights to participate in theater.

Chapter 3 discusses the multilingualism and multiculturalism present in Sor Juana's works of African influence, namely the many *villancicos* that utilize the *Bozal* Spanish spoken by African slaves. I reveal the historic circumstances under which Sor Juana was exposed to the language and culture of African slaves and uphold that her proficiency in *Bozal* Spanish was directly related to her cultural identification with Afro-Mexicans, leading to her desire to speak for them in her works. I discuss that unlike other Golden Age writers, Sor Juana's intention was not to mock Afro-Mexican characters but to give them a voice in the literary realm where they were usually silenced except when they were included for purposes of ridicule. I argue that the author's *Bozal villancicos* denounce inequalities and provide a defense for the Afro-Mexican population of New Spain.

I dedicate Chapter 4 to the analysis of texts including Latin and/or references to Classical culture and how the nun's multilingualism and multiculturalism affected her writing in these cases. I mention the importance of *The Response* but focus my analysis on less-studied works. I begin with two bilingual *villancicos* and then explore the *Allegorical Neptune* which is bilingual in that it is written partly in Latin and the play *Love is the Greater Labyrinth*, which is a reinvention of the Greek myth of Theseus. I consider that Sor Juana's study of Latin and the Classical tradition greatly influenced her writing. I analyze in the works the hybridity of literary traditions and the fusion of time periods and societies complete with multicultural

composite characters. Both works include religious syncretism between Catholicism and pagan worship. I connect this discussion to Sor Juana's agenda of defending the marginalized by demonstrating how Sor Juana defends the ostracized female intellectual by revealing her erudition, linguistic skills, and capabilities for scholarly dialogue despite her position as a woman.

Chapter 5 discusses the different ways that Sor Juana Inés's writings were affected by the multilingual and multicultural circumstances of her life and education. Theories on acculturation help to demonstrate how a member of the dominant society was influenced by cultures that were generally marginalized. I refer to contemporary research on bilingualism and biculturalism and confirm the relationship between Sor Juana's linguistic abilities and her perspectives on other cultures. As an artist, Sor Juana was able to function in a variety of languages and cultures, reflecting the multilingual and multicultural nature of her society and of her own identity. Sor Juana's multilingual and multicultural texts are significant in that they predate and predict the modern Latin American voice and show that Latin America has never been monolingual or monocultural. By examining the ethnic and cultural complexity of Sor Juana's viceroyal society, we are able to better understand the formation of Mexican identity and the struggle for equality.

Chapter 2

In xochitl in cuicatl[16]: Sor Juana as a Nahua Poet

Introduction

According to the acclaimed 20th century Mexican writer Octavio Paz, Sor Juana's inclusion of Nahuatl and indigenous themes in her writing was not an expression of "nationalism", but simply a manifestation of the strange and exotic, a commonplace in baroque style. He states that when she makes use of popular speech, it is not at all a demonstration of regional pride but is part of a global aesthetic of the period that included attention to specific details. Paz maintains that New Spain's baroque poetry was a "transplanted poetry" and that the goal of including native elements was to "astonish and astound" the audience (57-58). In the context of bilingualism and biculturalism, I aim in this chapter to prove several points in opposition to Paz's reading regarding Sor Juana's references to indigenous languages and cultures. The author's exposure to the Nahua culture and language as a child instilled in her an appreciation for both that is reflected in her texts. Her works include multicultural expressions and religious syncretism that suggest that her relationship with indigenous Nahuatl-speakers affected her cultural identity. In addition, I show that her intention was not to utilize indigenous details for the mere entertainment of her New Spainish audience, but rather to expose injustices and defend indigenous people through her writing. I demonstrate that her use of

[16] A Nahua metonym that signifies poetry but literally means "the flower the song". It is an example of *difrasismo*, a linguistic phenomenon common in Mesoamerican languages in which a single idea is expressed by two words but taken literally their meaning is distorted or lost completely.

Nahuatl and native Mexican themes was not simply a manifestation of the exotic, but was an attempt to give a voice to this underrepresented group.

The Nahuas are defined as multiple groups of people including the Mexica, Texococans, Cholulans, Chalcans, and Tlaxcalans, who inhabited ancient Mexico and continue to live in Mexico and Central America today. These were peoples of diverse cultures that shared the common language, Nahuatl, along with many of the cultural traditions and beliefs of the Toltecs, their common cultural ancestor (Leon-Portilla *Aztec* xvii-xviii). The most powerful and well-known of these groups are the Mexica or Aztecs[17]. The Aztecs founded their capital city, Tenochtitlan, around 1370 and their civilization flourished in Central Mexico for some 200 years before the arrival of the Spanish. After the European invasion, the indigenous people and the Spanish lived by separate laws under two different legal systems: the *república de indios* and *república de españoles*. These were independent republics with distinct legal rights and obligations. Despite the façade of functioning independently, the Spanish depended on the indigenous population for labor and goods resulting in an exploitative relationship between the two groups.

Although the Spanish were numerically the minority in New Spain and other American territories during colonial times, they were dominant in cultural, linguisitic, and religious terms. The indigenous, Afro-Mexicans, and people of mixed

[17] Although "Aztec" ("*azteca*" in Spanish) is somewhat of a misnomer in identifying the peoples of the region, I use the term in my dissertation as it has become common in scholarly works. The civilization of the indigenous people of Central Mexico was known as the Aztec Empire but they identified themselves as "Mexica" ("me/ʃi/ka"). The term "Mexican" when written can be confusing as it can refer to natives of the modern-day nation of Mexico as well as to the indigenous group for which the country was named.

blood were subjected to discrimination, political and economic control, and other injustices. Enslavement of indigenous people was outlawed by 1542 and Indians were considered wards of the Crown, which granted them some social privileges and political autonomy (Díaz 4). However, the estimated 25 million indigenous people that inhabited what is now Mexico at the time of the arrival of the Europeans in 1519 was reduced to about 1.5 million by the year 1600, primarily due to disease and harsh working conditions (Richmond 2).

Indigenous and European cultures influenced each other mutually. Matthew Restall explains in his book *Seven Myths of the Spanish Conquest* that the indigenous cultures were not annihilated as is often believed (102). The Nahua language was fundamental during the Conquest and in the construction of Mexico's blended cultural identity (Hernández "La lengua" 157). Nahuatl was often used as a *lingua franca* in multilingual regions throughout colonial Mesoamerica. The language was necessary for intercultural mediation in trade, commerce, travel, and administration, often with mestizos and mulattos as interpreters (Yannakakis 667-8). Friars learned Nahuatl and other indigenous languages in order to carry out their evangelical purposes. In fact, missionaries could not be ordained as priests if they lacked fluency in Spanish, Nahuatl, and Latin (Hernández "La lengua" 157).

Even in parts of Mexico in which Nahuatl was not the autochthonous language, it was used for evangelization as it had been introduced as a language of trade. It was a common language among non-Aztec indigenous groups and between indigenous and non-indigenous people (Yannakakis 668). Most translators worked

between Spanish and Nahuatl, counting on natives from all ethnic groups to be able to speak Nahuatl in order to participate in transactions (Pizzigoni 785).

The expansion of Nahuatl was vast, but was never standardized. Several varieties, referred to now as "Central American Colonial Nahuatl" were dispersed throughout Central America (Yannakakis 668). Each region's version of the language developed its own local traits and often times preserved archaisms that were no longer used in the Nahuatl of Central Mexico, making translation difficult. The Spanish usually spoke a simplified version of the language, while other indigenous groups spoke variants that were influenced by their local languages (Pizzioni 786-8).

Although the Church supported the conservation of native languages and used them for evangelical purposes, there was opposition, especially among *encomenderos*, who tended to dominate civil governments. They proposed in 1596 that Indians not only learn Spanish, but also be required to "abandon and forget" their native languages. However, King Phillip II refused to support the change. Regardless of the law, there was strong social pressure for Indians to learn to speak, read, and write Spanish (Rivers 10).

Despite the stigma placed by Europeans on indigenous languages, Juana Inés took an interest in Nahuatl and became fluent in the language. She began to understand Nahua speech on her grandfather's ranch and at the street markets in Amecameca (Jiménez Rueda 17, Loera Chávez y Peniche 14). She was raised in the towns of Panoya and Nepantla, where Nahuatl was the primary language

(Hernández "La nueva" 48). Evidence shows that her family had close ties with the indigenous people of their region. Her grandfather, Pedro Ramírez, mentions in his will that he owes money to a cacique[18], Felipe Páez (Ramírez España 5). Juana's half-brother, Diego Ruiz Lozano, states in his will that he was married to a María Páez, and that Felipe Páez, cacique of Mecameca, was his debtor, as is Francisco Páez, who he identifies as his brother-in-law (Ramírez España 30-33). If we can assume that the Páezes belong to the same family, it becomes obvious that the family of Juana Inés not only did business with the indigenous but also intermarried with them, accounting for Sor Juana's interest and exposure to Nahua language and culture.

Critics agree that Sor Juana acquired some of her knowledge of Nahua traditions from fray Juan de Torquemada's *Monarquía indiana* (Baudot 858, Zanelli 191), an extensive study of the indigenous people of New Spain published in 1615. The work was a combination of personal investigation and compilations from other chroniclers such as Bernardino de Sahagún, Hernán Cortés, Bartolomé de las Casas, and José de Acosta. The *Monarquía indiana* was the only work of its kind available to contemporaries, as the works of Sahagún and other historians that documented indigenous cultures had been confiscated and prohibited in the colonies. Sor Juana mentions the *Monarquía indiana* en her *Neptuno alegórico* and the details that she

[18] Cacique is a term derived from the Taíno language of the Arawak indigenous people of the Caribbean that referred to tribal chiefs. The Spanish and Portuguese then applied it to other indigenous leaders in the Americas. As revealed in Pedro Ramírez's will, indigenous caciques owned estates as they were considered nobility in New Spanish society.

provides of Aztec rituals in her *loas* coincide closely with the information provided by Torquemada.

Unlike other authors of her time who used the formal Nahuatl that they learned by studying works such as the *Vocabulario manual de las lenguas castellana y mexicana*, a Spanish-Nahuatl/Nahuatl-Spanish dictionary published by Pedro de Arenas in 1611[19], Sor Juana used the colloquial Nahuatl spoken by the Indians of her time (Diaz Cíntora "Yoqui" 98). This proves that she acquired the majority of her language skills by interacting with the natives themselves, accounting for her sympathy toward them and the effects on her cultural identity.

Georges Baudot, French Nahuatl scholar of the 20th century, assumed that Sor Juana produced additional work in Nahuatl, given her ability to write in the language and her upbringing in an environment where she was exposed to the language and culture (849). We must remember that the majority of her works have been lost. Nahuatl experts affirm that her use of the language is impressive due to refined use of verbs in the future to mark the time, delicate use of *i-i* assonance that is typical in Nahuatl, and the final consonant *l* for musical effect. These qualities indicate an intimate and complete knowledge of Nahuatl (Baudot 853).

In his essay about the resurgence of Nahua poetry, contemporary Nahua poet Natalio Hernández includes Sor Juana in his discussion of Nahua poets of the XVI and XVII centuries ("La nueva" 48). He also refers to her in his essay "La lengua

[19] The work became the most frequently printed source on the Nahuatl language, producing at least eleven editions over the next two centuries.

náhuatl en el proceso de construcción de la nación mexicana" ("The Nahua Language in the Process of Construction of the Mexican Nation") as one of the prominent writers of the Nahua language (159). He wrote her a poem, "Sor Juana Inés Icuic", "Tribute to Sor Juana Inés", in which he infers that Nepantla and Panohaya adopted her as part of the Nahua people. He tells her to listen to the steps of the [indigenous] people of Nepantla, Panohaya, and Amecameca, as they walk together with her ("Sor Juana" 75). Sor Juana lived a multicultural experience that influenced her works and she should not be identified as a writer of a strictly Spanish tradition.

In order to study the implications of Sor Juana's writing influenced by Nahua language and culture, I analyze several key works. I first allude to several *romances* or ballads that contain references to the marvel of indigenous cultures. I then examine a selection of *villancicos* that include both the Nahua language and what I will show to be an appreciation and defense of indigenous culture. My discussion then turns to works of theater, which include the *loas*, or introductory theatrical pieces, to two of Sor Juana's famous plays: the *Divine Narcissus* and *The Scepter of Joseph*. The topics of these *loas* are exceptionally considerate of issues of indigenous religion. The last work I study is a short play, *Aplaúdese la fineza que el señor hizo en quedar sacramentado con los hombres*[20] along with its accompanying *loa*, *Loa satírica mixta de una comedia representada en el atrio de la iglesia del*

[20] To my knowledge, the title has not been translated to English by any other scholar. It roughly translates to "May We Applaud the Act of Kindness that the Lord did in becoming Sacramented with Men". Since there is no official translation, I will continue to refer to the work with an abbreviated version of the Spanish title: *Aplaúdese la fineza*, and to the *loa* as *Loa satírica*, the shortened version of the *loa*'s title, used also by Salvador Díaz Cíntora. The title of the *loa* translates to "Mixed Satirical *Loa* of a *Comedia* [Play] Represented in the Atrium of the Church of the Dominican Convent of Our Lady of the Assumption of Amecameca in the Festival of Corpus Christi".

convento dominico de Nuestra Señora de la Asunción de Amecameca en la festividad de Corpus Christi, both of which contain Nahuatl and sympathetically defend the indigenous people.

Romances

Romances or ballads were poems of oral tradition common beginning in 15th century Spain. They were composed of eight-syllable verses with assonant rhyme and were often sung. *Romance* 22 compares the Marquises of the Laguna to "the eagle of the Indies", an important symbol of Aztec culture, as it is associated with divine power[21]. *Romance* 24 refers to the same "Mexican Eagle" (39) and the grandeur of "Moctezumas" (43), a dynastic name of Aztec rulers[22]. In *Romance* 51, Sor Juana attributes her success as a writer to the magic of the "herbalist Indians"[23]. These references are small but confirm Sor Juana's knowledge of Nahua culture as well as the high esteem in which she held these elements.

Villancicos

While Sor Juana's *romances* contain small references to Aztec culture, her *villancicos* are exceptional examples of New Spain's bilingual and bicultural reality because of their theatrical nature and inclusion of indigenous characters. Although today the term is restricted to Christmas carols, *villancicos* were traditionally simple

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[21] There are several legends of the foundation of Tenochtitlán, but according to the most famous account, the gods ordered the Aztecs to establish their civilization where they found an eagle with a serpent in its mouth perched on a cactus, which they found at Lake Texcoco (Hassig 23).
[22] Although the name Moctezuma (Montezuma, Moteucçoma, Moteuczoma, or Motecuhzoma) is usually used to refer to the emperor of the Aztec Empire at the time of the arrival of Hernán Cortés to Tenochtitlan, this leader was Moctezuma II, the ninth king of Tenochtitlan, Moctezuma I being the fifth, who reigned from 1440-1469. The name was used for centuries to designate Aztec rulers.
[23] "Indios herbolarios" (54).

and rustic pieces composed for singing. They were largely a popular genre, usually presented in colloquial language (Moraña "Poder, raza y lengua" 90). The songs were popular in both the Iberian Peninsula and in Latin America from the 15th to the 18th centuries and the form was similar on both continents (Sabat de Rivers "Blanco" 86). Some critics, such as Méndez Plancarte, consider *villancicos* to be poetry while others, such as Pedro Henríquez Ureña, deem them theatrical pieces, as they have characteristics of both. Puccini prefers to refer to them as a hybrid genre that includes musical, dramatic, and lyrical elements (226). The poems are often composed of dialogue of two or more voices with some kind of scene suggested, although never acted out physically, only imagined (Puccini 227, Méndez Plancarte lii). They were circulated on anonymously authored loose sheets of paper, making them more accessible to the public than other forms of literature (Moraña "Poder, raza y lengua" 96).

At the time of their creation, *villancicos* could be sacred or profane in nature. By Sor Juana's time, each complete *juego* or "set" of *villancicos* was dedicated to a particular saint and meant to be sung during a devotional service. Choirs and soloists performed the songs accompanied by an orchestra. Each set is composed of nine *villancicos* grouped into three *Nocturnos* of three. Sometimes the ninth composition was substituted for a final *Te Deum*, which was praise to God. *Nocturnos* I and II were formed by *villancicos* composed of *estribillos* (refrains) and *coplas*, four-line verses, while *Nocturno* III included *jácaras* and *ensaladas* and was generally longer (Sabat de Rivers "Blanco" 87). Jácaras were compositions that had

evolved from a dance to a short theatrical form (Puccini 228) and *ensaladas* can be defined as a mix of flavors and tones, games and riddles, Latin and slang, Nahuatl, Spanish, Congolese and Basque (Puccini 239) and usually included a multiplicity of local voices (Martínez-San Miguel "Neobarrocos" 444). Lafaye refers to the *ensaladas* as "linguistic salads" and emphasizes that it is in these compositions that Sor Juana lets the *castas*[24] speak (73). The villancicos were usually written in *arte menor*, the verse used for *romances* and *romancillos*, meaning that each verse was of eight syllables or less. The rhyme was usually *aguda* - on the last syllable. Puccini postulates that the *villancicos* that contain rhythmic songs of African and Indian voices were likely accompanied by movements and dance steps (228).

***Villancico* 224**

Although several of Sor Juana's *villancicos* contain traces of Nahuatl, only one contains a section written entirely in the indigenous language. *Villancico* 224, sung in the cathedral of Mexico to the Virgin Mary in 1676, is referred to as an "*ensaladilla"* or "salad" because of its variety of ingredients. The poem contains both "*negrillos*" or Black characters and indigenous characters who sing a *tocotín. Tocotines* are poetic compositions written in Nahautl or in Spanish with echoes of Nahuatl grammar in the Spanish style of six-syllable lines of assonant rhyme. The tradition of the *tocotín* likely began as an Indian dance that originated in the evangelizing theatrical works of the first missionaries and was later incorporated

[24] *Castas* in this sense refers to people of lower socio-racial categories: the indigenous, Africans, and those of mixed blood.

into other works of literature.[25] Méndez Plancarte suggests that the name is onomatopoeic due to its rhythms ("*toco, toco, toco*") ("Notas" 364). *Tocotines* are usually found at the end of a work and are dedicated to celebration and rejoicing. They lack the *retruecanos* and other word games characteristic of the *conceptismo* and *culturanismo* of the Spanish Baroque (Hanrahan 52-3).

Sor Juana introduces the *tocotín* with the following verses in Spanish:

Los Mejicanos alegres	The happy Mexicans
también a su usanza salen,	perform in accordance with their customs
que en quien campa la lealtad	for those that display loyalty
bien es que el aplauso campe;	deserve applause;
y con las cláusulas tiernas	and with the tender phrases
del Mejicano lenguaje,	of the Mexican language
en un Tocotín sonoro	in a resounding *Tocotín*,
dicen con voces süaves: (74-81)	they say with sweet voices:[26]

We immediately notice in these verses an appreciation for the Nahuas in the vocabulary that she uses to describe them. She describes them as "*alegres*" (happy or cheerful) and characterizes the phrases that they speak as "*tiernas*" – tender, soft or affectionate. Their voices are "*suaves*" (soft or sweet). She also suggests that they deserve applause because of their loyalty[27].

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[25] The first *tocotín*, apart from those of missionaries, is found in the *Auto del Triunfo de la Virgen y Gozo Mexicano* of Francisco Bramón, published in 1620 (Hanrahan 51).
[26] This and all subsequent translations from Spanish to English are mine.
[27] However positive, this description perpetuates a common stereotype of indigenous people as "noble savages". Europeans developed an exoticized image of the indigenous as docile and submissive.

The *tocotín* reads as follows:

Tla ya timohica,	If you are leaving
totlazo Zuapilli	our beloved lady,
maca ammo Tonantzin,	our *Tonantzin*,
titechmoilcahuíliz.	do not forget us.
Ma nel in Ilhuícac	Although in Heaven
huel timomaquítiz,	you will rejoice
¿amo nozo quenman	won't you have time
timotlalnamíctiz?	to remember us?
In moayolque mochtin	All of your followers
huel motilinizque;	could be lifted up
tlaca amo, tehuatzin	and if not
ticmomatlaníliz.	you will bring them up.
Ca mitztlacamati	He is grateful to you
motlazo Piltzintli,	your Son,
mac tel, in tepampa	and so for all people
xicmotlatlauhtili.	beg him.
Tlaca ammo quinequi,	And if he does not concur,
xicmoilnamiquili	Remind him
ca monocayotzin	that your flesh
oticmomaquiti.	you gave him.
Mochichihualayo	Milk from your breast

oquimomitili,	he drank,
tla motemictía	it sustained him
ihuan Tetepitzin.	when he was little.
Ma mopampantzinco	We hope, thanks to your mediation,
in moayolcatintin,	your weak creatures,
in itla pohpoltin,	the always forgotten,
tictomacehuizque.	that we may deserve something.
Totlatlácol mochtin	All of our sins
tïololquiztizque;	will be forgotten;
Ilhuícac tïazque,	We will go to heaven,
timitzittalizque:	we will see you there:
in campa cemícac	where you always
timonemitíliz,	will live,
cemícac mochíhuaz	where your orders
in monahuatiltzin (82-117)	will be followed[28].

The *tocotín* itself is directed to the Virgin Mary in second person. However, in the third line of the poem, the word translated to Spanish as "Madre nuestra" (our Mother) by Garibay[29] and "Madrecita querida" (dear Mother) by Baudot, is "Tonantzin". The word in Nahuatl literally means "our beloved mother" but was used to refer to the Aztec goddess Cihuacóatl, "the Serpent woman", who was

[28] Translated by me based on the translations to Spanish by Garibay and Baudot. In some cases, translations are not line-for-line.
[29] Ángel María Garibay was a Mexican priest of the 20th Century. As the original translator of Sor Juana's works in Nahuatl, it is possible that he intentionally obscured the reference to the indigenous deity and influenced subsequent translations as well.

worshiped as the mother of the gods (Lafaye 211)[30]. In fact, a temple was built to honor the Virgin Mary in the very place that Tonantzin was worshipped near Mexico City[31]. According to legend, a dark-skinned apparition of the Virgin Mary presented herself to Juan Diego, a young Nahua, in 1531. Speaking Nahuatl, she asked for a church to be built in that location in her honor. Mexicans have since worshipped the image as the Virgin of Guadalupe[32], a syncretic version of the Roman Catholic Virgin Mary and a native Mexican deity[33]. Years before the publication of Sor Juana's *tocotín*, Sahagún had identified the labeling of the Virgin of Guadalupe as Tonantzin as an abuse, as it seemed to him to promote idolatry in disguise. Although there were many churches devoted to the Virgin of Guadalupe, indigenous people came from afar to visit the temple that was originally built in reverence to Tonantzin, indicating that they continued to praise the female figure as the pagan goddess rather than as the mother of Christ (Lafaye 216). We must question, then, whether the *tocotín* of indigenous praise is dedicated to the Virgin Mary, the Aztec goddess

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[30] Jacques Lafaye is an influential French scholar that has written on Latin American culture and history. His book, *Quetzalcoatl and Guadalupe: The Formation of Mexican National Consciousness* (1974) is a fundamental study of Mexican culture from colonial times to the 20th century.

[31] Due to the typological relationship between the Eve and the Virgin Mary, the Mary was often thought of as the "new Eve". This made the adaptation of the Christian figure to the Aztec goddess even easier, as Tonantzin was considered both the wife of the Serpent and "our Mother". However, it produced confusion as the serpent represents the devil in the Catholic tradition, while it remained a sacred religious symbol in ancient Mexico. The Catholic missionaries believed that the indigenous people understood the negative connotation of the serpent in reference to Eve, although it is likely that they perceived Eve's serpent in a more positive light (Lafaye 215).

[32] Scholars believe that the apparition could originally have been identified as Tequatlanopeuh, a Nahuatl name meaning "She Whose Origins Were in the Rocky Summit" and that the name was castilianized to "de Guadalupe", meaning "from Guadalupe", a town in Extremadura, Spain (Castillo xvi).

[33] The figure is worshipped under elements of both religions. Although she is recognized as the mother of Christ, she is depicted with Mexican features, spoke Nahuatl, and is said to have appeared four times, four being the sacred number of completion for several indigenous cultures (Castillo xvi).

Tonantzin, or to the syncretic traditions that brought the two religious figures into positive overlap.

Several references suggest that the poem refers to the Catholic Virgin Mary. The *tocotín* states that due to her mediation, her followers' sins are forgiven (106-11). If Christ refuses the followers admittance into to heaven, she is asked to remind him that she gave him her flesh and her milk when he was small (90-104). These are both clear allusions to the figure as a mediator between God and man, a role for which the Virgin Mary had been praised since around the 4th century. According to Catholic Mariology, followers of the Virgin would be saved despite their sins, a belief that is indicated in the poem. The *tocotín* also refers to a heaven in which her law will always be obeyed, considering her an equal or replacement for God. Although this characterization appears to refer more to a goddess than to the Virgin Mary, Mary often replaced or was confused with God in the cult of the Virgin that began in medieval times (Foster 107). There are several images of motherhood applied to the figure, such as the reference to her son (95) and to breastfeeding (102-5), which relate to both the Virgin Mary and "Our Mother" Tonantzin. Tonantzin was also idolized as a motherly figure, often depicted with a cradle on her back (Lafaye 211).

The reference to giving her flesh to her son, however, appears to relate to the indigenous practice of human sacrifice more than to the Catholic tradition. During the festival of Cihuacóatl, a slave would be dressed in white to represent the goddess (Cihuacóatl/Tonantzin) and then sacrificed. According to Aztec belief,

these representations of gods were not symbols or metaphors but were understood to embody the essence of the deity itself. The woman dressed in white was called by the name Xilonen from the day of her purification until her sacrifice. Lafaye explains that Tonantzin, Cihuacóatl, and Xilonen refer to the same goddess, but that Xilonen is the goddess's name during her provisional incarnation (212). We can see then, that Cihuacóatl was in fact an object of sacrifice, hence the allusion to the giving of her flesh. Although both women were worshipped as mother figures, Tonantzin is the figure most commonly associated with breastfeeding. According to Aztec belief, Tontantzin provided her people with the cactus that produces the sacred drink *pulque*, also known as "the milk of the Virgin". Legend also states that Tontantzin defended her children from the wrath of the Christian god by challenging him to produce mother's milk as she had done (Anzaldúa 49)[34], displaying her superiority as a provider for her people. Tonantzin's compassion and defense of her people corresponds to the vision of Mary in Catholic Mariology, which enabled a syncretic understanding of the figure.

Given the references to a Catholic concept of Mary along with the allusions to the Aztec goddess Tonantzin, we can infer that the *tocotín* is open to dual-interpretation as well as a syncretic understanding of religion that was common during the colonial period. Referred to as the "displacement model" by Lockhart, it was long believed that indigenous people adopted most aspects of European culture and only a few small elements of pre-Conquest belief and practice remained (3). In

[34] Anzaldúa cites Alan R. Sandstrom's "The Tonantsi Cult of the Eastern Nahuas" as the source for the legend, but the details cited are not found in Sandstrom's study.

reality, indigenous practices were not eliminated but combined with other traditions to produce hybrid practices and values. As Lockhart maintains, "absolutely unaltered survival and total displacement are equally rare in the history of cultural contact in Central Mexico"(5). We can interpret the Tonantzin in Sor Juana's *villancico* to be a prime example of religious syncretism that was likely understood differently by different groups. Burkhart points out that both indigenous groups and Europeans operated on the assumption that they comprehended the culture of the other. Both groups assumed that "*tlatlacolli*" was the same as "sin", "*Mictlan*" was the same as hell, etc. (*Aztecs* 17) when in reality the concepts were quite different. The Mexica continued to worship Tonantzin, affixing to her characteristics of the Virgin Mary, while Spaniards assumed that the evangelization had been successful. Lockhart refers to this phenomenon as "Double Mistaken Identity", defining it as "whereby each side takes it that a given form or concept is essentially one already known to it, operating in much the same manner as in its own tradition, and hardly takes cognizance of the other side's interpretation" (445). In other words, both groups believe that they share an identical concept of an idea, when their understandings of the topic are actually very different. While Lockhart uses the term to refer to political and artistic concepts, it is particularly applicable in the religious realm. In this case, although both groups believed to worship the same figure, their concepts of her were distinct. The beauty of *Villancico* 224 is that it applied to two distinct religious figures in a fusion of them both.

In addition to the religious syncretism found in *Villancico* 224, language use in the song has important implications for Sor Juana's diverse audience. We must keep in mind that *villancicos* were sung in church as well as dispersed in writing publicly. However, given that the *tocotín* was written and sung entirely in Nahuatl, it would have only been intelligible to the indigenous population, church friars, and a select number of Spaniards or *criollos* that spoke the language for business or religious reasons. Monolingual Spaniards in attendance would not understand but could appreciate the rhythm of the Nahuatl in song. Applying traditional Spanish assonant rhyme and meter to the indigenous language shows its poetic value and ability to be used in prayer, placing it on an equal plane with Spanish and Latin. The author demonstrates the language's worth by suggesting that the Virgin Mary would be accepting of veneration in Nahuatl. While proving to Spaniards the value of Nahuatl, Sor Juana also appealed to her indigenous public by helping them to identify with the church service. As a typically marginalized group in linguistic and cultural terms, they were here given a chance to escape the subaltern category, as they would have been among the few that comprehended the song in its entirety.

As mentioned previously, the indigenous were among the marginalized groups in colonial society. This *villancico*, as well as the subsequent poem that I discuss, appears to contain what can be defined as resistance to this subalternization. The speakers, which we must be reminded are Nahua, ask to not be forgotten by the Virgin Mary/Tonantzin (85). Although the translations of the

tocotín differ quite a bit, both indicate toward the end of the *tocotín* that they are deserving of something (106-9). Garibay's translation reads:

Que por tu medicación	That because of your mediation
tus devotos,	your devotees,
los faltos de algo,	those lacking of something,
nos haremos merecedores	will make ourselves deserving.

while Baudot's reads:

Ojalá, gracias a tu mediación,	We hope, thanks to your mediation,
tus débiles criaturas,	your weak creatures,
los siempre olvidados,	the always forgotten,
merezcamos algo	may deserve something

Both identify the group as marginalized, either as "always forgotten" or "lacking something" and ask for inclusion. The *villancico* insists that the indigenous are deserving of a place in church, which can be understood as an allegory that requests their fair treatment in general. This section is a subtle social protest that calls for acceptance of the Nahua people in New Spanish society.

***Villancico* 241**

Villancico 241 is another of Sor Juana's poems that includes an indigenous voice. It was sung in honor of St. Peter Nolasco on January 31, 1677 and contains a bilingual *tocotín* in Spanish and Nahuatl. Peter Nolasco was a 13th century saint who founded the Order of Mercy in Spain in order to free Christian prisoners from the Moors. The *villancico* in dedication to St. Peter Nolasco begins with an Afro-Mexican

character singing and playing an African instrument. In the next section, an "academic"[35] begins to speak Latin to a man he encounters. The man does not understand but attempts to respond anyway. An Indian then arrives to "put them at peace" (65) by singing them a "Mestizo *tocotín* of Spanish and Mexican[36]" with an out-of-tune guitar (69-72).

The first interesting element of the *tocotín* in the context of bilingual studies is its religious message, which is obscured through language mixing. The Indian states that although he is devout to St. Peter Nolasco, he does not believe that he is the Redeemer, as the only redeemer of sins is Christ. The topic was obviously controversial, as the character mentions twice that the priests insist on St. Peter Nolasco as a redeemer (73-4, 81-4). Interestingly, although the majority of the *tocotín* is in Spanish, only the Nahuatl speakers in the audience perceive the disagreement with the priests. The *tocotín begins:*

Los Padres bendito	The blessed fathers
tiene on[37] Redentor;	have a Redeemer;
amo nic neltoca[38]	I don't believe it,
quimati no Dios.	My God knows it.
Solo Dios *Piltzintli*	Only God the Son
del Cielo bajó,	descended from Heaven
y nuestro *tlatlácol*	and our sin

[35] "*bachiller"*
[36] "*Mejicano*" – the language of the Mexica: Nahuatl
[37] The correct Spanish article should be "un", but Sor Juana reproduces the imperfect Spanish of indigenous speakers by including spelling errors to indicate pronunciation variants.
[38] Words in Nahuatl are shown in Italics to distinguish them from the Spanish.

nos lo perdonó (73-80).	he forgave.

The phrase "I don't believe it" is completely in Nahuatl, hiding the subversive message from those who do not speak the language. Those who only understand Spanish hear, "Redeemer…God", which is a simplified version of Sor Juana's message that obscures its confrontational nature. The next reference to the topic reads:

Pero estos *Teopixqui*	But these priests
dice en so sermón	say in their sermon
que este San Nolasco	that this St. Nolasco
mïechtin compró (81-4)	bought all.

Again, the message is unintelligible for those who only understand the Spanish. Due to the harsh censorship of the Inquisition, it was difficult for writers to express their opinions on religious matters. It is likely that Sor Juana was using the indigenous character to voice her belief, disguising the thoughts in a mix of languages. St. Peter Nolasco was known as a "redeemer" because he collected money to pay ransom in exchange for the freedom of Christian prisoners (Pérez 109). According to the evidence supplied in the *villancico*, priests interpreted him to be a redeemer of sins, with which Sor Juana appears to have disagreed, as it was a misinterpretation of historical facts. As a polyglot, Sor Juana was able to use a variety of languages to achieve the effect of linguistic exclusion when discussing contentious religious matters.

The *tocotín* contains another episode, defined by Baudot as "daring and subversive" (856) that is again concealed by inclusion of Nahuatl. The Indian relates

that a sheriff was looking for him because he owed tribute, and he hit the official in the head with a stick, possibly killing him:

También un *Topil*	Also a sheriff
del Gobernador	of the Governor
caipampa tributo	because of the tribute
prenderme mandó.	sent to arrest me.
Mas yo con un *cuáhuitl*	But I with a stick
un palo lo dio	hit him [with the stick]
ipam i sonteco:	in the head
no sé si morió (109-16).	I don't know if he died.

The Indian feels remorse about the incident and is looking for redemption. However, the reference to the tribute reveals an injustice of colonial society. Indigenous people were required to pay a tribute to the Crown although Spaniards and *criollos* were exempt from this tax. The Indian also refers to his *amo*, master or owner (103), indicating that he works in conditions of servitude under someone's control, a common practice even though slavery of the indigenous was forbidden by the 17th century. Georgina Sabat de Rivers states that in her *villancicos*, Sor Juana puts in the mouth of her characters their outstanding qualities and interests, along the with positions of disadvantage that they hold in society ("Blanco" 100). Although these references are subtle, they can be interpreted as an attempt to denounce unfair practices. The purpose of the *villancicos* was for praise in church

services, not for personal or political expression, making it all the more interesting that Sor Juana include these resistance efforts in the songs.[39]

Concealing subversive ideas was not the only reason for the author's use of Nahuatl in the *villancico*. In the following verses, she uses the Nahuatl "*se*" instead of the Spanish article "*un*":

Se no compañero	One acquaintance of mine
lo desafió	challenged him
y con *se* poñete	and with a stab
allí se cayó (105-8).	there he fell.

and "yuhqui" instead of the Spanish "como" to mean "like":

Y quiero comprar	And I want to buy
un San Redentor,	a Saint Redeemer
yuhqui el del altar	like that on the altar
con su bendición (117-20).	with his blessing.

The meaning of the verses is not obscured in these cases and in both examples the Nahuatl word has the same amount of syllables as the Spanish word, meaning that the mixing of languages cannot be attributed to meter requirements. We can infer that in these cases she is using the indigenous language simply to adorn the song, demonstrating the poetic function of code-switching.[40] As in the previous *villancico*

[39] Sor Juana included subversive messages in a number of her *villancicos*. The songs dedicated to St. Catherine attest to female intellectual capacity and argue for women's right to study.
[40] For a complete description of the distinct functions of code-switching or language mixing, see Appel and Muysken 118-9.

discussed, she demonstrates the beauty of the language and its ability to contribute to verse, despite assertions that it was a barbarous and unrefined language.

In addition to the words in Nahuatl, the *tocotín* contains mistakes in Spanish that would have been common among indigenous people who were learners of Spanish as a second language[41]. Although some could interpret these mistakes as mocking, the language is simply an accurate representation of indigenous speech. As Jiménez Torres notes, Sor Juana used her *villancicos* to create a metaphor for reality (283). These representations demonstrate the author's linguistic consciousness and sensitivity to authentic language use.

In order to fully understand the linguistic implications of the indigenous verses in this *villancico*, it is important to briefly examine the verses that precede the *tocotín*. The "dialogue" between the academic and the common man is bilingual, as the graduate speaks Latin and the other answers in Spanish. However, the second character misunderstands everything that is said in Latin and responds inappropriately. The first exchange is the following:

Hodie Nolascus divinus	Today the divine Nolasco
in Caelis est collocatus.	was placed in Heaven.
Yo no tengo asco del vino,	I am not disgusted by wine,
que antes muero por tragarlo	rather I die to drink it.
(45-8).	

[41] Examples include "lo" instead of "le" (85) and "o" instead of "u" in words like "estoviera" (94) and "morió" (116).

The phrase "*Nolascus divinus*" sounds much like the Spanish "*asco de vino*", "disgust of wine". The rest of the dialogue follows the same pattern, the academic appearing to ignore the fact his interlocutor misunderstands until the end, when he tells him to be quiet and that he is not speaking Spanish. This section that precedes the *tocotín* is relevant to its implications as a bilingual work. The dialogue is not really a conversation, as it does not lead to any type of communication. The less educated man is marginalized in the song due to his lack of understanding of a hegemonic language. However, the linguistically marginalized group is switched when the Indian begins to sing, as the song would not have been completely intelligible to the average Spaniard attending the service. As Bernárdez points out in *Bilingual Games*, monolinguals are thrown off by bilingual literature, "but bilinguals always know where to laugh or cry" (58). After he just laughed at the uneducated man, who is mocked in the song for not understanding, the monolingual Spaniard or *criollo* of the dominant culture suddenly is the one who does not understand the lyrics.

Lastly, although the song does not appear to be influenced by Nahua religion, it does contain an important allusion to Nahua culture. The singer states that he offers to St. Peter Nolasco a *Xúchil*, the Nahuatl word for "flower":

Yo al Santo lo tengo	I to the Saint
mucha devoción,	have much devotion
y de *Sempual Xúchil*	and from some marigolds
un *Xúchil* le doy.	I give him a flower.

This section offers examples of the referential function of language mixing, which is applied when the vocabulary of one language is more adequate or the word is not known in the other language. The Aztec marigold did not exist in Spain so there was no word for it in Spanish. The word "flower" did exist in Spanish, but using the word "xúchil", a form of the root word for flower, "xóchitl", gave a different cultural meaning to the offering. The flower was of exceptional importance in Nahua culture. The word "flower" often held a metaphorical meaning in terminology for war and sacrifice. To die a "flowery" death was to die in battle and prisoners of war and victims of sacrifice were also known as flowers. The human heart was known as "the flower of a god". Of the four Nahua after-death lands, three were imagined as flowery paradises[42]. Aztec theology believed Xochiquetzal, the goddess of flowers and love, to be the wife of Tlaloc, the deity of rain, expressing the relationship between flowers and life-giving water. Xochiquetzal was connected with Xochitl (Flower), one of the twenty calendar signs under which people were born. People under the sign of Xochitl, those born on the last day of the month, were thought to be diligent, hard-working, and skilled artists or artisans (Curl 10). In the 15th century, Tecayehuatzin, Lord of Huexotzinco, grouped together the flower, a symbol for art, and song, representative of the spoken word, as the two most valuable elements of human existence. The phrase "*in xochitl in cuicatl*" – literally "the flower, the song" referred to poetry, distinguishing it from the other common type of oral tradition, that of the *Huehuetlahtoli*, "the word of the elders", prose that

[42] Tamoanchan, the "flower land" was reserved for women who had died in childbirth. Tlalocan was the "place of the flowering tree" for those who died by water and Tonatiuhichan was a florid garden for those who had died in battle.

referred to moral philosophy (Hernández "La nueva" 43). The relationship between man and nature was the most common recurring theme of Nahua poetry (Hernández "La nueva" 44). The following poem, written by Ayocuan Cuetzpaltzin, a Nahua poet from the city of Puebla in the late 15th and early 16th centuries, illustrates the Nahua concepts of flower and song:

Ayn in ilhuicac itic	From within the sky come
ompa ye ya huitz	beautiful flowers
in yectli yan xochitl	beautiful songs.
yectli yan cuicatl.	Our yearning spoils them,
Conpoloan tellel,	our inventiveness
conpoloan totlayocol	ruins them.
¿Zan ca iuhquin onyaz	Must I go
in o ompopoliuh xochitla?	just as the flowers that perished?
¿An tle notleyo yez in quemanmanian?]	Nothing of my name will remain?
¿An tle nitauhca yez in tlalticpac?	Nothing of my fame here on Earth?
¡Maanel xochitl, manel cuicatl!	At least flowers, at least song![43]

The poem demonstrates the belief that flowers and song were the most important aspects of Nahua life. It appears that Sor Juana was aware of the importance of the flower in Nahua culture, as well as its relationship with song. The flower given to St. Peter Nolasco is the *Cempasúchil*, or marigold, which was particularly significant to

[43] Translation mine, based on the translation to Spanish by Hernández ("La nueva" 43).

the Nahua people. The Aztecs used it for medicinal purposes and believed that its smell could wake the souls of the dead and bring them temporarily back to Earth. Devotees offered it to Mictecacihuatl, the goddess of death. This offering is syncretic as it combines the devotion to St. Peter Nolasco with the offering of an Aztec marigold to the figure, as the Nahuas would have done to the deity Mictecacihuatl. Indigenous listeners would have identified with this allusion and the detail contributes to the multicultural nature of the work.

***Villancico* 299**

Thirteen years after her bilingual *villancio* was sung during the Feast of St. Pedro, Sor Juana included traces of Nahuatl and a voice for the indigenous in a *villancico* sung for St. Joseph on March 19, 1690. The topic of *villancico* is a debate about the profession of St. Joseph. At the end, a dialogue between an Indian and a Black character portrays linguistic traits of both groups. The Indian speaks principally in broken Spanish, but includes a few words in Nahuatl. In this case, Sor Juana designates the entire *villancico* an *ensalada*, as it includes a mixture of voices.

A section titled "*Juguete"*, which can mean "toy" or "game" as well as theatrical sketch, begins with a "doctor" or scholar's proposition of a riddle, promising a prize for he who answers correctly. The riddle asks listeners to define the "*oficio*", usually understood to mean profession, of St. Joseph. The doctor receives three distinct responses: pastor, laborer, and carpenter, all to which he replies are incorrect. He states that St. Joseph was the patron, protector, and advocate for the nation of Spain. When the riddle seems to be resolved, the Indian

character joins stating that he wants to propose a riddle, because according to him, "not only doctors speak the university". The other characters laugh at the idea of his riddle and ask to hear the question, at which point he inquires, "Which St. Joseph is the best?". They again laugh and ask how another can be better if there is only one St. Joseph. He replies that the best is that of Xochimilco, the parish in which the praise was being sung. It is here revealed that the Indian is referring back to the original riddle of the "*oficio*" of St. Joseph, as "*oficio*" can also mean a church service or mass. The same speaker who called the riddle nonsense responds that it is true, and the chorus replies "*¡Bien de su empeño salió*!" (v 180), a positive response implying that they are pleasantly surprised with the Indian's cleverness.

This episode defends indigenous culture because, as Martínez-San Miguel notices, it proposes the acceptance of other types of knowledge. It suspends and postpones supposedly universal knowledge represented by the Catholic religion in order to reassess it from the perspective of the voices that intervene in the dialogue ("Neo Barrocos" 445). It is significant that the Indian and Black voices offer alternatives after an answer to the riddle has already been given. It demonstrates that even when issues appear to have one clear answer, it is important to be open to possibilities that seem distant from the rest. It is also significant that Sor Juana includes the Black and the Indian characters in this *villancico* because they are then represented as part of the religious community (Martínez-San Miguel "Neo Barrocos" 444). They were often marginalized especially in the religious realm,

which is a common theme of the *villancicos* discussed in this chapter as well as the one that follows, and of the *Loa satírica* examined at the end of this chapter.

In linguistic terms, this *villancico* is different from the other two in that the Indian speaks in very broken Spanish, including only two words in Nahuatl. The first phrase, "Yo también*, quimati* Dios */ mo* adivinanza pondrá / que no solo os Dotore / habla la Oniversidá" (163-166), includes two Spanish verbs, both which are conjugated incorrectly. Other spelling mistakes indicate incorrect pronunciation. As with the previous *villancico* discussed, the speech reproduced here likely reflects reality and is not meant to mock the speaker. In fact, it proves that a lack of language skills in the dominant language of a society do not correspond to intellectual capability, as the Indian proves to be clever, impressing his fellow puzzle-solvers.

In addition to suggesting the consideration of marginalized groups' perspectives, the Indian in this *villancico* also offers an interpretation of St. Joseph that can be considered more "close to home" for the listeners. He proposes that the best service for St. Joseph is that which is held in their very church. Aside from this, both the Indian and the Black refer to the saint as "*San José*", the common Spanish name given to St. Joseph, while the other characters had referred to him as "*San Joseph*", an archaism even in colonial times. The Spanish of Sor Juana's poems has been modernized in most editions, however, and the saint's name has been modified to "*San José*" throughout, obscuring the fact that the subaltern characters refer to a version of the saint that better fit the concept of him held by the public. In this

villancico, Sor Juana gives the Nahua a voice and asserts that his perspectives are valid, while also suggesting that the indigenous are important members of church services and are a part of the unique character of each community.

Theater

I have shown the influence of Nahua culture on Sor Juana's poetry, but indigenous cultures had even greater an impact on her theatrical work. The three works examined here all contain subject matters that are directly related to the cultural and religious traditions of the indigenous and their oppression by Spanish domination.

Loas are introductory theatrical pieces that were performed before a play. Although it is believed that hundreds of *loas* were written in Spanish America during the 17th Century, only 36, from 8 different writers, remain today. Sor Juana wrote 18 of the 36 existing colonial *loas* (Lee 42). The first two *loas* I discuss, those of the *Divine Narcissus* and *The Scepter of Joseph*, were published in 1689 and 1692, respectively, although their dates of composition are unknown. Both of these works are *Autos Sacramentales*, plays that served as celebratory pieces of religious communities that confirmed their beliefs and religious traditions (Zanelli 184). Sor Juana's theater was written to be performed at the court of Madrid. It is important to keep in mind when analyzing these works, then, that they were written for an exclusively peninsular public. Evidence shows that they were never actually performed, neither in Madrid nor in Mexico but a select public would have read them (Sabat de Rivers "Apología" 283, Moraña "Poder, raza y lengua" 95).

These two *loas* are significant in that they demonstrate the syncretic reality of the Americas while supporting and celebrating indigenous traditions. According to Sabat de Rivers, the two *loas* attempt to "convert" the Spanish audience to the American perspective ("Apología" 283). This is ironic because religious theater was often used for evangelization, as it was the closest European equivalent to indigenous ritual performances. The Nahuas were attached to their ceremonial way of life and believed that their devotional impulses could be directed to new stories, festivals, and personages (Burkhart *Aztecs* 5). After years of using theater as a tool to "convert" the indigenous, Sor Juana uses it here to influence Europeans to become more accepting of Nahua ways of life.

The *Divine Narcissus*

Commissioned by the Countess of Paredes, the vicereine of New Spain from 1680-1686, Sor Juana wrote the *Divine Narcissus*, which was intended to be performed in Madrid at the festival of Corpus Christi of 1689. In the *loa* of the work, the allegorical characters are two couples. Occident and America are an indigenous man and woman while Religion and her husband Zeal, a conquistador, are Spaniards. The play begins with a *tocotín* song and dance as the Indians are celebrating the God of the Seeds. Religion asks Zeal how he can allow this type of idolatry[44], to which he responds that he will avenge her violently. Religion says that they must convert them peacefully, and begins to do so by telling the Indians that

[44] Idolatry was forbidden by the Catholic doctrine due to prescriptions indicated in the Book of Exodus of the *Old Testament* and by the *Summa Theologiae* of Thomas Aquinas, which defined idolatry as the worship of false gods. Aquinas attributes idolatry to two separate causes: *causa dispositiva*, which comes from human decision, and *causa consumativa*, which is introduced by the devil (Tavárez 13-4).

their religion is work of the devil and that they should believe the true doctrine. The indigenous characters ignore her and continue their celebration. Zeal then threatens violence and sends his soldiers but Religion says that she needs the indigenous subjects alive. They are given a chance to defend their religion and Occident explains that the God of the Seeds cleanses them of their sins. Religion convinces them that all of the miracles that they have described – the rain, produce, and flowers, are work of the True God. America wishes to know whether the god in question is one that she can touch with her hands, as the one that is made of seeds and blood. Religion replies that priests can touch him, referring to the sacrament of communion. America notes that only priests touch her god too, also when he is served as food[45]. Occident asks of what their god is made and Religion answers that he is immaterial, but wheat seeds are converted into his flesh and blood during the holy sacrament. The characters then begin to wonder if they worship the same god, which Religion confirms is true. The Indian characters want to learn more about God and Religion announces that an *auto sacramental*, the actual play that follows the *loa*, will explain his existence. Interestingly, the four characters exit singing, "Blessed is the day that I learned of the great God of the Seeds!" (497-8).

It is first necessary to provide background information in order to understand the cultural implications of this *loa*. The ritual presented in the play is known as *teocualo* or "God is eaten". The "God of the Seeds" refers to Huitzilopochtli, the god of Agriculture (Iniesta 271). Huitzilopochtli was the brother

[45] This detail corresponds with Torquemada's description of the practice: "no podía tocarle nadie, ni entrar en su Capilla, sino solo el Sumo Sacerdote" (No one could touch him, nor enter in his sanctuary, except the high priest) (72).

of Quetzalcóatl and son of Ometéotl, a deity of ambiguous sex that was both the mother and father of the gods. Huitzilopochtli was the principal deity in Mexico because he was important in the land from which the Mexica came originally (León-Portilla *Aztec* 33). During the ceremony, the participants would make a statue of the god out of seeds, grains, and the blood of human children (Torquemada 71). As with the host in the Catholic sacrament of communion, the statue represented the flesh of the deceased god and its pieces were distributed for consumption (Iniesta 269). Juana Inés identifies the similarities between the two religious traditions and presents *teocualo* as parallel to Christian communion, rather than as a perversion of it.

Sor Juana's influence and knowledge of indigenous culture in the *loa* is undeniable, the prime example being the portrayal of the ritual of *teocualo*. The description of the ritual coincides with that described by Torquemada, which she read and cited in other works. In addition to this native tradition are several other references to Nahua culture that prove that the community influenced the writer's subject matter. The *tocotín* at the beginning defines man as having originated from the sun (4), referring to the Aztec belief that man was in fact the son of the sun. According to Hanrahan, she could have learned this from Torquemada, but it is more probable that the tradition still survived in the Aztec ritual dances of the time with which she was familiar (53).

In another section, Occident defends his liberty, stating that in his heart he still worships the God of the Seeds (245-6). Sabat de Rivers notices that this defense

appears to have echoes of the historical event known as the "Colloquium of the Twelve" ("Apología" 293), which reflects the cultural clash of the Aztecs with Europeans. Twelve *tlamatinime*, or wise Nahuas, faced missionaries in 1524 to let them know that they refused to abandon their beliefs (León-Portilla *Filosofia Nahuatl* 128-133). The Indians listened to the missionaries in silence before one of the principal lords voiced his displeasure at the attack upon their customs and beliefs, which were passed down to them by wise and competent teachers (León-Portilla *Aztec* 18). Occident responds to the sermons of the Spanish characters with the same poise and firmness in the belief of his traditions, suggesting that the author intended to reproduce the famous defense.

Sabat de Rivers also notices that the dialogue of the *loa* is in the style of ancient Nahua theater ("Apología" 290). The *tocotín* is sung by two separate choruses, both defined as "Music", that rejoice in celebration of the God of the Seeds. The celebration corresponds to the description given by León-Portilla in *Las literaturas precolombinas de Mexico*, in which he describes Pre-Colombian theater. Unlike the contemporary concept of theater, which is mostly fictional, the dramatic pieces were meant as reverence to the gods and were of religious as well as artistic nature (106-9). Sacred hymns were sung in the form of dialogues between separate choruses (108), as is portrayed at the beginning of Sor Juana's *loa*. Since echoing choruses were not a characteristic of Spanish drama, we can infer that the *loa* was influenced by Nahua dramatic art itself.

What is perhaps most interesting to the modern reader about the *loa* of the *Divine Narcissus* is its religious syncretism. It must be clarified that the Nahua religion is not being represented in its original form but as a fusion with Catholic beliefs, through the pen of a Catholic nun. In what can be interpreted as a strategy to defend the Aztec religion as legitimate, the author attributes Christian elements to the Nahua ritual. The indigenous character Occident defines the consumption of the God of the Seeds as a practice that cleanses its participants of their sins (254-5), which is a characteristic of Christian communion. According to Torquemada, the Aztec ritual held the same purpose[46], but this is likely a detail that was misunderstood, as Christian and Nahua concepts of sin are different. Sor Juana includes it in the work in order to create a representation of *teocualo* as a version of the Christian sacrament. In addition, importance is given to only one god in the *loa*. Occident states that although several gods exist, the God of the Seeds is the most deserving of his attention (29-42). In reality the *teocualo* ritual involved statues of several gods, including one of Quetzalcoatl alongside Huitzilopochtli (Torquemada 72). Although Huitzilopochtli was indeed the most important of the Mexica gods, the monotheistic nature of this practice was likely a strategy used by Sor Juana to appeal to the Christian doctrine.

The last element of syncretic nature is proposed by the Spanish character, Religion. The indigenous characters had explained that they worship the God of the

[46] "Y hacían esta liberal ofrenda, pareciéndoles, que hacían un mui gran servicio à su Dios, y que por el les perdonaba sus pecados (que es lo que en Doctrina Católica, y sana, nos dice la Sagrada Escritura, que la limosna disminuie el pecado…" (72) (And they gave this liberal offering, believing that they were doing a great service to their god, and that for it he forgave their sins, which is what in the healthy Catholic Doctrine the Sacred Scriptures tell us, that alms diminish sin).

Seeds thanks to his provision of food for the people. Rather than dismiss the concept, she infers that the gods of the two religions in question are actually one in the same and that the wonders to which they refer: rain, produce, flowers, etc. are the work of the True God. The syncretism exists in that the author fuses the indigenous concept of Huitzilopochtli as the provider of agricultural products in exchange for sacrifice and the Christian concept of God as the creator of the universe. She calls the acts of nature "miracles", which is again a Christian concept that is here fused with the Nahua belief system, as the acts are attributed to Huitzilopochtli. At the end of the *loa*, the characters arrive at the conclusion that they have been in fact, worshipping the same god, using a similar ritual in which they symbolically consume his flesh. Although it is known that Aztec and Christian religions concepts were very different, these forms of hybridity and multiculturalism were commonplace during the colonial period. The author includes elements of both cultures in order to represent the heterogeneous reality of society and to call for inclusion of the marginalized indigenous group in the religious sphere.

Despite the syncretic nature of the *loa* that applies Christian characteristics to the Aztec ritual, several elements of the work call for the acceptance and celebration of Nahua religion and culture. From the beginning of the *loa*, the author capitalizes pronouns that refer to the God of the Seeds, as is necessary when referring to the Christian god. In doing this, she legitimizes the God of the Seeds as a deity to which the same respect must be offered as the hegemonic god, putting the

two religions on an equal plane. Through the voice of America, she also explains that the God of the Seeds is to thank for food production and the conservation of life, noting that produce is much more important than gold[47]. This could be an allusion to the Spanish obsession with gold, which was never understood by the Amerindians. The infamous conquistador, Hernán Cortés in response to a question about the European fascination with gold is said to have stated, "We Spaniards know a sickness of the heart that only gold can cure" (Horwitz 117). This comparison between America's gold mines and its produce is based on logic and defends the Nahuas' reverence to the God of the Seeds.

The religious ritual performed at the beginning of the *loa* can be seen as a metaphor for the Eucharist, suggesting that indigenous culture is valid for explaining the mysteries of Catholic sacraments. This is bold, considering that indigenous religious beliefs were usually dismissed as false. The fact that the *loa* is an introduction to a play that uses Roman mythology, the legend of Narcissus and Echo, to explain the sacrament, indicates that the Nahua legend is equally as appropriate as the widely known and celebrated classical culture. As Cross notes, the *loa* emphasizes the similarities that exist in the three cultures. Aztec practices are no longer seen as tricks of the devil that hide the true religion but as legitimate forms of worship (83).

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[47] "Y con razón, pues es solo / el que nuestra Monarquía / sustenta, pues la abundancia / de los frutos se Le aplica; / y como éste es el mayor / beneficio, en que se cifran / todos los otros, pues lo es / el de conservar la vida, / como el mayor Lo estimamos: / pues ¿qué importara que rica / el América abundara / en el oro de sus minas, / si esterilizando el campo / sus fumosidades mismas, / no dejaran a los frutos / que en sementeras opimas / brotasen?... (43-59)

Although at first glance the *loa* may seem as though its intention is to evangelize the indigenous, these elements suggest that its true intention was to educate Europeans about indigenous culture and to contest the prejudices that had developed, which is confirmed by the fact that the work was written to be performed in Madrid for an exclusively peninsular audience despite its evangelist content. Martínez-San Miguel has pointed out the inversion of the evangelist purpose of the *Auto*, given that in the end it is the European characters who are "evangelized" as they end up worshipping the God of the Seeds (*Saberes* 181). Sor Juana uses the work to denounce prejudices and misconceptions. The indigenous America ironically calls the Spanish Zeal "*bárbaro*" (166), barbarous or savage, a term frequently applied to the indigenous by Europeans. Zeal had called Occident by the same name for his pagan religious beliefs, but it is more fitting for the conquistador character, who has responded with violence and without reason. Zeal also claims to be a Minister of God (146) as many representatives of the Church did during the period. Given that he ends up being proved wrong in the end and even suggests that they ask for forgiveness[48], this questions the "true doctrine" and the undisputable authority of the Christian conquistador. When threatened by the violence of Zeal, the indigenous characters are forced to surrender. Juana Inés makes it clear, though, that it was force that dominated the Indians, rather than reason. Occident states, "*Ya es preciso que me rinda / tu valor, no tu razon*" (203-4), indicating that they have given in due to Zeal's courage, not his reasoning. This

[48] "Siendo así, a los Reales Pies, / en quien Dos Mundos se cifran, / pidamos perdón postrados;"(473-5).

again forces the public to question evangelist methods and reconsider what have been regarded as victories for the Christian religion. The author also includes references to the indigenous peoples' intelligence and capability, which was often contested in the period. Alluding to the indigenous characters and the fact that they are being "transported" to Madrid, Religion states, "*a especies intelectivas / ni habrá distancia que estorben / ni mares que les impidan*" (470-2), noting that they are part of an intellectual species. The indigenous characters are capable of thinking rationally, which was a question that was debated in the 16th century (Sabat de Rivers "Apología" 294; Restall *Seven Myths* 105). In fact, the indigenous characters respond with logic during each exchange of the debate, while the Spanish characters base their argument on the fact that the dominant discourse was not to be questioned. When Occident asks why unknown people have come to ruin their happiness, Zeal answers that their practices are insulting to the Christian religion[49]. Occident and America both state that Zeal's explanation is unclear and that there is no reason for his disruption of their joy[50]. The didactic purpose of the *loa* is confirmed at the end of the play when the characters, indigenous and Spanish, announce, "Blessed is the day that I learned of the great God of the Seeds!" (497-8), insinuating that the success of the work lies in that the Spanish have learned the reality of the Aztec tradition.

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[49] "*a la religión desprecias*" (132), *"…no permite Dios / que en tus delitos prosigas*" (136-7)
[50] Occident: "*Que no entiendo tus razones / ni aun por remotas noticias, / ni quién eres tú, que osado / a tanto empeño te animas / como impedir que mi gente*" (158-62). America: "*Bárbaro, loco, que ciego, / con razones no entendidas, / quieres turbar el sosiego / que en serena paz tranquila / gozamos.."* (166-70)

The Scepter of Joseph

The *loa* of *The Scepter of Joseph* shares a similar theme and equal valorization of Nahua religion. The *loa* begins with the four allegorical characters, Faith, the Law of Grace, Natural Law, and Nature rejoicing over the conversion of the Indies, where Nature prevailed as the religion for centuries. According to this interpretation, Natural Law was separate from the Law of Grace, but due to evangelization they have been joined and the Law of Grace perfects her natural counterpart. The Law of Grace was betrayed by Idolatry, whose sacrilegious altars, stained with human blood, demonstrated that the men who practiced such traditions were the most barbarous. Natural Law rejoices to see that Law of Grace arrived to complement her as she had long desired. What pleases her most is that Faith has demolished the sacrificial altars where her blood was spilled many times. Natural Law agrees, repulsed by the fact that women remained unwed and men were cohabiting with several women[51]. The Law of Grace states that they must remove the sacrilegious sculptures of false gods and replace them with statues of Christ, but Faith, referring to the Eucharist, replies that it is better to exhibit the very essence of Christ than just an image. They all sing with the purpose of invoking angels to descend in order for the sacrament to take place, but instead Idolatry appears. Idolatry defends the practice of sacrifice with logic, stating that the best offering that one can give to God is human blood. The other characters disagree and Idolatry explains that eating the

[51] Although Nahuas held ceremonies similar to marriage before the Conquest, polygamy was common even among those baptized as Christians in the colonial period (Lockhart 205). The Aztec concept of inamic unity, dualities or paired opposites, which applied to male and female partners, was very different from the Western concept of matrimony. For more information, see Maffie 137-183.

flesh of those sacrificed extends the life of the participants. Faith then agrees to meet her requests, stating that she will make a supreme offering that will offer not only longer life but eternal life. It then becomes obvious that she speaks of the Sacred Eucharist. When Idolatry asks how bread and wine turn into flesh and blood and how they have such marvelous effects, Faith answers that it will be explained in the *Auto Sacramental* that follows. Idolatry is then content and agrees to accept this human sacrifice that offers eternal life.

This *loa*, similar to that of the *Divine Narcissus*, offers a syncretic interpretation of two separate religious practices. In this case, however, the original indigenous rite seems to be replaced by the Spanish tradition. The exchange that takes place could be interpreted as assimilation. As Dean and Leibson state, while hybridity can be understood as a subaltern strategy to cope with domination, it should also be understood as a strategy utilized by dominant cultures to incorporate subalterns (24). When reading the *loa*, it appears to be a way of "tricking" those that practice sacrifice into accepting communion as a form of human sacrifice, encouraging them to forget their traditions and adopt those of the Spanish. However, it is again important to remember that the target audience of the work was Spanish, so evangelization was not the intention of the author. The content of the *loa* forces the audience to see the indigenous perspective and understand the reasoning behind sacrifice. As Martínez-San Miguel observes, Sor Juana subverts the genre by converting a space in which knowledge is imposed to a space in which

colonial subject and the colonizer are presented as equals (*Saberes* 197). Instead of insisting on Catholic doctrine, she is transmitting Indo-American wisdom.

The audience learns of the purpose of sacrifice through the character Idolatry, whose discourse, in addition to that of Occident in the *Divine Narcissus*, has been identified to resemble that of the Colloquium of the Twelve of Nahua elders (Sabat de Rivers "Apología" 296, Socorro Tabuenca 34) due to its defensive nature. The character explains the importance of sacrifice, stating that the best offering is owed to the highest deity (290-1). She specifies that although offerings had erroneously been made to false gods in the past, the recipient is now the "true God" (296-9). This syncretism allows the Christian public to better understand the ideology behind the practice, as they would have in mind their own god, rather than a foreign idol. Sabat de Rivers suggests that this singular god could refer to Quetzalcoatl ("Apología" 297), allowing for a dual interpretation of the tradition. Again, Sor Juana shares knowledge of the Nahua religion, while applying Christian characteristics to their practices in order to elicit empathy from the audience.

In addition to the explanation defending human sacrifice, Sor Juana references the new Sun, which is an important aspect of of Aztec religion. The *loa* begins with the announcement by the chorus of the "New Sun of Faith" (1), which according to Socorro Tabuenca refers to a new era or a change of "world" (32). The Aztec vision of time included several successive worlds or "Suns", each possessing its own span of time and each ending in catastrophe. Each sun was destroyed with all of mankind. The creation of the present world, the "Fifth Sun", is an important

element of Nahua religion[52]. It was humans' responsibility to replenish the sun with the necessary energy by means of sacrifice in order to keep it in existence. They believed that their mission was to side with the Sun, which represented goodness, in a struggle with evil (Neumann 256-60). The blood drawn from sacrificed victims was the only suitable nourishment for the Sun, and was needed to sustain its life (León-Portilla *Aztec* 37). According to Socorro Tabuenca's interpretation of the *loa*, the Fifth Sun has ended and the new Sun refers to the Christian god. This Sun moves by natural law and does not require human blood in order to appear each day at dawn (32). The rest of the *loa*, however, indicates that according to indigenous belief, voiced by the character Idolatry, sacrifice is still necessary. Idolatry questions Faith's intentions in depriving her people of this tribute (292-3). Before the arrival of Idolatry, Faith herself gives an ironic speech about the barbarity of sacrifice. After condemning sacrificial practices, she mentions that men in general are barbarous, giving as an example of the existence of war, specifying that it is based on hate and greed.[53] This forces one to consider that although it may seem

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[52] The present Sun is the Sun of Movement, *Ollintonatiuh*. The previous four Suns are each related to one of the elements: earth, wind, fire, and water, which led to their destruction (León-Portilla *Aztec* 6). It is believed that the 5th Sun will be destroyed by earthquakes and hunger (León-Portilla *Aztec* 39). In contrast with other ancient cultures, the Nahuatl religion lacks a mentality that looks forward to a "Great Time" at the conclusion of history. The religion is void of the nostalgia or hope that is usually associated with cultures that entertain the notion of historical despair (Neumann 259). Each of the previous four attempts of gods to create a successful reality failed due to the incapacity of the gods to identify themselves with the creative energy of the sun. They failed to achieve order and to create man. It was only through sacrifice to time itself (the sun) that the duty was fulfilled and history was established. The new reality was different in that the center of the universe was Man (Neumann 259-60).

[53] "a pesar de tus preceptos, / manchadas de sangre humana, / mostraban que son los hombres / de más bárbaras entrañas / que los brutos más crüeles / (pues entre éstos no se halla / quien contra su especie propia / vuelva las feroces garras; / y entre los hombres, no sólo / se ve el odio, pero pasa / a hacerse estudio el rencor / y a ser industria la saña, / pues no a otro efecto se ven / acicalar las

brutal for the indigenous to sacrifice humans, other cultures kill for selfish reasons of hate and greed. Socorro Tabuenca points out that sacrifice was linked to feelings of love and hope since the ritual sustained the human race (33). Torquemada explains that the ambience tied to the ritual was joyous and delightful, accompanied by song and dance with great reverence and respect to the god[54]. Sabat de Rivers notes the hypocrisy in that while Aztec society was based on the violence of wars and combat necessary for taking over other lands and capturing prisoners, Spanish violence contradicted their religion ("Apología" 296). To be an object of sacrifice in Nahua culture was a religious honor. Those sacrificed, along with those killed in battle, went to an afterworld known as the "sun's heaven". They escorted the sun through the sky from dawn until noon as part of a military honor guard for four years. After the four years, they became birds or butterflies, which represented sacredness and beauty (Burkhart "Which"). In the *loa,* the Catholic character Faith's own discourse diminishes the barbarity of sacrifice, done for the good of man, by comparing it with European war and Conquest, which contradicted Christian religious values.

As other scholars have already mentioned, the *loa* indicates that the Indies have been converted due to force, not because of true faith (Socorro Tabuenca 33, Martínez-San Miguel *Saberes* 193, Sabat de Rivers "Apología" 297). The characters rejoice at the beginning and Faith supposes that it is due to "the new conversion of

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espadas, / echar pólvora a las piezas, / unir el hierro a las lanzas… / ¡Oh loca, humana ambición, / que de ti misma olvidada, / a ti misma te destruyes, / cuando piensas que te ensalzas!)" (67-86)

[54] "Todo este día era de grandísima fiesta, y regocijo" (72). "y con grande reverencia y estimación…sonando las trompetas, y otros instrumentos, que hacían mucho, y mui gran ruido, e iban delante muchos bailando, y cantando" (71).

the conquered Indies"[55]. The choice to describe the Indies as "conquered" highlights the fact that the inhabitants did not convert to Christianity by choice. Idolatry refers to the "active persuasion" of Christian dogma that has almost all of her people dominated (247-9), which Sabat de Rivers interprets to refer to those indigenous tribes that allied themselves with the Spanish against the Aztecs. This again denounces the hypocrisy of the Spanish, who ignored the principals of their religion in their violent actions ("Apología" 297). The *loa*, then, proves to be a defense of the Indians in that their practices are no more barbaric than the customs of the Spanish and are justified in their belief that sacrifice to the gods is necessary to sustain the human race.

Loa satírica

The last work that I discuss in this chapter, the short play *Aplaúdese la fineza*, along with its accompanying *Loa satírica*, is unique in that it was recently discovered and has rarely been studied. It is mentioned in Sor Juana's biography written by her contemporary, Calleja, who supposes that she wrote it when she was seven (18-9) when she lived on the hacienda of Panoya, then part of the Republic of Indians of Amecameca, at the foot of the Iztaccihuatl and Popocatépetl volcanoes. In reality, she likely wrote it at a later date, although she reflects back on her memories as a child. Although the original is lost, historian Augusto Vallejo Villa found a copy in 2001 in the same archive in which Sor Juana's birth certificate was discovered, the archive of the parish of San Vicente de Ferrer de Chimalhuacán Chalco (Loera

[55] "...Y supuesto que / del regocijo la causa / es la nueva conversión / de las Indias conquistadas" (49-51).

Chávez y Peniche 77). The play was included in a collection of 20 works written in Nahuatl and some that combine the language with Spanish. The first 18 texts appear to be authored by Indian caciques in resistance to the cultural invasion of the Christian Europeans. The goal was to revive and preserve their ancient traditions by explaining to the *macehuales* or common Indians how to perform rituals in honor of the mountains, volcanoes, and the supernatural forces that were believed to inhabit them. The 17th century scribe attributed the last two works, the *loa* and the play, to Sor Juana (Loera Chávez y Peniche 9). The scholars Margarita Loera Chávez y Peniche and Salvador Díaz Cíntora have carried out studies proving Juana Inés's authorship of the works by recognizing similarities between the play and other works of the writer and by identifying biographical details of Sor Juana's life in the play.

The text, the most subversive and sympathetic to the indigenous cause of all of Sor Juana's literary compositions, was written to be performed at the festival of Corpus Christi in Amecameca. This festival was a feast that celebrated the Roman Catholic rite of transubstantiation: the conversion of bread into the body of Christ. Actors performed as consecrated bread, the host, was carried along a processional route (Burkhart *Aztecs* 6). The principle theme of the work is participation in the festivities themselves. The *loa* begins with a character, speaking in collective voice, complaining of the injustices of the Spaniards. Both Díaz Cíntora and María Elena Maruri Carrillo's translations to Spanish indicate that the poetic voice is female, as the adjectives that the speaker applies to herself are in the feminine form. Although

the gender of adjectives is ambiguous in Nahuatl, the vocative case, used only twice in the *loa*, indicates that the speaker is female. The narrator states that the Spaniards always make fun of them, get angry, and push them. The Indians are told that they are not meant for theater and the young girl laments that she will not be able to play the role that she wishes. She explains that the Spaniards begin preparation for their festivals seven or eight months ahead of time but do not offer the same respect for indigenous festivities. They instead criticize and mock them[56]. The next section is a satire of *bachilleres* or scholars who arrive to Amecameca and look around senselessly at the people kneeled down in church like hunters looking at rabbits. They gossip about the participants and raise their eyebrows, complaining about the *comedia*. The narrator then asks rhetorically who has invited them and states that if they do not like the festivals, they should respect them instead of gossiping. She then concludes her soliloquy and apologizes for any imperfections that the festival might have.

An interesting element about this *loa* is the identity of the narrator. Although we cannot assume that it is Juana Inés herself, she is a young girl as the writer was at the time. Both Díaz Cíntora and Loera Chávez y Peniche do assume that the speaker is in fact the author, as she is a young girl that goes to school[57] and mentions her grandmother (114), a relative with whom Sor Juana lived as a child. Interestingly, the narrator speaks collectively for the indigenous and speaks about

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[56] The character states that the Spaniards respond to indigenous festivals by giving "*culebra*" (62), a Spanish idiom that referred in the Early Modern period to mocking or teasing, usually accompanied by violence (Robert 107).

[57] "*ihuan nihuallauh yoatzinco / ompa tomachtía escuela*" (I go early in the morning / there where we learn, to school) (35-6)

the Spanish in the third person as if she were an Indian. Her lament about not being able to fulfill the theatrical role as well as the Spanish also indicates that she is indigenous. She states that she "barely fits (in)" (4) on the stage, referring to the discrimination of indigenous performers. If we take into consideration Díaz Cíntora and Loera Chávez y Peniche's assumption that the speaker is Juana Inés, she has written herself into her play with an indigenous identity. At the end of the *loa* of the *Divine Narcissus*, the Sor Juana places the common false modesty trope in the mouth of the Aztec character, America. America asks forgiveness for attempting to explain such a great mystery with awkward verses[58], indicating that she accepts responsibility for what is written and is hence a sort of alter ego of the writer. Many contemporary Chicano writers have commented on the effects of multilingualism and multiculturalism on identity. In her article, "The Breakdown of the Bicultural Mind", Chicana author Cherrie Moraga relates that her cultural identity changes depending on the circumstances (116) and that culture is contagious - she picks up others' speech, gestures, jokes, and reinvents herself with different groups (117). Due to her time spent with indigenous people growing up and her appreciation for the culture, Juana Inés may have used literature to express the composite cultural identity that she likely felt, given current research on the relationship between bilingualism and cultural consciousness.

In one section she refers to "the Indians" of Amecameca and compares them to the indigenous group of her homeland, presumably Nepantla, where the author

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[58] *a sus Ingenios, / a quien humilde suplica / el mío, que le perdonen / el querer con toscas líneas / describir tanto Misterio* (481-5)

was born, if the narrator is in fact the author. She states that the indigenous people of her land work with bravery or generosity[59] and not with the drunkenness of those of Amecameca. This comparison, although negative, is significant considering that Europeans tended to refer to all indigenous people as Indians and did not recognize them as different ethnic, cultural, or linguistic groups. The Nahuas of the Amecameca area produced *pulque*, an alcoholic drink made from the juice of the agave plant. According to Louise Burkhart, colonial Nahuas had serious problems with alcohol, adding, "as have many peoples living under colonialism or other forms of domination". It was their tradition was to get thoroughly drunk to mark ritual occasions and they would sober up when the festival was over. Spaniards detested this behavior and often dismissed the native peoples as drunks as a stereotype (*Aztecs* 19). Despite Juana Inés's sympathy for the indigenous, she does not idolize them and recognizes them for the human beings that they are.

Lastly, it is important to signal the significance of language use. The work combines two languages, Spanish and Nahuatl in the technique known today as code-switching or code-mixing. The *loa* includes intra-sentential code-switching by both characters with no explanation as to why the European character would speak in a mix of Spanish and Nahuatl. In literary terms, the variety provided by the choice to use two languages in the same verse increases the number of possibilities to convey meaning while adhering to the rhyme and meter of the work. In the *loa*, the writer uses a mix of Spanish and Nahuatl with no obvious pattern, presumably

[59] "*bizarría*"

basing her language choice on the number of syllables and necessary rhyme as a way to comply with the poetic restrictions as will be demonstrated below.

The obvious effect of this combination of languages is the limitation imposed on a monolingual audience. The *loa* would have been incomprehensible to the monolingual spectator, such as the average Spaniard, while being clear for the bilingual public, which would have been composed principally of mestizos or learned Nahuas, who were otherwise marginalized groups. The monolingual spectator may enjoy the show but completely ignores the meaning of the dialogue. The code-switching in the *loa* serves a directive function, which excludes certain persons from a portion of the discourse. In this case, the combination of languages is tremendously ironic. The *loa* represents a debate about whether Indians should be able to participate in theater. The inclusion of their language in verse demonstrates its artistic value and doubly argues, in content and in language use, that the indigenous deserve to take part in theatrical presentations. The Spanish character complains,

> "estos indios, ¿*tlein quimati*? these Indians, what do they know?
> ¡*aic quichihua* cosa buena!" (23-4), They never do anything well!"[60]

The bilingual reader understands the satire while the message perceived by the Spanish-speaking monolingual reads, "these Indians, a good thing!". There exist, then, two possible interpretations of several parts of the *loa*, given that ignoring

[60] I base my English translation on the translation to Spanish by Salvador Díaz Cíntora.

what is said in Nahuatl, the text in Spanish is coherent as well, although this is not the case of the entire work.

The inclusion of the subaltern Nahuatl permits a criticism of the Spanish without the monolingual Spaniard's understanding of it, such as in this example:

porque *huel techxixicoa*	because they always make fun of us
mochipa inin caztilteca.	these Spaniards
Señores, *huel tetlaocolti*,	Ladies and gentlemen, it is a shame
inin quichihua, de veras	what they do, truly
tonanual, porque *cualani*	bad luck for us, because they get angry
ihuan zazan techmapehua (15-19)	and just push us.

This part of the text is almost completely in Nahuatl and it is not even apparent that it addresses a criticism if the audience cannot understand the indigenous language. As Doris Sommer discusses, aside from the target audience, there sometimes exists another audience that is the target of exclusion due to the language barrier (2) and in this case, it is the dominant culture. The same applies to the satire of the scholars that complain about the theatrical productions of the festival. It can be assumed that those who fit this category would be in attendance of the *loa*, but would not understand what was being said about them, while indigenous audience members and other bilinguals would.

Aplaúdese la fineza

In the play itself, the author employs a different style of combining languages. The structure is a dialogue between two characters, "Spaniard" and "Indian", in

which each speaks his native language. They begin arguing because each has interrupted the devotion of the other, which is symbolic of the constant religious conflict of the colonial contact zone. The Spaniard states that only the Spanish are permitted to worship there. They debate over what it is that should be worshipped. While the Indian believes that it is the incarnation of the divine creature on Earth inside of a human woman, referring to the immaculate conception of Christ, the Spaniard believes that the Holy Sacrament, or the Eucharist, is the occurrence that is most worthy of worship. The Indian reminds the Spaniard of another great miracle, when Christ, although again not mentioned by name, fed hundreds of people with five pieces of bread, emphasizing that he was incarnated for the good of man. The Spaniard then agrees and the two decide that the many mysteries of God are worth worshiping.

The Indian in the play mentions that the Spaniard has disturbed him and has come to destroy the *chalchiuites* (17), which refers to green precious stones such as jade, emeralds and turquoise (Karttunen 45, Loera Chávez y Peniche 201). The stones were sacred to the Nahuas and no one had rights to them, as they were destined for the gods (Loera Chávez y Peniche 201). The Indian alludes to the sacred emeralds and jade several times as part of the devotion to God (17, 50, 78, 158). These references to precious stones in relation to worship again confirm that the author was familiar with their importance in Nahua culture. The Indian, who speaks only Nahuatl, never refers to Christian figures with their Spanish names, but with Nahuatl terms. The first name used is Cenyecmahuiztlanqui – "he of good and

wonderful things", an ambiguous name that could refer to the Christian god, an Aztec god, or a fusion of deities. The Indian later refers to a figure that one can assume to be Christ as *Mohuicani* (86), "the venerated one", and lastly to God as *Huecapanolca*, meaning "worthy of being praised". These ambiguous terms allow the audience, those who understand the dialogue, to interpret the figures at their own will. Those who follow the Christian faith can assume that the Indian uses Nahuatl words of worship to refer to Christian personages, while those who practice other religions may relate them to sacred figures with which they are familiar. The dialogue reflects the multiculturalism of New Spain as well as the syncretic nature of religious worship.

The linguistic effect of this part of the work is a representation of the bilingual society of Amecameca, with a poetic license that permits that the characters converse in two separate languages, conceding that they understand one another. The marginalized Indian is given a voice that he often does not have, especially in literary culture. Although the Indian never speaks Spanish, he speaks a phrase of Latin amid his discourse in Nahuatl, explaining that the Nahuas worship the Virgin Mary just as the Spaniards do:

chalchiuhcoyoltepapacti	we say with sweetness
Laudate omnes gentes	*Laudate omnes gentes*
contzopelitoa yamanqui (51),	"sing praises, all you peoples".

He translates the phrase, demonstrating that he is educated and multilingual, unlike other characters in Sor Juana's writing that speak Latin and do not understand the

meaning of the phrases that they speak[61]. He uses the language of the Church to demonstrate his familiarity with Catholic praise. In addition, the Indian proves to be correct, given that he is ironically more familiar with the mysteries of the Catholic religion than the Spaniard. Although the Indian proves his faith and knowledge of the Catholic religion, the Spaniard states that the indigenous are not permitted to worship God:

y solo a los españoles	and only the Spanish
se les permite que alaben	are permitted to praise
a aquel Sacra Deidad	that Sacred Deity,
Señor de las Magestades (37- 40)	Lord of the Majesties.

This statement denounces the oppression and injustice of racial discrimination in the religious realm and exposes the hypocrisy of the Europeans' evangelist missions and tendencies of ethnic exclusion. The play gives the audience a new perspective on indigenous Christians and suggests that they should enjoy equal participation in the Church's festivals.

Conclusion

Raquel Chang-Rodríguez highlights the power of writing during the colonial period as a means for defending the points of view of the marginalized (23). Her discussion features el Inca Garcilaso de la Vega and Felipe Guaman Poma de Ayala, subaltern writers of Incan and Quechua descent respectively, but also emphasizes the impact of Sor Juana, as she used her ability to write, one that most subaltern

[61] See Chapter 4 of this dissertation.

peoples didn't have, to communicate the importance and contribution of socially marginalized groups (28). Mary Louise Pratt explains that literature is a product of what she calls "contact zones", or spaces in which cultures meet and clash, often in highly asymmetrical relations of power (34, 37). The writings of Sor Juana are exceptionally significant in the context of the colonial period because of the systematic marginalization of the groups that she attempts to defend. The Nahuas are given a voice where they were usually silent or mocked characters in European-dominated literature. As Chang-Rodríguez argues, Juana Inés's inclusion of these groups is part of a process of recuperation of their culture and languages that had been suppressed since the time of the Conquest (28).

According to Hamers and Blanc, bilingual individuals can be distinguished in terms of their cultural identity. A bilingual may identify with two cultural groups with whom he has languages in common, making him bicultural (11). This is the case with Sor Juana. Her knowledge of the Nahua language, which was linked to her relationships with Nahuas, led her to appreciate and embrace their culture, a sentiment that is reflected in her writings. In the case of the *Loa satírica*, she invents a character that appears to be herself as an indigenous girl, reflecting the effect that her relationship with Nahuatl had on her identity. Several of the works that I analyzed contain defenses of Nahua religious elements, showing that Sor Juana appreciated and respected indigenous religion despite her position as a Catholic nun. According to acclaimed linguist Benjamin Lee Whorf's "linguistic relativity principle", speakers of different languages perceive the world differently

(221). The thought process of Sor Juana as a multilingual individual allowed her to see the world and its people from several perspectives, accounting for the support of subaltern knowledges in her writing.

Her inclusion of Nahuatl, in addition to revealing its literary value, is significant in that writing bilingually helps to decrease loss in meaning. Sommer explains that bilinguals suffer losses when writing in only one language (8-9). Writing in a mix of both languages allows the author to include concepts that may not have an adequate translation in the other language. In addition, words can be charged with feelings and violent passions, used to produce certain effects and stir up certain emotions (Holquist 23). Language choice in each of Sor Juana's verses is capable of producing effects that a monolingual text could not. Mignolo prefers to refer to language not as an object, something that human beings have, but as an ongoing process that he calls "languaging" (253). Languaging and bilanguaging, he states, are a way of knowing and of living emerging from the detritus of colonial and national expansion and can contribute to the struggle to reconvert subaltern memories from places of nostalgia to places of celebration (Mignolo 266). This is exactly what Sor Juana does in her writings. Through the inclusion of a marginalized language as well as defenses of Nahua religion, she calls for the appreciation of Nahua culture at the time of writing, not only as a romanticized memory of the past.

Chapter 3

"*Aunque neglo, gente somo*"[62]: Sor Juana's defense of the Afro-Mexican

Introduction

Sor Juana's writing in Nahuatl shows resistance to the dominant culture and substantiates the value of a subaltern language. Her dramatic pieces celebrate Nahua culture and provide a defense for the socially marginalized indigenous peoples. Her prose and poetry reflect the multicultural reality of New Spain while also revealing the composite linguistic and cultural identity of the author. Sor Juana also incorporates into her works the language and culture of another ostracized ethnic group: the Afro-Mexican. Although African studies have been largely ignored in Mexican History, slaves and their descendants comprised a considerable portion of New Spain's population and therefore contributed significantly to the cultural formation of the Mexican nation. The linguistic relationship of colonial Afro-Mexicans and other Spanish speakers can be considered diglossia[63], as they often spoke a less prestigious dialect of Spanish defined by modern linguists as "Bozal" Spanish. In this chapter, I focus on Sor Juana's works that denounce inequalities and provide a defense for the Afro-Mexican population of New Spain. I seek to prove that the author's proficiency in Bozal Spanish was directly related to her intimate relationship with Afro-Mexican individuals, leading to her desire to speak in their defense in her works. I focus my analysis on sections of six *villancicos* that Sor Juana wrote to be performed in a variety of religious festivals at different churches

[62] "Although black, we are people" in Bozal Spanish from Sor Juana's Villancico 241
[63] The use of two dialects of a language in the same community, usually when one has more prestige than the other

between the years of 1676 and 1690. There are a number of *villancicos* that include Bozal Spanish that have been attributed to Sor Juana and are included in her *Obras Completas* edited by Alfonso Méndez Plancarte but for the purpose of this study, I include only those for which her authorship has been confirmed.

As discussed in the previous chapter, *villancicos* were performed in church services and were therefore a popular genre. The lyrics were printed on loose sheets of paper and were more accessible to the public than other forms of literature (Moraña "Poder, raza y lengua" 96). The songs were presented in colloquial speech, which made Bozal Spanish an acceptable dialect, unlike other styles of poetry that required a more formal language.

There are several explanations as to why the *villancicos* are Sor Juana's only existing works that include Bozal Spanish. Many of the works that she created, such as the *auto-sacramentales*, did not provide an adequate setting for the inclusion of Afro-Mexicans. These religious works were often allegorical and unlike the *villancicos*, did not depict everyday life in New Spain. Her three surviving secular plays, *The Trials of a Noble House*, *Love is the Greater Labyrinth*, and *The Second Celestina* were *comedias*. Golden Age drama prescriptions would have required Blacks to serve as servants and/or *graciosos*, secondary characters whose actions parodied those of the nobles and who were the subjects of humiliation and mockery. The author perhaps disdained these representations and preferred to leave Blacks out of her plays. The possibility also exists that she did write Afro-Mexican characters into other works but that these works have not been discovered, as the

majority of the nun's work has been lost. Works that focused on marginalized people would not have been as treasured by elites as other forms of literature and may not have been preserved for this reason.

Evidence suggests that Juana Inés's relationships with the Afro-Mexican community inspired her interest in African culture and Bozal language. She grew up on her grandfather's ranch, where she would have cohabited with his slaves just as she interacted with Nahua people throughout her childhood. Her grandfather lists slaves in his will (Ramírez 6-8), indicating that they were an important part of his estate. Her grandparents and mother also owned slaves (Aguirre 303), further exposing her to other cultures. As a nun, she owned at least one slave named Juana de San José, a *mulata* four years younger than she, given to her by her mother in 1669 (Cervantes 18). Ángel Aguirre, professor of Spanish at the Universidad Interamericana de Puerto Rico, assumes Sor Juana's intimate relationship with Juana de San José shaped in her sympathy for the lower classes (303). Juana Inés and her slave lived together for 15 years until she sold her to her sister Josefa in 1684 (Cervantes 22). Convent records from the 1670s showed that nuns often brought young slave women into their cells as domestic servants, although most came from informal transactions. Spanish women, such as Sor Juana's mother, would send girls that had been raised in their homes, following an arrangement by the girl's parents. In one example, a nun stated that a girl's father had sent her to serve in the convent to remove her from the risks of the world. The majority of Mexico City *castas* lived in poverty and suffered from undesirable living conditions

and exposure to diseases and violent crime. Servants in the convent relied on the patronage of their mistresses (Cope 104-5). Although the *mulata* Juana is the only known servant of Juana Inés, Paz believes that she had other slaves or maids considering her distinguished financial status (128). Mexico City elites valued Black slaves as status symbols that held visible but relatively unproductive roles (Cope 13). Although she criticizes the institution of slavery in her works, Sor Juana did not completely diverge from the social norm of holding slaves.

Prior to Sor Juana's Bozal poetry, there were numerous literary imitations of Bozal Spanish, beginning in Spain in the 16th century, continuing into colonial Spanish America in the early 17th century, and lasting into the 20th century (Lipski "Where and How" 359). The first to incorporate the Black theme into literature were the Portuguese in the 15th century (Aguirre 295; Lipski *A History* 51). Although the Spanish may have produced similar works during this period, the earliest Afro-Hispanic texts discovered to date are some *coplas* by Rodrigo de Reinosa, written around 1510 in Cantabria. The humorous poems are characterized by crude and vulgar language along with Bozal speech. According to John Lipski, linguist and Bozal expert of Pennsylvania University, Reinosa's texts were not influenced by the Portuguese authors (*A History* 71). The first Spanish writer to incorporate a Black character into a work was Diego Sánchez de Badajoz. He included the typical speech of the Black slave into theater with humoristic intentions, and was followed by other Spanish dramaturges of the 16th century (Aguirre 295). The *negro* was a common figure in the *entremés*, a short theatrical

piece that was performed during an interlude. The purpose of the Black characters was for comic relief, the most humorous of their characteristics being their broken Bozal Spanish, which was an inaccurate exaggeration created by the playwrights. Spanish writers attempted to entertain their audiences by fomenting a stereotype of Black characters who were superstitious and cowardly and were inclined to music and dance (Castellano 58). Poetry of the 16th and 17th centuries also began to imitate the speech of blacks (Aguirre 296), but again the intentions were aesthetic and contemptuous, not attempts to integrate subaltern voices into hegemonic society. The most prolific user of Bozal Spanish was Lope de Vega, who represented Africans as buffoons and included vulgar puns and linguistic stereotypes that were unlikely to have represented the authentic speech of Africans of the time (Lipski *A History* 83-5). Blacks in Spanish literature were either inferior characters morally, physically, and intellectually or were good people that pretended or longed to be white. According to professor Baltasar Fra Molinero, Spanish literature was not capable of creating a normal Black slave, one who was conscious of his slavery and did not accept the condition[64] (11).

Although the "*villancico de negro*" was an established genre that included a racist and stereotypical vision of the African (Páez 180), Sor Juana wrote the greatest number of "Black" *villancicos* in all the Spanish Empire (Jiménez Torres 275) and included a much different representation of the Afro-Mexican character. As mentioned in the previous chapter, Paz maintains that Sor Juana's inclusion of

[64] One exception to this is *Juan Latino*, a *comedia* by Diego Ximénez de Enciso in which a slave repeatedly asks his owner for freedom.

marginalized voices was nothing more than a manifestation of the Baroque characteristic of the strange and exotic (58). Flynn shares a similar opinion, stating, "The purpose of the Negro verses was to amuse a congregation that was tired after a long time at prayer" (82-3). According to Lipski in reference to early modern literary imitations of Black speech, "Many of the literary imitations are simply grotesque racist parodies, devoid of any resemblance to the true results of Afro-Hispanic language contacts" ("Where and How" 359). Lipski also states in an earlier article that literary imitations of what was considered to be stereotypical "Black" speech took precedence over linguistically accurate portrayals ("Convergence and Divergence" 186).

Sor Juana's use of the language dialect, however, was distinct. There is no suggestion of mocking or derogatory representations of Black characters. Based on the content of the Black speech in her *villancicos*, the purpose of including Bozal Spanish was to reflect reality rather than to provide a humorous effect. Jorge Porras, a linguistic expert on Spanish-based Creole languages, argues that Sor Juana imitated the speech of slaves with considerable accuracy. He confirms that her imitation should not be understood as a repetition of Spanish Golden Age literary imitations, but should be attributed to her formation as a polyglot[65] ("Mexican Bozal" 157). He believes that her training in Latin, Greek, and Nahuatl rendered her better qualified to develop linguistic imitations of Bozal Spanish (167). According to Porras, Juana Inés is the only Early Modern writer that appears to possess adequate

[65] Lipski also believes that Sor Juana's verses are based on both authentic Afro-Mexican speech and Spanish literary imitations (*A History* 92).

linguistic knowledge of Afro-Hispanic dialects, as the grammatical features of her imitations are coherent with current linguistic research[66]. In addition, Porras agrees that the writer did not compose her imitations with intentions of mockery or debasement ("Black Spanish" 266) but instead with the purpose of describing their linguistic identity poetically and musically ("Lenguaje afro-hispánico" 95). Ángel Aguirre is in agreement that ridicule and parody of the Blacks are not present in the verses of Sor Juana. On the contrary, the Black characters are enthusiastic Christians with a genuine devotion to the Virgin Mary (307). As Mexican historian Margarita Loera Chávez y Peniche notes, she ennobles them, makes them likeable and pleasant, and captures the regions where they come from, showing her ethnographic intuition (51). The Blacks of Sor Juana's *villancicos*, despite their broken Spanish, are lyrically talented, unlike the African characters of other writers (Aguirre 303).

The history of Africans in Mexico is as deep-rooted as the European tradition, as African slaves accompanied the Spanish from the beginning of the Conquest. Afro-Mexicans joined Spaniards in the fight against the indigenous and later in the war for independence from Spain (Richmond 1). A total of 200,000 African slaves were introduced into Mexico during its three centuries of colonial rule (Aguirre Beltrán "Slave Trade" 431). This figure excludes the thousands of Afro-Mexicans

[66] Authentic Bozal Spanish is studied through several sources. The first is isolated enclaves of Afro-Hispanic speech, which are post-Bozal remnants that conserve a few of the original characteristics. Linguists have also studied ritualized folkloric reproductions of earlier Bozal speech, collective recollections of the speech of the last remaining Bozal speakers, and descendants of return-diaspora Bozal speakers (Lipski "Where and How" 360-70).

born into slavery. By 1570, the African population in New Spain was greater than that of whites: 9,000 people of African descent outnumbered 8,000 Spaniards in Mexico City[67]. By Sor Juana's time, however, *criollos*, people of Spanish descent born in the colony, had surpassed the African presence (Bennett 5).

For the first two decades of the Conquest, the Crown permitted the entrance only of evangelized Africans, known as "*negros ladinos*", who came from Spain or other Christian territories and spoke Spanish or Portuguese (Brady 283). These individuals were culturally and linguistically more European than African. The Catholic Church and activists such as Bartolomé de las Casas[68] fought with success for the rights of the natives and indigenous slavery was abolished in 1542, although it continued to exist illegally for centuries in some areas (Martínez 487). The "labor crisis" that resulted, however, provoked mass importations of "*bozales*" or enslaved workers that arrived directly from Africa, breaking the laws against slavery. The term *bozal* in Spanish signifies "savage" or "untamed", especially referring to animals (Lipski *A History* 5). It is also the word for muzzle or for a halting device connected to a horse's mouth to slow him down or stop him. Metaphorically, it came to be used for the first time in Medieval Spain, and later by Golden Age writers, to refer to the enslaved African who spoke Spanish or Portuguese imperfectly or in a

[67] This demographic was comparable throughout the colony. A sixteenth-century census of the diocese of Mexico, Michoacán, Nueva Galicia, Tlaxcala, Yucatan, Oaxaca and Chiapas recorded 15,000 Spaniards and 17,000 *negro* slaves (Schwaller 897).

[68] Bartolomé de las Casas was a Dominican friar and bishop of Chiapas who denounced the injustices against the indigenous and fought for their fair treatment. He suggested that Africans and not Indians should serve as slaves to the Spanish. The friar later confessed remorsefully that the policies which he advocated had the effect of augmenting the African slave trade and stated with regret that the labor policies should have applied equally to the indigenous and Blacks (Richmond 2).

"halting" manner (Porras "Mexican Bozal" 159). Linguists now use the word to define the pidgin[69] language spoken by Afro-Latinos in colonial times as well as in contemporary Latin America.

The importation of *bozales* increased European contact with African culture. Although the new workers were required to convert to Christianity, they conserved (to varying degrees) their culture and language, unlike the "*negros ladinos*" who were "Hispanicized" Christians and already spoke Spanish. The slaves brought to the New World came from a variety of different locations along the western coast of Africa, from Senegal to southern Angola, and in some cases from eastern and central Africa, principally from Congo, Mozambique, and Tanzania (Megenney 164).

The preference for an African labor force caused the transatlantic slave trade to expand. According to early modern stereotypes, Africans were physically superior and resisted tropical diseases and Mexico's hot weather (Richmond 5). Africans were preferred in the mines due to the perception that they could withstand physical strain better than indigenous laborers. During the 16th century, the demand for mine workers was so great that every viceroy in the Spanish colonies requested the importation of slaves exclusively for the purpose of mining (Schwaller 895).

Another justification for slavery, which was classified as unnatural by Castilian law, was "to bring infidels into the Christian fold". The papacy sanctioned their captivity on the basis that it could result in their conversion and salvation. For

[69] Pidgin is a simplified language dialect that arises when speakers of two or more language varieties need to speak with one another but do not share a common language. In the case of Bozal, it is a simplified, imperfect form of Spanish.

this reason slaves were baptized and recognized as Christians, which made them suitable characters to sing praise in Sor Juana's *villancicos*. Portugal was Spanish America's main supplier of slaves until the mid-seventeenth century and in theory prohibited the enslavement of Blacks that it recognized as vassals of African kings. Only those that were presumed to be "stateless" were sold to the ships of the Middle Passage and branded with the coat of arms of the European king (Martínez 488).

During Sor Juana's lifetime however, the viceroy, the Marques of Mancera, who was in power from 1664-1673, opposed the slave trade in light of the high number of slaves in New Spain and constant slave uprisings. The environment was one of fear and persecution of true or supposed plots of rebellion, which created a myth that produced panic in the cities (Valdés-Cruz 209). The Spanish were suspicious of Blacks because unlike the indigenous, they had no natural love for the land and were believed to be more likely side with Spain's enemies. Their conversion and allegiance to the rule of Spain was involuntary and the dominant culture often thought them to be disloyal to their masters, the Church, and the Crown (Martínez 489). Spanish authorities feared the growing presence of Africans at the beginning of the century because of their "nature" that according to the Viceroy Luis de Velasco, who ruled New Spain from 1590-1595 and again from 1607-1611, was "barbarous and inclined to liberty, atrocities and crimes" (cited in Von Germeten 80). Royal decrees forbade African gatherings in the plaza and street because authorities believed that the festivities would lead to injuries, theft, and death. By the end of the century, punishments for slave rebellions were less severe,

indicating that the fears of the effects that a large number of Africans had on the dominant class had subsided. By this time, those of mixed blood outnumbered Africans and this urban mass did not show signs of cooperating in an effective and focused rebellion (Von Germeten 75-81).

Not all of New Spain's blacks were slaves, however. By the second half of the 17th century, there were more free Afro-Mexicans than slaves in the colony (Proctor 3). Slaves were able to buy their own freedom through self-purchase. Others were set free through manumission, which was more common for second-generation slaves that grew up in the homes of their masters (Cope 97). In some cases, slave-owners, particularly women, would free slaves and/or their children in gratitude for the care that slaves provided to the children of the masters (Proctor 32). Although children of slaves were typically born into servitude, those that were children of a slave and an Indian would be born free.

Afro-Mexicans, especially slaves, lived under lived under highly racialized and oppressive circumstances (Vasquez 183), creating a context that made Sor Juana's defense of the ethnic group both audacious and crucial. Masters used whips to urge slaves to work faster and any resistance could result in beatings, separation of families, or death. After a rebellion in 1612, even free blacks and mulattoes were required to live with a "known master" who would keep watchful eyes on them in order to deter further uprisings. They also could not be on the street after dark, bear arms, or be with other *castas* in groups of more than four. The legislation became meaningless after a short time, as non-whites could not realistically be prevented

from establishing their own households or gathering in large groups, but Afro-Mexicans continued to suffer from discrimination. A Spaniard who used fraudulent scales for selling weighed meat was fined 20 pesos while a non-white who was guilty of the same infraction was punished with 100 lashes (Cope 18-22). Many *castas* found themselves in debt peonage, which could be socially worse than slavery as there was no chance for mobility. Employers often manipulated workers into accumulating more debt and working a lifetime to repay the money owed (Cope 99-100).

Throughout the 17th century, slaves and free people of African descent participated in rural and urban economic activities (Martínez 494). As the *villancicos* mention, Africans often held skilled positions in *obrajes* – textile factories or other industrial workshops - while the indigenous were employed as unskilled workers. Indigenous peoples as well as Blacks and mulattoes, free and slave alike, participated in Mexico City's economy as vendors (Schwaller 894, Cope 21), another activity detailed in several of Sor Juana's *villanicos*. While some sold products at the command of their masters, others operated their own businesses during hours when they weren't working for their owners (Proctor 33).

Seventeenth century Black culture in New Spain was best exhibited through *cofradías*[70] or confraternities, which were lay religious brotherhoods. A tradition brought to New Spain by the Spanish, confraternities provided members with social connections, charity, and status for their members. Many confraternities in New

[70] For a complete study of Afro-Mexican confraternities, see Nicole Von Germeten's *Black Blood Brothers: Confraternities and Social Mobility for Afro-Mexicans*.

Spain were associated with a hospital. For some slaves and free Afro-Mexicans, the brotherhoods were the only means to ensure care in time of sickness and a proper burial. Members paid a fee to join and depended on their brotherhood to pay for their funeral mass and burial and most importantly, to pray for their souls. Confraternities were always connected to a social division and were separated by ethnicity and class. Male confraternity leaders, even if they were enslaved, could achieve limited prosperity. In one case in 1611, a *cofradía* led a demonstration in protest of the death of a slave woman at the hands of her master (Von Germeten 77).

Linguists refer to the language dialect spoken by Bozal Africans and used by Sor Juana as Bozal Spanish, the creole language formed by imperfect learning and pidginization by African learners of Spanish. Although some forms of Bozal Spanish can be traced back to common African origins or mutually shared influences[71], most Afro-Hispanic language forms arose spontaneously as the result of Africans learning Spanish as a second language (Lipski "Convergence and Divergence" 171). The earliest published study on the traits of Bozal Spanish is Esteban Pichardo's *Diccionario provincial casi razonado de voces cubanas* of 1836. Pichardo defined Cuban Bozal as, "a disfigured Castilian, babbled, without grammatical agreement, number, declension, or conjugation, without strong R, final S or D, with Ll for N, E for I, G for V, etc." (Clements 69, 88).

Bozal Spanish is also characterized by an influence of Portuguese. During the 16th and 17th centuries, it was the Portuguese who brought the most slaves from

[71] Examples include Papiamentu, Colombian Palenquero, and 19th century Cuban and Puerto Rican bozal language.

Africa to the Americas. Some slaves were born in Europe and in the islands of Cabo Verde and would have been exposed to Portuguese. Because of this, the *lingua franca* among costal African groups was a Portuguese-based pidgin language[72] (Megenney 164-5). The compositions of Luis de Góngora[73] that include Black speech imitations have an obvious Portuguese influence, which was common among the Blacks of Spain (Aguirre 296). Lipski suggests that the pidgin Portuguese that slaves brought to Latin America from Lisbon may have been "Hispanicized" by Spanish writers for ease of comprehension by the audience ("Convergence and Divergence" 186).

The mixture of morphemes of different languages that is visible in Sor Juana's *villancicos* represents not only the distinct Sub-Saharan and European sources of the slaves brought to Mexico, but is also the result of the influx of many native slaves from American trading centers. Although *villancicos* even in Spain were originally commonly written in Galician or Portuguese, the tradition had been lost by the 16th century in Mexico and *villancicos* were sung and transcribed in Spanish (Megenney 166).

A difference between the indigenous and the African situation is that the indigenous peoples of the same community were able to communicate with one another, whereas Africans were placed into societies with other slaves that did not speak the same language. Slaving ships typically collected Africans from several

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[72] Afro-Portuguese language was known in Early Modern Portuguese as *guinéu* ("Guineanese"), *lingua de guiné* ("language of Guinea") and *lingua de negro/preto* ("negro/black language") (Clements 45-6).

[73] Luis de Góngora (1521-1657) was the most renowned Spanish writer that included Blacks and Bozal Spanish in poetry (A. Aguirre 296).

ports before crossing the ocean; therefore a shipment of slaves could contain speakers of a dozen mutually unintelligible languages (Lipski *A History* 9). Africans were then forced to resort to the language of the dominator to communicate with one another and were unable to express themselves collectively using a subaltern native tongue[74]. William Megenney suggests that the Bozal language spoken by the Blacks likely served as a unifying force that created sociolinguistic bonds (165). Stuart Hall, the Jamaican-born cultural theorist, reveals the paradox that it was the uprooting of slavery and transportation into the Western world that unified these peoples across their differences, in the same moment as it cut them off from direct access to their past (227). Clancy Clements, author of *The Linguistic Legacy of Spanish and Portuguese: Colonial Expansion and Language Change*, explains that a speech community is often defined not necessarily by linguistic factors, but by cultural, social, or political ties (8)[75]. Many different varieties of Spanish, then, could be considered Bozal, not because of their linguistic similarities but because of the circumstances under which they were created. This, among other factors, such as meter requirements, explains inconsistencies between speakers in Sor Juana's

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[74] In the 19th century during the sugar boom, however, Latin America saw a large demand for slave workers while only a few large slave traders remained in business, meaning that slave shipments often came from only one port. This led to ethnically, culturally, and linguistically homogenous African groups establishing themselves in Latin America, particularly in Brazil and Cuba. The Afro-Cuban religion Santeria as well as other remaining cultural and linguistic traditions developed under these conditions (Lipski *A History* 11).

[75] One example is the Dutch-German border, where the language varieties on either side of the border are mutually intelligible. While the variety spoken within the Dutch border is considered a dialect of Dutch, the language spoken on the German side is considered a variety of German. Meanwhile, Brazilian Portuguese and Continental Portuguese are phonologically and syntactically quite different, but considered different dialects of the same language due to cultural and social ties between the countries (Clements 6-7).

villancicos. The characters may have come from different parts of Africa and some may have been more exposed to standard Spanish than others.

There are two hypotheses in regards to the formation of Bozal Spanish. Some critics suggest that Afro-Hispanic language comprised a stable creole that was eventually acquired natively (Clements 69; Lipski *A History* 6). This theory proposes that the language has origins in an earlier Afro-Portuguese pidgin or creole (Lipski *A History* 6). Other scholars attribute the development of Bozal Spanish simply to natural second language acquisition, indicating that only first-generation African-born slaves exhibited such speech patterns (Clements 69; Lipski *A History* 6).

The phonetic and morpho-syntactic features of the Bozal Spanish in Sor Juana's *villancicos* has already been outlined by Porras as follows: (1) 'l'-'r' neutralization; (2) 'd'-'r' neutralization; (3) vowel raising of 'o' to 'u' and 'e' to 'i'; (4) palatalization of 'n' to 'ñ' (5) reduction of word final 'r' in infinitives; (6) deletion of final 's' in the verbal suffix of the first person plural; (7) suffix '-s' in only the first element of plural noun phrases; (8) deletion of definite articles; (9) regularization of inflexion in the imperfect; (10) lack of gender and number agreement in noun-adjective sequences; and (11) lack of agreement in subject-verb sequences ("Mexican Bozal" 161-2). Clements notes that these phenomena are common in naturally learned second language acquisition (97) but Megenney points out some characteristics that are specific to African-language speakers. The confusion of l and r, for example is due to the similarity between these sounds in the languages spoken

along the "Slave Coast" on the western coast of Africa from which many of the colonies' slaves originated (169). The interchange of r and d is characteristic of speakers of Sudanic languages (Megenney 172).

My analysis of Sor Juana's use of Black speech and culture is limited to the *villancicos* but an excerpt of one of her dramatic pieces is relevant to her defense of the Afro-Mexican people. In the nun's secular play, *Love is the Greater Labyrinth*, which was performed in 1689, the verses from the protagonist, Theseus's monologue reads:

De donde infiero, que sólo	From whence I infer that only
fue poderoso el esfuerzo	force was so powerful
a diferenciar los hombres	as to differentiate men
que tan iguales nacieron,	that were born so equal,
con tan grande distinción	with such great distinction,
como hacer, siendo unos mesmos,	being one in the same,
que unos sirvan como esclavos	that some serve as slaves
y otros manden como dueños.[76]	and others rule as masters[77].

As is typical of Sor Juana, she uses logic to argue against the slave status of men who were born equal to those who live as masters. Although the context derives from a

[76] From the monologue of Theseus in Act I (509-16). As discussed in the following chapter, this political commentary is multicultural in that it is situated in ancient Greece but is based on progressive ideas of Sor Juana's time.
[77] This and all subsequent translations are mine.

different time and place in history[78], the author reveals her negative sentiments toward the concept of slavery, an institution that was prevalent in colonial New Spain as well as in ancient Greece. Including socio-political criticisms in a text out of the context of the viceroyalty of New Spain allowed Juana Inés to discreetly denounce this injustice of her own society. Her sympathy toward the Afro-Mexican population is clearer in her *villancicos*, as they reveal issues of racial inequality in a local context.

***Villancico* 224**

The first extant *villancico* of Sor Juana's that contains Afro-Mexican characters is "*Villancico* 224", sung at the Holy Metropolitan Church of Mexico in honor of the Virgin Mary for the Festival of the Assumption[79] on August 15th, 1676. The song begins with an introduction sung by the chorus, followed by a dialogue between two "*negrillos*" or Blacks. While the purpose of the *villancico* is for worship, the underlying theme of the song is a call for inclusion of Africans in the kingdom of the Virgin Mary, which can be interpreted as a metaphor for their inclusion in society. In the introduction of the *villancico*, the chorus sings,

Y como Reina es de todos	And since she is the Queen of everyone
su Coronación celebran (5-6).	they celebrate her Coronation.

The lyrics later emphasize,

Vos habéis de mantenernos	You (Mary) must maintain us

[78] *Love is the greater Labyrinth* is a multicultural work adapted from Greek mythology with contemporary allusions to the society of New Spain. It is reasonable to believe that in the discussion of slavery, Sor Juana had in mind the slavery of her own society.
[79] Refers to the ascent of the Virgin Mary into heaven, celebrated by the Catholic Church on August 15.

en paz y justicia igual (17-8).	in equal peace and justice.

Although the chorus is White, these verses indicate inclusion and equality and prefigure the dialogue of the African characters, who denounce discrimination and request to be included in the religious sphere. A reference to "the laws that God gave mankind"[80] implies that religious codes apply equally to people of all races and reminds the audience that the Afro-Mexican characters participating in the dialogue are in fact human. The author refers to the Black characters as Heraclitus and Democritus, both names of distinguished Greek philosophers, indicating that their ideas are worthy of attention.

Under the title "*Negrillos*", the first exchange between Afro-Mexican characters reads:

1. Cantemo, pilico	1. Let's sing, Perico
que se va las Reina	as the Queen is leaving
y dalemu turo	and let's all give her
una noche buena.	a good night
2. Iguale yolale,	2. Crying out of pity,
Flacico, de pena,	Francisco, does not matter,
que nos deja ascula	since all of us Blacks
a turo las Negla (33-40).	she leaves in the dark[81].

The fifth stanza also emphasizes the Virgin's abandonment of Blacks:

2. Déjame yolá,	Let me cry,

[80] "*fueros que Dios / le dio al humano linaje*" (15-6)
[81] My translations from Bozal Spanish to English are done with the help of Méndez Plancarte's translations from Bozal to standard Spanish.

Flacico, pol Eya,	Francisco, for her,
que se va, y nosotlo	as she is leaving,
la Oblaje nos deja (49-52).	and leaves us to the *obraje*.

This is a clear reference to human exploitation in addition to the Afro-Mexicans' exclusion from society. During the 17th century, most free Afro-Mexicans had been associated, either directly or through their parents, with the institution of slavery (Martínez 506) and would have identified with this allusion to the *obraje*. Free workers of African descent often worked in *obrajes* as well. Due to labor shortages and fear that workers would renounce, workers, both slave and free, would often be locked in the factories and unable to leave, even at night (Proctor 13,16). Unlike most African character portrayals of the time, the author persuades the audience to sympathize with the Blacks, as the Virgin Mary has unjustly excluded them and left them in the dark, equal to their treatment in everyday society.

An interesting multicultural element of this *villancico* is the subsequent representation of the Virgin Mary as a dark-skinned person. The character Francisco announces,

mila la Pañola,	Look at the Spanish woman,
que se quela plieta (55-6).	she is turning dark.

They then dedicate a song or *estribillo*[82] to her, singing as follows:

- *¡Ah, ah, ah,*	-¡Ah, ah, ah,
que la Reina se nos va!	the Queen is leaving!

[82] A refrain or small group of verses that is repeated

-¡Uh, uh, uh,	-¡Uh, uh, uh,
que non blanca como tú,	she is not white like you,
nin Pañó que no sa buena,	nor Spanish, which is not good;
que Ella dici: So molena	She says: I'm dark-skinned
las Sole que mirá! (65-71).	because the Sun has looked at me!

Here the Virgin herself proclaims that she is dark, due to exposure to "the Sun". The capitalization of the word "sun" indicates that it represents a religious figure, which in this case is Christ. Sabat de Rivers affirms that the sun here represents God and being dark-skinned becomes a positive and desirable characteristic ("Blanco" 90). This symbolism is innovative, given that dark colors tend to represent evil while white represents goodness, reflecting on perceptions of race. The Iberians had a long history of perceiving black skin color in negative terms as well as linking black blood to slavery and Islam because of the presence of black slaves in Muslim parts of the peninsula (Martínez 486). The "Curse of Ham" was a biblical prescription that condemned those of African descent to perpetual servitude. In the Book of Genesis, Noah curses Ham's son, Canaan, to slavery. The legend was used to explain the origins of slavery for over 1500 years, from the serfdom of the classical era to the transatlantic slave trade of the colonial period. In early modern times, the tale was manipulated, inferring that the Africans' dark skin was the result of God's curse on Ham as punishment for his sin (Whitford 26-8). The legend was deployed by the Portuguese as early as the mid-fifteenth century and later regularly applied to Africans by the Spanish and the English in order to justify slavery (Martínez 485).

The indigenous and mestizos were considered pure to an extent because their descendants had not mixed with "contaminated" or "condemned" sects[83]. Black blood was more frequently and systematically construed as a stain on lineage and viewed negatively and related to evil. Sor Juana's *villancico* reverses this standard and relates dark color to the Christian faith. Valdés-Cruz states that the Afro-Mexican characters in the *villancico* console themselves by suggesting that by being close to the sun, the Virgin will become dark like them (214). She ignores, however, that the importance of this image is the correlation between dark skin and the influence of God. This symbolism is repeated and explained clearly in *Villancico* 281, analyzed later in the chapter.

In linguistic terms, the *villancico* displays common characteristics of Bozal Spanish. The second verse of the exchange contains the phrase "que se va las Reina". The article "las" is designated for plural nouns, while here it corresponds to the singular noun, "Reina", meaning queen, referring to the Virgin Mary. Long believes that "las Reina" is a reference to the family of African musicians who would be denounced for scapular ceremonies many years later in 1691 (573). During the first half of the century, Africans began to meet to interpret traditional dances in the streets of Mexico City. When the viceroy Luis de Velasco restricted this practice in 1609, the groups opted to hold ceremonies in private homes. The ceremonies were known as "*nacimientos*" (births) or "*oratorios*" (places for prayer) because they met

[83] Spaniards often married native women, which enabled them to acquire lands, tribute, and rulerships as well as to establish political and kinship links with indigenous nobility. In order to hold the title of *cacique* or *principal* (noble), one had to prove that he descended from indigenous nobles or rulers (Martínez 484-93).

under the pretext of praying. The nature of the reunions however, was based more on dancing, drinking, and food than on devotion. The Inquisition was invoked to investigate these parties in 1643 and they subsided, but resurfaced in the 1680s and 90s, then called "*escapularios*" or scapulars[84] and were subsequently prohibited again by several different decrees. By this time, participation included not only Africans, but those of indigenous or mixed race as well as some Spanish, while the music and dance were of African nature. The surname of the musicians that were famous in Mexico City for their performance in scapular ceremonies was Reina, and the reference to an entire family explains the use of a plural article. Contextually the reference is coherent. The stanza could translate to:

1. Cantemo, pilico	Let's sing, Perico
que se va las Reina	The Reinas are leaving
y dalemu turo	and let's all give them
una noche buena.	a good night.

In *Villancico* 232, we find another possible reference to the Reina musicians:

que tambié sabemo	we also know

[84] *Escapulario* or scapular usually refers to a devotional accessory worn around the neck. Monastic scapulars are large pieces of cloth worn by nuns or monks while devotional scapulars, used by common people, are formed by two pieces of fabric, wood, or paper bearing images or text that are bound together with string or cloth and worn as a necklace. Africans, indigenous people, and those of mixed blood were accused of abusing scapulars by wearing them without understanding of their nature and were required by a decree of 1689 to have them blessed by a priest before being allowed to wear them. The parties were named after scapulars because of the use of the accessories during the ceremonies (Long 567). Scapular necklaces remain common in parts of Mexico and other Roman Catholic communities today.

cantaye las Leina (3-4) how to sing to/like/with[85] the Reinas

The indirect object pronoun "le" usually refers to a singular noun, while "les" refers to a plural object but the use of Bozal allows for ambiguity, given that the elimination of "s" is common in Bozal speech, as is the lack of agreement among parts of speech. The use of a plural article to designate a singular noun is much less common and these two examples are the only instances of the error in all of Sor Juana's known *villancico*s, further suggesting that the double meaning was intentional and not a simple imitation of a Bozal phonetic error. The audience would have related the stanza to the well-known family that in the songs represented the Afro-Mexican community and their cultural contributions.

This first "Black" *villancico*, along with those that followed it, contains rhythmic chants, representative of African traditions ("-¡*Ah, ah, ah, … -¡Uh, uh, uh,*") (65-7). The onomatopoeias, repetitions of words and alliterations of the *villancicos* bestows upon them a danceable character, which according to Chang-Rodríguez is symbolic of the abandonment of work and the rejection of the labor regimen imposed on the slaves (29). The performance of African sound and dance was the author's method of celebrating Afro-Mexican culture and displaying the Afro-Mexican component of her cultural identity. These elements along with the *villancico*'s themes render the composition multicultural as well as sympathetic to ethnic justice.

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[85] A common characteristic of Bozal Spanish is the omission of prepositions, leading to a variety of interpretations. This phrase in Spanish requires the personal "a" in order to mean "to" and is therefore lacking a necessary pronoun regardless of interpretation.

***Villancico* 232**

"*Villancico* 232", which also includes Bozal Spanish, was sung in the Holy Metropolitan Church of Mexico on December 8th, 1676 in celebration of the Immaculate Conception. The stage direction at the beginning of the *villancico* indicates for a *negro* character to enter along with Castilian music. Ángel Aguirre determines that the music represents the prejudice of the white Spaniard (307) while Julieta Jiménez Torres specifies that the same music symbolizes colonial power. The theme of the *villancico* is the prejudice against the Afro-Mexican and the assertion of his worth. A Spanish character tells him to leave and mentions that the present celebration is a festival of lights where all is pure and nothing black is permitted:

¡Vaya, vaya fuera	Go, go away
que en Fiesta de luces,	for in the Festival of Lights,
toda de purezas,	all of pure nature,
no es bien se permita	it is not good
haya cosa negra!" (6-10).	to permit anything black

Skin color in this case is symbolic, where white represents Christianity and purity while black represents the opposite. The previous *villancico* of the same set details an allegorical battle between Mary and "Guilt" (*la Culpa*), using imagery of day, light, and the color white to represent the Virgin, while describing the enemy with images of night, shadows, and black. Douglas Richmond explains that the idea of social purity, which entailed white skin color and Christian faith, had become "ingrained in

the Hispanic psyche" since the Middle Ages and was transported to Mexico (5). The colonial period is characterized by an obsession with race and *limpieza de sangre*[86], hence the creation of the *casta* system, a socio-racial hierarchy of categorization that classified people based on their ethnicity, birth, and visible physical characteristics. The Spanish perceived dark-skinned people as morally and intellectually inferior. The adjective "*negro*" (black) in Spain was a synonym for evil (Cope 17). After employing the popular imagery of the white-black, good-evil dichotomy, the author uses *Villancico* 232 to discredit any correlation that the audience may make between good or evil and race. The Afro-Mexican character responds to the Spaniard's discrimination with the following:

Aunque Neglo, blanco	Although Black, white
somo, lela, lela,	we are, (hey, hey)
que il alma rivota	for the devout soul
blanca sá, no prieta (11-14)	is white, not black.

While maintaining the image of white to represent the Christian faith, Sor Juana convinces us that the Afro soul is pure and that skin color is insignificant. As Jiménez Torres points out, after the Spaniard dehumanizes the Black character, the Black humanizes himself by reminding us that he has a soul. The same scholar suggests that the Afro-Mexican's demand to participate in the festivities is symbolic of his desire for admission into society (277).

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[86] "Purity of blood" originally referred to the lack of Jewish or Moorish ancestors for Christians in the Iberian Peninsula. The obsession with ethnic purity was transported to the Americas, where African or indigenous ancestry affected the social status of the inhabitants.

The next section of the *villancico* depicts a battle between the devil and the Virgin Mary. Here we see cultural syncretism as the scene combines the Biblical reference of the Virgin being attacked by a serpent with African rituals that ensure her rescue:

-¡Válgati Riabro, Rimoño,	Curse you Devil, Demon,
con su ojo ri culebra!	with your serpent eye!
¿Quiriaba picá la Virgi?	You want to bite the Virgin?
¡Anda, tomá para heya! (23-6)	Go on, take this! For her!

Each stanza ends with the onomatopoeic refrain, "¡*Vaya, vaya, vaya! / ¡Zambio, lela, lela*[87]!". Valdés-Cruz infers that the snake is killed with the dance steps indicated in the song (210). The evil represented is also syncretic, as it is referred to as "Cambinga", which according to Jiménez Torres is a being that represents supernatural power (277). Sor Juana appropriates the African religion by enacting its victory over evil. Given that several African religions worship snake gods, the African attitude toward the serpent is generally one of respect. Sor Juana's snake represents evil, indicating that it has a Christian component. The ritual is open to dual interpretation and could be an example of Double Mistaken Identity, as Sor Juana may have witnessed dances to the snake in the Afro-Mexican community and understood them differently because of the symbolism behind the snake in her own

[87] "Lela" could be a meaningless onomatopoeic phrase, as most critics believe, but could derive from the Bemba language of Tanzania, where the word is the interjection "Hey!" or the word for "today" (Megenney 172-3). According to Zielina, "Zambio" refers to the devil (463). The word is now used in Spanish to designate the people of the Republic of Zambia. The country did not receive its name until it became independent in 1964 but the name is derived from the Zambezi River, which was termed as such by the 1500s. The term could have designated the peoples of the Zambezi River or another cultural element associated with the river.

religion. The multiculturalism of New Spain is reflected in this bilingual *villancico*'s chant-like phrases, syncretic religious rituals, and condemnation of racism.

***Villancico* 241**

"*Villancico* 241" was sung in the matins[88] of Saint Peter Nolasco on January 31, 1677. Like the previous *villancico* that was composed the year before, it treats the issue of discrimination, this time criticizing the hypocrisy of the Church. The poem also contains several references to African culture. The introduction narrates the festivities of Saint Peter Nolasco and presents the entrance of a "Black" into the church. The character sings a direct lament of enslavement, expressing his desire for his friend to no longer be a slave.

The first section of the song is titled "Puerto Rico", which designates a type of dance. The lyrics read: *"¡Tumba, la-lá-la; tumba, la-lé-le; / que donde ya Pilico, escrava no quede! / ¡Tumba, tumba, la-lé-le; tumba la-lá-la / que donde ya Pilico, no quede escrava!*" (9-12). The second and fourth line of the stanza can both translate to either "where Perico is, may there be no more slaves[89]!" or "wherever Perico is, may he no longer be a slave!". The utterances such as "*Tumba, la-lá-la; tumba, la-lé-le*" are defined by Porras as African-based ritual expressions ("Mexican Bozal" 163) and also as an imitation of the drumming of African music ("Lenguaje afro-hispánico" 88). The word "*tumbar*" in Spanish means to knock down and the form "*tumba*" could be either an imperative or a third-person singular conjugation in the present tense. However, the word's position in the stanza and the context of the

[88] Matins are early morning or nighttime prayers.
[89] According to Méndez Plancarte, "*ya*" should read "*está*".

song suggest that it is not to be interpreted as the Spanish word. Megenney notes that the expression "*tumba*" could be derived from a number of African-language words. *Tùmbuka* in Tshiluba means to be in an elevated position while the same word in the Kiluba language of Zaire means to jump. "*Ntumbu*" in Ngangela of Angola is a person known around the world (192). The various African words suggested by Megenney seem out of context as well. Given her relationship with African peoples, it is possible that Juana Inés may have learned some of the language, but it is more likely that she intends to imitate the lively rhythm of African chants and dance. Long points out that the nun was probably familiar with traditional African music and dance as the genre had become popular in the viceroyal court as well as in the convent (570).

The next section of the *villancico* is labeled "*Coplas*[90]" and has been identified as a protest against slavery by Sabat de Rivers ("Blanco" 97). The first section denounces the priests for not liberating the Blacks from their slave work[91]. The Black character sings that the Fathers claim to redeem people but he lives in the *obraje* and the priests don't take him away from it:

Ella dici que redimi:	They say that they redeem:
cosa palece encantala,	something that seems delightful
por que yo la Oblaje vivo	because I live in the *obraje*

[90] A poetic form of four verses usually considered a popular form of meter.
[91] This was a common complaint, though it was often priests who criticized slaveholders for not releasing their workers for Sunday services. Some priests, however, deferred to the wishes of the wealthy white patrons.

y las Parre no mi saca (17-20).	and the Priests don't free me.[92]

This accusation is bold, given that the author is a nun and the poem is denouncing the Church for the lack of compassion in its sanction of slavery. The Afro-Mexican character goes on to reflect on how St. Peter Nolasco must not like Black people as much as Whites. He believes that the saint only helps the Spaniard and asks God to recognize this injustice:

La otra noche con mi conga	The other night with my wife
turo sin durmí pensaba,	I couldn't sleep and thought
que no quiele gente plieta,	he doesn't like black people
como eya so gente branca.	as well as his own white.
Sola saca la Pañola;	He only helps the Spaniard;
¡pues, Dioso, mila la trampa (21-6)	well, God, see the hitch[93]

Sor Juana incites us to see into the mind of the African character, and how he must feel as a subject who is discriminated against under the colonial culture of New Spain. The absurdity of the theory of divine powers protecting certain races over others forces the audience to consider the incongruity of the social system of the time. Again the author exposes the discrimination that Afro-Mexicans often face. The character states,

que aunque neglo, gente somo,	Although Black, we are people,
aunque nos dici cabaya! (27-8)	although they call us animals!

[92] Translation to English mine, following the translation to standard Spanish by Jiménez Torres (278).
[93] Translation by Flynn (86).

She reminds the audience, similarly to in *Villancico* 232, that the slave has a free soul although his body suffers[94].

The *coplas* also contain a reference to a "*conga*", or a woman from the African Kingdom of Kongo[95]. This detail is seemingly unnecessary in the narration: the slave character speaks of his thoughts while in bed with his wife, a *conga*. As Sabat de Rivers points out, this allusion reminds the public that there were many different tribes of Africans in Mexico ("Blanco" 98). Just as with the indigenous peoples, the Europeans often grouped the Africans into a single category with disregard for the distinct cultural and linguistic customs. This element further humanizes the members of the Afro-Mexican community by marking them as individuals with varying backgrounds.

As seen from the stanzas transcribed above, the language of the *coplas* is practically unintelligible to a speaker of standard Spanish. Nearly every word contains a mistake and incorrect pronouns and conjugations would make it difficult to follow the lyrics as they were sung. Rather than use the Bozal language for its typical purpose of mocking slave characters, the author appears to have used it here to make the denunciation more subtle, which allowed for its acceptance during the church service. This explains why her most firm denunciation differs linguistically from other less serious suggestions from Afro-Mexican characters. In this case, the subaltern language dialect is essential in showing resistance to the dominant colonial power, similar to in the *Loa satírica* discussed in the previous chapter,

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[94] "que aunque padesca la cuepo / en ese libla las alma." (35-6).
[95] Now known as the Republic of Congo

which also hid denunciation of the mistreatment of indigenous people and assertions of their worth in the Nahuatl language, which would not have been understood by Spanish spectators of the play. Like the previous *villancicos* mentioned, this poem is revolutionary in that it calls attention to injustices and discrimination while celebrating the African culture of Mexico City. Bozal in this case serves as a resistance language to undermine and denounce colonial power.

***Villancico* 258**

Juana Inés's "*Villancico* 258" was sung two years later on August 15th, 1679 in the Holy Metropolitan Church of Mexico to celebrate the Assumption. This song is unique in that it gives a voice to Afro-Mexican females. Two African women sing in praise of the Virgin and decide to forsake the day's activities to dedicate themselves to glorifying Her. The first woman, Cristina, suggests to her friend Francisca that they not sell pumpkin seeds, as everyone is full of exaltation and happiness that the Virgin Mary gives them:

Flasica, naquete día	Francisca, on this day
qui tamo lena li glolia,	that we are so full of glory,
no vindamo pipitolia,	let us not sell pumpkin seeds,
pueque sobla la alegría:	as there is so much joy
que la Señola Malía	that (the Lady) Mary
a turo mundo la da (50-5).	gives to the whole world.

Francisca agrees that they should abandon the kitchen and not sell sweet potatoes or chickpeas. The specification of the goods sold by Afro-Mexican women is an

example of the detail that Sor Juana included in her poems in order to appeal to the subaltern members of the audience, as they would identify with the references. It also prompts the dominant culture to again see the world through the eyes of the slaves by detailing their daily activities. It is revealed in the introduction that the women are Guinean princesses (35). The image of royalty is quickly dissolved when they describe their lives of cooking and selling food, likely evoking sympathy from the audience. This spectacle parallels the Afro-Mexican confraternity celebrations, in which individuals would be crowned kings and queens and return to their lives as slaves the next day.

This stanza is especially interesting as it contains a double meaning. The word "*camote*" is Spanish for sweet potato, but in colonial Mexico also referred to Blacks or Indians being sold (Méndez Plancarte "Notas" 396, Jiménez Torres 280). The stanza reads:

Dejémoso la cocina	Let us leave the kitchen
y vámoso a turo trote,	and go as fast as we can
sin que vindamo gamote	without selling *camote*
nin garbanzo a la vizina:	or chickpeas to the neighbor woman
qui arto gamote, Cristina,	for many *camote*, Christina
hoy a la fieta vendrá (57-62).	will come to the festival today.

While *camote* refers to sweet potatoes in the third verse, it designates enslaved workers in the fifth. On one hand, the author reminds the Spaniards that these citizens will celebrate the Assumption just like them and emphasizes the fact that

they too are practicing Christians. On the other hand, this double meaning is a reminder that their fellow Christians are sold as goods.

While the Virgin was portrayed as dark-skinned in *Villancico* 224, she is in this song described metaphorically as a slave. Christina characterizes the figure as a devoted slave that served God and was set free for being such a great servant:

Ésa sí qui se nombraba	She herself was named
escrava con devoción,	a devoted slave
e cun turo culazón	and with all her heart
a mi Dioso servïaba:	served my God
y polo sel buena Ecrava	and for being a good slave
le dieron la libertá (64-9).	she was set free.

A positive image of slavery was often promoted by Christian writers as a metaphor for submission to God. Equating Mary to a slave not only helps the Afro-Mexican characters to identify with the religious figure but also highlights the devout nature of the slave, comparable to the servitude of Mary to God. The liberation of Mary for being a good slave is an insinuation that good slaves deserve freedom.

Before the entrance of the princesses, an Afro-Mexican male performer sings a chant to announce their arrival. The song reads:

Negro 1. - ¡Ha, ha, ha!

2.-¡Monan vuchilá!

¡He, he, he,

cambulé!

1. - ¡Gila coro,

gulungú, gulungú,

hu, hu, hu!

2. - ¡Menguiquilá

ha, ha, ha! (41-9)

Porras defines the lyrics as semantic expressions similar to African dance rituals. Etymologies for the words have not been discovered, and therefore may have been conceived by the author ("Lenguaje afro-hispánico" 99). As Chang-Rodríguez points out, the return to rhythm and music is a return to the ancestral, the tradition denied by the dominant culture (29) but recuperated here by Sor Juana. This *villancico*, like the others, is multicultural as it replicates an African cultural ritual along with praise to the figures of the dominant religion. It draws attention to the buying and selling of humans as goods and gives the marginalized Afro-Mexican female a voice, allowing the audience to consider her perspective.

***Villancico* 274**

The final *villancico* of the set for a particular festival was often an *ensalada* or "hodge-podge" as it included several voices and usually several languages. *Villancico* 274 is an *ensalada* that was sung as the final song of the celebration of the Assumption of 1685. The poem is complex in terms of personal identity, as it does not contain Afro-Mexican characters but rather a Spaniard character that "transforms" into an African and worships in Bozal Spanish rather than in his native language. The beginning of the *ensalada* is sung in Spanish and Latin, but one of the

characters claims that he is not "full" or satisfied. "*Ensalada*" is the Spanish word for salad and the author incorporates a play on words, suggesting that Latin is not fulfilling:

Bueno está el Latín; mas yo	Latin is good; but I
de la Ensalada, os prometo	promise you that because of
que lo que es deste bocado,	the nature of this bite of salad
lo que soy yo, ayuno quedo (63-6).	and my own nature, I remain hungry.

The character goes on to say that in order to fill up, he would like to sing something that he likes and understands:

Y para darme un hartazgo,	In order to fill up,
como un Negro camotero	like a Black sweet potato vendor[96]
quiero cantar, que al fin es	I wish to sing, after all, it is
cosa que gusto y entiendo; (67-70)	what I enjoy and understand.

The Spaniard asks for the help of the others and requests that at the hand of God, he turn into a Guinean:

pero han de ayudar todos.	but everyone must help
Tropa – Todos os lo prometemos.	Crowd – We all promise to.
– Pues a la mano de Dios,	Well at the hand of God,
y transfórmome en Guineo (71-4).	May I transform into a Guinean.

The character then begins to sing in African Bozal. He takes on the identity of an Afro-Mexican named "Antón" and wishes to give an offering of food to the Virgin

[96] "*Camotero*" can refer either to someone who sells or eats sweet potatoes (Aguirre 309).

Mary before her Assumption into heaven. This element is religiously syncretic, as the offering of food to deities is not characteristic of Catholicism but was common in the worship of African gods (Martínez-San Miguel *Saberes* 161). The multicultural nature of this scene is even more fascinating in the context of 17th century New Spain, where authorities condemned Afro-Mexican religious celebrations, such as Black confraternity gatherings, which a 1612 ordinance accused of "causing harm, disturbing the peace, and being inconvenient to to residents" (Von Germeten 78).

The song has been analyzed by Porras, who determines that it is linguistically similar to African oral tradition. Antón's song reads,

¡Rorro, rorro, rorro,	
rorro, rorro, ro!	
¡Qué cuaja, qué cuaja, qué cuaja	What curds, what curds, what curds
qué cuaja te doy (79-82).	what curds I give you.

The refrain contains a repetition of the sounds "*rorro, rorro, rorro*", which he notes symbolizes a lullaby, along with the recurrence of the phrase "*qué cuaja*", which refers to the gift of food that Antón offers to the Virgin Mary. Both the vocalization of lulling sounds and the repetition of a phrase that emphasizes a relevant theme are common characteristics of African chants ("Lenguaje afro-hispánico" 99).

The unique characteristic of this *villancico* is that the character is not Black, yet takes on the identity of an Afro-Mexican. Gazarian Gautier suggests that it is Sor Juana herself that identified with him and takes on his personality (194). Like Juana Inés, the man prefers to celebrate in a way that he likes and understands, which

peculiarly corresponds to a culture other than his own. In the *Loa satírica* examined in the previous chapter, a young Juana Inés includes in her play a version of herself as an indigenous girl. Although she is not a character in her *villancico*, she perhaps identified with the man who, although he enjoyed Latin, related more to the exciting rhythms of African dance, which is further implied by her decision to include them in her *villancicos*. The fluid concept of identity in this poem suggests that the author identified personally with Afro-Mexican culture. According to linguists Luna, Ringberg, and Peracchio, while the knowledge that monoculturals have of other cultures is not linked to self-relevant identity constructs, meaning that their knowledge of the other culture does not affect how they view themselves, biculturals have a richer, more complex knowledge about what it means to be a member of each of the two cultures and have two distinct and complete sets of knowledge structures. Because of this, biculturals are likely to have identity constructs related to both cultures while monoculturals have only secondhand knowledge about the other culture (280). This explains why Sor Juana may have felt herself to have Afro-Mexican identity components, which are reflected in the Spanish character's desire to sing, dance and worship as an Afro-Mexican, as well as speak for justice of the ethnic group. "Antón" asks the Virgin to beg God to free them from their prison:

Mas ya que te va,	But now that you are leaving,
ruégale a mi Dios	Beg my God
que nos saque lible	that he set us free

de aquesta plisión (95-8). from this prison.

He uses the first person plural to speak collectively for all slaves. In this *villancico* the desire for freedom is especially articulated because the character that requests it is not actually Black, but a Spaniard and can even be interpreted as Juana Inés herself. She is not only mimicking what she thinks the Afro-Mexicans may feel, but this time expressing the proposition of an end to slave labor through the mouth of a member of the dominant culture.

***Villancico* 281**

We have observed that Sor Juana defended the Afro-Mexican in her Bozal verses, but she also includes the topic of racial justice in another poem that is written in standard Spanish. "*Villancico* 281" was sung in 1689 in the Holy Cathedral Church of Puebla to celebrate the Immaculate Conception. The poem does not contain Bozal Spanish, but is a reproach against racism. In "*Villancico* 224", 13 years earlier, Sor Juana introduced the notion of the African being dark due to exposure of the Sun, which represents God. She challenges the typical symbolism of white to represent goodness and purity while dark represents evil. While the image was somewhat subtle in 1676, it is repeated and explained clearly in "*Villancico* 281". The refrain states, "The Wife is dark-skinned / because the Sun shines on her face"[97]. Again the word for "sun" is capitalized, indicating that it refers to a religious figure. She dedicates the poem to redefining the light-dark symbolism that surrounds the Christian faith. The *coplas* begin by explaining that although the

[97] "Morenica la Esposa está, / porque el Sol en el rostro le da" (1-2).

woman is called Black ("*negra*"), it is not because she lives in the shadows but because the Sun shines on her as a result of her purity and never leaves her[98]. She clarifies in the second stanza that the sun does in fact refer to God: "Beneath the bright Sun of God, / the Child is dark / but one becomes more beautiful / the more she approaches it"[99]. Here dark skin becomes a desirable characteristic, corresponding to both beauty and faith. The closer the woman gets to the sun, or God, the darker and more beautiful she becomes. The next stanza rephrases the same idea:

Del Sol, que siempre la baña,	By the Sun, which always bathes her
está abrasada la Esposa;	the Wife is embraced;
y tanto está más hermosa	and is more beautiful
cuanto más de Él se acompaña:	the more He accompanies her:
nunca su Pureza empaña,	her Purity never fades,
porque nunca el Sol se va (15-20).	because the Sun never leaves.

She later insists that that the woman has more grace[100] because of her color:

pues Ella da la causal	For she gives the reason
de su encendido color,	for her burning color,
añadiendo, por primor,	adding, with care,
que eso más gracia le da (23-6).	that it gives her more charm.

[98] "Aunque en el negro arrebol / Negra la Esposa se nombra, / no es porque ella tiene sombra, / sino porque le da el Sol / de su Pureza el crisol, / que el Sol nunca se le va" (3-8).
[99] "ante el claro Sol de Dios / es morena la Criatura; / pero se añade hermosura / mientras más se acerca allá" (11-4).
[100] The term "grace" in the Catholic faith refers to God's love and benevolence toward man but in Spanish can also signify physical attractiveness.

and again repeats that it makes her more beautiful:

dice que esa negregura	she says that that blackness
le da mayor hermosura (28-9).	gives her more beauty.

The *villancico* is multicultural because it combines the skin color associated with Africans with the desired religious purity of the Spanish tradition. It forces the audience to question the typical symbolic relationship between white imagery and the Christian faith. Instead of relating dark skin to evil or impurity, one is forced to consider that darker skin corresponds with exposure to the sun, analogous to closeness with God or Christ.

***Villancico* 299**

Villancico 299 is the last of Sor Juana's works of African influence, sung in the Holy Cathedral Church of Puebla in the matins of St. Joseph on March 19, 1690. As mentioned in the previous chapter, this *villancico* is significant because it proposes the acceptance of other types of knowledge. After the Spanish characters have come to a conclusion in their debate about St. Joseph, an indigenous and an Afro-Mexican character discuss their own ideas. The character identified as *Negro*, speaking in Bozal Spanish, suggests that St. Joseph could have been Black:

Pues, y yo	Well, and I
también alivinalé;	will also propose
lele, lele, lele, lele,	lele, lele, lele, lele,
¡que pulo ser Neglo Señol San José!	That St. Joseph could have been Black!
(181-4)	

He is able to support his theory by explaining that the saint was the son of Salomon, who had an African wife, the Queen of Sheba[101].

Pues ¿no pulo de Sabá	Well, couldn't he from the Queen of Sheba
telé algún cualteló?	be one fourth Black?
Que a su Parre Salomó	For of his father Solomon,
también eya fue mujel (186-9)	she was also a wife

As Méndez Plancarte points out, the Bible does not necessarily indicate that the Queen of Sheba was King Solomon's wife ("Notas" 425) but the common belief was that they were a couple and they were depicted as so in early modern literature and artwork. The claim that a Catholic saint could be Black was a revolutionary suggestion and would suggest to the audience to reevaluate their prejudiced opinions about race. The idea also would have appealed to the Afro-Mexican population, as it would promote their inclusion in the religious realm. In 1704, fourteen years after Sor Juana's *villancico* 299 was sung, a Kongolese woman named Dona Beatriz Kimpa Vita claimed to have died and been reborn as St. Anthony in order restore peace in Kongo, which was in the midst of political and religious turmoil[102]. She preached that God revealed to her that the European versions of several Catholic traditions were false. According to the divine message, Mary and Jesus well as St. Francis[103] were in fact Kongolese and the Catholic Church was founded in Kongo. Dona Beatriz had thousands of followers and her theology

[101] Sheba is a country that is believed to have existed near the present-day territories of Ethiopia and Yemen.
[102] While rulers disputed over territory, many people practiced synthetic varieties of Catholicism and traditional Kongolese religions, thought to be diabolic corruptions of Christian traditions.
[103] St. Francis and St. Anthony were the two principal saints venerated in Kongo at the time.

spread throughout Kongo and to the American colonies (principally Brazil and South Carolina) through the institution of slavery. The slaves that had been exposed to Dona Beatriz's movement were devout Catholics and upon their arrival to South Carolina, many fled to Florida to join the Spanish Catholic communities[104]. Although the Church did not approve Dona Beatriz's sermons, her association of Catholicism with the culture that was familiar to her people led to widespread devotion[105]. Sor Juana's *villancico* could have had a similar effect, on a smaller scale, in convincing Afro-Mexicans that Catholicism could have elements with which they could identify historically. The suggestion changes the dynamic of colonial control, converting the faith into a cultural component that does not belong solely to the dominant group. The multiculturalism of the *villancico* reveals part of the process of assimilation of Afro-Mexicans to Christianity, which included finding or adding elements with which they could identify.

Conclusion

As determined in the previous chapter with regard to indigenous language and culture, Sor Juana's "bilingualism", given her ability to accurately reproduce Bozal Spanish, corresponds to her love for the African culture and her desire to give Afro-Mexicans a voice that seeks justice. Her *villancicos* differ greatly from the typical Golden Age representations of Bozal speech, both linguistically and thematically. She based her writings not on other literary imitations but on

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[104] In fact, Kongolese slave revolts in North America fueled by the theology of Dona Beatriz led to the reduction of slave importations from Central Africa (Thornton 210-4).
[105] For the story of Dona Beatriz, see *The Kongolese Saint Anthony: Dona Beatriz Kimpa Vita and the Antonian Movement, 1684-1706* by John K. Thornton.

personal exposure to authentic Bozal Spanish, which correlates with the intimate relationships she would have formed with its speakers. As Porras states, the African dialect was connected to a host of experiences and physical, ethnic, and socio-cultural characteristics ("Lenguaje afro-hispánico" 86). Language, as Mignolo considers, is not an object that people "have", but an ongoing process (253). As the writer's mastery of Bozal developed, so did her passion for African culture and justice for the Afro-Mexican people. At the same time, her fascination with African culture likely encouraged her to pay heed to the language dialect. She uses the *villancicos*, as well as the passage from *Amor es más laberinto*, to revolutionarily denounce the unjust treatment of slaves. The lyrics of her characters reveal the discrimination and hypocrisy of the Church and suggest that Afro-Mexicans be equally welcome in religious ceremonies. The Africans in her works prove to be good Christians and it is even proposed that their dark skin color is directly related to their relationship with God, represented by the sun, which bronzes the skin. The Black, who did not typically have a voice in literature, is given a chance to speak through the songs. The audience sees into the daily life of a servant, and worships alongside him with African-based rhythms. Sor Juana's inclusion of these elements not only demonstrates that she, as a multicultural being, was familiar with African culture, but also that she appreciated it and wanted to share its value with her audience. As Alfred Arteaga states of contemporary Chicano poetry, Sor Juana's *villancico* is powerful in that undermines the dominant discourse by converting the authoritative monologue into dialogue (14). Lipski explains that "when one society

dominates and enslaves another, the languages of the enslaved group are automatically placed at a disadvantage, and can only seep into the language of the dominant society to the extent that both demographic weight and direct social contact make such transfer possible" (*A History* 9). Nevertheless, Juana Inés, as an internationally known writer, succeeds at the difficult task of including the subaltern and often illiterate group in the cultured literary world.

Chapter 4

Et unde hoc mihi?[106]: Self-Vindication in a Male-Dominated Intellectual Sphere

In the preceding chapters, I have examined the relationship between Sor Juana's multilingualism and cultural awareness. Chapter 2 illustrates that her knowledge of Nahuatl corresponds to her understanding and admiration of indigenous culture. As analyzed in Chapter 3, Sor Juana's sensitivity to authentic Bozal speech is complemented by her attraction to African rhythms and attention to details in the daily life of Afro-Mexican workers. As a scholar, Sor Juana was also fluent in Latin and familiar with the literature of ancient Greece and Rome. Although the context of classical culture is distinct since she did not have personal contact with its people, the same cultural awareness that she displays towards diverse groups of her society applies to the traditions of antiquity. Her acceptance of alternative religions and ways of thinking extends to Greek and Roman mythology and classical thought. As a writer, she became part of an intellectual culture that inherited many of its traditions from Classical Antiquity, further shaping the multicultural nature of her society and her persona. In the same way that she includes indigenous and African traditions in her writing, she incorporates classical elements, creating works that, like those that include indigenous and African features, are religiously syncretic and reflect a composite sense of identity in their characters and settings.

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[106] "And whence is this to me?" *La Respuesta a Sor Filotea* (40).

I have also proven in the previous two chapters of this dissertation that Sor Juana used her skills as a writer to speak for subaltern groups. She defends indigenous religious practices in several theatrical works and denounces discrimination against the Nahuas and the Afro-Mexicans in her *villancicos*. The author reveals a genuine appreciation for subaltern cultures while demonstrating that their languages are valuable and worthy of poetic use despite being ostracized by the hegemonic culture. How does her use of Latin, then, contribute to her social agenda of protecting the marginalized? To be a female writer in the colonial period was extraordinary in and of itself. Despite the obstacles that Sor Juana faced as a *criolla* and a woman, she demonstrated remarkable poetic ability and was extremely well-versed in a number of subjects. The intellectual culture that surrounded her scholarly activities was dominated by European men and she found herself in the minority as a woman and a *criolla*. Sor Juana makes use of her poetic prowess and her incredible erudition to show that she is capable of sophisticated academic dialogue and is not inferior to male writers of the time.

In this chapter, I analyze a selection of works that include Latin and/or are syncretic in nature given their ancient cultural and religious elements. The number of the nun's works that are written in Latin, relate to mythology, and display her exceptional erudition is too vast for the confines of this study. I choose to focus on less-studied albeit significant works that are bilingual and multicultural in nature and hence reflect Sor Juana's immersion in classical culture as a result of her condition as a female scholar. I first introduce two of the author's many bilingual

villancicos in Latin and Spanish. These two in particular display the author's linguistic talent in terms of bilingual writing and speak to the implications of incorrect Latin speech among sacristans of the time. I then examine the non-fictional *Neptuno Alegórico* or *Allegorical Neptune*[107] and the comedic play *Amor es más laberinto* or *Love is the Greater Labyrinth*[108]. I discuss multicultural elements in the works and where applicable, the implications of the texts' bilingual nature. This chapter explores the composite characters that Sor Juana creates in a fusion of cultures and beings as well as religious syncretism and cross-cultural allegories. I also examine in this case the implications of the inclusion of a dominant rather than a subaltern language.

In Europe, and subsequently in colonial America, Latin was the language of scholarship throughout the medieval, Renaissance, and Baroque periods. The classical tradition has undoubtedly inspired and shaped world literature throughout history. The education system of the early modern period was highly influenced by the academic traditions of ancient Rome and Greece, leading to the multicultural disposition of learned men and occasionally learned women. The rhetorical

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[107] The full title of the work is *Neptuno alegórico, océano de colores, simulacro político que erigió la muy esclarecida, sacra y augusta Iglesia Metropolitana de México, en las lucidas alegóricas ideas de un arco triunfal que consagró obsequiosa y dedicó amante a la feliz entrada del excelentísimo señor don Tomás, Antonio, Lorenzo, Manuel de la Cerda Manrique de Lara, Enríquez, Afán de Ribera, Portocarrero y Cárdenas; conde de Paredes, marques de la Laguna, de la orden y caballería de Alcántara, comendador de la Moraleja, del Consejo y Cámara de Indias y Junta de Guerra, virrey, gobernador y capitán general de la Nueva España, y presidente de la Real Audiencia, que en ella reside, etc. Que hizo la madre Juana Inés de la Cruz, religiosa del convento de San Jerónimo de esta ciudad*, which translates to: *Allegorical Neptune, Ocean of Colors, Political Simulation, Erected by the Noble, Holy, and August Metropolitan Church of Mexico City, in the Magnificent Allegorical Concepts of a Triumphal Arch Solicitously Consecrated and Lovingly Dedicated to the Joyful Entrance of the Most Excellent Don Tomás Antonio de la Cerda, Count of Paredes, Marquis of La Laguna, Viceroy, Governor, and Captain General of Our New Spain and President of the Real Audiencia in which he resides, etc. created by the mother Juana Inés de la Cruz, nun of the convent of St. Jerome of this city.*

[108] The title has also been translated to *Love is Indeed a Labyrinth* and *Love is More a Labyrinth*.

curriculum in American colleges was strictly classical until the 19th century (Farrell 416) and dissertations were written in Latin in many parts of Europe until the 19th century as well (Helander 7).

Texts, such as Sor Juana's, written in Latin from the period 1300-1800 have been deemed "Neo-Latin". Although the subject area had previously been ignored by critics, new research by scholars such as Hans Helander of Uppsala University in Sweden and Jozef IJsewijn of the University of Leuven in Belgium has shed light upon Neo-Latin literature. Many authors of the early modern period chose to write in Latin as well as return to classical modes of expression, looking to the classical world for teachings that could help them interpret concerns of modern times. Classical analogies and parallels were not merely ornamental but acted as metaphors, providing color and depth to a contemporary event (Farrell 435). Scholarly works written in the vernacular language were often translated into Latin in order to reach an international public.

The classical heritage was especially important to the baroque style of writing, which dominated the works of Sor Juana. A renewed interest in antiquity was one of the driving forces of Baroque and Renaissance literature and many of the peculiarities in syntax and lexicon of Baroque writing are derived from aspects of the Latin language (DiPuccio 16, Herrera Zapién 41). One of the characteristics of Neo-Latin literature, and the Baroque, is the abundance of allusions to ancient texts, although most authors, including Sor Juana, often referred to citations from other writers of their time rather than directly from Classical sources (Helander 42).

Most women were excluded from learning Latin, as they were not permitted to attend the university or engage in many areas of intellectual life. Sor Juana, however, learned Latin from a young age and was an avid reader, possessing the largest library in New Spain. As a young girl, she read the works of ancient poets and philosophers. Demetrio García discovered an anthology of Latin poetry that belonged to the library of Sor Juana's grandfather in Panoaya. The work was edited in Lyon in 1590 and contains excerpts from Virgil, Ovid, Horace, Juvenal, Persius, Lucan, Seneca, Boethius, Plato, Catullus, Martial, Lucretius, Propertius, and Tibullus. The book contains comments and annotations, including the signature of Juana Inés, indicating that she read the book as a child (Loera 46).

As George Antony Thomas has considered, Sor Juana embodied a literary persona that was sanctioned by classical imagery. The most obvious example of this classical image is her portrait on the cover of her posthumous work, *Fama y obras postumas* of 1700, in which she is pictured crowned with laurels and bordered with the Hapsburg coat-of-arms. According to Thomas, Sor Juana's peninsular editors intentionally portrayed her as the unofficial poet laureate of the Spanish Empire (256). However, she herself had assumed the role of a classical writer before she was portrayed in this manner on the cover of her anthology. She maintained intimate relationships with civic authorities by writing commissioned works for them and praising them in her verses, inscribing herself within the classical literary tradition of the poet of empire. Sor Juana's strategic appropriation of classical texts worked as a path to recognition as an imperial icon. The classical epithet "Tenth

Muse" characterized the author as a mythical figure, further uniting her with the classical tradition (Thomas 266).

The two works of prose analyzed in this chapter, the *Allegorical Neptune* and *Love is the Greater Labyrinth*, are characterized by their mythological basis. The myths of a society are essential to its culture and according to Meyer Reinhold, American classical scholar of the 20th century and author of *Past and Present: The Continuity of Classical Myths*, myths tell us more about the people than their history (27). It is important to discuss the nature of myth and its role in the early modern period in order to understand how Sor Juana uses myth in her works. There is no way of knowing how the pagans themselves viewed their own religion. It is possible that they believed themselves to be living in a divine world with no notion of natural laws. Other theories suggest that the Greeks and Romans perceived myths as distorted historical facts in which the characters are men who have been raised to the rank of immortals, or that they understood them as merely the expression in fable of moral and philosophical ideas, in which case the gods are allegories (Seznec 4). Myths differ enormously in their morphology and social function (G.S. Kirk 7). In both works discussed, Sor Juana makes use of mythology for the purpose of political propaganda, which was a technique used by rulers in ancient times and inherited by Sor Juana's society (Reinhold 29).

It may seem contradictory for a Christian writer to take such an interest to pagan myth. However, a majority of early modern Christians, including some priests, were accepting of pagan traditions handed down by the Greeks and the

Romans. The Catholic Church owes aspects of its discipline, law, and ritual to the ancient practices of Greece and Rome. Without much thought, the tolerant attitude toward the classical heritage was carried on throughout history. Pagan literature was the basis of grammar and rhetoric and formed the staple subject matter in schools (Bolgar 45-8). The Christians of the Middle Ages did not suppress Greek myths despite their pagan character, but rather they adapted them to new interpretations in harmony with the Christian religion (Reinhold 4-5). In his analysis of the *Divine Narcissus*, Chad Gasta explains that while it may seem blasphemous to proclaim a pagan mythological figure as Jesus, an established acceptance of classical culture had allowed for such comparisons since the Renaissance as long as Church principles remained protected. Baroque allegory provided ideological distance between the two worlds (237). Using Narcissus as a Christ figure was fully in keeping with the literary tradition of the *auto sacramental*. Calderón, the master of the genre, used many different mythological figures to represent Jesus. For this reason, it was acceptable for Sor Juana to include mythological figures in her *Allegorical Neptune* and *Love is the Greater Labyrinth*. It was expected that the audience would set aside elements of the myth that were not compatible with the theological message and embrace those that were (Ellis 168). As Scavino states, it is of little importance that Narcissus was a mythological character, as the dramatic pieces of Sor Juana were not psychological or historical, but typological. As discussed in Chapter 2[109], Sor Juana extends the typological

[109] See pages 56-60

reading to the Aztec religion of New Spain, which could also be interpreted as premonitory allegories for Christianity (33-4).

Much of the fascination with myth in the Spanish Empire is due to Annius of Viterbo, who in the late fifteenth century published his *Antiquitatum Variarum*, which he claimed to be Greek and Roman writings discovered in Mantua, but were actually fabricated by him. The myths served to glorify the Roman papacy of Alexander VI and as well as the newly formed Spanish Empire. Annius's work linked Spanish royalty to the Trojan empire and the Libyan Hercules. The myths created by Annius influenced Spain while the empire was in the process of formation of its national identity and his ideas flourished in the works of 16th and 17th century writers long after historians knew them to be false (Chinchilla 379-91). Medieval authors, however, still believed themselves to be heirs of the great men of classical legends (Seznec 18). As Lupher states, the Greeks and Romans participated in the conquest of Mexico in the "mental baggage" of both the conquistadors and their critics (1).

The general interest in mythology is also due to its humanistic nature and its ability to be applied and repurposed in distinct situations. Myths expressed the fears, wonders, anxieties and aspirations of primitive man, constituting for him a guide for all aspects of life (Reinhold 27). As Torres states, "Set in a timeless past, which can be made to speak to every time, myths explore essential questions that reflect the individual's eternal desire to understand himself and his often fraught relationship with his world" (6). Greek myths in particular have a distinctive human

quality and contain no magic, few witches, and no ghosts. It is this humanism that has made them the inspiration for so many artistic and literary creations from antiquity to present day (Reinhold 36). Although myths are attached to a particular region, the region may vary according to where the myth is being told (G.S. Kirk 39). Sor Juana appropriates classical myths for her own means, and in both cases situates the myths in New Spain, likening a hero of ancient mythology to the current viceroy.

The writer's well-known texts are clearly influenced by her immersion in the intellectual classical culture. In her *auto sacramental*, *The Divine Narcissus* (1689), the mythological Narcissus represents Jesus Christ while his nefarious companion Echo represents Satan. The cultural fusion in the play is obvious and is parallel to the religious syncretism of the *loa* of the work, which is discussed in Chapter 2. Scholars have also identified an abundance of classical allusions in Sor Juana's poetry[110].

[110] According to Herrera Zapién, her ideas of love come from Ovid and her lyricism from Martial, Horace, and Catullus (55-6). He believes that her "feminist" ideas are inspired by Martial (269) while her sensibility to pain associated with love and life after death, along with the musicality of her poetry are due to the influence of Virgil (55). The researcher maintains that Virgil was Sor Juana's greatest inspiration, with Ovid being the next (58). *El Sueño*, the only work she claims she wrote for pleasure, is the most influenced by Virgil (82). Sor Juana imitated some of Horace's principal themes and literary strategies, such as his first-person voice and ambivalent stance towards authority. Her light-hearted poems, often gifts or apologies addressed to colonial authorities, echo Horace's comic voice (Thomas 257-8). In *Romance* 11, she describes a descent into the Greek underworld, making use of a mythological place to explain her feelings. The poem contains elements from Ovid, Virgil, and Tibullus (Herrera Zapién 77). *Romance* 20 is based on descriptions from the *Metamorphoses* of Ovid while *Romances* 15 and 45 are based on Horace's lyrics (Herrera Zapién 189, 197). The *endecha* 78 is similar to verses of Catullus while *Romances* 11, 27, and 29 are based on the poetry of Tibullus, Lucian, and Juvenal, respectively (Herrera Zapién 197-200). The *décima* 100 is an allegory of the Trojan horse for love and the *villancicos* of the Assumption of 1679 include paraphrases of verses of the *Aeneid*.

Sor Juana's most famous and most studied work is undoubtedly her "Respuesta a Sor Filotea", "Response to Sister Philotea", an autobiographical letter that defends the author's right to engage in secular reading and writing. To support her arguments (and embellish the writing) she references several Classical writers[111] as well as prominent religious figures[112] and quotes the Bible in Latin. Further exhibiting her multilingualism, the author uses Latin to express her arguments. For example, after an introduction of modesty and praise, Sor Juana uses Latin to finally confront the recipient, asking, "why then hast thou spoken this word to me? And whence is this to me?"[113] (40). Changing to a second language here is a means of questioning the bishop in a less forthright and defiant approach since Latin was not the first language of the reader either. She translates most of the quotes in Latin, indicating that her reader would not have understood and needs her explanation. In this way she asserts her authority against her male critic, as she is linguistically dominant.

In the *villancicos* discussed below, the author uses her command of Latin in a different way. Rather than using the verses to expose her own knowledge of Latin, the author chooses to parody men that attempt to gain respect for their erudite manner of speaking, but in reality have no command of the Latin language.

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[111] Examples include Quintilian, Seneca, Aristotle, Luther, Homer, Virgil, Martial, and Ovid.
[112] She includes anecdotes and passages from St. Thomas Aquinas, the mother of John the Baptist, St. Paul, St. John, Moses, Ahasuerus, St. Jerome, Reverend Athanasius Kircher, St. Theresa, St. Peter, St. Ambrose, St. Gregory, Moses, and St. John Chrysostom.
[113] "*quare locutus es mihi sermonem istum? Et unde hoc mihi?*" (Translation by Electa Arenal and Amanda Powell).

***Villancico* 249**

Sor Juana's "*Villancico* 249" was sung in the matins at the holy cathedral in Mexico City on June 29, 1677 and includes songs from a multitude of characters who wish to commemorate St. Peter on the day of the Feast of Saints Peter and Paul. After a *mestizo* sings of St. Peter's foolish youth and a Portuguese sailor creates an allegory of St. Peter as a seafarer, a cowardly sacristan dedicates his bilingual verses to a crowing rooster, symbolizing Peter's repentance after his denial of Christ. According to all four Canonical Gospels[114], Jesus predicted at the Last Supper that Peter would deny him three times before the rooster crowed the next morning, to which Peter responded that he would never disown him. When Jesus was arrested and Peter was accused of being one of his disciples, he claimed three times that he was not Jesus's follower and after the third time, heard a rooster crow, reminding him of Christ's prediction and causing him to weep. In Christian symbolism, the rooster represents St. Peter's repentance after his denial of Christ. The theme of this *villancico* is the fear felt by Peter upon hearing the rooster crow, which is embodied in the apprehensive sacristan and is likely meant to speak to the Christians who audience who may have worried about failing God. The introduction to this section reads:

Temblando, después, del gallo,	Trembling, afterwards, at the rooster,
cantó un sacristán cobarde,	sang a cowardly monk,
que una gallina no fue mucho	for a chicken was not so grand

[114] The gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John in the New Testament.

que con el gallo cantase.	as to sing with a rooster.
Mezcló romance y latín,	He mixed Spanish and Latin
por campar, a lo estudiante,	to show off, like a schoolboy,
en el mal latín lo gallo,	a rooster [showoff] in his bad Latin
lo gallina en buen romance (74-81)	and a chicken[115] in his good Spanish.

The sacristan in the *villancico* reproduces Peter's feelings of distress upon hearing the rooster crow while attempting to impress the audience with his use of Latin. According to Appel and Muysken, switching codes to impress others with a show of linguistic skills is an example of the metalinguistic function of code-switching (120). The sacristan's fake erudition in his attempts to speak Latin can be interpreted as a symbol of false religiosity and the struggle to remain holy, explaining his fear of God's judgment, which makes the linguistic features of this work exceptionally important. Some of the use of Latin in the song is incorrect. In the third stanza, the sacristan sings:

pues no me anima el amar,	I am not motivated to love,
que Pedro supo juntar	for Peter knew to join
el flevit *con el* amare*;*	*flevit* [cried] with *amare.*

For the novice Latin learner, the reference appears to make sense. However, "*amare*", which is a Latin cognate to the Spanish verb "*amar*", "to love" is also the

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[115] The chicken/rooster symbolism of Sor Juana's *villancico* is possibly borrowed from verses of Quevedo's *ovillejo* 736 to St. Peter: "You denied the Lord; then the rooster crowed to you / and other roosters will sing to you, it cannot be denied; / But that the rooster sings / for you, cowardly Peter, should not impress you; / for it is nothing new or remarkable / to see the rooster crow for a chicken". (*A Dios negastes; luego os cantó el gallo,/ y otro gallo os cantara a no negallo;/ Pero que el Gallo cante / por vos, cobarde Pedro, no os espante; / que no es cosa muy nueva o peregrina / ver al Gallo cantar por la Gallina*) (7-12). Translation mine.

adverb "bitterly", which is the context in which it is used in the Bible with regards to how St. Peter cried when he heard the crow of the rooster[116]. The association of "cried" to "love" is erroneous. Alfonso Méndez Plancarte, editor of Sor Juana's *Obras Completas*, attributes the confusion to an error on Sor Juana's part (387) but given her command in Latin and her sense of humor, it is obvious that the author is simply exposing the monk's "bad Latin" and expounding on the weakness of his character.

To demonstrate how the sacristan's song is composed and remark on the meaning of the *villancico*, I include the last stanza of his song:

Luego que Petrus negavit,	After *Peter denied*[117],
este Gallo con su treta	this rooster with his ruse
le empezó a dar cantaleta:	began to sing to him:
continuo Gallus cantavit.	*immediately a rooster crowed.*
Si sic *a Pedro,* qui amavit,	*If this is how* to Pedro, *who loved him*,
le fue, ¿qué será de mí?	it happened, what will become of me?
- *¡Qui-qui-riquí!* (117-23)	Cock-a-doodle-do!

The sacristan is a feeble character, evidenced by both his cowardice and his insistence on speaking a language that he has not mastered. In this stanza, the use of Latin can be attributed to poetic function, as the variety of languages is used to comply with the rhyme and meter of the poem, and to character development through the expressive function of code-switching which allows the emphasis, or in this case the appearance, of a mixed identity. All of the code switches in this stanza

[116] "*…Petrus flevit amare…*" ("…Peter wept bitterly…") (Luke 22:62, *Biblia Sacra Vulgata*).
[117] Italics in the translation indicate that the phrases are written in Latin in the original poem.

are cognates, making the section completely intelligible to the audience. In the fourth verse, the sacristan quotes the Bible (Matthew 26:74), to reiterate what he has just stated in Spanish. The nervous but presumptuous sacristan wonders what will become of him if Peter, who loved Jesus, was unable to avoid failing him. His query is answered by the sound of a rooster crowing, indicating that he, like Peter, will fail the expectations of the religion and repent.

The author includes an allusion to classical literature, adding to the multiculturalism of the *villancico*. The sacristan sings,

Pienso, con el sobresalto,	I think, with distress,
Gallo, que ya me galleas.	Rooster, that you are tormenting me.
¡Oh quién fuera ahora Eneas,	Oh if I could be Aeneas,
por ser sic orsus ab alto*!* (110-3)	to be *thus having begun aloft*!

This phrase comes from the beginning of Book II of the Aeneid, where Aeneas begins to tell his story from a lofty couch. The sacristan wishes that he could be above the rooster, both metaphorically and physically, to escape the agony represented by the animal. The Latin phrase, however, is both grammatically and contextually out of place. The expression is part of a longer phrase and cannot stand alone. "*Alto"* (high) is an adjective that modifies "*toro*", the couch on which Aeneas sits, but the noun is in a previous part of the sentence, making the adjective insignificant when isolated. "*Orsus*" has a double-meaning in the Aeneid: it signifies both that Aeneas rose up and also began to speak. Again the word is meaningless when isolated from the rest of the sentence and is out of context, as the sacristan would simply want to

convey that he wishes he could be "up high" but wants to use a phrase that would make him sound well-versed. Sor Juana develops the character as a church official that attempts to impress people with his knowledge of Latin, which is minimal, while simultaneously achieving her purpose of displaying her knowledge of ancient literature and her ability to use Latin in a humorous way.

The cultural syncretism of the *villancico* is summarized in the last stanza of the *villancico* after the conclusion of the sacristan's song:

Estos fueron los Maitines,	These were the Matins,
sin ponerles ni quitarles;	nothing more and nothing less;
si no tuvieron elogios,	although they did not have praises,
no carecieron de *Laudes*	they lacked no *laudes*.

"*Laudes*" in Spanish means lauds, another word for matins, the early morning vigils. However, the term serves a double meaning, given that *laudes* is the Latin word for praises. The phrase serves the referential function of code-switching, which is the inclusion of a word in a different language than the one being used because the vocabulary of the second language is more adequate. According to the song, they did not sing *elogios*, the Spanish word for praises, but did sing *laudes*. The words carry different cultural connotations and the author wishes to express, sarcastically, the erudition of the monk's song given its bilingual nature and reference to ancient literature in Latin. This example of referential code-switching is particularly significant because the author explicitly states that the Spanish term is not adequate in identifying the praises that took place and instead requires a change in linguistic

code. The villancico directly and indirectly comments on the languages involved, creating a metalinguistic composition. The next *villancico* discussed pokes fun at false erudition in a similar way, while further demonstrating the linguistic talent of the poet.

***Villancico* 290**

Villancico 290 was sung on Christmas in 1689 in the cathedral of Puebla and resembling the *villancico* of 1677 contains a parody of the false erudition of church officials. The characters are two sacristans who argue in broken Latin over the significance of the Christ Child. The introduction announces,

Escuchen dos Sacristanes	Listen to two sacristans
que disputan, arguyendo,	who dispute, arguing,
si es el Niño el Verbum Caro,	whether the Child is the *Verbum Caro*,
o es el Niño el Tantum Ergo (1-4).	or the Child is the *Tantum Ergo*.

The two Latin expressions are incongruous in this context. The phrase *Verbum Caro* comes from John 1:14, which begins "*Verbum caro factum est*", "Word is made into flesh", a phrase that was commonly used in Christmas matins. Latin word order is different than that of Spanish or English, and *Verbum caro* alone is "word flesh" and is grammatically incoherent. "*Tantum Ergo*" is the opening of a medieval hymn written by St. Thomas Aquinas in 1264, which begins "*Tantum Ergo Sacramentum,*", "Hence so great a sacrament,". Again, taken out of context, *Tantum Ergo* means nothing, as it translates to "so great hence". Although the sacristans are discussing seriously whether the significance of Jesus's birth lies in the miracle of Incarnation

or in his future role in the Eucharist, their use of language is a parody. The sacristans' discussion begins:

1. – *Sacristane*.	Sacristan.
2. – *Sacristane*.	Sacristan.
1. – *Exi foras*.	Go away.
2. – *Vade retro*.	Step back.
1. – *Famulorum*.	Of the servants.
2. – *Famularum*.	Of the female servants.
1. – *Mecum arguis?*	Are you arguing with me?
2. – *Tu arguis mecum?*	Are you arguing with me?
1. – *Laus tibi, Christe!*	Praise to you, Christ!
2. – *Deo gratias!*	Thanks be to God!
1. – *Verbum Caro!*	*Verbum Caro!*
2. – *Tantum Ergo!*	*Tantum Ergo!*

A translation is hardly appropriate for this section, as it is necessary to explain the context of each verse. Méndez Plancarte identifies "*sacristane*" as a neologism, an invented word nonexistent in Latin but similar to the Spanish "*sacristán*", meant to sound like a Latin translation (417). This is incorrect, however, as it is actually the vocative form of "*sacristanus*", the medieval Latin word from which "sacristan" derives, making it a correct and appropriate way for the church officials to address one another. It is possible, however, that Sor Juana meant it as a joke since the words are cognates and could have been correctly devised by her Spanish-speaking

characters by chance. *Exi foras* and *Vade retro* are common phrases that the characters (and the audience) would learn in formal schooling. The first sacristan states "*famulorum*", the genitive form of "*famulus*" which translates to "of the servants". The second corrects him, changing the noun to the female form, "*famularum"* meaning "of the female servants", both words that do not serve to communicate anything significant. They begin to argue, here in correct Latin, then afterwards interject haphazard Latin phrases that are heard in mass. The episode is comical, as it is obvious that the sacristans are trying to hold a conversation in Latin with limited knowledge of the language and utter any expression that comes to mind.

The poem continues in Spanish, with references to the subject matters, "*Verbum Caro"* and "*Tantum Ergo"*, remaining in Latin. Although this is an example of the referential function of code switching, the author has assigned new meanings to the phrases, "*Verbum Caro*" referring to the Incarnation and "*Tantum Ergo*" denoting the sacrament of the Eucharist. While it appears necessary to use the Latin to maintain the cultural significance of the expressions, the irony lies in the fact that they actually hold no meaning. Comically, she uses the expressions along with the Spanish article "*el*", as in "*el Tantum Ergo*" (4, 25, 47, 53) adding to the impropriety of grammatical structure and further indicating that the phrases represent nouns. Though her word games are humorous, the subject is serious and sophisticated as her newly coined Latin phrases acquire theological significance.

The sacristans hold a second argument in Latin linguistically similar to the first. They use phrases that would have been commonly heard in church services or learned in school but that make little sense out of context:

1. – *Melius dixi!*	I said better!
2. – *Dixi melius!*	I said better!
1. – *Probo, probo!*	I prove it, I show it!
2. – *Nego, nego!*	I deny it, I deny it!
1. – *Incarnatus.*	Incarnate.
2. – *Corpus Christi.*	The body of Christ.
1. – *Saeculorum*[118].	Of the centuries.
2. – *In aeternum.*	Eternally.
1. – *Verbum Caro!*	*Verbum Caro!*
2. – *Tantum Ergo!* (54-63)	*Tantum Ergo!*

While the first four stanzas contain common phrases learned in schools (Méndez Plancarte 418), the last four contain expressions heard in mass that serve no purpose here except for the sacristans to attempt to boast their Latin skills.

For Sor Juana, these bilingual *villancicos* are a word games, or as Doris Sommer postulates, "bilingual games". Sommer states that among the rules for bilingual games or code-switching are the different positions we take on the field (2), indicating that the parties involved have different levels of bilingualism. While the author is fluent in Latin, she knows that her audience is not, and she jokes with

[118] This utterance is part of the phrase, "in saecula saeculorum", literally "in a century of centuries". The expression is used in mass and is now translated as "forever and ever".

the linguistic prowess, or lack thereof, of her characters. Her sophisticated understanding of her characters and audience and her ability to use language artistically show that she is an incredible poet, equally capable as the male writers of her time. She refrains from mocking Bozal Spanish speakers as other Golden Age authors did to add humor to their verses, but instead targets the dominant white male as the subject of humorous ridicule, showing resistance to the marginalization of minority groups.

Allegorical Neptune

The *Allegorical Neptune* is a more serious work in which the author fully demonstrates her linguistic ability and cultural knowledge of a variety of ancient societies. Written in 1680, it was her second published piece after the *villancicos* to St. Peter in 1677. This commissioned work contains the design and explanation of an allegorical archway that was constructed to celebrate the entrance of the new viceroy, Tomás de la Cerda y Aragón, Marquis de la Laguna, along with his wife, María Luisa Manrique de Lara y Gonzaga, Countess of Paredes, into Mexico City. The tradition of "triumphal arches" is a Roman custom that was revived in Europe in the fifteenth century and had been practiced in New Spain since 1528. Generally two arches were built, one in a political center, where the new viceroy would be given the symbolic keys to the city, and another at the church. In 1680, Sor Juana was commissioned to design the façade that would decorate the entrance to the cathedral while her literary compatriot, Carlos de Sigüenza y Góngora, wrote his

famous *Theater of Political Virtues*[119] to describe the arch that was to be erected in the Plaza of Santo Domingo[120]. The writers both designed an arch and wrote a text to elaborate the allegories that it embodied. Sor Juana was the only woman in Western history to be contracted for the invention and design of a triumphal arch (Arenal 11).

The *Allegorical Neptune* is composed of three parts. The first section, after a short dedication to the viceroy, is titled "Rationale of the Allegorical Invention and Application of the Fable"[121]. This segment introduces the allegory, which involves the representation of the Marquis as the Roman god, Neptune[122]. She presents her reasons for choosing to represent the viceroy as Neptune. To justify the election of the deity, she takes advantage of some circumstantial coincidences. Neptune was the god of the sea as well as fresh water and "Laguna", lagoon or lake, was the last name of the Marquis. In addition, Mexico City was originally surrounded by water as it was founded on Lake Texcoco, making it all the more appropriate to relate the new ruler to the marine god. Because of his marriage with María Luisa Manrique de Lara, who was the Countess of Paredes, the viceroy also held the title of Count of "Paredes", which means "walls" in Spanish. The construction of the walls of Troy is generally attributed to Neptune and is depicted in the work. The author also takes

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[119] *Teatro de virtudes políticas*

[120] In his work, Sigüneza y Góngora criticizes the tradition of decorating triumphal arches with mythological figures and instead offers examples of good government and political virtues in the Aztec rulers of ancient Mexico. In fact, he rejected the use of the word "triumphal" (*triunfal*), as it derived from the Roman tradition of celebrating victors of bloody battles, in which an arch would be erected for a warrior who had robbed at least 5000 enemies of their lives (Paz 151).

[121] "*Razón de la fábrica alegórica y aplicación de la fábula*"

[122] Neptune is the counterpart of the Greek god Poseidon, brother of Jupiter and Pluto in the Greek-influenced tradition.

the opportunity to praise the Marquis by comparing his virtues to those of Neptune, while at the same time offering an erudite discussion of Greek mythology and classical thought.

The second section, which comprises the majority of the work, describes the paintings that were to adorn the arch and their significance in the allegory. The façade displayed eight large canvases on the front and as well as four paintings on the sides, one on each interior and exterior base of the arch. The images depict Neptune, or the viceroy as Neptune, in his various feats and roles as a ruler. As the text reveals, the viceroy and vicereine's faces were superimposed on the bodies of Neptune and Amphitrite in the paintings (119).

The last section is titled "Explanation of the arch"[123] and, unlike the rest of the work, is written in verse. The verses would have been read aloud for the court during the viceroy's ceremony (López Poza 247). The poem is composed of a summary of the rest of the work, and like the work is divided into an introduction followed by a description of each of the main canvases and finally a short conclusion. The four base paintings are not mentioned in the poems.

The *Allegorical Neptune* is characterized by its numerous quotations and references to ancient works as well as mythology. As Llosa Sanz has pointed out, although the purpose of the work is political propaganda, the author achieves her own goal of personal legitimization by proving her erudition (750). López Poza states similarly that to express a courtly and political message, Sor Juana had to

[123] *Explicación del arco*

demonstrate knowledge of 17th century human letters: Latin language, poetics, rhetoric, and oratory (262). While she speaks for external subaltern groups in other works, here the nun exerts her own voice in an intellectual sphere where she, as a woman and a *criolla*, was marginalized. She demonstrates her linguistic ability as well as her impressive knowledge of classical thinkers and ancient culture. The effect of her bilingualism on her cultural identification with the corresponding ancient societies is evident in that she references their customs and often alludes to them to justify or suggest social practices.

This work is bilingual in that it contains 220 quotations in Latin (and one in Italian, from Giovanni Boccaccio[124]), comprising a significant portion of the text. The *Allegorical Neptune*'s quotations come from 30 different Latin authors. The most cited are Virgil and Ovid, followed by Horace, Cicero, Pliny the Elder and the Younger, Seneca the Younger and the Elder, Lucan, Tacitus, Quintilian, Juvenal, Statius, Silius Italicus, Martial, Martianus Capella, as well as other less-known authors such as Curtius, Florus, Valerius Maximus, Claudius, Macrobius, Apuleius, Germanicus, Afranius, and Serenus Sammonicus. Of the Greek authors, all cited in Latin, she emphasizes Homer, Plutarch, Aristotle, Plato, Herodotus, and Diodorus as well as references to Lucian, Euripides, Sophocles, Apollonius, Diogenes, Pausanias, Aratus, Orpheus, Theognis, and Dionysius (Hinojo Andrés 193).

Scholars have criticized the work for its reliance on secondary rather than primary sources for citations. According to Hinojo Andrés, Sor Juana did not read

[124] Italian Renaissance humanist writer who lived from 1313 to 1375

works from each of the classical authors, but rather compiled quotes that were previously collected in other anthologies (194). Eighty percent of the quotes from the *Neptuno Alegórico* are found in Baltasar de Vitoria's *Teatro de los dioses de la gentilidad* (Hinojo Andrés 185). In addition, her citations contain several errors, which Hinojo Andrés has discovered to derive from the 1676 edition of *Teatro de los dioses de la gentilidad*, from which she mistook the letter "I" for the number "1" on several occasions, causing her to mis-cite the original sources (Hinojo Andrés 187, 194). Paz attests that the author hid the fact that her sources were secondhand (157). However, "borrowed erudition" was common during Sor Juana's time, and Vitoria's work itself was full of ideas copied from other sources. Sor Juana organizes the sources in a different manner to create a new vision of Neptune in compliance with the interests of her work. This procedure was the norm among Neo-Latin writers, and would not have been considered plagiarism in the modern sense, despite the fact that she did not cite her Renaissance source. López Poza also disagrees with Paz's criticism, citing evidence that although she consulted secondary sources as a guide, which was characteristic of the 17th century, she then researched the original sources indicated. This can be proven by examining her allusions to drawings and figures that were not present in the secondary source (260). Apart from Vitoria's work, Sor Juana's other important source in writing her *Allegorical Neptune* was the *Mythologiae sive explicationum fabularum libri decem*[125] of 1567 by Natale Conti. Unlike the *Teatro de los dioses de la gentilidad*, this work is

[125] Known in English as *Mythologiae* and in Spanish as *Mythologia*, this mythological treatise was a collection of ten books in which Conti organized the ancient myths and constructed genealogical associations between characters. The work became a standard reference for classical mythology.

prolifically cited in the *Allegorical Neptune* and it is from this source that Sor Juana obtains many of the quotes and translations to Latin of Greek authors (Hinojo Andrés 200, López Poza 260). In spite of modern criticism, the work is extremely scholarly and cultured, demonstrating the nun's erudition.

It is also important to note that many of the phrases in Latin are not direct quotes but creations of the author herself to paraphrase ideas of classical authors. On the fourth canvas, she calls for the inscription "*Sat est videat, ut provideat*" (134), "It is enough that he see for them to be able to predict", which is similar but not equal to Seneca's "*quod sat est, videat pater*", "May the father see what is enough". In some cases, the author attributes her statements to classical thinkers when they are really her own ideas, similar to those of ancient philosophers, but phrased in her own words. She claims to cite Pliny the Younger and states, "*Melior Republica est, in qua Princeps malus, quam amici Principis mali*", "The republic in which the ruler is evil is better than one in which the evil ones are the prince's friends", while the actual quote reads, "*meliorem esse rem publicam et prope tutiorem, in qua princeps malus est, ea, in qua sunt amici principis mali*"[126], "the state in which the ruler is evil is happier and almost safer than the one in which he has evil friends". The idea belongs another writer but the diction is the Sor Juana's. The original quote is written in indirect discourse and she phrases it using correct direct discourse, indicating that she fully understood this construction of Latin. Although many

[126] Martin notes that Sor Juana was erred in citing Pliny, as the phrase comes from Severus Alexander's *Historia Augusta*. However, Severus Alexander attributes the quotation to Marius Maximus, one of the many authors cited by Severus whose works have now been lost. Other than the *Historia Augusta*, Sor Juana may have referred to another non-surviving work that correctly or incorrectly identified Pliny as the original author.

scholars of Sor Juana's time as well as our own have been able to read and understand Latin, it is much more impressive for a writer to produce her own expressions in the foreign language. The epigrams of the sixth and seventh canvases are original verses written in Latin, revealing the linguistic proficiency and poetic capacity of the author.

The bilingualism of the work reveals Sor Juana's true target audience. While her erudite baroque explanation would have likely impressed the viceroy, he would not have understood most of it. Although the work as a whole is intelligible to a speaker of only Spanish, many details would remain obscured to anyone who didn't understand Latin. In the introduction, she quotes Ovid, who declares, "It is not wealth nor noble ancestry that makes men great, but honesty and upright character", followed by "To be born a king is not great, to be deserving of a kingdom, that is the greatest"[127] (70). There is no context in Spanish to indicate the concept expressed in the quotes, therefore the viceroy would ignore the message that is directed, in second person, to him. Scholars that had been educated in Latin, however, could truly appreciate the intricate development of the allegory along with the classical references. Her bilingual work allowed her to make a name for herself among erudite men and speak to the capabilities of an educated woman. The multilingual nature of the work also reflects the identity of the author, who as part of the intellectual culture was fluent in Latin and was a living reflection of the society's classical heritage.

[127] Sor Juana attributes this quote to Plutarch but it comes from Agathocles, a Greek tyrant who was king of Sicily (Martin 70).

In addition to the bilingual nature of this work, the multicultural components of the *Allegorical Neptune* are vast, largely as a result of the influence of ancient Greek and Roman culture on the practices of early modern Europe and consequently its colonies. The tradition of the arch itself was a classical custom. The ceremonies were inspired in the Roman *triumphus*, a ceremony of praise for a victorious general, for whom triumphal arches were erected. During the Renaissance, the tradition of the *entreé* or "entrance" was transformed from a military service into a spectacle for civilians, rendering the celebration more similar to a festival since it was now public (López Poza 243). From the Italian Renaissance, the tradition spread to the rest of Europe, from where it was transported to the American colonies shortly afterwards (Sabat de Rivers "*El Neptuno*" 243). Despite customary changes, the purpose was the same as that of the ancient *triumphus*: political propaganda (López Poza 243). Colonial arches welcoming viceroys and bishops were usually covered with inscriptions, like the classical arches (Thomas 264). These classically-based entrances of royalty were the most spectacular celebrations of the Spanish Golden Age (López Poza 242).

Although Sor Juana abided by the established rules for the genre and her participation in this classical tradition was not based on personal preference[128], she includes unique elements that further indicate her knowledge and interest in the classical culture. Rather than model her work on other arches created during her time or the Renaissance, Sor Juana based her fabrication of the arch on a classical

[128] In fact, the author declared that she did not wish to take part in the project and rejected the offer to design the arch three or four times until she was forced to do so by the church council (Alatorre "La carta" 619).

architectural text by Marcus Vitruvius Pollio, a Roman author and architect from the first century B.C. (Arenal 18). She also diverged from the tradition in the election of Neptune to represent the viceroy. The triumphal arches decorated for new viceroys traditionally depicted mythological figures, but the chosen image was rarely a god (López Poza 247, Morales Folguera 290).

Aside from its basis in a Roman tradition, the classical references that make up the *Allegorical Neptune* render it a multicultural text. The work revolves around its quotations and references to the great thinkers of antiquity as well as synopses of the legends of ancient mythology in order to support the author's arguments. The author employs metaphors of both historical and mythological figures of the ancient world to describe the colonial arch in classical terms, as if she were trying to create an image to be understood by someone belonging to the culture of ancient Greece or Rome. The "Explanation of the Arch", for example, refers to the ephemeral structure as "this Cicero without a tongue, / this mute Demosthenes[129],…this Prometheus[130] of canvases / and Daedalus[131] of drawings" (190). The vocabulary of the work is also influenced by the classical heritage, even in excerpts that are written in Spanish. As Hinojo Andrés observes, the author uses some classic terms to describe new realities (192). Virgil uses the adjective "*caeruleus*" (cerulean or "sky blue") to describe color in the story of Neptune (Herrera Zapién 88). Following the lexical tradition set by Virgil, Sor Juana applies "*cerúleo*" to her creation of images in the

[129] An orator of ancient Athens that lived from 384 to 322 BC
[130] A deity of Greek mythology believed to be the creator of mankind
[131] In Greek mythology, the designer of Crete's labyrinth

work a number of times (99, 120, 142, 174, 192, 193)[132]. In the "Explanation of the Arch", Sor Juana also uses the phrase "pious Trojan" to refer to Aeneas (195), a phrase that is also modeled on the work of Virgil. In addition, the work contains Latin-based words in the sections written in Spanish, such as the adjective "*consentáneo*", a word nonexistent in Spanish that Martin defines as a Latinism meaning "in agreement with" (130).

The multiculturalism of the work is also demonstrated through the essence of its characters. The Neptune of Sor Juana's work is not simply the Roman deity, but a composite divinity. In her description, she transforms the pagan god into the figure of the viceroy and replaces Rome with Mexico. Throughout the text, she refers to the deity as "our Neptune" and also alludes to "our heroic marquis, son of Saturn" (102), personalizing the character and distinguishing him from the classical figure. Notable characteristics of the classical Neptune such as his brutality and lack of culture are suppressed in this syncretic image. The author outlines the legendary significance of Neptune's trident, first citing Catari, who wrote that the three prongs symbolized the three qualities of water: the saltiness of the ocean, the "sweet" taste of spring water, and the "bitterness" or unpleasantness of water from lakes. Sor Juana then explains that Vadius Ascentius argued that the staff represented the triple-power of Neptune, just as the tri-form ray symbolizes the power of Jupiter and the three-headed dog that of Pluto. In developing her allegory, she describes the three-pronged nature of the trident as a representation of the civil, criminal, and

[132] Sor Juana also uses "*cerúleo*" in verses 796 and 949 of *Romance* 11.

martial powers of the viceroy, which correspond to the titles of Governor, Capitan General, and President of the Colonial Law Courts, all which were held by the new ruler (108-110). It was appropriate to use the trident as a symbol that would represent the range of the marquis's authority, as Neptune's staff was the source of his power in mythological legends. She transports the image of Neptune's trident across time and space, appropriating its ternary design as a symbol of New Spanish government. On the first canvas, which depicts Neptune and Amphitrite as rulers of the sea, she calls for the inscription "*Munere Triplex*", meaning "Triple in Office"(124), emphasizing on the architectural structure the contemporary symbolism that she assigns the trident.

The figure of Neptune's mother is also conceived as a syncretic character. Neptune is represented as the son of Isis, the Egyptian goddess of wisdom, and fused with Harpocrates, who was the Greek god of silence adapted from the Egyptian Horus, son of Isis. Sor Juana writes that Opis[133] (the mother of Neptune), Cybele[134], and Isis are one in the same[135] and appropriates the figure of Isis as the protagonist's mother throughout the work.[136] She explains that both Harpocrates and Neptune were venerated as gods of silence and describes Harpocrates as if he were part of the allegory that represents the viceroy (83-7). As Hinojo Andrés suggests, these fusions could be both an attempt to humanize and intellectualize the model of the Count of the Laguna, as well as a pretext for the writer to exhibit her

[133] The Roman goddess of fertility
[134] The Anatolian mother goddess
[135] "Fue madre suya la diosa Opis, o Cibeles, la cual es lo mesmo que Isis" (78).
[136] In his chapter, "Sister Juana and the Goddess Isis", Paz maintains that in the *Allegorical Neptune*, Isis represents Sor Juana herself as the mother of poetry and the personification of wisdom.

knowledge and interest in the culture of Egypt (191). The fusion of Egyptian, Greek, and Roman deities, along with their allegorical relationships to colonial subjects, creates characters that personify Sor Juana's erudition and identification with a variety of world cultures. This syncretism contributes to the multicultural nature of the work and allows the author to display her knowledge of a number of ancient societies.

The multicultural nature of the work is also exemplified by its religious hybridity. In addition to the numerous quotes from classical thinkers, the *Allegorical Neptune* contains 10 excerpts taken from the Bible. The author references both pagan and Christian literature to support her arguments, often to elaborate the same idea. After alluding to ancient pagan traditions of the representation of deities, she quotes King David and then St. Matthew, who both emphasized the importance of parables (66). While discussing that the feats and qualities of the viceroy cannot be properly expressed in writing just as the divine letters should not be reproduced in the vernacular language, she quotes the pagan Cicero, who stated, "Familiarity breeds contempt[137]" (68). The combination of sacred and pagan ideas to inform her writing creates hybrid images that promote diverse perspectives.

In another syncretic argument, Juana Inés describes the sacred nature of the sea, first by quoting the *Bible*, which states in *Genesis* that the Earth was originally covered completely by water and that God ordered the water to separate in order to

[137] "*Nimia familiaritas contemptum parit*".

expose the land. The author then cites Cicero, who wrote about how the pagans considered the sea to be sacred and divine and strove not to contaminate it (175). She finds a common ground between the two cultures that will allow her to continue to narrate about the classical world while still appealing to the Christian audience. The work then explains that during sacrifices, worshippers would use water from the sea to purify sins (176), an obvious allusion to the Roman Catholic sacrament of baptism. She is again fusing cultures, as the concept of sin for the pagans was not the same as what the Spanish or English words would suggest, given that the words carry with them Christian perceptions. In fact, there was only one "sin" (if it is even acceptable to use the term to describe the pagan reality) in the Greek religion: *hybris*, the sin of excess[138]. It is questionable, then, to what the author refers when she attributes sacrifice to the purification of sin, or if she has ascribed Christian ideals to a description of a pagan ritual in order to appeal to the audience. When referring to the sea kingdom of Neptune, she returns to quoting the Bible, which in *Ecclesiastes* asks for sea travelers to tell others of creatures that they may find (176). The narration again mixes two religious worlds to form a composite image, as if both should be accepted as reality.

Aside from the figure of Neptune, the work contains many additional allusions to pagan beliefs. Although it was common for the genre of the arch to contain many classical references (Morales Folguera 285), Sor Juana justifies the content of her work by alluding to ancient custom. She informs, "It was ancient

[138] The Greek doctrine demanded that everything be practiced in moderation and any excessive individualism or accumulation of power or wealth was punishable by the gods (Reinhold 46).

custom, especially of the Egyptians, to worship their deities under different hieroglyphs and various forms[139]". Not only does she include a reference to ancient culture that is unrelated to the tradition of the arch, but she implies that she is participating in the practice herself, absorbing the tradition of the ancient Egyptians. Similar to her defense of indigenous practices analyzed in Chapter 2, she justifies the pagan religious practice to which she adheres by explaining that it was logical to represent deities with symbols because the gods lacked a visible form. Sor Juana clarifies that in reverence to the Egyptian gods, it was necessary to honor them under a symbolic hieroglyph rather than an exact image, as to not vulgarize their mysteries to the common people (66). She creates a parallel between the Egyptian practice and the Catholic doctrine, which also maintains that the mysteries of the faith are not to be understood by the vulgate. To explain her choice of Neptune, Juana Inés asserts that fables are founded on true stories and those that were known as pagan gods were actually great princes to whom divinity was attributed due to their virtue. She remarks that, as Pliny the Younger suggests, they could have also been inventors (77). This was a common belief in her time. Many early Christians insisted that the ancient gods were originally outstanding historical personages of early times, and that after their deaths people began to worship them and tell stories about them (Reinhold 392). In the early modern period, the existence of Greek and Roman gods continued to be sanctioned on historical grounds, which was part of the hermetic tradition (Seznec 22).

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[139] "Costumbre fue de la Antigüedad, y muy especialmente de los egipcios, adorar sus deidades debajo de diferentes jeroglíficos y formas varias"(65). This information comes from the work of Baltasar de Vitoria, who she does not cite (Hinojo Andrés 191).

In this very erudite work, Sor Juana not only demonstrates extensive knowledge of classical texts but participates in mythological analysis herself. In the "Rationale of the Allegorical Invention and Application of the Fable", she explains that of the few authors with whom she is familiar (a claim of false modesty), none have offered explanation as to why Neptune was venerated as the god of silence. The author then proposes, adding the phrase "if my conjecture is permitted", that because he was the god of the waters, he was the father of fish, who are mute according to Horace (84). In addition, she explains, Rhadamanthus[140] would turn loquacious gossipers into fish, so that they would remain in eternal silence (86). She cites three further classical resources to support her theory. The author develops another theory on the reason that bulls were the preferred sacrifice of Neptune. She first tells of how the deity, when competing for primacy of workmanship, molds a bull, while Vulcan[141] makes a man and Minerva[142] a house (90). Sor Juana argues, however, that this is not the reason for the traditional offering and suggests that there is a different explanation behind the sacrificial tradition. She reminds the audience that Neptune is the son of wisdom (the goddess Isis), who was worshipped by the Egyptians under the figure of a cow (91). Because of the association of the cow with wisdom, which was inherited by the Romans from the Egyptians, to illustrate Neptune as a bull was to depict him as wise (92-3). Sor Juana proves herself as a philosopher, as she is successful not only exploiting her knowledge of classical texts, but also her ability to devise her own hypotheses based on her

[140] In Greek mythology, a wise king who was the son of Zeus and Europa
[141] The Roman god of fire
[142] The Roman goddess of wisdom

research. She places herself in the philosophical circle with the classical thinkers and creates a dialogue with them, using Latin to inform her argument and demonstrate her linguistic abilities as a polyglot. Sor Juana fills her work with multicultural elements and also proves that a woman is capable of studying and interpreting the sophisticated culture of antiquity.

Love is the Greater Labyrinth

In addition to her adulatory work written for the viceroy's ceremony, Sor Juana displays her erudition and multiculturalism through the genre of *comedia*, or comedic theater. *Love is the Greater Labyrinth* is one of Sor Juana's insufficiently studied works that was highly influenced by the author's affinity for classical culture. Although written entirely in Spanish, the author uses the work to create composite characters and culturally syncretic elements. While the purpose of the *Allegorical Neptune* was to honor the new viceroy upon his arrival, *Love is the Greater Labyrinth* paid reverence to a different viceroy twelve years later. The play was commissioned for a festival to celebrate the birthday of the newly crowned viceroy, Gaspar de Silva y Mendoza, Count of Galve in January of 1689. Because of time constraints, Sor Juana wrote the first and third acts, while the second act was written by the Juan de Guevara, a less experienced poet who had never written drama. The viceroy requested the play some time in December, and his birthday was the 11th of January, allowing only a month for the creation of the work (Schmidhuber 132-3). Schmidhuber attests, however, that Sor Juana also collaborated on the second act, given sudden changes in rhyme and meter that

correspond with Act I rather than Act II, and stylistic similarities to her other works (140-5).

Love is the Greater Labyrinth is considered a mythological comedy as it is based on the Greek myth of Theseus[143] and Crete's Labyrinth. Although the theme of the Cretan labyrinth and the loves of Theseus had been reproduced in several early modern works[144], Schmidhuber reveals that Sor Juana did not imitate these works but was inspired by Ovid's *Metamorphoses* (130). A closer reading reveals that Sor Juana also referred to Apollodorus's *Bibliotheca* (*Library*) and Plutarch's *Lives*, demonstrating her connection to the classical heritage.

The *loa* of the play treats the theme of time, which is projected as both finite and infinite in an attempt to eternalize age and honor the viceroy in his advancing of years. The principal allegory likens Janus, the Roman god of beginnings, to the viceroy, whose birthday was in January and was experiencing a new beginning as the recently crowned ruler of New Spain. Just as in *Allegorical Neptune*, Sor Juana creates in the work a composite multicultural character that embodies both the ancient god and the colonial viceroy along with their respective cultures. She includes the elements of Janus that suit the objectives of the work (to praise the viceroy and create a *speculum principum*[145] for him to emulate) while replacing those that were not compatible with the society of New Spain. Juana Inés begins the

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[143] According to Greek mythology, Theseus was the son of Aethra and 2 fathers: Poseidon and Aegeus.
[144] Examples include Lope de Vega in 1621, Juan Baustista Diamante in 1674, Antonio José de Silva in 1736, and two works by Pedro Calderón de la Barca from 1677.
[145] A genre that throughout the Middle Ages and the Renaissance included instruction manuals for new rulers as well as literary works that created images of kings with the goal that positive notions would be imitated while the negative would be avoided.

work asking for the deity to be applauded (9-19, 126-8), a seemingly blasphemous request from a Catholic nun, but acceptable due to the multicultural society's tolerant attitude toward classical beliefs. The characters of the *loa* are the four seasons, which Sor Juana links to the four basic elements: Earth, Water, Air, and Fire, by outlining their similar qualities[146]. García Valdés points out that in the work of Ovid, the deity Janus is associated with the four elements. In Ovid's *Book of Days*, Janus explains that the four elements were originally a unified confusing mass and upon their separation, he, who was also an unformed mass, took shape (García Valdés 307). Since Janus also presided over the beginning and end of conflict, the doors to his temple would be open during war and closed to indicate peace. The *loa* alludes to this tradition that characterizes the ancient god[147]. However, the Roman Janus requires sacrifices, a detail that Sor Juana decides to modify in order to better suit the context of her time. While worshippers of Janus offered him wine and incense and sacrificed steer in his name the character Winter states that it is not necessary to offer him the sacrifices of the past[148]. Fall and Summer ask, respectively, why it is necessary to revive the tradition of sacrifice to the god and why the celebration has moved from Rome to America (156-61), to which Age replies that the deity Janus is not the figure of ancient Italy, but is the new viceroy of

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[146] Winter corresponds to Earth as it is dry and cold, Water predominates in the humid Summer, Fall's heat is likened to the warm Wind, and the dry heat of Spring is represented by the qualities of fire (90-9).

[147] "*fue del marcial aparato / bélica oficina del templo, / de tal modo que el cerrarlo / era de la paz indicio*" (148-51)

[148] "*pues sacrificios pasados / no nos obligan ahora / para querer celebrarlos*" (144-6).

New Spain[149]. The characters then present the allegorical Janus with symbolic offerings of ice, seasoning, flowers, and fruits, which are deemed more fitting for the 17th century viceroy on his birthday (311-66).

After praising the viceroy and his family, the *loa* moves on to flatter the *Real Audiencia*, the appellate court of New Spain, by comparing its members to the senators of Greece and Rome[150] such as Solon, a lawmaker of Athens who lived from 638-558 B.C. and Lycurgus, a mythological legislator of Sparta. The practice of equating politicians to those of ancient Greece and Rome was common in Latin America as well as in the United States[151]. This tradition reveals the esteem in which classical figures were held in early modern times.

Aside from the indispensable Roman theme of *Love is the Greater Labyrinth*'s *loa*, it includes small references that further demonstrate the author's knowledge and admiration of classical culture. The *loa* includes the statement, "give Love [Cupid] more arrows"[152], an allusion to the mythological Roman Cupid, who is armed with arrows that provoke desire. The *loa* closes with the petition for the gods to grant the viceroy the years allotted to his subjects, a petition that parallels Jason's request in the *Metamorphoses* that Medea take away his years and add them to those of his father (Schmidhuber 131).

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[149] "*Sabed que este Jano heroico / no es aquel de Italia anciano, / prudente rey, aunque fue / del que celebro dechado, / sino el soberano Silva*" (169-73).
[150] "*Y el venerable senado /…/que en su prudencia pudiera / hallar Grecia sus Solones, / Lacedemonia, Licurgos / y Roma sus Senadores*" (577, 581-4). S
[151] For examples of allusions to classical models in political propaganda of the colonial United States, see Farrell "Above all Greek, above all Roman fame: Classical Rhetoric in America during the Colonial and Early National Periods".
[152] "*le den a Amor más arpones*" (573). Cupid was referred to in Latin as both *Cupido* and *Amor*, which is the word for love.

In the play itself, the author further demonstrates her erudition and understanding of the classical heritage. *Love is the Greater Labyrinth*'s Theseus introduces himself with a long monologue that reflects Sor Juana's knowledge of the tradition of the mythological prince. He states that he accompanied Hercules as a child, a detail that comes from the work *Lives* of Plutarch[153] (García Valdés 351). He relates his slaying of Corynetes, more commonly known as Periphetes, and the bull in Marathon, legends told in both Plutarch and Apollodorus[154]. He tells of how he freed the land of Thebes from the oppression of ruler Creon, who would not allow its citizens to bury the dead. Both Apollodorus and Sophocles's *Antigone*[155] credit Theseus for leading the Athenian troops against Creon (García Valdés 353). Theseus then tells the legends of Sciron[156] and Procrustes[157], both of whom he killed. The *comedia*'s representation of Sciron corresponds with those of Plutarch and Apollodorus, while the story of Procrustes follows Plutarch but differs from that of Apollodurus, contrary to what is stated in García Valdés's annotation (353). The author relays another episode, that of Sinis[158], this time referring to Diodorus's

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[153] A Greek historian that lived from 46-120 A.D.
[154] A Greek scholar that lived from approximately 180-120 B.C. He is most famous for his encyclopedia of Greek mythology, *Bibliotheca* or *Library*, which is the work that Sor Juana references.
[155] Tragic play written around 441 B.C.
[156] A bandit from the Isthmus of Corinth who attacked travellers while they were washing their feet.
[157] A bandit from Attica who according to legend would place his victims in a bed and deform their bodies so that they would match the size of the bed. In Apollodorus's version there are two beds: a shorter bed for the taller people and a long bed for shorter people (133). Plutarch's version refers to only one bed, which corresponds to the description given by Sor Juana's Theseus: "*en un inhumano lecho*" (in an inhumane bed) (582)
[158] "The pine-bender", who would kill travellers by tying them to either one or two bent pine trees, depending on the source. In Sor Juana's version, there are two trees, which is a detail in the *Bibliotheca historica* that differs from the myths of Ovid and Apollodorus (García Valdés 354).

Bibliotheca historica or *Historical Library*. In her story of Pirithous[159], she attributes the perversion of the centaurs to wine, a detail found only in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* (García Valdés 355). As one can see, the author was very familiar with a variety of classical literature and included details that revealed that she referenced distinct sources. These details also confirm that the character is in fact a version of the classical Theseus, unlike in Sor Juana's *La segunda Celestina* (1676), in which the author includes a witch named Celestina but makes it clear that she is not the same character from Fernando de Rojas's play of 1499.

According to the classical tale of Theseus, seven men and seven women were sent to Crete each year to represent Athens in compensation demanded by King Minos for the death of his son at the hands of the Athenians. The victims were sacrificed to the Minotaur, a creature who lived in a labyrinth that was designed by Daedalus and was considered impossible to escape. On the third year of the annual sacrifice, the prince Theseus was chosen, or volunteered, depending on the version, to participate in the sacrifice. When Theseus was to be killed, he was saved by the king's daughter, Ariadne, who had fallen in love with him. The princess devised a plan for Theseus to use a ball of yarn to track his path through the labyrinth and be able to return to the entrance. Theseus killed the Minotaur and married Ariadne, but abandoned her on the island of Naxos before sailing to Athens. Ariadne then married Bacchus and Theseus married Ariadne's sister, Phaedra. The most famous

[159] King of the Lapiths in Thessaly and friend of Theseus

works in which the story is found are Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, Plutarch's *Lives*, and Apollodorus's *Bibliotheca*.

In *Love is the Greater Labyrinth*, only the first act corresponds to the classical myth. The daughters of King Minos, Ariadne and Phaedra, are courted by the princes Bacchus and Lidorus, respectively. When Theseus arrives for his execution, the sisters lament his fortune and are both enamored by his gallantry. Phaedra has plans to foster Theseus's escape, but Ariadne announces that she will free the prince first. Bacchus overhears Ariadne discuss with Cynthia, her servant, her love for her sister's lover and assumes they are talking about Lidorus rather than Theseus. Guided by the advice of his footman Bunch (*Racimo*), he decides to seek vengeance by courting Phaedra. Lidorus overhears Bacchus's flattery toward Phaedra and draws his sword, commencing a duel that is impeded by the king.

By the beginning of Act II, Ariadne has freed Theseus from the labyrinth. At this point, the plot no longer corresponds to the classical myth, but with knowledge of the myth, the spectator can assume that Theseus will marry Phaedra in the end. Both princesses invite Theseus to a masked ball and arrange to meet him in the same place. Caught in the dilemma on whether to respond to Phaedra, who he adores, or Ariadne, who saved his life, Theseus finds that love is an even greater labyrinth.

The disguised nature of the guests causes the confusion of identities at the ball. Bacchus and Lidorus become further enraged with one another, both believing that the other pursues his lady. In Act III, Theseus kills Lidorus believing that he is

Bacchus, and Bacchus is blamed for the crime. Theseus and Bacchus both plan to flee Crete to escape punishment for murder. Theseus asks Phaedra to go with him to Athens, to which she agrees. Ariadne suggests to Bacchus, believing that he is Theseus, that they flee Crete. The princes erroneously begin their escapes with the wrong woman due to coincidental timing and the fact that the sisters exit the same door with their faces covered. Each prince realizes that the other is escorting his lady and they begin to fight. They are discovered by the king, who orders the death of his daughters and their suitors. At that time, soldiers arrive and announce that Crete is surrounded by Athenian troops that plan to avenge the death of Theseus. Theseus reveals that he is alive and asks for forgiveness of the king, since it was his daughters who freed him from death. In return, the king offers to Theseus what ever he may desire, and Theseus chooses the hand of Phaedra. The play ends with the promised marriage of Theseus and Phaedra and Bacchus and Ariadne, as well as their respective servants: Tuna and Laura and Bunch and Cynthia.

Some critics have undervalued the work and looked for "discrepancies" in the play that do not correspond with the ancient versions. Peden, for example, identifies "alterations" of the myth upon which the play is based (41) and claims that Lope de Vega "follows the myth rather faithfully" in his *El laberinto de Creta* (Crete's Labyrinth) (42). However, if we consider the nature of the classical myth, we find that Sor Juana in fact does not diverge from the classical tradition. There were no "official" Greek myths and they were not upheld by religious creeds. Several versions of myths existed from the time of their creation and they were

frequently altered in detail and interpretation to suit new needs and purposes (Reinhold 26). In fact, because of modifications from each "reteller", it is often impossible to decipher the original form of the myth and its most ancient purpose. Myths were often created by combining several unrelated fables or by adding elements of myths from other cultures (Reinhold 28). According to Reinhold, "The changes in myths were exceedingly varied, brought about by many factors: contacts with other societies, migrations, extraordinary changes in the natural environment, evolution of social, political, and economic organization, the flux of religion and ethical thought and practice" (28-9). Myths are then inherently multicultural. For Plato, the first known user of the term, *muthologia* (mythology) meant no more than the telling of stories (G.S. Kirk 8). It is Sor Juana, then, who captures the essence of myth in repurposing it for the designated means of creating a theatrical piece that was appropriate for the time and place in which it was performed. In regards to the myth of Theseus, the classical versions themselves differed from one another. While Ovid's story reports that Theseus abandoned Ariadne (8.210), Apollodorus tells of how Dionysus (Bacchus) ran away with her, causing Theseus grief (136). Although some versions of the myth recount that Theseus volunteered to be sacrificed, Sor Juana choses the version of Ovid (García Valdés 335), indicating that the sacrifices were chosen at random and the prince was a victim of this misfortune (101-5).

Among the many reasons for not adhering to classical versions throughout the entire work, Sor Juana would have been required to alter the myth in order to fit in the lines of a 17th century courtly *comedia*, which entailed complicated love

triangles, cases of mistaken identity, and other *enredos* or troubles and confusions that added dramatic character to the plot. It was necessary to elaborate and add details, as the classical myths were very short in comparison with the expectations for a 17th century play. The Ovid, Apollodorus, and Plutarch versions are only approximately 65, 150, and 70 words respectively. G.S. Kirk, British classical scholar of the 20th century and expert on Greek mythology, explains that Greek myths are by nature thematically simple. They have been elaborated over time, giving rise to many different variants. Historicizing legend, cult and ritual, the vicissitudes of oral tradition, and conscious literary elaboration and refinement all played a part in shaping stories whose original versions have been greatly obscured (172-3). In order to elaborate on the simplicity of the myth, it was necessary to add a great amount of detail to the storyline. Sor Juana embraces the variable nature of the classical myth by taking liberties and adapting the story to her local context.

Similar to the *Allegorical Neptune*, the fusion of time periods and societies renders the play bicultural. The supposed archaisms of Crete and the baroque language and intrigue of the palace both contribute to the charm of the drama. As in all conventional Spanish Golden Age *comedias*, *Love is the Greater Labyrinth*'s protagonists include beautiful noble women and their suitors, a specific prescription not found in the classical myth, requiring the addition of the character Lidorus and the placement of Bacchus as Ariadne's suitor from the beginning of the plot. As Schmidhuber notices, the relationships between masters and servants are not characteristic of Greek mythology, but of Golden Age plays (145). Golden Age drama

required the presence of lower class servants or pages, who usually served to parody or mimic the action of the noble protagonists. One or more of these characters would act as a *gracioso*, who provided comic relief through his sarcastic remarks, lack of morale, and silly misunderstandings. The character Tuna is designated as the ancient Greek servant of the great Theseus while at the same time serving as the 17th century Spanish *gracioso*. In fact, Tuna functions to mock the Petrarchan concept of love of classical times (Swansey 137). The nobles are also hybrid characters of two different worlds. Ariadne and Phaedra are the daughters of the mythological King Minos, but their exaggerated emotions and form of speaking mimic those of the typical Golden Age lady. The princes flatter the king's daughters, creating the idealistic image of the female common in *comedias*. The play ends with the marriage of the two noble couples and the parallel marriage of their servants, which is the appropriate finale of any *comedia*.

The Theseus myth and its characters are not the only components of ancient culture in the play. A multitude of classical references combines with the decorum of Golden Age theater to create a composite multicultural ambiance. In the first act, Ariadne refers to love with the symbolism of an arrow[160], an allusion to Cupid or his Greek version, Eros. She also mentions the gold of the arrow in her blood[161], referring to the belief that Cupid employed a gold arrow to initiate love and a lead arrow to produce aversion (García Valdés 371). The first act is also largely occupied by Theseus's monologue, which retells many of the legends of Theseus, introducing

[160] "*Apenas, amor tirano, / de tus flechas conocí*" (1011-2)
[161] "*el sutil / oro de mi sangre esmalte el carmín*" (1021-2)

other mythological characters. Racimo says to Bacchus, "if love is only madness, / what would wine and love be?[162]" and also states "I fear that of thirst / I may drink my master"[163], both reminders of the fact that the ancient Bacchus was the god of wine. King Minos, who was a legislator in life, became an administrator of justice in Hades, the mythological underworld. Sor Juana's Theseus makes a reference that foreshadows this legend: "as he gives laws to the globe / he will give precepts to hell"[164].

There are few allusions to the classical heritage in the second act, written by Guevara. There is another pun regarding Bacchus as the god of wine, in which Tuna tells Bunch, Bacchus's servant, that he cannot possibly "serve" him without being drunk [165]. There is also a reference to a secret of the king (1324), which García Valdés believes refers to the legend of the adultery of King Minos's wife Pasiphaë with a bull (385). Guevara includes the myth of Icarus and his famous melting wax wings (2049-50) which corresponds only with Ovid's version of the legend (VIII 221-78). According to Apollodorus's tale, King Minos jailed Icarus in the labyrinth along with his father, Daedalus, as a punishment for Daedalus's having revealed to Ariadne the solution to escaping the labyrinth (139). Since Ariadne of *Love is the Greater Labyrinth* does not ask Daedalus for help, the baroque work doesn't follow Apollodorus, but Ovid, who leaves out the detail of Ariadne seeking Daedalus, but places Daedalus and Icarus in exile in the next scene (8.221-78). The legend of

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[162] *que si amor solo es locura, / ¿qué serán vino y amor?*
[163] *Mucho temo que de sed / he de beberme a mi amo* (1267-8)
[164] "*como da leyes al orbe, / dará al abismo preceptos,"* (433-4)
[165] *RACIMO: Yo tengo amo a quien servir. / ATÚN: Dígame quién es. / RACIMO: Es Baco. / ATÚN: Servirle no puede ser, / si no es estando borracho* (1911-4)

Icarus is not found in Plutarch's *Lives*. Although on a lesser scale, Guevara's act maintains the multiculturalism of the work by alluding to classical legends while upholding Spanish theatrical norms.

In Act III, Juana Inés continues to impress with her erudite knowledge of ancient tales. Theseus remarks that he sees a Hercules in Lidorus (2610). Theseus and Hercules were warrior companions in the classical tradition (Apollodorus 143, 152; Plutarch 67, 76; Ovid 9.1-20). When Theseus's life is in danger, Ariadne laments that she was the Lachesis of his life and the Atropos of his death (2785-6), a reference to the fates of Greek religion. The three sisters, Lachesis, Clotho, and Atropos, were believed to weave, extend, and finally cut the thread of life. While Lachesis was thought to determine a person's destiny, Atropos is the fate that cuts the string, causing death. The reference is doubly clever, considering that it was the string given to Theseus by Ariadne that saved his life. The king refers to Theseus as a Hydra[166], explaining that after resolving to kill him for one infraction, he emerges with even more offenses[167] . When Theseus, supposed dead, reveals himself, Bunch asks if it is Day of the Dead[168] in Crete[169], a humorous anachronism, given that the Day of the Dead is a Mexican celebration based on Christian and Aztec traditions. In

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[166] A creature from Greek mythology that had many heads. For each head that was cut, two would grow in its place.

[167] "Hidra, que mi enojo incitas, / pues cuando mi enojo piensa/ matar contigo una ofensa, / con tantas me resucitas" (3437-40).

[168] Veneration for the deceased that originates from Amerindian traditions, specifically the Aztec festival dedicated to the goddess, Mictecacihuatl. Prior to Spanish colonization it was celebrated during the summer, but the ritual was combined in colonial times with the Catholic holidays All Souls' Day and All Saints' Day, shifting the celebration to November.

[169] "¿Qué fuera que con Lidoro / nos sucediera otro tanto, / y tuviéramos en Creta / el día de los finados?" (3423-6)

the resolution, Tuna gives thanks to St. Lucy[170] for letting him speak, a humorous attribution considering that Lucy is associated with eyesight[171] (3580). These references confirm that the play is a multicultural hybrid containing Catholic as well as pagan traits.

The labyrinth itself is an allegory that passes through space, time, and culture. On the stage, the audience sees a physical labyrinth that relates to the Cretan myth but is representative of the contemporary labyrinths of the play, stemming from complicated loves, mistaken identities, and confusions of the palace. When Bacchus is wrongly accused of murder, he announces, "Goodbye, curse / of Crete, for in this palace / there is not only one labyrinth"[172]. Theseus and Phaedra both declare that love is a greater labyrinth, giving the play its title. The maze, then, is another multicultural element that unites the two worlds and ties Golden Age dramatic prescriptions of *enredos*, challenges, and misunderstandings into the classical myth.

Unlike in the *Divine Narcissus*, Sor Juana does not refer directly to language in the play. At no time is there mention of the contradictory fact that the ancient Greek characters are speaking 17th century Spanish. The work could not have been written in Latin due to the constraints of the audience. The viceroy being celebrated would not have understood, defeating the purpose of the work. This necessary

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[170] St. Lucy's mother's name was Eutychia, suggesting that she was Greek. According to legend, Eutychia arranged Lucy's marriage to a pagan man, unaware that she had consecrated herself to God. Sor Juana may have chosen this saint for Tuna to venerate as her legend exemplified religious hybridity among Christian and pagan faiths.

[171] St. Lucy is the patron saint of the blind and those with eye trouble.

[172] "*Adiós, hechizo / de Creta, que en este alcazar / no hay un solo laberinto*" (2744-6).

fusion of societies contributes to the multiculturalism of the work, although rendering it monolingual. The linguistic situation of the play adds to the complex labyrinth, given that the spoken language does not correspond with the time period or geographical location of the action. Interestingly, it would not have been questioned at the time because mythological dramas were quite common.

The work's political commentary also contributes to its multicultural nature. In his monologue, Theseus discusses his ideas on the origins of state or man ruling over man. He asserts that although he is of royal blood, he is more proud of being a warrior than a prince, as he should value what he has earned through his own achievements rather than that which is owed to someone else [his father's royal bloodline] (459-68). Theseus also boasts that a good soldier can become a great king but a king, merely by being a king, is not a good soldier[173]. The prince offers a discussion of social inequality and political power (477-522). According to Paz, the Baroque Theseus's political views are based on those of Spanish Neothomist philosophers (332). These thinkers were the founders of modern constitutionalism that places power in the hands of the people. As discussed in the previous chapter, a portion of the monologue questions slavery and postulates force as the cause of the leap from a natural and equal civilization to a political society in which some serve as slaves while others live as masters (509-16). What Paz finds interesting is that King Minos does not refute Theseus's liberal ideas (Paz 333). The political element is multicultural because it combines the monarchical government of ancient times

[173] *de un valiente soldado / puede hacerse un rey supremo, / y de un rey, por serlo, no / hacerse un soldado bueno* (469-72).

with progressive new ideas of Sor Juana's time, revealing the author's cultural awareness.

The erudition in Sor Juana's work serves to highlight her role as a female intellectual, but she also makes a conscious effort to enhance the role of women in the play, a feature that is unconventional for her time but corresponds to the classical custom. Women in mythology held active roles as heroines and villains, unlike in the Spanish tradition where they maintained passive roles functioned primarily as objects of men's affection. In *Love is the Greater Labyrinth*, the women are the traditional protagonists. As DiPuccio has pointed out, the primary love triangle in this play involves two women competing for the affection of one man, the reverse of what is common in Golden Age *comedias* (193). The men of the play serve more passive roles. Aside from his monologue, Theseus is a secondary character. Other critics have also made note of the passiveness and objectification of Theseus (Swansey 137, DiPuccio 196). He is depicted as cowardly and hides when he hears people arrive to his and Phaedra's meeting place (2222) and runs into the labyrinth abandoning his opponent when he is threatened with a swordfight (2300). The "hero" actually plays a limited role in generating the circumstances of the play (DiPuccio 196). His character along with his defenseless position place him in a role that usually corresponds to the baroque female, while the princesses are the heroines disposed to his salvation. As DiPuccio points out, all three of the male protagonists are presumed dead at some point in the play, meaning that they are literally removed from the stage (183). Their absence results

in their silence, which reverses Golden Age theatrical norms (193). The men resemble *comedia* women in that they are silenced and their desires are rarely taken into consideration. The women have more freedom in choosing with whom and how they will communicate while the men fall victim to deception (196-7). Sor Juana adds details to the play that contribute to the strong, independent character of the 17th century Ariadne. Unlike in the classical versions, Sor Juana's Ariadne does not ask Daedalus for help in planning Theseus's escape but finds a solution for overcoming the labyrinth through her own resourcefulness. In addition, Ariadne does not request marriage as a payment for helping Theseus escape from the labyrinth as in other versions of the myth. This innovative transformation of the female persona from passive to active not only contributes to the play's multicultural nature but also implies resistance to the marginalization of women in society.

Conclusion

Although I have limited my study to a small number of select works, evidence of Classical culture within Juana Inés is profuse. She found importance in education, literature, and instruction and based her writings on fundamentals that she had learned from antiquity's great writers. She spoke Latin from the time she was a child and immersed herself in the world of mythology and Roman and Greek philosophical thought. An aspiring intellectual, the nun was further exposed to the literature of ancient times. The society of New Spain in which she lived featured

customs and literary traditions that had been retained or revived from ancient Rome and Greece.

Sor Juana's exposure to classical culture undoubtedly influenced her texts and shaped her creation of multicultural concepts and characters. The bilingualism of her *villancicos* and *Allegorical Neptune* reflects her ability as a polyglot and also reveals that her true target audience was made up of fellow intellectuals that could understand her work. Unlike many writers that included foreign language quotations in their works, she had the capability to produce her own sentences in Latin, further qualifying her as a multilingual writer. Her thorough understanding of the ancient language enabled her to appreciate Roman texts and she was able to imitate great classical lyricists in her poetry. The works themselves are multicultural and include composite characters that seem to have lived in two distinct societies and acquired traits from both. The writer included in her works countless references to classical authors and pagan religion as well as to the Bible and elements of her own society. It becomes apparent that the nun was affected by her exposure to the classical heritage and her works resulted as complex and multicultural as the writer herself. The hegemonic nature of the Latin language granted the nun an esteemed status in the intellectual sphere of her time, overcoming the marginalized position that was traditional among early modern women.

Chapter 5

Conclusion: Writing from Nepantla, the Land in the Middle

Sor Juana's hometown was Nepantla, a place so inherently diverse that it kept its Nahua name, which coincidentally means "Land in the Middle". Juana Inés found herself in the middle of an array of languages, cultures, and identities from the Spanish, indigenous, African, and classical cultures. Studies of multiculturalism tend to focus on third-world migration and subsequent "assimilation" to a dominant culture by members of subaltern groups. What is less studied are the effects of marginalized groups on societies like Sor Juana's, which were culturally dominant but yet displaced from their place of origin. I have presented in this project an example of how a member of hegemonic society was influenced by outside cultures and languages, some of which were deemed to be inferior to her own. Although some critics continue to consider Sor Juana's writing "Spanish", her texts contain unmistakable influences from other cultures, reflecting the multicultural and multilingual nature of her society. As Stuart Hall explains, there are two ways of understanding cultural identity. The first theorizes that people who share a similar history and ancestry, such as Sor Juana and her peninsular contemporaries, are connected to one another and identify as members of the same culture[174]. A second view of cultural identity constitutes what a person has become, rather than his or her ancestry, suggesting that cultural identities undergo constant transformation (225). It is through this theory that we understand how Mexican national identity

[174] This is the type of unity shaped movements such as Negritude, in which writers felt identified with one another because of a similar past, despite cultural differences of the present.

developed and began as early as Sor Juana's time, with writers like her who diverged from the Spanish tradition and chose to include elements that were unique to New Spain and its diverse population. To write from Nepantla was not the same as writing from Spain, nor was it completely different from Spanish writing. Sor Juana's texts reveal what a voice sounds like when it comes from "in the middle".

Homi Bhabha has also coined the term "third space", which is found in areas of cross-cultural contact and is characterized by fluid identity and ambivalence. We must think of the colonial culture not as the Spanish culture transported into a different space, but as the emergence of a new culture that evolved with each generation. *Criollos* didn't always identify with a "homeland" that they had never seen and *peninsulares* experienced a permanent change in culture and values due to their extended stay in the Americas. We can see themes of fluid cultural and ethnic identity in Sor Juana's writing, such as in the play *Aplaúdese la fineza*, in which Sor Juana includes herself as a character that identifies as indigenous, and in her *villancico* 274, where a White man transforms into a Guinean and sings an African chant, stating that the African culture is the one he prefers. In her collection of essays, *Borderlands / La frontera*, Gloria Anzaldúa also considers the concept of a third space or a "third country" when referring to those that live in both the Mexican and U.S. culture (3). According to Anzaldúa's definition, Sor Juana's society corresponds to the metaphorical concept of "borderlands", which she defines as "present wherever two or more cultures edge each other, where people of different races occupy the same territory, where under, lower, middle and upper classes

touch, where the space between two individuals shrinks with intimacy". Like Bhabha, Anzaldúa defines the borderlands as zones of multiple and shifting identities, in which two worlds merge to form a third (Preface, 4). These zones are also characterized by prejudice, hate, and exploitation (Anzaldúa Preface), as was the case in colonial New Spain.

The root of cultural difference and lack of understanding is, at least in modern times, often found in language. The Classical world was generally characterized by pluralism and a tolerance for diversity. Group and cultural differences were tied to language rather than geography. Although a common language was convenient, there were few if any considerations that would induce the suppression of a local dialect or the promotion of an intrusive language. It was not until the Middle Ages that monolinguistic ideologies began to develop, with foundations in the growth of nationalism and the search for uniformity in theory and in practice (E. Lewis 24-6). These views have remained through Sor Juana's century and into our own, as certain discourses promote monolingualism as an instrument of cultural unity and national pride.

Sor Juana herself makes an interesting allusion to the problematic multilingual nature of the world. In the *Divino Narciso*, Echo, who represents Satan, tells the story of the Tower of Babel, which

> corresponded to divisions
> the confusion of languages;
> which is a fair punishment

to he who stubbornly thinks

that he knows everything

may he not understand anyone[175]

She then relates the separation of languages to the division of religions:

And thus, the languages divided,

I split religion into sects,

so that, for some the sun provided

a god; for some, the distant stars;

while some adored ferocious beasts;

still others worshiped the high mountains,

…

and soon there was no creature which,

however filthy and obscene,

their blindness would not leave alone,

nor their great ignorance exclude,

and, adoring fascinations

made in their imaginations,

they lost remembrance of their God,

the object of true adoration;

and venerating idols, they

became, in their blind ignorance,

[175] "correspondió en divisiones/ la confusión de las lenguas; / que es justo castigo / al que necio piensa / que lo entiende todo, / que a ninguno entienda" (502-7). Translation mine.

nearly changed into the thing

of stone they had been worshipping (508-27)[176]

She suggests, then, that the devil is to blame for separating language and culture and also infers that all languages and cultures are equal, a theory that contradicted her society's belief that subaltern speech was barbaric and inferior and that there was only one "true" religion. Sor Juana's progressive ideas on language are reflected in the works studied in this project. Her ability to accurately reproduce Bozal Spanish and colloquial Nahuatl reveals a sensitivity to authentic language use that differed from that of her contemporaries, who depicted the languages with stereotypical and inaccurate representations of indigenous and African speech. Sor Juana reveals the poetic value of both dialects by using them in verse and adhering to elite prescriptions for rhyme and meter. As a multilingual writer, she uses the tools available to her in order to achieve certain objectives, which often included the use of other languages to hide subversive messages or make them subtler. She applied her cultural awareness and ability to function in several cultures and languages to the classical heritage that shaped and influenced early modern academia, creating erudite multilingual and multicultural works comparable to her texts based on indigenous and African cultures. She defends the position of the intellectual female by demonstrating her vast knowledge and proficiency in Latin and participating in scholarly dialogues with elite men.

[176] English version of Patricia Peters and Renée Domeier (73)

In addition to its usefulness as a writing tool, the author's varied language use has important implications for the diversity of her audience. She used Nahuatl in *villancicos* and theater, both which entertained spectators of Nahua origin. These members of society were able to temporarily escape their subaltern linguistic position as they would have understood the performances while monolingual Spaniards would have been excluded. Since her *villancicos* included realistic renditions of the idiosyncracies of African language learners along with sympathetic themes that denounced slavery and injustices, Afro-Mexican members of the audience would have been able to identify with the service and feel included in a sphere that was often exclusive and targeted towards those of European descent. While the spectators of her *villancicos* and civic ceremony that included Latin may not have understood her bilingual writing, she was able to exert her voice as a female scholar by working with the prestigious language that was usually reserved for men.

As mentioned in the introduction to this project, scholars such as Benjamin Whorf, Walter Mignolo, and John Edwards have demonstrated the positive relationship between bilingualism and cultural sensitivity. Sor Juana's bilingualism resembles what is defined as "globalization-based" bilingualism, which refers to individuals of the dominant culture who come in contact with a second cultural group and language in their home culture (Chen 809). Although these theories come from contemporary linguists, evidence from her writing demonstrates that they apply to Sor Juana. Chen's study shows similar effects of globalization-based

bilingualism on biculturalism, including feelings of cultural identity confusion and an experience of acculturation similar to that of those who migrate to other cultures (828-32). As Edwards explains, speaking a particular language means belonging to a particular speech community and speaking more than one may suggest variations in identity and allegiances (Edwards 248). Language implies a linking of the individual to others (Edwards 21), especially in the case of Sor Juana, who acquired linguistic fluency through personal interaction with member of the Nahua and Afro-Mexican cultures.

I have shown in this dissertation that Sor Juana was sympathetic to marginalized groups, a result of both her cultural awareness and relationship with individuals of Nahua and African descent and her own position as a writer who was marginalized because of her sex. In her *villancicos*, the writer provides both the Nahua and the Afro-Mexican the opportunity to speak and denounce injustices and prejudices. She criticizes discrimination and the hypocrisy of the Church and calls for both groups to be included in the religious sphere, an allegorical strategy that requests their fair inclusion in New Spanish society. Sor Juana re-appropriates the longstanding symbolism of dark skin color, attributing it to beauty and closeness to God rather than to evil. *Villancico* characters of both groups reveal the cultures' rich heritage, which is celebrated, rather than mocked. The author combines Catholic praise with both indigenous and African traditions, revealing the syncretic understanding of religion that was common during the colonial period. In her *loas*,

she depicts the Aztec tradition of sacrifice as parallel and connected to the Catholic Eucharistic sacrament, defending the practice with logic and reason.

Her cultural awareness is also evident in her references to classical culture, in which she reflects a respect for ancient traditions and a syncretic understanding of religion through allegory that linked Catholicism to Greek and Roman mythology. The intellectual sphere was a culture of its own, shaped in large part by the practices and the literature of ancient times. As a woman, she was a minority in this intellectual culture but exerted her position as a scholar by revealing her familiarity with this culture's language, traditions, legends, and religious beliefs. The classical tradition that was inherited by Hispanic culture was yet another contributor to the multicultural nature of New Spain, and, as is evidenced by her works, was another influence on the composite cultural identity of Sor Juana.

While the author uses her position as a *criolla* and a writer to speak for subaltern groups, she at the same time reflects her own multilingual and multicultural reality. The writings of Sor Juana disprove the common belief that the Nahuas and Africans assimilated to Spanish culture and abandoned their own. Her work shows that cultural influence was mutual and that rather than one society replacing another, the cross-cultural encounters of her time formed a third society as described by Bhabha and Anzaldúa.

The cross-cultural encounters of the colonial period that are expressed and preserved in Sor Juana's multicultural writings are the foundation of Mexican language, culture, and identity today. In dominant Mexican society, we can see

many influences from the Nahua culture and language. Words like *chocolate*, *tomate* (tomato), *mole* (sauce), *aguacate* (avocado), *cacahuate* (peanut), *ejote* (green bean), *elote* (corn cob), *chamaco* (boy), *cuate* (twin/friend), *escuincle* (child), *chamarra* (jacket), *tecolote* (owl), *guajolote* (turkey), *mapache* (raccoon), *tlacuache* (opossum), *coyote*, and *zacate* (grass) are all of Nahua origin and are common in standard Mexican Spanish today[177]. The official seal of Mexico depicts an eagle perched on a cactus with a serpent in its mouth, a representation of the Aztec legend of the foundation of Tenochtitlan. The Virgin of Guadalupe is often referred to by Nahua and non-indigenous Mexicans alike as "Tonantzin", revealing that the religious syncretism developed in the colonial period and referenced by Sor Juana is still prevalent in Mexican society. Another widespread syncretic tradition of Mexico is the Day of the Dead, which is based on an Aztec festival that honored Mictecacihuatl, the goddess of death. The holiday is now fused with Catholic traditions and is observed on November 1st and 2nd, All Saints' Day and All Souls' Day respectively, but retains indigenous customs, such as the displaying of the marigold, the flower that was traditionally offered to Mictecacihuatl, and the manifestation of skulls in costumes and décor.

In addition to manifestations of the Aztec heritage that are present within Mexico's borders, Nahua culture has also been appropriated by the Chicano movement, whose members chose to write in Nahuatl in addition to English and/or Spanish as a way to reclaim the Aztec culture as their symbolic, and in some cases

[177] This is not a comprehensive list, as there are hundreds of Nahuatl words used in Mexican Spanish.

authentic, original heritage. U.S. Latino social groups and university Chicano Studies departments often use the Aztec calendar or other symbols of indigenous culture in their logos and banners. The legendary ancestral home of the Mexica people is Aztlán, which Chicano folklore often places in the Southwest of the United States, affirming the region as the territory of their ancestors (Anzaldúa 23).

Although on a lesser scale, African culture also continues to prevail in contemporary Mexican society. The popular Mexican drink *jamaica* is of African origin and is commonly served throughout Mexico and in Mexican restaurants in the United States. During the Day of the Dead, some communities celebrate with the *danza de los diablos*, "the devils' dance", which originates from a festival of veneration to the African god Ruja, but has transformed to incorporate themes slavery, resistance, and African pride, much like the *villancicos* of Sor Juana. Other dances of African origin, such as the *son de Artesa*, are common in the states of Guerrero and Oaxaca that have larger Afro-Mexican populations. Sor Juana's *villancicos* emphasize the importance of African musical instruments in the colonial period, a tradition that continues into modern day. Instruments such as the *bule*, *bote*, marimba, and *marimbol* are of African origin and are utilized during the Day of the Dead and other celebrations in Mexico. African culture also remains present in Mexican architecture, medicinal remedies, oral traditions, and African healing rituals such as "*la sombra*" and "*el tono*". Afro-Mexican communities in Acapulco and Costa Grande maintain African wedding and funeral traditions, as well as the use of African-style open kitchens (Velásquez and Nieto 11-24).

It is also important to consider Sor Juana's work in the context of multicultural studies because while the cultural legacy of subaltern groups is prominent in Mexico, so is the legacy of the colonial period's social hierarchy. The colonial hegemony that imposed social inequality, gender marginalization, ethnic exclusion, economic and cultural dependence, racism, and political instability continues to pervade Mexico and other parts of Latin America.

In contemporary Mexico, the indigenous continue the fight for linguistic and social equality that was prefigured by Sor Juana. Although the indigenous comprised the majority of the population in colonial times, the Spanish language prevailed in international affairs, official transactions, and the culture of the dominant society. Spanish-language dominance continued after Independence and in the 1880s, decision-makers chose Spanish as Mexico's official language. A national language offered unity and integration, but was imposed at the expense of the identity and self-respect of the indigenous (Heath vii). Mexico implemented a number of castilianization projects[178], which claimed to seek to educate the indigenous population but were identified by critics as schemes to eliminate diversity (Tinajero 166). In 2003, Mexico passed the General Law for the Linguistic Rights of Indigenous People, which recognized the equal status of those languages and Spanish in any matter and activity of public nature. However, as Tinajero remarks, the objectives of the law are unclear, as are the modalities of implementation and the designation of people in charge of initiating change (168).

[178] Initiatives to make Spanish the primary language

In addition to linguistic inequality, Mexico also retains overt social racism against the indigenous people, which segregates them from economic development, political participation, and educational opportunities (Fortes de Leff 620). Unlike in other parts of the country, indigenous schools tend to have one teacher for children of different grades simultaneously. Governmental bilingual education initiatives for indigenous children have been criticized as being incongruous with the reality of ethnic communities, as they feature inadequate training for teachers, culturally irrelevant pedagogical materials, and high levels of failure and desertion by students. Although current policies claim to foster quality intercultural education, it is difficult to administer such plans in the unequal socioeconomic conditions of indigenous communities. Standardized test scores in mathematics and Spanish in the indigenous schools are the lowest of all national categories and drop-out and failure rates are higher than the national average. Illiteracy among indigenous adults is triple the national average: 22.1% for indigenous people and 7.5 for the national average (Tinajero 169-74).

In addition to retaining the colonial legacy of inferior education, indigenous communities are marked by extreme poverty. Although poverty is an inclusive problem throughout Mexico, the indigenous situation is distinct and termed "native-poverty", "a result of a complex historical process in which the fundamental human rights of the indigenous people were violated over centuries" (Tinajero 164-5). Those with indigenous features suffer discrimination in the job market as well as in the social sphere. There is an overt preference for European appearance across

Mexican society, affecting the distribution of income (19). A study carried out by Martínez and de la Torre suggests that preferences for European features influence hires and promotions in the job market (22-3). On printed ads, TV commercials, and ads on the internet, the great majority of models have a European appearance, very few have Mestizo appearance, and virtually none have an Indian appearance. Although this could be expected in the publicity of luxurious and expensive goods and services targeted towards the white upper class, the trend is true for basic goods whose main buyers are dark skinned customers. Marketers admit the preference for models with European appearance, attributing selection to the supposition that Indians and Mestizos prefer the European appearance to their own (Martínez and de la Torre 20). At the end of the 1960's, Mexico's lead entrepreneurs, all of whom were of exclusive European ancestry, openly expressed their firm conviction that Indians and Mestizos were racially inferior. Twenty-five years later, in the early and mid 1990s, the racist attitudes among whites and white Mestizos was reported again in books and articles published as a result of the implementation of the North American Free Trade Agreement. Although denied by society, the conviction that Indians and Mestizos are racially inferior continues to be firmly held by the vast majority of whites and white Mestizos (Martínez and de la Torre 20). White skin is still associated with power, higher social class, and deserving privileges, while being "dark" relates to an Indian origin, denoting an inferior social class (Fortes de Leff 621). Christina Sue refers to Mexico as a "pigmentocracy", where light-skinned individuals with European features dominate

the top positions of society and dark-skinned people of indigenous or African descent are over-represented at the bottom rungs of society. In many regions of Mexico, light-skinned mestizos are much more likely to own large companies, live in mansions, and possess luxury goods, while dark-skinned mestizos disproportionately struggle with basic needs (6).

Like the indigenous, Afro-Mexicans continue to suffer the consequences of the system of racial hierarchy implemented during the viceroyalty, but their situation is quite distinct. While indigenous populations have been blatantly exploited and marginalized, the existence of an African population in Mexico has been mostly ignored by the general population and scholars alike. Douglas Richmond, author of "The Legacy of African Slavery in Colonial Mexico", confirms that interpretations of history insist that indigenous and Spanish influences are the exclusive foundations of modern Mexican society (1). Laura Lewis, professor of anthropology at James Madison University and expert in Afro-Mexican studies, adds that ideologically, the "Mexican" is Indian. The indigenous, especially the Aztecs, are central to Mexican mestizo identity (*Chocolate* 6), while the African component fails to fit into the ideology of racial dichotomy. Restall observes that while scholars are beginning to understand the mutual exchange of cultural elements in which the Spanish and the indigenous participated, bicultural studies tend to exclude from consideration the influence of Africans and African cultures.[179] ("Black Slaves" 8).

[179] Restall points out that many scholars concerned with the development of African-based cultures also ignore the influence of the indigenous ("Black Slaves" 8).

The slaves and their descendants greatly influenced and continue to influence Mexican culture and identity. In the middle of the 18th century one in nine New Spanish colonials and one in three non-Indians was of African heritage (Proctor 9). People of African heritage contributed to the shaping of colonial practices, the Mexican economy, and social developments (Vasquez 186) but the general belief for years was that there were few Blacks in Mexico. Blacks were perceived as having disappeared through biological and cultural integration and at the same time, *mestizaje* ideology constructed the mestizo as a purely Spanish-indigenous mixture (Sue 16). In the 1990s, in reports submitted to the UN International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, the Mexican government cited the absence of racism in Mexico as a justification for not implementing antiracist legislation. The same report defined Mexico's mestizo population as a Spanish-indigenous mixture (Sue 17). The option for citizens to identify as Black on the census was eliminated in 1921 and only reinstated in 2015. A total of 1.38 million Afro-Mexicans chose this option, suggesting that 1.2% of the country's total population identifies as Black. Like the indigenous, the 2015 census also found the Afro-Mexican category to be poorer and less educated than the national average. Christina Sue reminds us that as countless anecdotes and studies reveal, Mexican society privileges whiteness and is stratified by race and color (5).

The third group that Sor Juana attempted to defend, that of the female intellectual, also continues to suffer injustices in Mexico due to the patriarchal system implemented in New Spain. Unlike Sor Juana, women are now allowed to

attend the university in Mexico, but it is often difficult for them to be successful due to societal pressures for them to hold roles as wives and mothers. In contrast to the U.S. educational system, public school employees hold prestigious and high-paying positions. Women, however, are less likely to be promoted as principals of schools despite higher qualifications and rates of success (Reimers 279). The percent of female teachers decreases consistently as the grade increases, leaving men to teach the more desirable higher levels with smaller class sizes (Reimers 283). As Fernando Reimers points out, this injustice is problematic because it shapes a powerful moral lesson for both male and female students, suggesting that merit and ability in the quest for social and professional advancement are secondary to the traditional values of patriarchy (279). Colonial discourse defined learning as masculine, an ideology that was reinforced by the institutional rules of the Church. In the colonial period, society was suspicious of women that wrot and participated in intellectual activities (Franco 28). Gender roles are still very marked and it is considered inappropriate or impractical for a woman to achieve success in the realm of education in traditional Mexican ideology.

While Sor Juana's texts are important because of the systematic marginalization of the groups she attempts to defend, her multicultural work achieves exceptional significance because it predates and predicts the Latin American voice and proves that it has never been monolingual or monocultural. Sor Juana can be considered a precursor for contemporary activists like Subcomandante Marcos, who, as a child of Spanish immigrants, is also a *criollo* who uses his

education and status to fight for the rights of the indigenous people. He is the spokesperson for the Zapatista Army of National Liberation, which advocates for the rights of the indigenous people of Chiapas. *Our Word is our Weapon* is a collection of his political writings that demonstrates the power of writing in encouraging justice and equality for marginalized groups that lack the means to diffuse their political needs. Like Sor Juana, Subcomandante Marcos also uses his position as a writer to educate people on the rich cultural heritage of the indigenous people. His bilingual children's book, *The Story of Colors*, tells the story of the origin of colors based on beliefs of the native groups of Chiapas. As mentioned in Chapter 2, contemporary Nahua poet Natalio Hernández identifies Sor Juana as a Nahua poet herself, an indication that she prefigured the Nahua literary tradition that continues to grow in both Mexico and the United States.

In addition to her recognition as a contributor to the Nahuatl literary canon, Sor Juana is also considered a precursor to Afro-Latino writings. Several critics have noted the similarities in recent black poetry and the Bozal *villancicos* of Sor Juana (Valdés-Cruz 208, Gazarian Gautier 189). Gazarian Gautier believes that Alejo Carpentier, Emilio Ballagas, Nicolás Guillén and Luis Palés followed in the footsteps of the nun's work[180] (197). The rhythmic elements of Sor Juana's *villancicos* suggest dance steps, which is a detail characteristic of the Afro-Hispanic poetry of the 20th century (Valdés-Cruz 208). The syncretic battle of Sor Juana's *villancico 232* that depicts the killing of a snake with African chants and dance steps foreshadows the

[180] "*El aporte de Sor Juana a la poesía negra es de valor fundamental, ya que desempeñó el papel de innovadora de aquel género. Alejo Carpentier, Emilio Ballagas, Nicolás Guillén y Luis Palés Matos no hicieron más que seguir los caminos que les enseñó ella*" (197).

rhythm and theme of several contemporary Afro-Latino verses. Valdés-Cruz cites an anonymous song performed in Cuba in the 19th Century on Three Kings Day:

¡Sángala muleque!	Make it bleed, boy!
¡La culebra murió!	The snake is dead!
¡Calabasó-so-só!	(chanting)
¡Yo mimito mató!	I killed it myself!
¡Calabasó-so-só! (211)	(chanting)

The lyrics can be defined as *Bozal* Spanish, as they include elision of consonants ("*Sángala*" for "*Sángrala*" and "*mimito*" for "*mismito*"), vowel raising (*moleque* to *muleque*), Portuguese influence (the word *moleque* itself) and lack of agreement between subject and verb, with preference for the third person ("*yo…mató*", which is the first person pronoun but the third person form of the verb). Like Sor Juana's *villancico*, the song contains an onomatopoeic rhythm, "*so-so-so*", and also depicts the killing of a snake. The poem "Sensemayá", written by the Afro-Cuban Nicolás Guillén in 1902, likewise contains onomatopoeic rhythms that are the formula for killing a serpent:

¡Mayombe-bombe-mayombé!	(chanting)
¡Tú le das con el hacha y se muere!	You strike it with the ax and it dies!
¡Dale ya!	Hit it now!
¡No le des con el pie, que te muerde!	Don't kick it, it will bite you!
¡No le des con el pie, que se va!	Don't kick it, it will get away!

Valdés-Cruz cites the relationship between the poems[181] while Gazarian Gautier suggests that Guillén in fact based his work on Sor Juana's *villancico*[182]. We can infer that in the very least, Sor Juana's *Bozal* poetry foreshadowed the multicultural Latin American voice that would be heard in Afro-Latino poetry centuries later.

While Afro-Latino poetry and song inherited the theme of *villancico* 232, the tradition inherited a similar rhythm to that implemented by Sor Juana in her *villancico* 241. Afro-Latino poet Nicolás Guillén's "Canto negro" or "Black Song" reads:

Tamba, tamba, tamba, tamba,

tamba del negro que tumba

tumba del negro, caramba

caramba, que el negro tumba

while Sor Juana's *villancico* chants:

¡Tumba, la-lá-la; tumba, la-lé-le;

que donde ya Pilico, escrava no quede!

¡Tumba, tumba, la-lé-le; tumba la-lá-la

que donde ya Pilico, no quede escrava! (9-12).

The poem is linguistically similar to that of Sor Juana, as the works both emphasize the word "*tumba*" and feature alternating vowel sounds. As Valdés-Cruz points out, they both imitate the sound of a drum (213). The character of Sor Juana's *villancico*

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[181] "*Tanto el villancico de Sor Juana como el anónimo de los cubanos conducen al 'Sensemaya' de Guillén, que nos da también la formula para matar la culebra"* (211).
[182] "*El poema de Nicolás Guillén 'Sensemaya la culebra' parece tener sus raíces en la obra misma de Sor Juana*" (193).

sings in praise along with a *calabazo*[183], a traditionally African musical instrument made of a squash or gourd. References to percussion instruments will later become an important element of Black poetry. An exaltation of instruments such as the drum ("*tambó*") and maracas ("*calabacillo*") is also found in another *villancico* (ix) that is attributed to Sor Juana and included in her *Obras Completas*.

Valdés-Cruz has pointed out the similarities between *Villancico* 258 and Puerto Rican poet Luis Palés Matos's "Danza Negra" or "Black Dance" of 1937. The poem reads:

Calabó-Bambú

Bambú-Calabó

El Gran Cocoroco dice: tu-cu-tú

la Gran Cocoroca dice: to-co-tó

while Sor Juana's female Afro-Mexican characters sing,

1. - ¡Ha, ha, ha!

2.-¡Monan vuchilá!

¡He, he, he,

cambulé!

1. - ¡Gila coro,

gulungú, gulungú,

hu, hu, hu!

2. - ¡Menguiquilá

[183] "A los plausibles festejos / que a su fundador Nolasco / la Redentora Familia / publica en justos aplausos, / un Negro que entró en la Iglesia, / de su grandeza admirado, / por regocijar la fiesta /cantó al son de un calabazo:" (1-8).

ha, ha, ha! (41-9).

Both poems are characterized by alternating vowels and verses that are known in Spanish as *agudo*, in which the stress falls on the last syllable of the word (212). The similarities between Sor Juana's poems and those of contemporary Black writers are significant because we see how her writings resemble today's Afro-Latino literature rather than the typical Golden Age use of Afro speech for mocking and ridicule. She predates the voice of the Afro-Latino and the Afro-Latina.

It goes without saying that Sor Juana is among history's most influential female writers. Many scholars consider her Latin America's first "feminist", although the term postdates her time as the concept of gender equality did not exist. Her works continue to inspire women and girls to pursue an education[184]. Her writing in Latin and participation in intellectual culture proved to the world that a woman was capable of remarkable academic activity. Early critics such as Ludwig Pfandl and Fray Luis Tineo de Morales considered her talent to be unnatural because of her gender while other critics, such as Marcelino Menéndez y Pelayo and Karl Vossler, tend to "feminize" her life and writings, assuming her to be an emotional female or characterizing her writing as feminine, often despite evidence of the contrary (Merrim "Toward" 16-7). As a female writer, Sor Juana advocates for her own marginalized group as well as for others.

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[184] Emily Hind points out that Mexico has established Sor Juana as *the* model for the female intellectual, which may indicate to girls that they must hold the role of the "other", not as a typical woman, in order to achieve academic success (38). In her chapter, "Your Maternity or Your Mind", Hind infers that the idolization of Sor Juana suggests to girls that they must choose between becoming wives and mothers and participating in intellectual activity.

The issues discussed in this dissertation are also relevant to the multicultural and multilingual reality of the United States, where U.S. Latino writers are standing up against oppression and discrimination and using literature to express and celebrate their multicultural identities. As Edward Said states, "Appeals to the past are among the commonest of strategies in interpretations of the present. What animates such appeals is not only disagreement about what happened in the past and what the past was, but uncertainty about whether the past is really past, over and concluded, or whether it continues, albeit in different forms, perhaps". The Mexican experience has been one of cultural hybridity, religious syncretism, linguistic prejudice, and racial discrimination from the time of the Conquest to present day. Sor Juana's works help us to understand the Mexican experience throughout space and time along with the struggle for equality and the search for identity.

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