

FABRICATING RELIGION: THE THEOLOGICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF SARTORIAL
IMAGERY IN JUANA DE LA CRUZ'S (1481-1534) *EL CONHORTE*

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ABSTRACT

Anne-Shirley Harford: *Fabricating Religion: The Theological Significance of Sartorial Imagery in Juana de la Cruz's (1481-1534) El Conhorto*
(Under the direction of Frank A. Domínguez)

Mother Juana de la Cruz (1481-1534) is a fascinating female mystic whose preaching marks an important step in the development of Marian devotion under Queen Isabel I. With the support of important religious figures such as Cardinal Francisco Jiménez de Cisneros, a Franciscan like Juana, her visionary experience gained widespread fame both inside and outside the convent of Santa María de la Cruz in Cubas.

Fabricating Religion examines Juana's use of sartorial imagery within *El Conhorto*—a collection of seventy-two of Juana's "*sermones*" dictated by one of the members of the nunnery, Sor María Evangelista. It analyzes two key elements in the sermons—the theology and the materiality of dress images, and their connections to the cultural and religious praxis of the period. Juana employs sartorial imagery repeatedly when treating such theologically complex topics as Jesus' Incarnation, Mary's Immaculate Conception, and Mary's role in Redemption, Salvation and Intercession. The sumptuous aesthetic detail with which she describes their state of dress or undress advances the ever-evolving role of Mary by crafting an image of a divinized Mother Mary and an altogether humanized Christ.

To Joel, my best friend and the love of my life. I never would have attempted this without your encouragement and support.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION
CLOTHING: A MATERIAL METAPHOR WITH SPIRITUAL SIGNIFICANCE

“It reminds me of an early renaissance fashion magazine.” This remark made by Jessica Boon, renowned religious studies scholar, was the catalyst for the entire project. Although tongue-in-cheek, her observation resonated with me. We were discussing Juana de la Cruz's early-16th century collection of sermons called *El Conhorte*, and her words raised an important question in my mind. In the work, Juana depicts in detail the ornate clothing of celestial beings.¹ Did this sartorial imagery have a deeper purpose than that of mere description? I believe so. I have chosen the title “Fabricating Religion” for two reasons. In the literal sense, “to fabricate” means to construct or assemble while, in a metaphorical sense, it means to “invent.” This dissertation analyzes both aspects of the word “fabricate” (construction and invention) in Juana de la Cruz's sermons and places them in the context of the religious praxis of the time.

What little information we have about Juana de la Cruz (1481-1534) comes from three sources: *Vida y fin*, *Libro de la casa* and *El Conhorte*.² The primary focus for my dissertation is the latter, *El Conhorte*. Juana's thirteen-year-long preaching career began in 1508 and this

¹ Inocente García de Andrés' edition (1999) of *El Conhorte*, which includes an extensive introduction on Juana and the time period, was only published within the last 20 years. Prior to this edition, very few scholars had given the work any critical attention; Annie Fremaux-Crouzet (1985) and Ronald Surtz (1990) being chief among them.

² García de Andrés enumerates the various biographies that were published the two centuries after Juana's lifetime and details the process of their formulation and scrutiny. He remarks, however, that all of the subsequent biographies used as a point of departure Sor María Evangelista's *Vida y fin*. See “Juana de la Cruz: Párroco y predicadora”, pp 17-68. Boon likewise summarizes these works in “Introduction: The Other Voice”, p. 1 in n.1.

collection contains seventy-two visionary sermons (a liturgical year's worth) delivered by Juana to an audience convinced that it was hearing the voice of Jesus spoken through his beloved servant "Juanica"—"una religiosa elevada en contemplación" (*Conhorte* vol. I: 227).³

The authorship and authenticity of these semi-autobiographical works is difficult to ascertain. The only existent copy of the *Vida y fin de la bienaventurada virgen santa Juana de la Cruz* is currently housed in El Escorial.⁴ However, it does not provide clearly verifiable dates, but rather unfolds the supernatural world of Juana's visions for the reader. What *Vida y fin* makes evident, however, is that Juana's contemporaries were convinced of her sanctity and thought her voice to be divinely inspired.⁵ Her popular sobriquet says it all: La Santa Juana.⁶

The lives of saints may be behind this lack of clarity. The lives of saints, or those who would be saints, followed a set format that is repeated in nearly all vitae. We can trace those

³ After experiencing her first rapture at the age of twenty-five, frequent visions characterized Juana's life and became the source of her sermons (Triviño 1999, 68-9).

⁴ Henceforth referred to as *Vida y fin*. This work was recently transcribed by María Luengo Balbás (2016) in her doctoral dissertation: see pp. 327–556. García de Andrés notes that it is most likely not the original *Vida y fin* because of the references to specific pagination in Daza's and Navarro's subsequent biographies. Ibid: pp. 17-19. Boon summarizes the aforementioned works in her "Introduction" to *Mother Juana de la Cruz: Visionary Sermons* (2016), p. 2.

⁵ See Ronald Surtz *Guitar of God* (1990) in which he discusses at length the authorizing rhetoric of Juana's sermons and the trope of claiming that she was merely the mouthpiece of God. See also Boon (2016), p. 2 note 4.

⁶ Though she was lauded as a saint, her canonization process has yet to be brought to fruition. Despite her lack of official recognition within the Catholic Church, this seemed little hindrance to famous individuals, like Tirso de Molina who penned the hagiographic trilogy, *La Santa Juana* (1613-14), that celebrates Juana's sainthood. García Andrés traces in detail the three phases of her canonization process in his "Introduction" at pp. 139-48.

hagiographical patterns within *Viday y fin*.⁷ Caroline Walker Bynum writes: “[...] women’s vitae in the later Middle Ages were even more stereotypical than male vitae. In part this is because women’s lives were in fact less diverse and because women often learned patterns of piety from one another. [...] Thus women’s *vitae* and their daily lives often borrowed patterns from each other” (1987, 83-84).

In the case of Juana, her semi-autobiography was dictated in part by one of her nuns, Sor María Evangelista, whose creative written powers are questionable. Fray Antonio Daza in the “Prólogo al lector” to his 1610 edition of Juana’s biography (*Historia, vida y milagros, éxtasis y revelaciones de la bienaventurada virgen santa Juana de la Cruz*) writes that Sor María Evangelista was illiterate but was inspired by divine intervention not only to speak about Juana but also to reproduce her visions. One of the most famous accounts found within *Vida y fin* recounts God’s changing Juana from male to female within the womb in order that Juana might be Mother Mary’s chosen vessel to revive her fledgling convent in Cubas.⁸ The work concludes with Juana’s burial and the miracles that accompanied it.⁹

The *Libro de la casa* dates to the latter half of the sixteenth century and contains records of several of Juana’s visions, an auto (“Primer Auto de la Asunción de la Virgen”), and an

⁷ For example, with regard to Juana’s fleeing from her convent in male attire, Surtz points out that the “motifs of familial opposition and escape in male attire are traditional hagiographic formulas” (1990, 10).

⁸ *Vida y fin*, fols. 1v-3r.

⁹ See García Andrés “Introducción” (1999, 18-54) for a more modern account of her life. See also Boon’s “Introduction: The Other Voice” (2016, 1-33) for the most recent summary of Juana’s works and their authorship.

account of some of the devotional practices within the convent that were instigated by Juana.¹⁰

There are a number of parallel accounts within both semiautobiographical works. The content of *Libro de la casa* is comprised primarily of “Marian miracles that confirmed Juana as Mary’s delegate within her convent even before she became Christ’s voice to audiences within and without” (Boon 2016, 18). Although it is Christ’s voice that flows from Juana’s mouth, it is ultimately the Virgin Mary that forms the bedrock of Juana’s authority and theology.

The balance of the introduction to *Fabricating Religion* progresses in stages: first, it situates Juana's life within the broader scope of Cisnerian spirituality under the Catholic Monarchs and distinguishes the study from others who have treated Juana and *El Conhorte*. Then, it defines its methodology and the importance of the Pauline dress metaphor as a precedent for the sermons. It also explains such terms as “materiality,” “visionary experience,” “mysticism,” “theology,” “orthodoxy,” etc., before briefly describing the content of the monograph's chapters.

Mother Juana de la Cruz (1481-1534)

Due to the hagiographic nature of the information contained in the three works that circulate under Juana’s name, and yet were not written by her, it is difficult to deduce the actual chronological development of her lifetime. However, there are several key moments highlighted. Around the year 1497, the young 15-year-old Juana, disguised in male attire, fled to the doors of

¹⁰ I am grateful for the recent electronic transcription of *Libro de la Casa* by María Victoria Curto on the recently created website, visionarias.es. The work may be found under the “Vida impresa” section of “Catálogo de santas vivas,” at catalogodesantasvivas.visionarias.es; all of my citations come from this transcription.

the Franciscan convent of Santa María de la Cruz de Cubas.¹¹ In 1508, she was granted permission to preach publicly and in 1509, she was elected “abbess” and remained as such until her death on May 3rd, 1534.¹²

As Surtz notes, Juana’s arrival to the convent coincides with the regularization of the convent of Santa María de la Cruz within the broader scope of the monastic reformations led by Cardinal Cisneros (1990, 3). Late fifteenth- early sixteenth-century Spain saw a resurgence in the number of *beatas*,¹³

women who had made a simple (i.e. private) vow of chastity, wore a habit, observed a religious rule of some kind (whether temporarily or permanently), and lived alone or cloistered with others. However, they were usually under diocesan supervision and not subject to religious order, even if they adopted its habit and rule [...]. Permanent members of formal communities of third-order Franciscan women were also called *beatas*. (Christian 1981, 16-17)

One *beata* in particular, Inés Martínez, was instrumental in establishing the convent of Santa María de la Cruz.¹⁴ Due to a series of very well documented apparitions of the Virgin Mary to

¹¹ García de Andrés’ timeline of Juana’s life situates Juana’s profession into the convent in the year 1486 (1999, 64). Boon states that his dates are most likely a decade off; meaning that Juana professed in 1497, when she was roughly 15 years of age. See Boon (2016), p 3 n. 12.

¹² Her contemporaries referred to her as “abbess,” but Boon distinguishes that “[t]echnically only the head of a Benedictine convent is accorded the title of abbess” (2011, 243). For more on her position as abbess see María del Mar Cortés Timoner (2004), 13-15.

¹³ See Chapter 5 “Local Religion: Variations, Alternatives, and Reform” in William A. Christian (1981a), 170-71.

¹⁴ For further discussion on the foundation of the convent of Santa María de la Cruz in Cubas (Madrid) see William A. Christian (1981b), 57-87.

Inés, the convent was established in 1449, supposedly at the request of the Virgin herself.¹⁵ More is known about these apparitions in Cubas than about any other Spanish apparitions up until the twentieth century (Christian 1981, 57). What is interesting about these detailed testimonials regarding Inés is the importance placed on her ability to describe the garb of the Virgin Mary. One account from the diocesan investigation on April 23, 1449 reads:

Asked if the lady wore a crown on her head, she said she did not see. Asked what she wore on her head, and what clothes she wore, she said that she saw her face was shining, and that she wore something like a skirt (*saya*) and that it was white as snow, and a coif on her head. Asked if the coif was white, she said that no, that everything seemed like gold, the coif and the skirt. Asked if she wore a belt, she said she did not see it. Asked if she wore jewels on her hands, she said she did not see them, but that her hands were white as snow. Asked if she wore clogs, she said no, she wore golden slippers. Asked if the slippers had points, she said she thinks they were without points [...] Asked by the judges what clothes the Virgin Mary wore on that Tuesday, she said she saw her the same that day as the day before. Asked if the Virgin Mary wore an overskirt [or train—*falda*], she said no, that the skirt (*saya*) was rounded. (1981, 67-68)

The questioning reveals the importance placed on dress in accounts of Inés's visions. In fact, the veracity of them was cross-referenced with the descriptions of other eyewitnesses (Christian 1981, 72), and it is noteworthy that they all shared similar ideas about what the Virgin should

¹⁵ In March 1449, over the course of seventeen days, the Virgin Mary appeared to Inés six times (Christian 1981, 59-60).

look like and the type of clothing she should wear. It is clear that these views were impressed upon people accustomed to ornate religious iconography.¹⁶

However, it was not until 1464 that a group of uncloistered *beatas* that included Inés moved into the nunnery of Santa María de la Cruz adjacent to the site of the apparitions of the Virgin. As Christian notes, the *beatas*: “supported themselves by weaving and by begging in neighboring villages. They watched over their own animals. Individual or collective, non-binding, retirement was common throughout New Castile until the end of the sixteenth century” and such arrangements afforded poorer women the opportunity of pursuing religious life without a dowry (1981, 86).

This initial group of Third Order Franciscan *beatas* was eventually disbanded, when most of the women sought marriage and renounced their vows of chastity. Interestingly, Juana de la Cruz was the catalyst in reestablishing and reforming the convent of Santa María de la Cruz some twenty years later—as she drew evermore pilgrims interested in hearing her supernatural revelations. Juana then came to supplant Inés Martínez’s status as founder of the religious foundation, which is even now popularly referred to as the convent of “Santa Juana” (Christian 1981, 87).

After Juana’s death in 1534, the sermons of *El Conhorte* received some attention. A man identified as Ortiz wrote in the margins of its manuscript¹⁷ and it passed through other hands, including some officials of the Inquisition, who examined its orthodoxy. This initial concern appears to have halted around 1567-68, after Father Francisco de Torres wrote in support of

¹⁶ There is a great deal of literature on this topic. For several key works in recent years see: Susan Webster (2004); Catherine Oakes (2008) and Cynthia Robinson (2013).

¹⁷ See Surtz in *Guitar of God* at p. 8, specifically n. 34 and n. 35.

Juana's visionary homilies.¹⁸ In the seventeenth century, the aforementioned biographies by Daza and Navarro surfaced and reinvigorated the public's interest in her, culminating in Tirso de Molina's hagiographical trilogy, *La Santa Juana* (1613-14).¹⁹ It coincided with a beatification process that was initiated in Rome but was derailed by Martín de Esparza Artieda (1606-89) and Giovanni Bona (1609-74), who found Juana's life and work lacking in the qualities needed of someone about to be beatified.²⁰ In 1672, José Cappons wrote *Brevis Satisfactio* in her defense but to no avail.²¹

Mariology and Cisnerian Spirituality under the Catholic Monarchs

We cannot understand Juana and her visions without looking at how Marian devotion developed under Queen Isabel I of Castile.²² At the end of the fifteenth century, Spain was in a

¹⁸ See Annie Fremaux-Crouzet's "Alegato en favor de 'las muerjeres e idiotas': aspectos del franciscanismo feminist en la *Glosa* de Francisco de Torres a *El Conhorte* (1567-1668) de Juana de la Cruz" (1985). See also Surtz *Guitar of God* (1990) at p. 9 and p. 13.

¹⁹ See my previous note 4 regarding Juana's biographies. For an interesting discussion on the interplay of hysteria, sexuality and religiosity within this drama see Matthew Stroud (1996), 144-61. For a more recent study on the spatial elements of the drama see Isabel Ibáñez (2015). García Andrés also mentions two more Golden Age dramas that centered around Juana: *La Luna de la Sagra y Vida de Santa Juana de la Cruz* (1664) by Francisco Bernaldo de Quirós and *El Prodigio de la Sagra, Sor Juana de la Cruz* (1723) by José de Cañizares ("Introducción" 223).

²⁰ Esparza and Bona's negative reports were submitted to the Congregation of Sacred Rites on August 13, 1667. See Surtz *Guitar of God* p. 8 and p. 13. For the original record of the beatification proceedings see *Sacra Rituum Congregatione [...] Beatificationis, & Canonizationis Ven. Servae Dei Joannae De Cruce* (Rome: Typis Reverendae Camerae Apostolicae 1731), p. 4.

²¹ García Andrés delineates the details of the stop-and-go nature of Juana's beatification process in "Instrucción" at p. 67-8; ultimately her case was reopened in 1985 and has yet to come to fruition.

²² Queen Isabel I provides the most concrete example of the employment of Marian theology to substantiate her role as queen. As Peggy Liss mentions, Isabel and her publicists "did play on

state of heightened religious fervor characterized by the birth of the Inquisition, the conclusion of the Reconquest, the expulsion of the Jews, and the reform of the religious orders under Cardinal Francisco Jiménez de Cisneros.²³ The latter's support of visionary activity led to a half-century of openness to a variety of expressions of spirituality that were principally tied to women (Boon 2010, 127; Sáinz Rodríguez 35).²⁴ The cardinal intended to reinvigorate and reform every aspect

several aspect of Holy Mary” (121). Although a number of her admirers likened her to other salient female figures in the Bible, such as Queen Esther and judge Deborah, these figures paled in comparison to the potent and multi-purposeful image of Mary (Liss 121). According to Marian theology, Mary is the answer to Eve. As Moholy states “since Eve cooperated in the fall of man, so the Virgin Mother plays the supporting role in the restoration” (152). From the onset of her reign, Isabel aspired to mirror these redeeming qualities of the Virgin, hoping to purify the political community by constructing her self-image through the lens of the Holy Scripture. In this manner, Queen Isabel was able to validate her authority and assert herself as a ‘redeeming’ figure akin to the Virgin Mary.

²³ For a recent overview of the period see Pablo Maroto, Daniel de (2012), at, pp. 46-47 and pp. 71-100. For further examination of Cisneros’s reforms see Pedro Sáinz Rodríguez’s classic study *La siembra mística del cardenal Cisneros y las reformas en la Iglesia* (1979). See also, Alvar Gómez de Castro “Libro Segundo: Actividades Varias del Cardenal” in *Las Hazañas de Francisco Jiménez de Cisneros* (1984), and Erika Rummel *Jiménez de Cisneros: On the Threshold of Spain’s Golden Age* (1999).

²⁴ “The mysticism of such visionaries embodied the kind of nonintellectual and noninstitutional mediation between God and humankind in which women were traditionally allowed to participate. [...] The phenomenon of the visionaries would seem to correspond to the needs of those believers who, dissatisfied with the traditional system of mediation with the divine provided by the ecclesiastical hierarchy, sought a more direct way of contacting the supernatural” (Surtz 1990, 2).

of Spanish society under the banner of Catholicism, and in particular,²⁵ his own Franciscan Order in which Juana professed in 1497.²⁶

Graña Cid, while dividing the development of feminine religious experience into periods, agrees that the most active of these corresponds to 1475-1510,²⁷ the reign of the Catholic Monarchs:

se desarrolló un período que, iniciado con la reforma promovida por los Reyes Católicos e implantada por Cisneros, coincidió con el triunfo definitivo de las observancias en las distintas religiosas. Significó la culminación del proceso de institucionalización, con disminución drástica y reorientación de los espacios laicos. (Graña Cid 2010, 31)

She further discusses the influence of the monarch's religious reforms and even addresses their specific impact on the Franciscan Order (292-94). Jane Tar (2008), in contrast, concentrates on the tense relationship between the Spanish Inquisition and visionary nuns such as Sor Magdalena de la Cruz of Córdoba (1487-1560), Madre Luisa de la Ascensión (1565-1635) and Sor Ana María de San José (1581-1632). Tar believes that "[...] from a feminist perspective, there are clearly transgressive components to early modern Spanish Franciscan nuns' supernatural

²⁵ Put quite frankly, the "monarchy in the late fifteenth century had become identified with Catholicism" (Christian 1981, 154). And thus there was a sense of collective or corporate religiosity that was fueled by the monarchs and their subsequent rulers. For more on the Catholic Monarch's societal and religious reforms and programs, see also, Vicente Cárcel Ortí (2003) at pp. 152-167.

²⁶ See Juan Meseguer Fernández (1959) and García Oro (1971) at p. 172. For a brief overview of the monarch's push to reform all Conventual Franciscans to Observant Franciscans see Erika Rummel (1999) at pp. 18-20 and Steven E. Turley (2014) at pp. 18-20.

²⁷ See Ronald Surtz's "The Reciprocal Construction of Isabelline Book Patronage" (2008). Surtz traces the pro-feminine and Marian thrust of Isabel's literary interests, particularly within the texts she commissioned. He conjectures that her interest, for example, in the *Vita Christi* was due in large part to its intense devotion to the Virgin Mary (68).

journeys” (292) and notes that it is not until the late 1520’s that the Spanish Inquisition vigorously begins persecuting suspected Lutherans and “alumbrados”— curtailing the relative religious openness toward mystical experience of Queen Isabel and Cardinal Cisneros (263).

One cannot underestimate the influence of Cisneros during the reign of the Catholic Monarchs;²⁸ yet his powerful influence on the spirituality of Spain was also due in large part to his book patronage, most particularly the commissioning of the first Polyglot Bible (ca. 1517-20)²⁹ and of female spiritual vitae. Boon notes that:

In addition to publishing translation of Angela of Foligno and Catherine of Siena, Cisneros’s interests in women’s visionary experience was sufficiently important for him to offer explicit protection, putting him firmly on one side of the long-standing debate as to whether visionary experience was a trustworthy mode of accessing the divine. (2016, 11)

Elizabeth Howe likewise marks Cisneros’ death as the end of an era of such openness for female religious experience:

Presumably, Cisneros was aware of the existence of the *Conorte*, but during 1509 when the sermons were being transcribed he was in Oran on a military expedition. After his return, he was in communication with Juana concerning the exercise of her abbatial powers. [...] Clearly, after Cisneros’ death in 1517, the Holy Office began to take a

²⁸ Several key works on Cisneros’ influence include: José de García Oro *La reforma de los religiosos españoles en tiempo de los reyes católicos* (1969) and *El Cardenal Cisneros: Vida y Empresas* (1992-1993).

²⁹ See Boon (2016) at p. 9. Also, Howe (2002) notes “Cisneros not only manifested his interest in reform through his patronage of publishing but also in his attraction to affective spirituality, especially as practiced by the nuns of his archdiocese” (284). For a more in-depth study of women’s education, to include nuns like Juana, see Elizabeth Howe (2008).

harder line with all visionaries, especially women, whom they condemned as
“alumbrados.” (2002, 288)

We should not view Cisneros’ powerful political position and interest in feminine spirituality as accidental. There is no doubt that the reality of a female sovereign instigated a collective male anxiety (Surtz 2002, 270) and that Cisneros’ appointment was a strategic means of further surrounding Queen Isabel with people who would propagate her image as akin to that of the Virgin Mary (Liss 2005, 121).

Fray Ambrosio Montesino, a confessor and poet of the Catholic Monarchs, and a key proponent of the Marian cult,³⁰ was integral to the creation of a new branch of Franciscan nuns dedicated to the Immaculate Conception, or “concepcionistas,” by preparing the *Breviarium secundum ordinem Inmaculatae Conceptionis Virginis genitricis Dei Mariae* (1484) to help standardize their observance of the Canonical Hours (Calvo Moralejo 256, 261-64).³¹ His own preaching abounded in “temas sobre la Virgen, la insistencia en promover su devoción, la piedad y unción, verdaderamente franciscana” and rightfully earned him the title “predicador mariano” (Calvo Moralejo 266).

The Marian warp and woof of Franciscan spirituality undoubtedly shaped Juana’s own spiritual formation. She is a product of regularizing and reforming efforts of Cisneros that had at its core several key components: first, an emphasis on proper theological training for clergy,

³⁰ A devote follower of the Virgin Mary, Fray Ambrosio de Montesino lived in the shadow of Cisneros’ reforms as “el predicador y poeta franciscano de la Corte de los Reyes Católicos” (Calvo Moralejo 264). His sermons and poetry exuded Marian devotion, and he received enthusiastic support from Queen Isabel I.

³¹ Juana’s convent pertained to the Regular Third Order of Saint Francis. For a brief summary on the structure and distinctives of this Order see Tarsicio de Azcona (1982a, 1982b). For a more in-depth study of development of the Franciscan Order see Regis J. Armstrong (2010), especially pp. 105-21, and also Manuel Jiménez (2008) especially pp. 26-33.

most notably achieved in his establishment of the first theological university, Alcalá de Henares, and the commissioning the first Polyglot Bible; second, the establishment of a printing press in Alcalá which distributed devotional materials to the laity and the monastic orders (among them Juana's own Franciscan Order); and third, his own special interest in visionary experiences.³² The conflation of these factors is evident in Juana's life and her sermons.

Critical Literature on Mother Juana

Before defining what I mean by a "material" and "theological" approaches, I want to first briefly survey the criticism concerning Juana and her work. Inocente García de Andrés' edition (1999) of *El Conhorte*, which includes an extensive introduction to Juana and her time, was only published within the last 20 years. Prior to this edition, very few scholars had given the work critical attention. Most prominent among these were Annie Fremaux-Crouzet (1985) and Ronald Surtz (1990). Fremaux-Crouzet wrote one of the first articles on Juana, which examines her through the lens of Torres' comment in the margins of *El Conhorte* and ultimately gives credence to the fact that she had been granted the task of preaching which was normally reserved to men. Ronald Surtz wrote the only full-length English monograph entirely devoted to Santa Juana de la Cruz, *The Guitar of God: Gender, Power, and Authority in the Visionary World of Mother Juana de la Cruz* (1990). It analyzes the connection to gender and authority of several of the sermons in *El Conhorte*. Since then, Mary E. Giles' (1996) and others have looked at the

³² For Cisneros' educational reforms see "Cisneros Reformador" in Pérez, Joseph (2014) at pp. 209-54. For the commissioning of the Polyglot Bible see the aforementioned source at pp. 234-39 and Boon's "Introduction" (2016) at p. 9. For further reading on the devotional materials propagated by Cisneros' printing press see Anthony Levi (2004) and Elizabeth Howe (2008). For Cisneros' interest in visionary experience see Pedro Sáinz Rodríguez (1979), especially at p. 35-36.

discursive elements that put Juana in dialogue with María de Santo Domingo; María Victoria Triviño (1999, 2004) has provided a biographical and hagiographical compilation on Juana's life, although she did not analyze Juana's sermons in themselves until a more recent article (2004) in which she examines several literary art forms (*coplas*, poems and *autos sacramentales*) within Juana's *El Conhorte*; Daniel de Pablo Maroto (2001) has placed Juana within the *querelle des femmes* and, like Surtz (1995), made comparisons to Teresa de Cartagena and Isabel de Villena; and María del Mar Cortés Timoner (2004, 2015) has expanded an initial biographical study on Juana's life to include a broader comparison to four other women: Leonor López de Córdoba, Constanza de Castilla, Teresa de Cartagena and María de Santo Domingo; Rebeca Sanmartín Bastida (2012, 2015, 2016) has worked extensively on the mystics contemporary to Juana and has explored the genre of visionary experience and its relation to theatrical performance (2012). She expanded this aspect in a recent article (2016) on "género performativo" in Juana and María de Santo Domingo's visions.³³ In addition, there are a handful of biographies and some two-dozen articles and chapters written on Juana or her works.³⁴

Only a small subset of these scholars have focused on the literary devices and techniques employed by Juana.³⁵ Most important among them is Surtz monograph, who considers Juana's

³³ In *La comida visionaria: Formas de alimentación en el discurso carismático femenino del siglo XVI* (2015) she takes Bynum's seminal *Holy Feast, Holy Fast* (1987) and applies Bynum's methodology to Juana, along with Teresa de Avila and María Vela y Cueto.

³⁴ See for example: Inocente García de Andrés (1999) and Triviño, María Victoria (1999). See also, Pablo Maroto, Daniel (2001) and Cortés Timoner, María del Mar (2004). Muñoz Fernández, Ángela (2012, 2014) has drawn a connection between Juana's descriptions of purgatory and El Tostados's *Çinco figuratas paradoxas* (c. 1437) and has also examined Juana's sermon on Santa Ana (2014) and traced a feminine lineage to Jesus, thus demonstrating, yet again, the predominance of gender in scholarly approaches toward Juana's life and works.

³⁵ For an annotated bibliography on Juana that was recently updated in 2017 see Boon, "Mother Juana de la Cruz," in *Oxford Bibliographies in Renaissance and Reformation*, ed. Margaret L.

sermons as creating a subtly subversive work that elevates the role of the feminine and furthers a more feminist theological agenda (1990, 21). Jessica Boon's contributions to the scholarship on *El Conhorte* have also centered on the theological aspects of Juana's sermons. Her most recent article, "At the Limits of (Trans) Gender: Jesus, Mary, and the Angels in the Visionary Sermons of Juana de la Cruz" (2018), problematizes traditional gender binaries and explores the fluidity of the gender continuum of Juana's celestial visions and in her personal life. Like Surtz, her interpretive lens often references gender as the foundational touchstone of Juana's mystical experience, but it goes on to explore how the inextricable relationship between Juana's Christology and Mariology in many cases favors the latter.³⁶ In 2016, she, Ronald Surtz and Nora Weinerth collaborated on the first-ever English translation of six of Juana's seventy-two sermons. This dissertation seeks to be among the first in-depth literary studies to explore the sermons themselves.

There is a "subtly subversive" nature to *El Conhorte* that elevates the role of the feminine and furthers a more "feminist agenda" (Surtz 1990, 21). However, while I agree with this view, I do not filter my analysis of *El Conhorte* through a feminist lens. Gender is not the primary focus

King (New York: Oxford UP), doi.org. In addition to the previously discussed monographs and articles by Boon and Surtz, several of the most notable literary studies are: Graña Cid, María del Mar "Terciarias franciscanas, Apostolado y Ministerios: Juana de la Cruz y el sacerdocio feminine" (2005) and "La feminidad de Jesucristo y sus implicaciones eclesiales en la predicación mística de Juana de la Cruz (Sobre la Prerreforma y la *Querrela de las Mujeres* en Castilla)" (2009).

³⁶ For further reading see Boon (2011, 2012). Boon's conclusions are in dialogue with María del Mar Cortés Timoner's *Sor Juana de la Cruz* (2004). Cortés Timoner sees *El Conhorte* as primarily Christological. She states that Juana's constant use of "Dijo el Señor" (or any variation of the like) is evidence that Christ is the fundamental component of Juana's theology. I agree with Boon, that within Juana's theology, Mary is actually more prominent than Christ.

of my work.³⁷ I aim to examine how Juana's use of sartorial imagery was shaped by her spiritual formation, the material religious practices of the period, and the connection between her mystical experiences the theological beliefs of her time.

Methodology: A Material and Theological Approach

Scholars have approached mystical texts like Juana's through a myriad of interpretive lenses. However, several overarching trends have emerged: gender, feminist, postcolonial or poststructuralist, and cultural studies, or an interdisciplinary amalgamation of these methodologies.³⁸ Informing my methodology is Caroline Walker Bynum's understanding of material orthopraxy of medieval Christianity as expressed in *Christian Materiality* (2011).³⁹

³⁷ For example, Surtz does briefly analyze the image of the Virgin Mary's "manto," one of the sartorial images that will feature prominently in Chapter 5 of my dissertation. However, he analyzes the connection between the "manto" and the wings of a mother hen, once again seeking to highlight Juana's emphasis on the feminine/maternal. See *Guitar of God*, pp. 37-62. In contrast, I want to ground this sartorial image in the cultural religious practice of the time with the "imagen de vestir" and the developing doctrinal significance of Mary's usurping Christ's role as intercessor and Mother of Mercy. Triviño also likens Juana's use of the "manto" to the image of a mother hen guarding her baby chicks: "Esta imagen protectora de la Santa Virgen, que cubre con su manto a los que acogen a ella como la madre guarda a su niño, como la gallina y sus pollitos, encontró en la iconografía expresiones muy bellas" (207).

³⁸ Scholars such as Cynthia Robinson (2013) and Amy Hollywood (2002) have problematized oft-accepted generalizations of marginalized voices—namely those of females or religious minorities. Robinson's *Imagining the Passion in a Multiconfessional Castile: The Virgin, Christ, Devotions, and Images in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries* (2013) is a perfect example an interdisciplinary approach that analyzes religious devotional practice, iconographic and textual production of the time period prior to Juana's *El Conhorte*. She see observes the visual and cultural dialogue between Islamic and Catholic religious practice. Hollywood's *Sensible Ecstasy: Mysticism, Sexual Difference, and the Demands of History* (2002) analyzes how mystical writers like Angela of Foligno, Hadewijch, and Teresa of Avila have attracted the attention of many 21st-century scholars by opening up a wide array of interpretations on subjectivity, marginality and sexual difference. Using Lacan's theories of fetishism Hollywood remarks of hagiographic depictions of female mystics in the following manner: "By ventriloquizing their own hysteria through women's bodies, hagiographers created woman's body as a fetish [...]. Fetishism, then, emerges here as the masculine correlate to hysteria" (247). Her interpretation typifies the trend

Bynum breaks the mold of interpreting visionary/religious experience through the two-dimensional lens of optics or ekphrasis.⁴⁰ She remarks,

[...] descriptions of visions are filled with concrete objects. Especially in the accounts of visionary women, the holy and the other is not only understood and imaged but also mediated through what we moderns would call inanimate things. Thus, these visions, so often used by recent critics as evidence or examples of medieval theories of seeing (in the sense of optics) or of the visual, are in fact textual in form and material in content. (2011, 41)

Throughout, she directs most of her attention to altarpieces, relics, and other devotional objects.⁴¹ Her discussions widely reflect what must have been the visual experiences around which Juana structured her sermons. They are laced with verbal descriptions of sumptuous material objects

within recent scholarship to engage with mystical texts—particularly those of females—with the aim of problematizing established structures of gender and power.

³⁹ There is a vast corpus of scholarly work on the philosophical and phenomenological understanding of “materiality.” I will not engage directly with these approaches to materiality, however I include here an extremely consolidated overview of the seminal works on this topic: Raymond Williams (1958); Pierre Bourdieu (1977); Anthony Giddens (1981); Michel de Certeau (1984); Jacques Derrida (1984); Žižek, Slavoj (1991); Jean Baudrillard (1996); Bill Brown (2001); Ileana Baird and Christina Ionescu (2013).

⁴⁰ A perfect example of this approach is the recent compilation *The Art of Vision: Ekphrasis in Medieval Literature and Culture* (2015) edited by Andrew J. Johnston, Ethan Knapp and Margitta Rouse. The essays in this compilation deal with the text-image relationship and offer a less rigid understanding of ekphrastic interpretation: “situat[ing] ekphrasis in the contexts of contemporary medieval debates in order to demonstrate how [...] ekphrasis responds to a plethora of challenges, ranging from Lollard iconophobia to the problem of the gaze in aristocratic culture, from the visionary experience of medieval mysticism to the issue of the materiality of the aesthetic object in ecclesiastical and secular cultures alike, or to the question of visual art as a form of signification that probes the very boundaries of the signifying process itself” (7). The essays in this compilation rely heavily on modern theories of gazing, sign/signifier, and the like.

⁴¹ Only one brief subsection of Chapter 4 (“Matter and Miracles”) is dedicated to clothing.

(clothing, gloves, crowns, jewels, and the like). One is left to ponder: what is their function? Lesley K. Twomey's work, *The Fabric of Marian Devotion in Isabel de Villena's Vita Christi* (2013), has masterfully answered this exact question in regard to Isabel de Villena (1430-90). Twomey analyzes the materiality of Isabel's *Vita Christi* and teases out its religious and cultural significance.

I likewise believe that there is an undergirding, historical religious practice at the root of Juana's allusions to material objects within her *sermones*. Religious experience was, and arguably still is, intimately connected with devotional objects intended to awaken within the heart of the devotee a deeper meditation and love for the immaterial divine. As Bynum remarks:

when medieval craftsman dressed the Madonna, they were apt to paste brocade or leather on her statue rather than creating the illusion of cloth through paint. Such deliberate and sophisticated use of materials makes a theological and devotional point and compels a reaction: the gorgeously robed lady is queen of heaven. The physicality we encounter in devotional objects (often in their combination of colors, depth of relief, textures, and materials) reflects and results from the fact that they are not so much naturalistic (that is, mimetic) depictions as disclosures of the sacred through material substance. (2011, 38-41)

Juana's personal religious experience was undoubtedly shaped by the materiality so prevalent in the religiosity of the period.⁴² It is no wonder that she constructs—indeed, fabricates—her visions through material elements and, most noticeably, through clothing. In Juana, clothing functions as a “disclosure of the sacred” and of her own personal theological interpretations. As

⁴² In reference to statues of saints, Bynum remarks: “The power lies in its representation of (in the sense of standing for or conveying) the holy person. And such representation is signaled by an object” (2011, 61).

tangible objects and verbal descriptions, they both convey deeper religious truths that were not always completely orthodox, yet were deeply ingrained within the period.⁴³

Juana's position as a preacher—or at the very least a mystic who disseminated theological teachings to a listening audience—is unique. Preaching and teaching were offices almost exclusively held by men; which is why the undergirding theological messages of Juana are of great importance. Her sermons were not universally applauded, because “[l]a predicación no deja de ser una función sacerdotal y por lo tanto masculina [...]” (García Andrés 81). As a preacher Juana usurps a role almost exclusively reserved for men. The *Vida y fin* describes the effects of her raptures on a varied audience, which the account goes on to say, sometimes lasted up to six or seven hours:⁴⁴

Oíanla frailes de todas órdenes, predicadores y letrados, canónigos, obispos y arzobispos, el cardenal de España don fray Francisco Ximénez y condes, duques, marqueses, y caballeros muy generosos y señoras, y de todos estados, ansí de hombres como mujeres que este misterio vieron y oyeron, y estuvieron presentes, y veían cómo esta bendita estaba vestida y tocada de religiosa, echada sobre una cama y sus brazos puestos a manera de persona recogida y el cuerpo como muerto (porque estuvo mucho tiempo tullida) y los ojos cerrados y el gesto muy bien puesto, y muy hermoso y resplandeciente. Su habla era tan poderosa y de tan gran doctrina para la salvación de las almas, y reprehensible a los pecadores, que cuantos la veían y oían, por grandes letrados que

⁴³ Surtz provides a brief overview of the differing opinions on Juana's orthodoxy in his introduction to *Guitar of God*; see p. 8 and corresponding notes on p. 13.

⁴⁴ “La cual algunas veces duraba cinco, seis y siete horas. Era tan dulce a todos los que la oían que, aunque fuesen muy pecadores e incrédulos desta santa gracia antes que la viesen y oyesen, les parecía estuvieran tres días con sus noches oyéndola con mucho gusto” (*Vida y fin*, fol. 529).

fuesen, se maravillaban y quisieran estar tan vecinos y cercanos al monasterio que todas las veces que había estas pláticas la pudieran oír. (fol. 528-29)

This description of a sermon in *Vida y fin* reveals several important details. First, her audience at times was composed of both men and women from a variety of religious orders including Cardinal Cisneros; second, her powerfully delivered sermons were meant to be instructive and not just entertaining, “su habla era tan poderosa y de tan gran doctrina para la salvación de las almas.” This implies that in crafting a theology of her own, she was reaching out to malleable souls. Although her sermons did not have much impact on the religious hierarchy or shape the upper echelons of the Franciscan Order—or any order for that matter—she did shape popular thought and one must not overlook her long-term impact.⁴⁵

As Boon aptly observes, Juana's visionary experiences (“*sermones*”) differ drastically from the traditional structure of a medieval sermon (2016, 4).⁴⁶ The tendency to look at Juana’s sermons as merely “visions” “undermines the most distinctive aspect of Juana’s charismatic authority, for it transforms the public performativity of a sermon (and the immediate impact of its liturgical and theological implications) into a traditionally private visionary experience” (Boon 2016, 5). Juana’s visions are not part of traditional sermons yet should not be discounted

⁴⁵ William A. Christian draws a similar conclusion in *Local Religion in Sixteenth-Century Spain* (1981). He envisions two “levels of Catholicism—that of the Church Universal based on the sacraments, the Roman liturgy, and the Roman calendar; and a local one based on particular sacred places, images and relics, locally chosen patron saints, idiosyncratic ceremonies, and a unique calendar build up form the settlement’s own sacred history” (3). What Christian refers to as “local” religion I understand to be synonymous with “popular” religion.

⁴⁶ Bynum, in *Jesus as Mother* (1982), notes a shift in theological emphasis in twelfth-century Europe in which there is a greater emphasis on Christ’s humanity and in conjunction with this shift is an “outburst of mystical theology” that privileged the feminine (1982, 17). For further discussion see Boon’s “Introduction” to *Mother Juana de la Cruz, 1481-1534: Visionary Sermons* (p 4-5).

as merely visions that are lacking in any pedagogical force. The celestial festivities that Juana describes were called *figuras* (pageants or festivals) in which allegorical characters participate, and which are often interpreted by Jesus himself, who refashions many traditional biblical accounts.⁴⁷ Juana undoubtedly sought to give her sermons deeper theological importance through this device.

María de Santo Domingo (c. 1485-1524), popularly known as “La Beata de Piedrahita”, closely resembles Juana’s trances. Her visions have recently been examined by Rebeca Sanmartín Bastida in *La representación de las místicas: Sor María de Santo Domingo en su contexto europeo* (2012),⁴⁸ who coins the term “teatro de trance” to describe both María’s and Juana’s experiences.⁴⁹ Although Juana did not actively participate in the form of sacred *performance*—as her contemporary Sor María often did—, Sanmartín Bastida does suggest that Juana’s less active role within the “teatros de trance” was a means of protecting herself from more intense scrutiny.⁵⁰ However, Boon’s classification of Juana’s sermons as “visionary” best

⁴⁷ One sermon that is examined extensively by Surtz is Sermon LVII in which Jesus/Juana “re-write” the Genesis account of Adam and Eve’s partaking of the forbidden fruit in the Garden of Eden. See *Guitar of God*, pp. 15-35.

⁴⁸ See also Jodi Bilinkoff (1997) for a discussion on Sor María’s influence over powerful figures like Cisneros.

⁴⁹ See her chapter “La palabra y el teatro de trance” (2012, 241-89). She remarks that “la cualidad teatral de los sermones de esta beata [Juana] también se aprecia en las descripciones de los escenarios en los que se desarrolla la acción, llenos de luz, comensales, mesas, manteles, platos y tazas de oro, sillas, música y colorido [...]: lo que se hace tangible es el lugar de la fiesta y del Paraíso” (2012, 284).

⁵⁰ Sanmartín Bastida clearly distinguishes that Juana does not actively participate and dialogue within her own visions, as other mystics did: “Sor Juana se distancia de otras místicas españolas en que no es un personaje testigo ni activo en sus visiones, sino que cumple un rol secundario que la ayudará a salvaguardarse de acusaciones de agenciamiento de autoridad” (2012, 283-84). Of course her conclusions are in keeping with ones previously made by Surtz (1982, 1990).

encapsulates both the mystical and the pedagogical nature of the experience, and is the classification that I have adopted for my present analysis.

In analyzing *El Conhorte*, we must not forget that we are essentially jumping right into the middle of the history of mysticism,⁵¹ but it is not clear what exactly scholars mean when they use the term “mysticism” (Riehle xiii). Terms like “mysticism” or “theology,” for example, are not as easily and universally definable as one would think. Evelyn Underhill’s *Mysticism: A Study in the Nature and Development of Man’s Spiritual Consciousness* (1911) traditionally calls the five phases to all mystical experience Awakening, Purgation of the Self, Illumination, the Dark Night, and Union.⁵² For her mysticism, was “the expression of the innate tendency of the human spirit towards complete harmony with transcendental order, whatever be the theological formula under which that order is understood” (xiv). Underhill’s analysis has been critiqued for its “anti-historical” and “de-contextualized” approach that ultimately catered to her overly generalized conclusions about a “mystical type” and that is distinct from other disciplines, for example, theology and philosophy.⁵³

Regardless, Underhill’s work stands at the forefront of any discussion on mysticism, as it is one of the first attempts to comprehensively articulate what is meant by “mysticism” and most

⁵¹ Bernard McGinn’s seminal work, *The Presence of God: A History of Western Christian Mysticism* (1992), provides one of the most rigorous studies of the development of Christian mysticism, dating its conception back as early as Philo.

⁵² See Underhill, pp. 169-70 for a brief outline.

⁵³ For examples see Von Hügel’s critique in Greene, Dana (1998) at pp. 54–55; McGinn, Bernard (2013), especially at p. 22. McGinn remarks that she “had difficulty expressing the relationship between mysticism and theology” (2013, 22).

scholars have since used her work as a point of departure for their own nuanced definitions.⁵⁴

McGinn explores the interplay between “mysticism” and “theology.” He believes that,

mystical theology is not some form of epiphenomenon, a shell or covering that can be peeled off to reveal the ‘real’ thing. The interactions between conscious acts and their symbolic and theoretical thematizations are much more complex than that [...]. A recognition of the interdependence of experience and interpretation can help avoid some of the false problems evident in scholarship on mysticism. (I: xiv).

Put quite simply, he understands “mysticism” to be the “belief and practices that concern the preparation for, the consciousness of, and the reaction to what can be described as the immediate or direct presence of God” (I: xvii). Thus I am classifying Juana’s visionary sermons as a mystical text (understood as her descriptions of an encounter/consciousness of the presence of God).

But what do I mean by “theology” and why does it matter? What can I gain by examining her use of the sartorial image for its theological significance? In this, I find Helmer’s definition of theology helpful: “Theology has to do with the study of doctrine; and in particular times and places, doctrine has to do with human beings’ experience with divine reality that comes to but

⁵⁴ Of course Underhill’s systemic approach to mystical experience differs little from how prominent mystical figures, like San Juan de la Cruz, had articulated their personal mystical experiences. See San Juan de la Cruz’s *Subida del Monte Carmelo* (c. 1578-1579). Underhill’s work is helpful as informing a scholarly approach toward mystical texts. For a helpful overview of the key theological approaches to mysticism, to include Underhill’s work, see Bernard McGinn, *The Foundations of Mysticism* (1992), vol. I: pp. 266-91; For a discussion on imagery and imaginative mysticism see Nelstrop’s *Christian Mysticism*, specifically chapter 9, “Imaginative Mysticism, Meditation and Experience” (pp. 183-201). Here She discusses the various approaches to imaginative mystical texts, looking specifically at Medieval English texts. For her discussion on interpretation and theology see pp. 196-99. McGinn also provides helpful summaries of “Philosophical Approaches to Mysticism” (vol I: pp. 291-326) and “Comparativist and Psychological Approaches to Mysticism” (vol I: pp. 326-43).

also transcends those temporal and spatial specificities” (2014, 1). It is necessary to briefly parse out the difference between these two interconnected terms—“theology” and “doctrine”—because Juana’s overarching theology, namely her conception of the divine reality, influences her articulations of specific doctrines.⁵⁵ I mention this because, though my focus is the theological significance of clothing, we actually find her theology fleshed out in specific doctrines within her visions; namely, Incarnation, Immaculate Conception, and the like. I believe that analyzing Juana’s articulation of these doctrines reveals an intensely Marian emphasis in her theology, so much so that Mary ultimately becomes the centerpiece of her theology.

There is a trend in scholarship that wrongly assumes a scholastic model of “theology.” As Corbari (2013) says “Theological education in the Middle Ages is often associated with scholasticism and universities; however the study of medieval sermons shows that there was a whole culture of theological education taking place outside the university” (1). Corbari, along with many other religious studies scholars,⁵⁶ have made a helpful distinction between, what we might call, two registers of theology: vernacular and scholastic. For McGinn (1994), “late medieval vernacular theology not only created distinctive theological models, it also produced

⁵⁵ See Christine Helmer (2014). Helmer delineates further distinctions between “theology” and “doctrine” that I will not fully enumerate here. She states that “Theology is a discipline that is at once oriented to the transcendent and thoroughly located in a particular time and place. It arises out of personal needs and social crises but looks beyond them to truth. The theologian’s study is always and necessarily open to the surrounding world, heaven and earth” (2-3). Doctrine, on the other hand, is more intimately connected with the pragmatics of religion and formulating “core beliefs and foundational identity” and as such, “the nature of doctrine inevitably changes as church and academy work out their respective aims and interests in interpreting and formulating doctrine” (5-6). I agree with her conclusions and tether closely to her understanding of these terms.

⁵⁶ See, among others, for example: Corbari (2013), Gillispie (2007), McGinn (1998, 2012), Watson (1995, 2006).

new, and sometimes challenging, insights into the mysteries of the faith” (1994, 7).⁵⁷ Vincent Gillispie adds that the term “allowed a new female vocalization and a fresh examination of gender roles and paradigms of power within theological discourse” (2007, 402).⁵⁸ Nicholas Watson has set forth the most robust examination of “vernacular theology”—opting for it over other popular terms such as “didactic,” “devotional,” or “affective” writing—and has most clearly specified its meaning beyond McGinn’s original inception of the term. His definition is worth quoting in its entirety as it clarifies the boundaries within which I employ the term “theology” throughout my discussion of *El Conhorte*:

First, it [“vernacular theology”] makes possible the comparative discussion of various kinds of vernacular writing that tend to be studied in isolation or in groupings that are sometimes artificial. [...] Second, the word “theology” focuses our attention on the specifically intellectual content of vernacular religious texts that are often treated with condescension (especially in relation to Latin texts), encouraging reflection on the kinds of religious information available to vernacular readers without obliging us to insist on the simplicity or crudity of that information: that is, the term is an attempt to distance scholarship from its habitual adherence to a clerical, Latinate perspective in its dealings with these texts. Third, the term is intended to focus attention on the cultural-linguistic environment in which religious writing happens and to act as a counterweight to the aura

⁵⁷ For more in-depth exploration, especially as it relates to male/female voices, see McGinn’s *The Flowering of Mysticism: Men and Women in the New Mysticism* (1998). For more on his articulation of “vernacular theology” applied to mysticism see *The Varieties of Vernacular Mysticism* (2012).

⁵⁸ Gillispie focuses his analysis on Julian of Norwich, and his assessment of her theology bears striking resemblance to the skill with which Juana interweaves deeper theological truths in *El Conhorte*.

of otherworldliness that often surrounds terms like “devotional,” or indeed “spirituality” itself. (1995, 283-84)

Juana is not a theologian in the scholastic sense, however she is, as I will demonstrate in this dissertation, a theologian in the vernacular sense.⁵⁹

Even more important is the fact that one cannot study mysticism without theology. Mark A. McIntosh in *Mystical Theology: The Integrity of Spirituality and Theology* (1998) warns against such a dangerous divorce: “theology without spirituality becomes ever more methodologically refined but unable to know or speak of the very mysteries at the heart of Christianity, and spirituality without theology becomes rootless, easily hijacked by individualistic consumerism” (10). McIntosh stands on the shoulders of Thomas Melton’s seminal work *Seeds of Contemplation* (1949) in which he states:

Contemplation, far from being opposed to theology, is in fact the normal perfection of theology. We must not separate intellectual study of divinely revealed truth and contemplative experience of that truth as if they could never have anything to do with one another. On the contrary, they are simply two aspects of the same thing. Dogmatic and mystical theology, or theology and “spirituality”, are not to be set apart in mutually exclusive categories. [...] But the two belong together. Unless they are united there is no fervor, no life, and no spiritual value in theology, no substance, no meaning and no sure orientation in the contemplative life. (197-98)

Thus, any proper treatment of *El Conhorte* cannot be anything but a theological approach. We cannot appreciate Juana's visionary experiences without uncovering and examining the

⁵⁹ I will make the distinction throughout this dissertation between official, scholastic theology (which sets forth official dogmas of the universal Catholic Church) and the type of theology that Juana is crafting within her sermons. The dissonance and harmony between these two registers is revealing of Juana’s nuanced articulations of various doctrines.

theological significance of her elaborate and sensory-saturated visions. García Andrés, at the end of his introduction concludes that *El conhorto* is “ortodoxia fuera de toda duda” (216-17). He supports this rather sweeping claim by citing that Juana is a mystic with “una profunda experiencia espiritual” and thus it will always be difficult to truly express her divine revelations (217). Yet such an appeal to the archetypal ineffability of encounters with the divine, completely disregards the aforementioned relationship—and certainly necessary tension—between theology and spirituality. One cannot unreservedly pronounce her sermons “orthodox” without submitting them to theological scrutiny.⁶⁰

The Pauline Dress Metaphor

Juana was not a university-trained theologian, and it would be anachronistic to envision her seated reading a copy of the Bible.⁶¹ Indeed, we can even question the extent to which Juana was herself literate (Surtz 1995, 5).⁶² Nonetheless, we would be remiss not to address sartorial imagery within the Bible, seeing as it has an ancient pedigree within the Judeo-Christian

⁶⁰ My understanding of “orthodoxy,” “heterodoxy” and “heresy” will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis. As I previously mentioned, the nature of doctrine inevitably changes as the church and academy work to formulate and refine their core beliefs. Within each chapter I will evaluate Juana’s orthodoxy in relation to other religious works of the period. Hamilton, Alistair (1992) provides the lay of the land with regard to the term “orthodoxy” under the Inquisition.

⁶¹ Elizabeth Howe (2002) discusses the topic of nuns’ (to include Juana) education. She remarks: “Although women were excluded from higher education by reason of their sex, nevertheless, they gained a modicum of legitimacy by embracing the interiorized spirituality characteristic of the *devotio moderna*” (288).

⁶² Surtz remarks: “Indeed, the degree of literacy of Maria de Santo Domingo and Juana de la Cruz is open to question. Both were probably illiterate or nearly so, and the words pronounced during their mystical ecstasies were taken down by those who witnessed the nuns’ extraordinary experiences” (1995, 5). He goes on to chide modern-day scholars for questioning their authorship as it was a common medieval practice for famous saints, like Saint Jerome and Gregory the Great, to dictate their works.

tradition, the Bible itself being laced from cover to cover with sartorial metaphors.⁶³ The Psalms, in particular, would have informed and shaped the liturgical Books of Hours to which Juana would undoubtedly have been exposed.⁶⁴ There can be little surety regarding what Juana was reading within the convent.

We know that Cisneros sponsored translations of Catherine of Siena (1347-80) and Angela of Foligno (1248-1309). Juana may have had access to these works, but attempts to reconstruct her reading are speculative. For example, Graña Cid (2014) wonders on what works might have been available in the library of Santa María de la Cruz in Cubas and makes connections between Juana's sermons and the work of Hildegard of Bingen (1098-1179) and Mechthild of Magdeburg (1207-1282). Her correlations, although thought provoking, do not prove anything. Pérez García takes a wider approach. He copiously details the publication and proliferation of spiritual literature in *La imprenta y la literatura espiritual castellana en la España del Renacimiento* (2006). He features Ambrosio Montesino's *Epístolas y Evangelios*, Jerome's *Vitas patrum* and Augustine's *Meditaciones*, San Bernardo's *Sermones*, Juan de

⁶³ In Psalm 139, for example, David likens God's craftsmanship in forming the human body to the knitting and weaving of fabric, stating, "you knit me together in my mother's womb [...] I was woven together in the depths of earth." Others include: "For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well. My frame was not hidden from you when I was made in the secret place. When I was woven together in the depths of the earth, your eyes saw my unformed body [...]" (Psalm 139: 13-16). This is an image evoked throughout the Old and New Testament. See Job 8:22; 29:14, 40:10; Psalm 109:18-19; 35:26; 45:3; 73:6; 104:1-2; 132:9,16,18; Proverbs 31:25; Isaiah 59:17; 61:3,10; Ezekiel 7:27; 26:16; 31:15; Zechariah 6:13; Luke 24:19; Romans 13:14; 1 Corinthians 15:53-54; Galatians 3:27; Colossians 3:12; 1 Peter 5:5.

⁶⁴ Twomey (2013) notes that "Devotions which adapt psalms and canticles into Marian prayers are found in various fifteenth-century manuscripts in the Peninsula" (222). Thus books of hours and devotional prayers sung at vespers would have been heavily influenced by the Psalms. For an overview of the development of the Franciscan liturgy of Hours see *Franciscans at Prayer* (2007) at pp. 385-474.

Padilla's *Retablo de la vida de Cristo*.⁶⁵ Reconstructing the Cubas library is perhaps best done by approaching it from this angle, rather than making correlations with other female mystics and automatically assuming some sort of causality.

Regardless of the exact sources Juana was reading, foundational to all of these would have been the biblical narrative, thus we must turn our attention to the Garden of Eden wherein we encounter the naked fleshly bodies of Adam and Eve (Seidel 225). Their nakedness recalls the natural state of harmony with God—a state devoid of shame when the unblemished nude perfectly reflected God's own image. Their sin and expulsion from Paradise prompts their shame and makes them cover their nakedness with fig leaves (Genesis 3:7). God himself then provides them with "garments of flesh" (Genesis 3:21).⁶⁶

This irruption of shame in the world produced a dichotomy in the perception of the human body or, as Patricia Dailey (2013) calls it, "two anthropological registers" that reflected "the inner and the outer persons" (2). Since the expulsion, man's plight has been to restore this

⁶⁵ For a more extensive list of works in circulation during Juana's lifetime see Pérez García (2006) at pp. 218-32.

⁶⁶ In *Saving Shame* (2008), Virginia Burrus examines the "cultural legacy of shame conveyed by ancient Christian literatures of martyrdom, and asceticism, Christology and confession" (5). For an in-depth look at what Burrus names the "embarrassment of the flesh" see Chapter 2 (44). Concerning God's crafting garments "of skin" for Adam and Eve, Kim (2004) notes: "The genitive 'of skin' also reinforces our interpretation, because a skin presupposes the sacrifice of a living being. Investiture with a garment of skin may be regarded as being clothed with the life of the sacrificed creature. As far as Adam's being clothed (3.21) signals his restoration to the original life which is hinted at in Gen. 2.7, it can further signal his restoration to his original kingship; in light of the motif of movement from dust to kingship in 1 Sam. 2.6-8, 1 Kgs. 16.2 and Ps. 113.7" (14-15).

former perfect state of oneness with God and harmonize these now opposed entities—soul and body. How one adorns one’s physical body can proclaim one’s virtue or conceal one’s shame.⁶⁷

The Apostle Paul’s letters are the hallmark for the metaphoric use of dress as he expands the uses of the Old Testament metaphor. He is the first to use clothing in the context in which it is known to the Christian world: as a symbol of transformative power of baptism (for example, Galatians 3:26-29; Romans 13:14; Colossians 3:5-14),⁶⁸ of the transformation of the physical into the celestial body after the Second Coming (1 Corinthians 15:52-54; 2 Corinthians 5:1-4),⁶⁹ and of the ethical transformation undergone by every Christian (Romans 6:12-13, 11-14; Ephesians 4:22).⁷⁰ Jung Hoon Kim has extensively examined Paul’s use of sartorial imagery in

⁶⁷ Kim traces this sartorial theme in the Old Testament ceremonial laws of priestly garments: “What is crucial is the fact that the splendour of the priest’s garments (due to its coloured threads woven with white linen) demonstrates divinity, glory and beauty (cf. Exod. 28.2, 40)” (18). This is of course later parodied in the anti-clerical thrust of Spanish Golden Age works like *Lazarillo de Tormes* (1549), *Guzmán de Alfarache* (1599, 1604), and even the famous *Don Quijote de la Mancha* (1605, 1615) wherein the unsavory character of clergyman is hypocritically concealed by elaborate clerical robes.

⁶⁸ The metaphor of dressing oneself in Christ and his character is repeated numerous times throughout the New Testament. Romans 13:14 urges: “Rather, clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ, and do not think about how to gratify the desires of the sinful nature.” See a similar admonition in Colossians 3:5-14. Here Paul urges believers to rid themselves of their sinful, fleshly desires and “put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator. Here there is no Greek or Jew, no circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave or freed, but Christ is all, and is in all. Therefore, as God’s chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience” (10-12).

⁶⁹ Paul uses the metaphor to explain the mystery of the resurrected body. He writes: “For the perishable must clothe itself with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality. When the perishable has been clothed with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality, then the saying that is written will come true: “Death has been swallowed up in victory” (1 Corinthians 15:52-54).

⁷⁰ Romans 6 makes clear the need for the believer continually to “put on” the new self even after one has “put on” (past tense) Christ in Baptism (Colossians 3:9-10). Paul writes: “Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase? By no means! [...] For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be done away with [...] offer yourselves to God,

The Significance of Clothing Imagery in the Pauline Corpus (2004), wherein he traces the development of the sartorial metaphor within the Judeo-Christian tradition, analyzing a rich breadth of biblical texts and traditional Jewish literature.⁷¹ Placing Juana’s manipulation of clothing imagery in dialogue with the Pauline dress metaphor will help us gain a fuller perspective of the subtle sartorial nuances in *El Conhorte*.

Summary of Chapters

Fabricating Religion begins with a look at Juana’s semi-autobiographical works, *Vida y fin* and *Libro de la casa* (Chapter 2: “The Fashioning of A Mystic”). The chapter examines these two works and provides the biographical context for understanding Juana’s sermons.⁷² Juárez-Almendros in *El cuerpo vestido y la construcción de la identidad en las narrativas autobiográficas del Siglo de Oro* (2006) provides a helpful lens through which to understand the construction—or as he coins it the “self-fashioning”—of one’s identity. Applying his

as those who have been brought from death to life; and offer the parts of your body to him as instruments of righteousness” (Romans 6:1, 6, 13). After putting off the old fleshly desires, the believer should “[...] put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness. Therefore each of you must put off falsehood and speak truthfully to his neighbor, for we are all members of one body” (Ephesians 3:24-25).

⁷¹ Among the many facets of clothing’s religious symbolism, he discusses the Apostle Paul’s use of the clothing metaphor for visual embodiment of the religious rituals of conversion, baptism, and ultimately Christ’s and the believer’s resurrection. For Kim “a garment dominating its wearer’s appearance. As a garment is dominant in expressing its wearer’s appearance, so Christ is dominant in Christians’ lives. As a garment tends to be identified with its wearer, so Christ becomes one with Christians. As a garment also reveals its wearer’s character, so Christ reveals a Christian’s character. Yet as a garment maintains a difference from its wearer, so Christ is not equated with Christians; although Christ like a garment clothes Christians, he remains himself and they remain themselves” (Kim 117-18). Within the biblical paradigm, clothing is intimately connected with the projection of the Christian’s inner soul.

⁷² As McGinn stresses, and I agree, “mysticism needs to be understood contextually, [...] and the mystical text in its place in the tradition” (I: xv).

methodology to Juana's semi-autobiographical works reveals how she, and her contemporaries, employed clothing imagery to craft an empowered and truly otherworldly identity that set the stage for her visionary sermons.

The remaining chapters each address a theological aspect of Juana's sartorial imagery and their deeper theological truths that often border on heterodoxy. Chapter 3 (“(Ad)Dressing Christ”) examines the Doctrine of the Incarnation, looking specifically at Christ's (un)clothed body within a selection of Juana's sermons. When placed in dialogue with works that delve into theology, like Fernández de Madrigal's (commonly referred to as “el Tostado”) *Las cinco figuratas paradoxas* (1430's) and Pedro Jiménez de Prejano's *El lucero de la vida cristiana* (1493), the questions about Juana's orthodoxy come more clearly into focus.

Due to the overwhelmingly Marian thrust of Juana's theology,⁷³ the remaining two chapters unpack the theological questions surrounding the Virgin Mary. Chapter 4 (“Immaculate Clothing, Immaculate Conception”) provides an appropriate foil to Chapter 4's discussion on Christ's Incarnation as we shift our focus from the humanization of Christ to the divinization of Mary. The Doctrine of Mary's Immaculate Conception was a point of contention beginning in the twelfth century and was not fully established until Pope Pius IX made it into dogma in 1854.⁷⁴ Juana's adornment of Mary's body (un)veils a theological agenda that is altogether in favor of the Immaculate Conception and situates Juana on a dynamic continuum of theological understanding and doctrinal development that extends to this day. Her sermons anticipate one of

⁷³ See previous footnote 27 for bibliography about Juana's Mariology.

⁷⁴ For a brief overview of the theological development of Mary's Immaculate Conception see Lesley K. Twomey “Good and Evil: Theological Dispute over Mary” in *Serpent and the Rose: The Immaculate Conception and Hispanic Poetry in the Late Medieval Period* (2008): pp. 23-46.

the key mystical works used to solidify the ideas about the Immaculate Conception, *La mística ciudad de Dios* (1637-45) of María of Ágreda (1602-1665).⁷⁵

Chapter 5 (“Mary, Mantle of Mercy and Crown of Heaven”) deals with the intercessory role of Mary and is a fitting culmination of our textual analysis as it places in dialogue Mary’s and Christ’s roles in the biblical economy of salvation. The aim of this chapter is to examine Mary’s Mantle and Crown as symbols for the mercy of God and her queenly power.⁷⁶ Juana’s manipulation of the mantle, perhaps more so than any of the other item of clothing, most closely evidences the intersection of the material practices of her immediate religious context and her personal theological—or mariological—convictions.

I hope that by studying these images, we will reach a greater appreciation for the masterful tapestry that Juana has woven throughout *El Conhorte* and help us to assess García Andrés’ sweeping statement that *El Conhorte* is “ortodoxia fuera de toda duda.” Juana’s theology may be an ornate, fashion-magazine-like veneer of sartorial images but his statement appears to disregard the deeper theological significance buried within the folds of Juana’s ostentatious language. His remark that “el error de alguno de los antiguos censores del Conhorte

⁷⁵ See Marilyn H. Fedewa, *María of Ágreda: Mystical Lady in Blue* (2009). She concludes that: “To this day, Marian scholars credit Sor María of Ágreda and King Felipe IV with favorably influencing Pope Alexander VII on the doctrine. [...] Alexander VII’s 1661 decree is considered the turning point in the evolution of the Immaculate Conception. Many consider it the definitive statement on the doctrine until it was fully established by Pope Pius IX in 1854” (100).

⁷⁶ Surtz has made some observations about the sartorial image of the mantle within Juana’s sermons. See *Writing Women in Late Medieval and Early Modern Spain* (1995), at pp. 115-26. I intend to examine more the theological concerns (i.e. Mary’s role in redemption and intercession) than the gender and authority issues that Surtz aptly addresses. See Webster, Susan V. (1998) for a thorough discussion of the cultural context of adorning processional statues. Oakes, Catherine (2008) provides an in-depth analysis of Mary’s role as the metaphoric mantle of mercy. Medieval iconography depicts Mary as the embodiment of God’s mercy; the earliest known large-scale example is that of a fourteenth-century wall painting in a small Norman church of St. Cèneri-le-Gèrei near Alençon (Oakes 102).

fue quedarse en frases sueltas o en el ropaje de las figuras, para criticarlas y rechazarlas, sin darse cuenta de que seguidamente, en el propio sermón, se ofrecía la interpretación de las mismas” (“Introducción” 217) fails to see that through the “ropaje de las figuras” Juana unveils a Catholicism of her own fabrication.

CHAPTER 2: THE FASHIONING OF A MYSTIC

Clothing as (Self) Fashioning

Juana's transition from a humble girl of fifteen to a nun in the Franciscan convent of Santa María de la Cruz in Cubas is as miraculous as is her ultimate appointment as abbess.⁷⁷ Her beginnings were not promising. In the year 1496, shrouded in male attire, young Juana fled an arranged marriage and arrived at the doorstep of the convent.⁷⁸ The account in *Libro de Casa* follows her steps as she makes her way out of the house and passes her suitor:

a él le cegó Dios de manera que no solamente no la conoció, ni aun el color de los vestidos de hombre que llevaba le parecieron a él de otra color, y cuando pasó por enfrente donde ella estaba, dijo en su corazón: “Mirad que cobardía de hombre, qué le había yo de hacer, que en viéndome se apartó del camino”. Y tornando a mirarla, vido el lío que traía debajo del brazo y dijo: “Algún sastre debe de ser, que viene de cortar o de

⁷⁷ Her contemporaries referred to her as “abbess,” but Boon distinguishes that “[t]echnically only the head of a Benedictine convent is accorded the title of abbess” (2011, 243). For more on her position as abbess see María del Mar Cortés Timoner *Sor Juana de la Cruz, 1481-1534* (2000): 13-15.

⁷⁸ *Vida y Fin* recounts the tale with the following sartorial details: “la siguiesen, entrose aprisa en un aparte y quitose los bestidos de muger y púsose un tocador de hombre en la caveza y arrevecose una toca de camino y hechose una capa en el hombro y una espada en la mano; y un lío que tenía hecho de sus aderezos de muger tomó de debajo del brazo y, santiguándose, empeçó su camino, en el qual ella no savía si no por oýdas” (fol. 11r). Ronald Surtz points out that the “motifs of familial opposition and escape in male attire are traditional hagiographic formulas” (*Guitar* 10). For a novelesque retelling of Juana's flight to the convent see María Victoria Triviño's *Mujer, predicadora y párroco* (1999): pp. 33-45.

coser de algunos destes lugares”. Y con este pensamiento se pasó el mancebo sin la conocer. La bendita virgen, viéndose libre de aquel tan gran peligro, hincose de rodillas y dio gracias a Nuestro Señor, y suplicó a Nuestra Señora la favoreciese en aquella su obra, y en esta oración fue muy consolada de Nuestro Señor y pasó adelante con su camino.
(fol. 519)

From the start, clothing (in the form of a disguise) has an important role in her life.⁷⁹ Both *Vida y Fin* and *Libro de casa* not only have God blind her suitor’s eyes and but He distorts her attire so that she is unrecognizable.

Clothing, I will to argue throughout this chapter, is at the root of Juana's religious experience. *Vida y fin* provides a metaphor to explain how she has devoted her life fully to the service of God instead of to marriage and childrearing. It is also one of the most recurrent metaphors in *El Conhorte*. In a sense, the life and sermons of Juana envision her as a sort of “sastre” from the beginning to her later life.

As mentioned in the introduction, there are only three extant works produced by or under Juana—two semi-autobiographical works (*Vida y fin* and *Libro de Casa*) and a collection of visionary sermons called *El Conhorte*. This chapter will focus on the two semi-autobiographical works in order to provide a backdrop for the sermons themselves. In so doing, this chapter begins to demonstrate how clothing imagery is rooted in the accounts of her life and is later used as an integral component of her sermons. *Libro de Casa* was written after Juana’s death in 1534 and is a compilation of visions, miracles, prayers and devotional activities; some of which are present

⁷⁹ *Vida y fin* contains a parallel account with almost the exact detail: “Mira que cobardía de hombre, qué le havíayo de hazer que en viéndome se apartó del camino”. Y tornando él a mirar allá vido el lío que la bienaventurada traía debaxo del brazo y dixo: “Algún sastre debe de ser que viene de cortar y coser de alguno de estos lugares”; y con este pensamiento pasó aquel manzebo su camino sin la conozer” (fol. 11v).

in *Vida y Fin* and *El Conhorte*.⁸⁰ For example, the Assumption sermon found in *El Conhorte*, was dramatized by the convent as a play and was found in the first folios of the manuscript.⁸¹ As Boon rightly summarizes, “many of the events described [in the *Libro de la Casa*] are Marian miracles that confirmed Juana as Mary’s delegate within her convent even before she became Christ’s voice to audiences within and without” (“Introduction” 18). Therefore, it is worth examining both alongside each other to better understand the devotional life of Juana’s convent.

Sor María Evangelista

We are indebted to a nun, Sor María Evangelista, for recording not only the visionary sermons found in *El Conhorte*, but also Juana’s biography. However, if we know little about Juana, we know even less about María Evangelista. According to the testimonies collected during Juana’s canonization process we learn that:⁸²

Esta testigo conoció a María Evangelista que fue aquella que compiló y escribió e Libro de la vida, santidad, virtudes y milagros de esta Sierva de Dios Juana de la Cruz, a la cual esta testigo oyó muchas veces que ella había escrito dicho libro por voluntad de Dios y que, no sabiendo leer ni escribir, Dios le dio gracia para ello y para escribir otro libro, grande compendio, llamado ‘del Conhorte’, en el cual se encuentran escritos muchos de los sermones que predicaba [...] Decía, dicha María Evangelista, que escribió al dictado de dicha sierva de Dios Juana de la Cruz en los últimos años de su vida, cuando

⁸⁰ See Boon “Introduction” (2016) at p. 17.

⁸¹ Ronald Surtz analyzes the theatrical nature of both the play and the sermon in *El libro del conorte (1509) and the Early Castilian Theater* (1982).

⁸² For further information see García Andrés “Introducción” at pp 23-26. The following quotation is a testimony from Sor María Purificación. See also Boon “Introduction” (2016), 16-17 and corresponding note 58.

permanecía en el lecho, tullido todo el cuerpo y los pies y las manos. (qtd. in
“Introduction” 24)

This is the most extensive account we have of the process of compilation of Juana’s works. Though still quite vague and perhaps mythicized by tradition, we learn that Sor María Evangelista was the actual forger of the book, although by divine appointment and inspiration.

How, then, should we approach *Vida y fin* and *Libro de la casa*? Surtz and Boon have noted the thorny issue of authority and the inability to uncover Juana’s “authorial voice”; and Bynum, among others have examined the stereotypical motifs repeated in most of the biographies of medieval holy women.⁸³ The most helpful approach to *Vida y fin* has been Juárez-Almendros's *El cuerpo vestido y la construcción de la identidad en las narrativas autobiográficas del Siglo de Oro* (2006).⁸⁴ Juárez-Almendros understands autobiography as a form of “self-fashioning”:

La autobiografía es una construcción del yo cuyo sujeto es siempre un reflejo, una ficción. La construcción textual del yo funciona como un ropaje que cubre una realidad

⁸³ See Boon, “Introduction”, p 15 and Surtz *Guitar of God*, 26. See, among others, Bynum (1987), p. 83; John W. Coakley (2006); and Darcy Donahue (1989). Durán López provides a helpful summary of spiritual autobiographies and Juana’s (semi) autobiographies are in keeping with a very similar structure: “Thus the account paints a picture of pious infancy, a brief period of adolescent weakness—almost always of ingenuous innocence—and a not-so-abrupt turn (vocation, not conversion) which leads to scorn for the world and entry into the convent. [...] The concept of time [...] is a morosely internal idea of time, cyclical, ahistorical, without dates or events to serve as points of reference” (2010, 29).

⁸⁴ The main purpose of Juárez-Almendros’ study is to use clothing as a means of analyzing the conflation of the divided self as it seeks a fictitious unity and personal/individual distinction. As she writes: “Este estudio considera la representación verbal de la ropa como un sitio donde confluyen dialécticamente el sujeto escindido en busca de unidad ficticia y de distinción personal y el individuo enfrentado a las estructuras y discursos que lo configuran. El análisis tiene en cuenta el significado filológico, económico, político, moral y artístico del vestido” (1). Throughout the work she employs the theoretical approaches of Bakhtin, Mulvey, Freud, Lacan, and Kristeva.

que nunca se puede aprehender en su totalidad. [...] Tanto la autobiografía como las ropas mismas, son coberturas y velos que dan sentido al sujeto autobiográfico en su imposibilidad de auto-conocimiento. (3)

The layers of hagiographical formulae and aggrandizing anecdotal incidents function as a “ropaje” that conceals the woman Juana; however, as “coberturas y velos que dan sentido al sujeto” they reveal the reaction of her audiences.

Vida y fin and *Libro de Casa*, however, are not autobiographies in the traditional sense, thus it is impossible to reconstruct Juana's life as a real person. Nonetheless, it is beneficial to apply Juárez-Almendros' interpretive lens to these works and view them as a form of “ropaje” that envelops a historic person. In so doing we will better understand the immense esteem in which she was held and the manner in which her biographers desired for her to be remembered.

Interestingly, sartorial imagery is woven throughout her *Vida y fin* and *Libro de Casa*, often times functioning to highlight an aspect of Juana's character and saintly devotion. Even before Juana donned male attire to flee to the convent, her life was dominated by clothing. She would wear a cilice (“cilicio”) to invoke deeper intimacy with Christ's suffering through her own bodily pain.⁸⁵ It is recorded that she would even disrobe down to this cilice before confession in imitation of the penance of Saint Francis.⁸⁶ Regardless of whether or not this is true, it is evident

⁸⁵ “Era rigurosa para su cuerpo porque traía junto a sus carnes un cilicio, hecho de unas cardas que buscó ella muy secretamente y las deshizo, y todas las púas y puntas cosió en una cosa muy áspera y aquello traía junto a sus carnes. Andaba de continuo dolorosa y toda llagada y muy alegre y consolada, porque tenía de continuo dolores que ofrecer al Señor en reverencia de los que padeció por nos redimir y salvar” (*Libro de Casa*, fol. 515).

⁸⁶ “[...] respondió la bienaventurada que no estaba enferma, que temblaba de frío. Y acabada la confesión, salió del confesionario, y ella, que se empezaba a vestir y otra religiosa que iba a confesar, y vídola, y entró en el confesionario y dijo al confesor que riñese a Juana de la Cruz por tan ásperas penitencias como hacía, que había entrado a confesar desnuda con solo un silicio” (*Vida y fin*, fol. 524).

that the (auto)biographers sought to emphasize Juana's extreme religious zeal. As Juárez-Almendros states:

el vestido es un lenguaje de auto-representación que refleja las cambiantes y conflictivas posiciones existenciales de los protagonistas, así como los intercambios con sus circunstancias sociales, culturales e históricos. [...] En efecto, los vestidos y decoraciones son materiales culturales y prácticas sociales llenos de sentido simbólico. (17)

References to clothing, like the cilice, are full of symbolic meaning, because they mark “cambiantes conflictivas posiciones existenciales.” For example, when Juana professed at the convent, María Evangelista describes in great length the “hábito” that Juana wore because she considered it as marking the beginning of her “vida maravillosa y muy provechosa”:

Concertadas todas las cosas, dieron el hábito a la virgen con mucha solemnidad y espiritual alegría en presencia de sus parientes. Comenzó a hacer vida maravillosa y muy provechosa para los que la veían y oían; su vestido era muy pobre y humilde, mucho más que el de las demás religiosas. Traía túnica de sayal y una saya muy vieja y remendada y el hábito lo mismo. Calzaba unos alpargates, y lo más del tiempo andaba descalza y ceñida con la más gruesa cuerda que podía haber, y en la cabeza una albanega de estopa y encima lo más despreciado que ella podía haber, y debajo de todo esto traía de secreto un muy áspero silicio, el cual nunca se quitaba día ni noche y otras muy ásperas penitencias que hacía. (fol. 521)

Her entrance is marked by Juana's change of habit, both literally and figuratively in her renouncing her worldly lifestyle and pledging herself solely to the service of God.⁸⁷ As Sherry

⁸⁷ This metaphoric and literal change of habit is a common trope in spiritual (auto)biographies and hagiographies. For example, with Saint John of the Cross, Ackerman notes: “When he

Lindquist observes, “how and when we adorn our bodies is connected to our social identities, and dressing and undressing therefore figure prominently in rituals that govern changes of status in societies (for example, boy to man, maiden to wife, novitiate to monk, dauphin to king)” (2). Indeed, Juana’s change in status is symbolized by the “áspero cilicio” that led to self-imposed “ásperas penitencias.” It goes on to say that Juana “Deseaba tormentos y dolores, llagas y heridas, frío y cansancio y todas maneras de penas por amor de Dios” (fol. 521). María Luengo Balbás has examined closely how such renunciation of physical comforts becomes a visible marker of internal spirituality within *El Conhorte*: “la abstinencia es una marca externa de santidad y por lo tanto una manera de visibilizar la espiritualidad de la religiosa” (2012, 225).⁸⁸

Vida y fin goes to great lengths to describe Juana’s habit as the material display of her intense religious fervor:

Su bestido hera muy pobre e humilde, muy más qu’el de las otras religiosas, traýa túnica de sayas e una saya muy vieja e remendada, e el ávito lo mesmo, e unos alpargatas en los pies e lo más del tiempo andava descalza, e la más gruesa cuerda que ella podía haver se çeñía, y en la caveça una albanega de estopa, y ençima lo más despreçiado que ella tenía y devajo de esto, que no se lo vía nadie, un muy áspero siliçio, el qual nunca se quitava de noche ni de día, estas muy graves e

entered monastic life in 1564, he exchanged clothing symbolic of his former life for garments that identified with the charismatic nature of his order. He discarded his patronym, becoming a John of Saint Matthew. Four years later, joining Teresa de Ávila’s renewal movement, he again changed garments and name. He donned a habit that was shorter, and so less dignified. He also took a new name, John of the Cross. He thus opted to become a more empathic visible sign of the poverty of Christ. [...] On his back the rough cloth of the Discalced habit came to stand for stubborn intent to divide” (2010, 161).

⁸⁸ Her conclusions stem from Leigh Gilmore’s *Autobiography and Postmodernism* (1994) that states that within biographies of visionaries “the body becomes evidentiary text” (65).

ásperas penitencias que hacía. Era [¿su?] paciencia cosa maravillosa de mirar e oír, que no solamente holgava de ser menospreciada de qualquier manera que quisiesen fatigalla: deseava tormentos e llagas, heridas, dolores, frío e cansancio e todas maneras de penas por amor de Dios. (fols. 13v – 14r)

Juana's (un)dressing marks a significant shift in her identity, and the religious habit she assumes constructs a persona that is altogether fervent in devotion.

Clothing as Autonomy and Authority

In *Vida y fin* and *Libro de Casa*, clothing seems to have allowed Juana to fabricate her own religious experience of devotion and utmost penance.⁸⁹ What little autonomy women had during the period centered primarily on these acts of asceticism and corporeal abasement, both internally and externally. Thus it seems fitting to connect her manipulation of religious rite to Bynum's observations in *Holy Feast and Holy Fast* (1987), who remarks that "[t]o religious women food was a way of controlling as well as renouncing both self and environment" (1987, 5). Within many of Juana's most intense experiences there are references both to renunciation of food and some form of (un)dressing. For Juana, the (mis)treatment of both her internal and

⁸⁹ Here is a clear example of this Juana's autonomy in religious experience through her manipulation of clothing: "Y con mucha contrición de sus pecados, entró en el confesionario y comenzose a confesar, hincada de rodilla con muchas lágrimas, y era tiempo de mucho frío y comenzó a dar grandes temblores del gran frío que sentía, de manera que no lo podía encubrir, y fue tanto que el confesor le preguntó que si estaba enferma, que de qué temblaba; respondió la bienaventurada que no estaba enferma, que temblaba de frío. Y acabada la confesión, salió del confesionario, y ella, que se empezaba a vestir y otra religiosa que iba a confesar, y vídola, y entró en el confesionario y dijo al confesor que riñese a Juana de la Cruz por tan ásperas penitencias como hacía, que había entrado a confesar desnuda con solo un silicio" (*Libro de Casa*, fol. 523-23).

external body are intimately linked; thus, Bynum's observations, though principally focused on food and fasting, shed light on the deeper significance of Juana's sartorial acts.

Like many female mystics of the medieval period, Juana also frequently observed the sacrament of the Eucharist, which became another avenue for Juana's experience of the supernatural. Her trances, which were intimately linked to her ingesting the host, also resonated with Bynum's observations:⁹⁰

Muchas veces, estando comiendo se arrobaba en espíritu; y esto de arrobarse creció en ella tanto la gracia que adonde quiera que aquella gracia le tomaba se quedaba como muerta, aunque muy hermosa, ora fuese en el coro o en el refitorio o en otro lugar de la casa, a cualquier hora del día o de la noche que era la voluntad de Dios, y muy a menudo; y no estaba elevada poco tiempo, mas tres horas, cinco y siete y doce, y esto al principio de sus elevaciones. Y andado el tiempo diole Dios muy copiosa esta gracia, porque estaba elevada un día y una noche y algunas veces cuarenta horas. (*Libro de Casa*, fol. 527)

Her trances sometimes lasted up to five, seven or even twelve hours. Whether exaggeration or fact, it is clear that the *Vida y fin* paints an altogether otherworldly portrait of Juana; one in which she wields autonomy over her body, whether through its external act of (un)dressing or eating/fasting. María Evangelista makes this connection quite evident on numerous occasions.

For instance, in chapter 2 of *Vida y fin* she writes:

⁹⁰ For a full discussion on female mystics and their perceptions/appropriations of the Eucharist, see the aforementioned work, *Holy Feast and Holy Fast* (1987). See specifically chapter 8 "The Meaning of Food: Food as Physicality" (pp. 245-59) for Bynum's discussion on the Eucharist and its effects in mystical devotion and union with Christ. See also Chapter 9 "Woman as Body and as Food" (260-76) for Bynum's analysis of woman's body symbolically becoming God's body through the sacrament. She remarks: "[c]losing herself off to ordinary food yet consuming God in the Eucharist, the holy woman became God's body" (1987, 274).

Hera muy humilde e tenía la voluntad muy aparejada para hazer penitencia y lo tomava sobre sí con mucha alegría por amor de Dios y assí lo ponía por obra que en sus ayunos fue muy abstigente, que su comer hera pan e agua y no comía más de una vez al día, y desto no todo lo que había menester y no solamente ayunava con solo pan y agua, mas se estava dos o tres días sin comer ni beber ninguna cosa y esto hazía ella muy ordinario y muy secreto. Todas las vezes que ella se podía desocupar para reçar y contemplar lo hazía: oraçión muy fervorosa bañada en lágrimas salidas de su coraçón y lloradas con compasión de la pasión de Nuestro Señor Jesuchristo, que hecha de otra manera la oraçión la tenía por yndigna de ser rescivida delante del acatamiento divino. Hera cruel para su cuerpo, que traía junto con sus carnes un siliçio hecho de unas cardas que buscó ella muy secretamente, y las deshizo e todas las púas e puntas cosió en una cosa muy áspera, y aquello traía junto a sus carnes. Andava de contino dolorosa, y toda llagada y muy alegre y consolada porque tenía contino dolores que offreçía al Señor en reverencia de los que Él padesçió por nos redimir y salvar. (fols. 15v-15r)⁹¹

The passage oscillates between the control of the body through the ingestion of food (“pan y agua”) and through wearing a “siliçio” (“cosa muy áspera”). Indeed the interplay of these forms of self-imposed corporeal suffering—both externally and internally—reveals Juana’s agency in obtaining and fostering mystical union with the divine.⁹²

Disrobing also marks a significant part of Juana’s autonomy and authority—autonomy in her decision to suffer the elements and inflict extreme physical pain to her unclothed body and

⁹¹ Identical account in *Libro de Casa* may be found at fols. 514-15.

⁹² As Bynum observes: “[...] food asceticism, food distribution, and Eucharistic devotion did not, to medieval people, mean self-torture; rather, they were ways of fusing with a Christ whose suffering saves the world” (1987, 218).

also authority in that it positions her against the other nuns who seem to lack the religious fervor of Juana. There is a specific encounter that captures this dynamic found in *Libro de casa*:

Oyendo esta sierva de Dios leer en un libro llamado Floreto de santo Francisco, y oyendo cómo había mandado una vez a un fraile que fuese a predicar, sin capilla y desnudo, pensó entre sí: “Si el Padre San Francisco mandaba ir al fraile a predicar desnudo, no teniendo pecados, ¿cómo no iré yo a confesarme de los míos y desnudarme dellos, desnuda en carnes y hiriéndolas con piedra o palo a cada pecado que dijere? Encomiéndome a Dios y, a vos Padre S. Francisco, y sola la cuerda ceñida a mi cuerpo y cuello quiero ir a confesar como malhechora, y por tal me pregonaré ante Dios y mi confesor”. Y con mucha contrición de sus pecados, entró en el confesionario y comenzose a confesar, hincada de rodilla con muchas lágrimas, y era tiempo de mucho frío y comenzó a dar grandes temblores del gran frío que sentía, de manera que no lo podía encubrir, y fue tanto que el confesor le preguntó que si estaba enferma, que de qué temblaba; respondió la bienaventurada que no estaba enferma, que temblaba de frío. Y acabada la confesión, salió del confesionario, y ella, que se empezaba a vestir y otra religiosa que iba a confesar, y vídola, y entró en el confesionario y dijo al confesor que riñese a Juana de la Cruz por tan ásperas penitencias como hacía, que había entrado a confesar desnuda con solo un silicio. (fol. 522-23)⁹³

After hearing the account of Saint Francis in *Floreto de Santo Francisco*—more on this work and its influence in Juana’s life momentarily—Juana proceeds to imitate his exhortation to

⁹³ Parallel account is echoed in *Vida y fin* and includes the detail that Juana was “desnuda como nació” (fols. 15r-16v).

“predicar desnudo.” Because preaching is reserved exclusively for men;⁹⁴ however, she seizes on this opportunity to disrobe in imitation of Saint Francis, and she remains “desnuda en carnes” as she enters into the confessional, thereby likening herself to Saint Francis in religious devotion and in corporeal abasement. This fact comes more clearly into focus when compared to the actions of Juana’s fellow nun. At the sight of Juana dressing herself after leaving the confessional, she is shocked and tells the confessor to reprimand Juana for her scandalous behavior. Quite comically the account goes on to say that the confessor would henceforth ask Juana if she was going to confess “cubierta” or not, and if she did not, he would refuse to hear her confession. Yet her actions connection to her authority is revealed next. The exchange between Juana and her confessor does not end with a reprimand, but rather the narrative insists

Todas las veces que esta bienaventurada iba a confesar recibía el confesor singular consuelo en su ánima y doctrina maravillosa para enmienda de su vida, y no solamente él, mas todos los otros padres que la confesaron mientras vivió decían que de sus confesiones no solo salían ellos muy confusos, mas sacaban mucho aprovechamiento para sus almas. [...] Era esta virgen muy prudente y de mucha discreción y capacidad y de mucha gravedad, tenía presencia de mucha autoridad, tenía piedad y admirable consejo y provechoso en las ánimas y a los cuerpos, de muy graciosa habla [...]. (fol. 523)

Even within the confessional, Juana’s assumes an authoritative role, in which her words of “mucha autoridad” and of “doctrina maravillosa” ultimately comfort and, at times, confuse, the confessor himself; and clothing, or lack thereof, marks this authoritative shift.

⁹⁴ For a discussion on authority and preaching see Surtz *Guitar of God*, at p. 5 and pp. 63-64. For a summary of her contemporaries’ reception of Juana’s act of preaching see García Andrés “Introducción”, at pp. 81-84. For Juana’s connection to both Mary and Jesus, respectively, as an authorizing technique to her sermons see Boon “Introduction” (2016), at pp. 20-30.

From the Sartorial to the Theological

The *Libro de la Casa* is particularly illuminating in its descriptions of images and religious devotional objects. Unlike the *Vida y fin*, it unveils the materiality of the religious experience, not only within the four walls of Juana's convent but throughout Spain.⁹⁵ The prayers recorded in *Libro de Casa* are intimately linked with the physical presence of a material image—typically statues or paintings of the Virgin Mary and other saints. In fact, on one occasion, an image of the Virgin Mary elicits a divine revelation to Juana. *Libro de Casa* contains a chapter entitled “Revelación que esta imagen de la Virgen hizo a Juana” that begins with the following summary: “Capítulo de una revelación que vio nuestra madre santa Juana tocante a esta imagen de Nuestra Señora, la que consagró el Señor, y fue d'esta manera” (fol. 44v). Interestingly, the account authorizes Juana by its content.⁹⁶

Initially the revelation is tactile and visual. The “madero” or “imagen” of the Virgin becomes a gateway through which Juana is granted a deeper, non-physical, spiritual insight into Christ's utmost concern that the nuns of the convent hold his Holy Mother's image in highest

⁹⁵ See William Christian's discussion of relics and religious devotional objects in Chapter 4 (“Relics and Indulgences”) of *Local Religion* at p. 126. See also Caroline Walker Bynum in *Christian Materiality* (2011) at pp. 53, 57 and corresponding note on p. 309.

⁹⁶ See Madeline Caviness' seminal article (1983) “Images of Divine Order and the Third Mode of Seeing” and its subsequent elaboration in “The Simple Perception of Matter” and the Representation of Narrative, ca. 1180–1280.” In these works, Caviness postulates gradations, or “modes” of seeing and interpreting visual art based on a cleric named Richard of Saint-Victor (ca. 1173) who “presented visions as four-fold, in a way that is analogous to the four levels of scriptural exegesis that were current by the latter part of the century [literal/historical, allegorical, moral/tropological and anagogical]. Two of his modes are external and corporeal, two are internal and spiritual” (1983, 115). Her work has helped shape my understanding of the interplay between the material object and immaterial, supernatural revelation. I will discuss these modes of medieval scriptural exegesis in momentarily as I delve into my methodology and lay the groundwork for how we should properly approach mystical texts like *El Conhornte*.

esteem. After Juana's celestial vision, the "santo angel" Laruel interprets the revelation, insisting that just as the Holy Spirit worked to purify and cleanse the image of the Virgin Mary, so likewise sinners ought to have their souls purified and washed by the Holy Spirit.⁹⁷

This particular contains several sartorial details revealing the lack of devotion paid to the image and Mary's clothing and nudity become paramount in representing this deeper spiritual meaning, namely, apathy on the part of those devotees of the convent. During the hour of matins, Juana sees God enthroned in Heaven wearing "vestiduras pontificales." The vision goes on to relate: "[Nuestro Señor] Estaba vestido como obispo y la imagen [de la Virgen], que estaba vestida según es costumbre adereçar las imágenes, a desora pareció toda desnuda e alçada en alto, tiniéndose con el poder de Dios" (fol. 46r). Jesus Christ, as the great "obispo", has removed the Virgin's outer garments and her nudity represents God's cleansing and purifying work. Those who might slight the Virgin—both by their lack of devotion to the material object (the image) and by their complacent adoration of it—must repent and be made new in the same manner that Christ strips and then subsequently adorns the image of the Virgin:

‘¿Quién te desprecia, Madre mía?’ Y poníale muchas cruces hechas joyeles; estando ella así desnuda la cercaba toda, especialmente la cabeça, frente y gesto y los pechos y espaldas e ombros e braços e manos, todo el cuerpo hasta los pies, que significaban los cimientos de la santa Madre Yglesia. E después de muchas bendiciones que el Señor decía [...] pareció a desora la imagen de Nuestra Señora vestida de las mismas vestiduras

⁹⁷ “[...] díxome mi santo ángel después que desapareció el Señor ‘Mira qué son las maravillas de Dios que si en un madero halla Dios voscosidad y no quiere que su santa Madre le tenga por su imagen, hasta le haver limpiado e puesto en él dignidad de bendición suya, como la tiene la santa Madre Iglesia, ¿qué tales estarán las ánimas que llenas de pecados están ensuciadas e asquerosas, cómo serán dignas aquellas tales que venga Dios en ellas ni su santa Madre con gracia e piadosa charidad, si primero no son alimpiadas las tales ánimas por especial gracia del Spíritu Santo? Las cosas que son despreciadas e bajas Dios las ensalça e tiene en ellas thesoros muy grandes, aunque escondidos a los ojos de las personas de la tierra” (fols. 48v-48r).

de antes y puesta en el altar como primero estaba, e los demonios quedáronse mesando e arañando e dando gritos e ahullidos, e la visión de Nuestro Señor desapareció roziando la casa con agua bendita, e la bienaventurada quedó muy consolada. (fol. 47r)

Lack of clothing represents a cleansing that must be performed spiritually by Christ,⁹⁸ as confirmed by his own theological interpretation for the events:

[...] el mesmo Señor desde su alto trono: “Sum qui sum et ecce nova facio omnia”, que quiere dezir “Yo soy el que soy, que todas las cosas hago nuevas. En lo alto del Cielo moro, soy rey eterno que rijo los coraçones católicos e devotos, que mi adversario los perturba, empero yo soy el que los sosiego; él los derrama, yo los allego; él los discipa, yo los recreo; él los destruye, yo los edifico; él los ensucia, yo los limpio; él los enturbia y rebuelve y haze oler mal, yo los purifico e hago oler suavíssimo. Si de lo malo hazen bueno, e de lo no limpio hazen limpio, e de lo imperfecto hazen perfecto e loable e agradable. (fol. 46r-46v)

The verse “Sum qui sum et ecce nova facio omnia” is a quotation from Revelation 21:5 and the turn of phrase “que quiere decir” is an exegetical shift in Juana’s vision which in turn reveals that clothing and cleansing are no longer details of an image within this vision; rather, they carry a deeper theological meaning. Christ, the “rey eterno,” restores the image of the Virgin to its proper dignity and worth, not by honoring her with jewels, brocades and other sumptuous garments, but rather by removing her garments. What is interesting about this unexpected twist

⁹⁸ Worthy of a brief note is the theological shift in the understanding of what/who is the foundation of the Holy Church (“cimientos de la santa Madre Yglesia”). Traditionally, Peter is considered the cornerstone of the Catholic Church based on Jesus’ words in Matthew 16:18, “And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.” See, among others, Stephen K. Ray (1999); Tony Castle and Peter McGrath (2002); and Walter F. Murphey (1987).

of events is that it echoes Sermon 50 on Mary's Nativity in *El Conhorte*, in which her naked body is clothed in the Holy Spirit and has no need for material adornment.⁹⁹ Theologically Christ's actions are like a garment not seen, that must be renewed ("todas las cosas hago nuevas") by himself, who is the great "I am who I am" ("Yo soy el que soy"). The garment worn by the Virgin Mary had been sullied by the attention from her followers. Christ was able to clean that which was unclean and perfect that which was defective. In such a way, a sinner must come to Christ to be cleansed and clothed.

The importance given to a the sartorial image is paralleled in another account within *Libro de la Casa* that demonstrates the awareness that Juana and the other nuns of its theological implications:

Preveníanse para las fiestas de Dios y de su santa Madre en echar suertes para vestirlos. Y estos vestidos los hazían de penitencias, ayunos y oración, fabricándolos en su imaginación, y el santo ángel san Laruel, por medio de nuestra madre santa Juana, les daba la industria y significación de las colores, y dezía: "Diles a tus hermanas que lo que hizieren de color blanca apliquen 'Avemarías' y el himno de 'O Gloriosa' y la 'Magnífica'; y para lo carmesí, el 'Anima Christi' y el rezo de la Passión; para lo verde la 'Salve'; y lo morado el 'Miserere'; y para oro 'Paternostres'; y el 'Salterio' todas colores". Y dixo más el santo ángel: que para la pedrería el 'Credo', que es piedra preciosa, y que el 'quiquunque vult es carbunco y Jacinto', "y que d'esta manera harán y guarnecerán los vestidos. Y diles que el ámbar significa el officio de nosotros, los

⁹⁹ In this sermon, Mary is raised up to Heaven in body and spirit shortly after her birth. What follows is a rather erotically charged festival in which virgins, clad in elaborate dresses of gold and precious stones, dance in front of the Holy Trinity. Mary is naked, and the Lord declares "Y muy más linda y apuesta y adornada aparecía ella, desnuda en carne, que todas las otras vestidas y apuestas" (*El Conhorte* II:50, 1150-51).

ángeles, para hazer lo que quisieren”. Y con estas cosas andaban absortas en Dios. (fols. 18v-18r)

This brief account shows the symbolism of the sartorial image—its colors, textures and placement—all boast a theological weight. Juana’s guardian angel, Laruel, again provides an interpretation of the meaning of the colors and precious stones. Each color has a corresponding hymn or prayer: for white “Avemarias” and the hymn “O Gloriosa” and “Magnífica”; for crimson the “Anima Christi” and the prayer of the Passion; for green “Salve”; for purple “Miserere”; for gold “Paternostres”; for the “Salterio” all of the colors; for the “Credo” the symbol is the gemstone or “piedra preciosa” and carbuncle for the “quicumque vult.” The enumeration ends with amber that signifies the angelic office, which, according to Laurel, helps to do whatever they please (“para hazer lo que quisieren”).

This vision resembles closely the *Corona* meditation that was a popular part of Franciscan devotion throughout the fifteenth century.¹⁰⁰ Twomey posits a votive origin as in *Corona Beatissime Virginis* (Biblioteca Nacional de España, Madrid; MS 17674), she remarks that “jewels, celestial bodies, and flowers are a feature of a fifteenth century Spanish devotional crown [...] which is copied alongside prayers and devotions to the Virgin” (2013, 199). We have already mentioned Fray Ambrosio Montesino’s importance in the introduction and he dedicates one of his compositions to the twelve-star crown (Dutton 1990-91: V, 107a). Twomey remarks that each of his stanzas “focuses on a different aspect of the Virgin’s life or nature” (2013, 200). We see, thus, the interplay between the material practice of dressing the statue of a Virgin, devotional prayers and its resounding theological implications.

¹⁰⁰ For a brief overview see Twomey (2013), at pp. 198-203.

According to Juana, adoration of the Virgin through “penitencias, ayunos y oración” is the means by which the faithful receive their own spiritual adornment. Juana is apparently conscious of the *corona* meditation because she includes nearly all of the features enumerated in the crown (“oro”, “piedra preciosa”, “carbunco”, etc.) and also the devotional prayers in her vision. However, instead of meditating on these sumptuous materials and precious stones as a means of beautifying and glorifying the Virgin, she reverses the *corona* meditation. It is the faithful who are themselves adorned by the Virgin for their prayers and creeds. The implications are that she is empowered to dole out rewards to her devoted followers in recompense for their deeds of penance, fasting, and prayer. Rather than Christ or God the Father imparting these gifts/garments, it is the Virgin, who usurps his role.¹⁰¹

Yet this account goes even further. The fashioning of Juana as a mystic with supernatural and intimate connection with the divine culminates quite literally in the concrete image of a richly dressed and discalced San Juan Evangelista, enshrined in Juana’s oratory chamber (“la capilla de la güerta, que era su oratorio de la santa Juana”). The account reads:

Una monja, estando rezando en una imagen de la oración del güerto, llegó a besar el pie al señor san Juan Evangelista, y habló el santo en su imagen y dixo: “Igual havías de hazerme unos çapatos...”. Y la santa Juana oyolo y sonriose, y la monja importunola le dixese de qué se havia reýdo, y al fin se lo dixo; y la monja, llena de espíritu, ordenolos en su imaginación de oración y penitencias, que no durmió en toda aquella noche. Y al

¹⁰¹ See Jesus’ teaching in Matthew 6:20 “but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal.” See also the Pauline model that attributes God the Father with this authority: “He will render to each one according to his works: to those who by patience in well-doing seek for glory and honor and immortality, he will give eternal life; but for those who are self-seeking and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, there will be wrath and fury” (Romans 2:6-8).

amanecer entró el santo por la cámara donde estaba la santa y sonaban mucho los çapatos, y dixole la santa: “¿Cómo viene Vuestra Hermosura con esos çapatos?”. Dixo el santo: “Ansí me los hizieron.” Y d’esta suerte supo la religiosa cómo su oración avía sido oyda, y como andaban en espíritu eran sus entretenimientos estas pláticas. Y vínolo a saber una religiosa y hízole otros çapatos para su fiesta, procurando grande pureza en su alma. Apareciósele el santo a la santa Juana con ellos muy pulidos, y ansí tornó con ellos a visitar a la santa. Y esta imagen está oy día en la capilla de la güerta, que era su oratorio de la santa Juana. Está vestido el santo de blanco y la capa colorada, y los pies descalços en una tabla. (fols. 18v-19r)

The exchange between the “monja” (also referred to as “religiosa”) and Juana (also described as “santa” or “la santa” in this vision) focuses in on one particular image—shoes. While praying to it in the “capilla del güerta,” the nun prostrates herself at the feet of the image of San Juan Evangelista. The image miraculously speaks to her and requests that she make him shoes (“Igual havías de hazerme unos çapatos”). Saint John begins speaking with the word “Igual,” indicating that the nun’s act of prayer toward the other “imagen” in the oratory was also a metaphorical form of crafting spiritual “çapatos;” and therefore, he requests that she fashion him a pair of shoes through her prayers. Juana is observing the interaction between the nun and the devotional images and finds it comical (“oyolo y sonriose”).¹⁰² However, that evening, the image of San Juan Evangelista comes to Juana’s bedside and shows her the shoes that had been done by her

¹⁰² This is not an unusual occurrence for devotional images and objects (i.e. Juana’s “santo crucifixo”) to speak to Juana or perform other supernatural tasks. For an enumeration of these events see the section “Más relaciones de sucesos extraordinarios con las imágenes” in *Libro de la Casa* (fols. 48r-53v). This exact encounter with San Juan Evangelista is summarized in this section as well: “Una imagen de señor san Juan Evangelista que está en una tabla del güerto, que está vestido de blanco y el manto colorado, habló. Está en la capilla de la güerta” (fol. 51r).

fellow nun. It is then that Juana understands that the “oración y penitencias” of the nun have crafted the shoes (“Y d’ esta suerte supo la religiosa cómo su oración avía sido oyda, y como andaban en espíritu eran sus entretenimientos estas pláticas”), and he proceeds to perform a sort of “fashion show” by donning his polished shoes in front of her.

From the tactile image of the saint to the crafting of spiritual shoes, Juana’s connection with the divine is material to its core. The non-material prayers of her fellow nun become the material shoes of a saint. As Twomey notes “wearing shoes, putting them on, or handing shoes to someone else has biblical antecedents. The Old and New Testaments use shoes to symbolize faith in God” (2013, 165). The removal of shoes in the Old Testament account of Moses’ interaction with God at the burning bush symbolizes the reverence with which the Holy God must be approached.¹⁰³ The spiritually fabricated shoes in *Libro de la Casa* symbolize the faithful prayers of holy women that are worthy of covering the feet of San Juan Evangelista. And indeed scripture speaks of such feet as “beautiful” in Isaiah 52:7 (later quoted by the Apostle Paul in Romans 10:15): “How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him who brings good news, who publishes peace, who brings good news of happiness, who publishes salvation, who says to Zion, ‘Your God reigns.’” It is thus fitting that the feet of San Juan Evangelista—his saintly title rightly describing him as “evangelista” or “herald of good news”—are beautiful and should consequently be beautifully adorned by the prayers and acts of penance of faithful followers. The final image of the vision morphs from a supernatural encounter between Juana to a concrete image: “esta imagen está oy día en la capilla de la güerta, que era su oratorio de la

¹⁰³ “Then he [God] said, ‘Do not come near; take your sandals off your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground’” (Exodus 3:5). Twomey does not mention this specific account within her chapter on shoes. For further discussion on shoes and their spiritual significance, Twomey provides a helpful overview and insightful analysis in her chapter “Shoes, Shoes, Shoes: Stepping out in Style” in *The Fabric of Marian Devotion* (2013), at pp. 153-78.

santa Juana. Está vestido el santo de blanco y la capa colorada, y los pies descalços en una table” (fol. 19r). The concrete image thus perpetually invites future generations of devout nuns to spiritually fabricate shoes for the discalced feet of San Juan and the symbol, or lack thereof, of shoes is the gateway through which the nuns are ushered into this spiritual, non-material act of prayer and penance.

In the *Libro de la Casa*, the substance of Juana’s spirituality is inextricably linked to materiality and to the sartorial. This account plays with intimate connection between material content and spiritual significance. The visions are important because they are not something read anachronistically into the text, but rather imbedded within the very fabric of religious practice of the period. It is especially clear that Juana’s own Franciscan Order contributed both to the formulation of Juana’s theology and her sartorial bent. Before closely examining Juana’s views of key theological questions (Incarnation, Immaculate Conception, and the like) let us examine the source of her sartorial strategies—the Franciscan Order.

The Fabric of Franciscan Theology

My intention here is not to dive deeply into an unfolding of the development of the Franciscan order, but rather demonstrate how from its very inception, clothing is of great symbolic value and carries deeper theological meaning.¹⁰⁴ Not only at its inception, but also in

¹⁰⁴ Clothing as it relates to specific doctrinal developments (Incarnation, Immaculate Conception, etc.) will be addressed in the subsequent chapters and will be teased out in more detail to help properly situate Juana’s theology within the context of the Franciscan Order. My aim is not to place Juana’s theology in dialogue with other theological schools of thought (i.e. Dominican, Carmelite, etc.), but rather to see how her interpretations align with her own religious order and how her teachings compare with other Franciscan theologians and mystics of the period. Kenan Osborne in *The History of Franciscan Theology* (1994) provides a helpful summary of the development of Franciscan theology alongside other prominent schools of thought—Dominican and neo-Augustinian, for example. Osborne states: “The Franciscan theological tradition has its

its reformation, clothing is a distinctive symbol within the development of the Franciscan order. We have already mentioned that Juana entered the convent in a time of great spiritual revival following the reforms of Cisneros and the Catholic Monarchs and this return to the more “primitive” or “ideal” religion within the Franciscan order was intimately associated with imitating of Saint Francis’ conversion moment—hence the reformed branch was described as the “franciscanas descalzas.”¹⁰⁵

How informed was Juana of her own Order’s distinctives and what works would she have had access to within the convent that could have influenced her interpretations and interactions with the divine? This question, though very intriguing to scholars, is often highly speculative and typically yields no concrete responses. However, we do have some clues as to the types of literature to which Juana would have been exposed. In her *Vida y fin* it mentions that Juana would read aloud *Floreto de San Francisco*.¹⁰⁶ Margaret Carney rightly observes that for women

origins in the intensely intellectual developments of the thirteenth century. [...] From the very beginning of the Jesus community and the emergent church community, no one form of ‘theological thought’ stood out as monolithically dominant. Within the history of the Christian world, there has never been a theological ‘golden age,’ to which all subsequent theological ages are judged. Rather, an understanding of the Word of God, revealed both in creation and incarnation, has remained and will remain a continual task for Christian theology. The various schools of theology that developed in the thirteenth century must be seen against this background. They are efforts to express the Word of God, revealed both in creation and incarnation, in ways that people of their time might understand and incorporate in the depths of their spiritual life” (vi).

¹⁰⁵ For more on the origins and development of the discalced Franciscans see Fidel Lejarza (1962). For more on the Discalced reform within the broader scope of Cisnerian reform see José García Oro (1980), at pp. 208-86, and 288-90. See also José García Oro and María José Portela Silva (1998).

¹⁰⁶ “Oyendo esta sierva de Dios leer en un libro llamado Floreto de santo Francisco, y oyendo cómo había mandado una vez a un fraile que fuese a predicar, sin capilla y desnudo, pensó entre sí: “Si el Padre San Francisco mandaba ir al fraile a predicar desnudo, no teniendo pecados, ¿cómo no iré yo a confesarme de los míos y desnudarme dellos, desnuda en carnes y hiriéndolas con piedra o palo a cada pecado que dijere? Encomiéndome a Dios y, a vos Padre S. Francisco, y

like Juana, it was nearly impossible for them to seek higher theological education (332). She concludes that due to the lack of formal education, women's sphere of influence within religion was often consigned to the realm of "interiority, contemplation, miraculous powers of healing and prayer, heroic charity [...]" and not influential within the formulation of theology and doctrine (333). She states

at the beginnings of the theological developments within the Franciscan school we can see, then, that women had no hope of formally participating in the work of articulating a new way of looking at these fields through the Franciscan lens. In addition to this academic barrier, women who entered into the various forms of Franciscan life [...] could not participate in the apostolic work of formal evangelizing because this was increasingly limited to ordained clerics in the wake of the fourth Lateran Council and the culmination of the Gregorian reform. (333)

In light of this unwelcoming atmosphere to female education, it is quite stunning that though Juana was not theologically trained at the university level, her influence undoubtedly went beyond the realm of "interiority, contemplation, miraculous powers of healing and prayer, heroic charity." Her visionary sermons are indeed instructive and interwoven with theological interpretations. This means that Juana is more than just a mystic who undergoes visionary experience; her desire to instruct and interpret scripture begins to toe the line between theologian and mystic. As Jean Leclercq, François Vandendbroucke and Louis Bouyer have noted in their seminal work *A History of Christian Spirituality: The Spirituality of the Middle Ages* (1968)

sola la cuerda ceñida a mi cuerpo y cuello quiero ir a confesar como malhechora, y por tal me pregonaré ante Dios y mi confesor" (Fol. 523). In the concluding chapter of *Vida y fin* a quote from Erasmus is also mentioned in reference to the biblical passage of Mark chapter 8. This quotation is most likely in reference to Erasmus' *Paraphrases*, which were published between 1517 and 1524.

The distinction between Franciscan theologians and Franciscan mystics in the thirteenth century and the beginning of the fourteenth is in reality a somewhat artificial one. Even for those doctors who left a considerable body of theological work, like Alexander of Hales and Duns Scotus, the essential thing was not to know but to live and love. (II, 312)

They go on to remark that the difference, subtle though it may be, between “theologians” and “mystics” is that “theologians” were “spiritual writers, [who] also commented on the *pagina sacra*, taught theology as *scolares*, and adopted the methods of the schools of their time” while “mystics” were “remarkable more for their life than for their learning” (II, 312-13). Thus Juana, remarkable indeed for her extraordinary life as a mystic, also interweaves instructive theological teaching within *El Conhorte*. Even though the Franciscan Order would not have officially welcomed Juana’s contributions to theological and doctrinal development, Juana’s remarkable life held great clout over her followers and from this platform she was able to spread her own nuanced interpretations.

We cannot make a declarative statement about Juana’s (un)orthodoxy without properly situating her within the broader Franciscan tradition and its doctrinal development. She entered into the convent in the middle of the Cisnerian revival that was favoring *observantes* over *conventuales*.¹⁰⁷ Melquiades Andres in *La teología española del Siglo XVI* (1976) captures the religious atmosphere quite well:

Observantes son en esta época los partidarios del retorno al primitivo fervor fundacional, amantes de la austeridad, de la pobreza, de la vida en común, el retiro y de la regla primitiva. Los *conventuales* son amigos de los conventos bien montados, de la vida

¹⁰⁷ Refer back to introduction and pertinent bibliography on Cisneros’ push to regularize the various religious orders.

religiosa mitigada y más acomodada a los tiempos, de las excepciones en la regla, de las concesiones personales. [...] La decadencia de las órdenes religiosas en este período es una de tantas manifestaciones de la disolución general de valores, característica del otoño de la Edad Media. (83)

This strict return to more “primitive” religious orthopraxy was quite likely a formative component to the reform of Juana’s own convent. We will not have space here to tease out all of the specifics of the doctrines and practices of the Franciscan Order, however, it is beneficial to at the very least trace the threads of sartorial import that are present from the Order’s inception and within the life of its founder Saint Francis of Assisi.¹⁰⁸

The exact year of Francis’ birth is unknown, but it is estimated that he was born around the year 1182 in Assisi, Italy.¹⁰⁹ His father, Peter Bernardone, was a successful cloth (presumably silk) merchant and, at the time of his son’s birth, was in the south of France searching for fabrics (Moorman 4). Throughout his adolescence, Francis led a lavish lifestyle. Many of his hagiographers specifically note that he wore bright clothing, had rich friends, and loved pleasures.¹¹⁰ Yet after a series of visitations from the Lord, they remark that he renounced his

¹⁰⁸ It is impossible to include an exhaustive bibliography on Saint Francis’ life because, as John Moorman remarked in his seminal work *A History of the Franciscan Order: From its Origins to the Year 1517* (1988), “[i]n England alone, a new life of S. Francis of Assisi appears almost every year, and there are now in circulation at least a dozen learned periodicals devoted entirely to the Franciscan history” (3). However, in more recent scholarship, several works are noteworthy: Brent Thoman (2016), Augustine Thompson (2012) and, less recently, but foundational, Omer Englebert *Saint Francis of Assisi* (1950) which has been translated and edited by Edward Hutton.

¹⁰⁹ See Moorman (1968), at p. 4. For an excellent survey of the scholarly controversy over his life and establishment of the Order see the chapter “The Problem of Saint Francis” in *Franciscan Poverty* (1998), at pp. 1-32.

¹¹⁰ See Omer Englebert (1952), at p. 529.

lavish lifestyle to the disgust of his family and friends, and retreated to a life of meditation and prayer.¹¹¹ After his second visitation he remarked that he had fallen in love with a bride “nobler, richer and fairer than you have ever seen”—referring of course to Lady Poverty.¹¹²

The description of his spiritual transformation is laced with sartorial images. Francis’ father was upset with his son’s decision to renounce the opulent lifestyle he had afforded him. Francis stole “bales of cloth from his father’s shop and rode over to Foligno. Here he sold both the cloth and the horse and walked back to Assisi bearing a large sum of money which he tried to persuade the priest of San Damiano to accept” (Moorman 6). The bishop intended to settle the familial dispute and force Francis to return the profits to his father. Moorman summarizes the rest of the account in the following manner

At the end of the bishop’s speech Francis stepped forward, and, to the consternation of the crowd, stripped off all his clothes and laid them, with such money he had, at the bishop’s feet. [...] Francis had always delighted in the spectacular; and, as in the past he had dazzled the people of Assisi by his riches and clothes, now he would dazzle them by his poverty and nakedness. The gesture was dramatic, but it was also symbolic. It marked the complete break with the past. (7)

Removing his garments was synonymous with casting off sin. In leaving behind his old lifestyle he felt called by the Lord to “go repair [God’s] church” yet he was not exactly sure by what

¹¹¹ See Thomas of Celano *Vita Secunda S. Francisci*. (1247) Ed. Edouard, d’Alençon (Rome 1906), at p. 6 and 8. See parallel accounts in *Legenda Trium Sociorum*, ed. Michele Faloci-Pulignani (1898), at p. 6 and 8.

¹¹² See parallel accounts in Celano *Vita Secunda S. Francisci*, at p. 7 and *Legenda Trium Sociorum*, at p. 7 and 13.

means he was to repair it.¹¹³ He was given direction on February 26, 1206 when he heard the command in Matthew 10:7-10¹¹⁴ to “Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse lepers, cast out demons. You received without paying; give without pay. Acquire no gold or silver or copper for your belts, no bag for your journey, or two tunics or sandals or a staff, for the labourer deserves his food” (Matthew 10: 8-10). From his “conversion,” Francis set out to imitate Christ with utmost, literal obedience; he “tossed aside his staff, kicked off his sandals, and, throwing aside his leather belt, he girded himself with a piece of rough cord” (Moorman 9).¹¹⁵ Thus the *imitatio Christi* at the core of Franciscan theology is intimately connected with the material—and specifically in this case, the renunciation of material adornment.

It is also worth highlighting the state of clothing within the socio-political sphere. The religious emphasis on adornment did not exist in a vacuum, and in fact sumptuary laws have been a part of Spanish culture dating back to Alfonso X’s *Siete Partidas*. For example, Law V declares that gold, silk and precious stones are appropriate dress for the King alone because his external body,¹¹⁶ representative of the kingdom itself, must manifest his God-appointed status.¹¹⁷

¹¹³ See the account of this revelation to Francis in the church of San Damiano in *Legenda Trium Sociorum*, at p. 13; Celano *Vita Prima S. Francisci*, at p. 7; and Celano *Vita Secunda S. Francisci*, at p. 10.

¹¹⁴ Chronology of this exact even is not completely agreed upon by scholars. See “Francesco Bernardone” in John Moorman’s *A History of the Franciscan Order*, p 8 and corresponding footnote 5 for a brief survey of the conflicting dates of Francis’ conversion.

¹¹⁵ See Celano *Vita Prima S. Francisci*, at pp. 21-22 and *Legenda Trium Sociorum*, at p. 25.

¹¹⁶ “Vestiduras facen mucho conoscer á los homes por nobles ó por viles, et por ende los sabios antiguos establecieron que los reyes vestiesen paños de seda con oro et con piedras preciosas, porque los homes los pudiesen conoscer luego que los viesen á menos de preguntar por ellos [...]” (28-29).

¹¹⁷ “[...] et aun en las grandes fiestas quando facien sus cortes trayesen coronas de oro con piedras muy nobles et ricamente obradas, et esto por dos razones; la una por sinificanza de

Progressing through the later Middle Ages to the Early Modern period we can notice a shift in the emphasis on sumptuary laws. There was an increased focus on textiles—both socially and artistically—with the rise in economic growth and production in the early sixteenth century: “[...] tanto en España como en Europa, el floreciente comercio se basa mayormente en la producción e intercambio de tejidos. No obstante, las actividades de transacciones comerciales conviven con el más antiguo sistema del regalo de las sociedades pre-industriales, es decir con el viejo orden económico y social” (Juárez-Almendros 19).

During the Spanish Renaissance, there is an evident shift in the regulation of clothing, as lavish consumerism becomes the scapegoat for Spain’s political unraveling.¹¹⁸ In 1552, Charles V’s issues an edict in an attempt to temper the populous that was “spending the sum of their worth on clothing, and thus causing the ruin of their country” (González 298). González concludes that “[i]n blaming consumption, Charles V scapegoats clothing for the nation’s soaring inflation, and garments become the subtext of Spain’s decline. In fact, it was in this disastrous year of 1552 that the state of Spain as a fledgling hegemonic power became clear” (302). In a general sense, it might be said that as the sartorial splendor began to wane within the socio-political sphere, its brilliance still waxed within popular religious praxis—a brilliance that can still be evidenced to this very day.¹¹⁹

nuestro señor Dios, cuyo lugar tienen en tierra; et la otra porque los homes los conociesen, asi como desuso deximos para venir á ellos á servirlos, et honrarlos, et á pedirles merced quando les fuese mester” (29).

¹¹⁸ Goretta González provides an excellent overview of this period in “Dismantling Sosiego: Undressing, Dressing, and Cross-Dressing in Mateo Alemán’s Guzmán de Alfarache” in *Objects of Culture in the Literature of Imperial Spain* (2013), 294-323.

¹¹⁹ See Webster, Susan (2004). She traces the origins of the historical practice of adorning statues of the Virgin Mary that is still prominent today within Catholic religious practice.

This extravagant brilliance of materiality within religious praxis clearly informed Juana's (and her contemporaries') conception spiritual realities. *Vida y Fin* and *Libro de la casa* are quite literally full of sartorial images, thus revealing the materiality of religious devotion within the Franciscan Order at the turn of the sixteenth century. This materiality is the means by which Juana, and many faithful followers like her, conceptualized the heavenly realms and entered into spiritual meditation. The visionary experience of Juana does not leave behind the material world in pursuit of nirvana-like nothingness, but rather lays hold of the material image and imbues it with theological meaning. We turn our attention now to the theological question of Christ's Incarnation and how Juana weaves a nuanced articulation of this doctrine through the image of Christ's dressing himself in Mary's flesh.

CHAPTER 3: (AD)DRESSING CHRIST THE DOCTRINE OF THE INCARNATION OF CHRIST

The Doctrine of the Incarnation in the Franciscan Tradition

Theologians have long wrestled with the doctrine of the Incarnation. What exactly does the Apostle John mean when he says “the Word became flesh and dwelt among us” (John 1:14)? How can one harmonize the incomprehensible coexistence of divinity and humanity? Medieval and modern theologians alike have struggled over Anselm of Canterbury’s infamous question, “Why did God become human?” and have always come up short. Indeed, one could not hope to exhaust the vast corpus of scholarly commentary on the doctrine of Christ’s Incarnation.¹²⁰

Nevertheless, Franciscan theologian Bonaventure (1217/21-1274) took the question a step further when he asked what is the purpose of the Evangelist [John] when he selected flesh rather than soul to represent humanity, “since the soul is the nobler part?” (*Commentary on the Gospel of John* 1:14]; *Works* XI, 85). He concluded that Christ assumed human flesh both for our instruction and for our salvation:¹²¹ “And it was instruction, because it was visible. And it was liberation, since it was capable of suffering. So ‘flesh’ (*caro*) signifies the visible part and the

¹²⁰ The essential components of Franciscan theology are the Incarnation and the Passion (Pérez García 2009, 602). For some of the most recent trends and approaches to this doctrine see the following resources: Emily A. Holmes (2014); Wendy Farley (2011); Mary Shawn Copeland (2010). Seminal works include: Karl Rahner (1966) and Bernard McGinn (1987); Michael D. Meilach (1964); More specifically for our topic on Franciscan Christology see: Ilia Delio (2003) and Neils H. Gregersen (2016).

¹²¹ For an insightful analysis of Bonaventure’s Christology see Niels Henrik Gregersen “The Emotional Christ: Bonaventure and Deep Incarnation” *Dialog: A Journal of Theology* 55.3 (2016) especially at p. 252.

one especially capable of suffering” (XI, 85). As Gregerson remarks, the Incarnation is all "about the healing of the full human nature [...]. For restoration only is possible if God of the heights goes deep into the full gamut of human existence—in order for God to be known by people living in the world of flesh” (2016, 252).

While Bonaventure proposed a “deep incarnation” theology in which Christ assumed the fullness of humanity, Raymond Lull (1232-1315) remarked in his *Libre de Sancta Maria* that “the nature of Jesus Christ is the most eminent and most noble of all creatures, because it is the end, the beginning and the crown of all other things since all things that God made, he created to be clothed with this human nature, born of our Blessed Lady” (63). It appears that Lull posits a more superficial hypostatic union—thus depicting Christ’s dual nature as a form of “clothing” in human nature.

The medieval devotion called *imitatio Christi* coupled with the extreme Franciscan asceticism “was an effort to plumb and to realize all the possibilities of the flesh. It was a profound expression of the doctrine of the Incarnation: the doctrine that Christ, by becoming human, saves all that the human being is” (Walker Bynum 1987, 294). Walker Bynum adds that “Religious women in the later Middle Ages saw in their own female bodies not only a symbol of the humanness of both genders but also a symbol of—and a means of approach to—the humanity of God” (1987, 296). In life practice, Juana had an intense devotion to *imitatio Christi*—as we have already discussed some of her ascetic practices in the introduction—thus we can conclude that meditation on Christ and his humanity was prevalent in Juana’s mind. Her visionary sermons provide a unique articulation of the doctrine of Christ’s Incarnation. Her sermons go beyond any form of personal *devotio* as the pedagogical nature of her sermons undoubtedly comes to the fore.

Mary's Flesh as Clothing for the Incarnate Christ

How does Juana tailor the doctrine of the Incarnation and what does her treatment of the Incarnation reveal about her theology? The most obvious place to start is her sermon on the Incarnation (Sermón I: “De la Encarnación”) the primary focus of our analysis will be drawn from this sermon. From the very beginning the interweaving of sartorial imagery and theological meaning is unavoidable. She states

Y, así hizo toda la Santísima Trinidad esta sacratísima y maravillosa Encarnación, así como la lavandera cuando quiere edificar una camisa, que primero lo piensa; y, como tiene la memoria y propósito, luego viene la sabiduría y discreción y dice: de esta manera se hará bien y de esta, y esto y esto será menester para ello; y luego empieza a labrar la camisa, meneando el cuerpo y poniendo toda la voluntad y fuerzas que son menester para ello. Y así hizo la Santísima Trinidad, en esta tan alta obra: Que el Padre, al cual se atribuye la memoria y propósito, y pensó; y el Hijo que es suyo, y al cual la sabiduría y discreción, miró y dijo: de esta manera será bueno que se haga; y el Espíritu Santo, al cual la voluntad y fuerzas, se meneó y labró aquella tan blanca y limpísima camisa que Nuestro Redentor se vistió del vientre virginal de Nuestra Señora la Virgen María. Y así se meneó toda la Santísima Trinidad e hizo la obra de nuestra redención. (I. 6: 244)

God describes Mary as a container for the three persons of the Trinity —Father, Son and Spirit— and contains one of the most important sartorial components of the sermon, the notion of Christ's dressing himself in an undergarment made of Mary's flesh.¹²²

¹²² It is interesting to compare Juana's elaboration of the threefold work of the Trinity in the forming and fashioning of Christ's body in the chamber of Mary's womb with Sor Isabel de Villena's (1430-90) *Vita Christi* (1497). I am not arguing that there was any contact between

Gabriel is then summoned before the Holy Trinity and is charged with announcing Christ's Incarnation to Mary.¹²³

Ven acá, Gabriel, sé tú mi casamentero, que yo quiero que trates tú este matrimonio y seas embajador de este tan alto secreto que te quiero descubrir, el cual es que vayas a María de Nazaret y la saludes de mi parte y la digas que se pare a la ventana, que quiero encarnar en ella y vestirme de su humanidad. (I:5, 238)

Mary's body thus becomes the garment that clothes Christ. Described as a "match-maker" ("casamentero"), Gabriel is overjoyed at God's command. He summons the other angelic beings to spread the news of Christ's decision to take on human flesh: "tiene por bien de ir allá a tomar carne humana del vientre virginal de María de Nazaret, que yo tengo en guarda" (I:5, 239).¹²⁴

these two women, however their treatment of the Incarnation, interwoven with sartorial imagery is quite striking. Twomey analyzes the scene in the following manner: "Sor Isabel describes at length the alliance of the Virgin Mary with grace to equip her for the Incarnation. She describes the first chamber, the Virgin's Memory, in her head, adorned by a carbuncle, which is where God is to dwell. The second chamber is the Virgin's Understanding, where God the Son is to dwell. The third chamber is her Will and it is here that the Holy Spirit is to dwell" (41).

¹²³ Bynum remarks the Marian thrust in iconography and visionary experience that, in some cases quite literally, posits Mary as the "container" or "throne" of her son: "there is a theology underlying the fusion/confusion, for Mary *is* the container and a revealer of the divine. Queen of heaven, she is a throne for one mightier than herself, simultaneously providing and displaying the child who will rule and save the world. [...] Yet Mary is also a body—and a body that contains a body" (2011, 88).

¹²⁴ An interesting foil of this image is present in Fernando de Roja's *La Celestina* (1499). Celestina is an antithetical image of the Virgin Mary, and her role as a go-between employs this mixed sartorial metaphor. Manuel da Costa Fontes in *The Art of Subversion in Inquisitorial Spain: Rojas and Delicado* (2005) provides an astute analysis in his chapter "Celestina as an Antithesis of the Blessed Mother" (pp. 101-41). He notes: "Since many churches are especially dedicated to the Blessed Mother, bearing her name in one form or another [...] he decided that Celestina's house should also be the shrine of a cult where anti-Marian and anti-Christian rites are performed. The congregation is composed of the servant girls who apparently go there to practice their sewing under the direction of Celestina, the high priestess who uses her ability as master seamstress to cover her less honorable professions. [...] A seamstress uses the needle, a phallic symbol, in her profession. Celestina is a *labrandería* ('seamstress'), and the young girls

The passage, which cites passages from scripture, gives an incredible amount of agency to the Virgin. She not a victim of God's decision to dress with her flesh, for he awaits her final consent:

“Y declaró el Señor, diciendo, que así como Gabriel vino a saludar a Nuestra Señora, luego a deshora apareció la Santísima Trinidad y estaba allí, junto con Nuestra Señora, esperando que consintiese y dijese que sí, para entrar luego y hacer nueva morada en ella. A significar que nunca el mismo Dios quiere hacer fuerza a nadie y entrar en el corazón, si primero le consienten y abren de buena voluntad. (I:5, 241)

This bond between God and the Mary is not the result of force, but mutual agreement. This makes the Virgin the ultimate decision-maker, because she subjects God's will to hers.

God's subjection to Mary's will is further highlighted later in Sermón I as Juana draws attention to Mary's elevated agency by stating that the angels themselves are shocked that Mary would keep God, and the entire Trinity, waiting so long for her consent: “¡Qué cosa será ésta, que la Trinidad y el poderoso Dios está aquí tanto esperando!” (I:5, 243). For Boon, God's seeking of consent from the Virgin harkens back to the marital laws of the *Siete Partidas* that specify that a bride must agree to a marriage for the union to be valid.¹²⁵ There is also a deeper theological assertion being made.

who come to her house *a labrarse* ("to get sewed") go there in order to give up the virginity that the Blessed Mother represents and defends as 'Mater purissima' ('Mother most pure'), 'Mater castissima' ('Mother most chaste'), 'Mater inviolata' ('Mother inviolate'), and especially as 'Regina Virginum' ('Queen of Virgins'). Note that *labrar* also means 'to plough,' i. e., 'to fornicate.' The term was already used with identical meaning in ancient Greece. 'Labrar camisas' ('to sew shifts') alludes to the blood shed by the girls while losing their virginity, for 'la camisa' ('the shift') also constitutes a reference to menstruation" (113).

¹²⁵ See *Mother Juana de la Cruz: Visionary Sermons* (2016), p. 50 and corresponding footnote 33. This is indeed an apt connection, because the dialogue is steeped in marital union language (i.e. "casamentero", "vientre virginal", "conocer varón", and the like).

Mary's free will is something with which God must contend. It is a condition that can be extrapolated to all humanity (“nunca el mismo Dios quiere hacer fuerza a *nadie*”; emphasis mine). This application to others unveils theological thrust of Juana’s visions, and its pedagogical quality. Her affirmation anticipates one of the great theological debates of the sixteenth century, namely the Doctrine Free Will vs. God’s Sovereignty. For Juana, Mary’s will is autonomous, influenced neither by angelic appeal nor by the will of the Holy Trinity. Gabriel, after pleading repeatedly with the Virgin Mary to allow God to enter her virginal womb, admits defeat:

Y el santo ángel Gabriel, viendo como no podía vencer a Nuestra Señora para que dijese sí, por cuantas razones le decía, sino que aún estaba arraigada en su muy profunda humildad, diciendo que no era digna ni merecedora de tan grande bien, se quería ya tornar al cielo a decirlo al Señor, cómo ella en ninguna manera quería consentir. Y que no consentir la Virgen, significaba que fue tan humilde que nunca de sí misma, sin ser de Dios mesterada y esforzada, presumiera por alguna inducción exterior desear para sí tal dignidad. Y que bien, se pudiera San Gabriel volver al cielo sin el despacho, si la Trinidad desde su trono no enseñara y moviera a la Virgen a consentir” (I:5, 243).

Theologians have never agreed on how to best harmonize human free will with God’s will, yet Juana undoubtedly asserts the doctrine of an independent will upon which God is not able or does not permit himself to encroach.¹²⁶ Mary's intense humility really reveals the independence of her will.¹²⁷

¹²⁶ Interestingly this notion anticipates a theological debate that began taking shape during the sixteenth century regarding free will and divine sovereignty. Luis de Molina (1535-1600), a Spanish Jesuit, is the founder of a particular school of thought (today known as Molinism) that purports a human will that is entirely free, harmonizing it with a divinely sovereign God through

Although Sermón I is not replete with sartorial allusions, the entirety of Gabriel's interaction with Mary is imbued by a quote from the Gospel of Luke: "No temas, María, ni te turbes, que el Espíritu Santo vendrá sobre ti y la virtud del altísimo te cubrirá" (I:5, 241). In other words, the virtue of the Most High ("virtud del altísimo") will cover ("cubrirá") the Virgin—as a garment covers one's body—and this language anticipates the sartorial climax of Sermón I.¹²⁸

Y así como acabó de decir estas palabras, luego entró en ella toda la Trinidad en su vientre virginal. Y primeramente entró el Padre a aparejar la morada del Hijo, y luego entró el Hijo *a vestirse de la humanidad*, y luego entró el Espíritu Santo a formar y edificar el cuerpo. Y primeramente pensó el Padre en su memoria, cómo se edificaría aquel sagrado cuerpo. Y luego vino la sabiduría y discreción, que es el Hijo, y parió la palabra, diciendo, de esta manera se hará. Y luego se movió el Espíritu Santo, el cual es la fuerza y voluntad del Padre y del Hijo, y empezó a edificar un cuerpecito de niño muy blanco y purísimo. Y edifiéle unos ojos, los más lindos y amorosos y misericordiosos que nunca jamás fueron ni serán; y unas narices, las más lindas y afiladas que nunca se vieses; y una boca, la más dulce y graciosa que jamás hubo ni habrá; y unos brazos y manos, las más lindas y delicadas que nunca hombre tuvo ni tendrá; y unas piernas y pies,

Molina's articulation of God's omniscience. For a recent biography and helpful systematization of Molina's theology see Kirk MacGregor (2015).

¹²⁷ Alison Weber (1990) provides an applicable analysis of this rhetorical device among female authors. She notes the use of extreme humility and self-debasement as a means of ultimately asserting her voice: "Teresa's defensive strategy was to embrace stereotypes of female ignorance, timidity, or physical weakness [...]" (36).

¹²⁸ In this scene, Juana does not play up on the sexual connotation of "cubrir." In contrast, Sermón XXX ("De la natividad de Nuestra Señora") there is a rather erotically charged celestial scene, the climax of which being God's enveloping ("cubrir") of Mary's naked body. For further reading on the erotic elements of his sermon see Surtz Chapter 5 "Juana de la Cruz and the Secret Garden" in *Writing Women in Late Medieval and Early Modern Spain* (1995).

los más tallados y lindos que se podían decir ni pensar. Y, así, edificó y formó en aquel sagrado cuerpo de Nuestro Señor Jesucristo, los más lindos miembros y facciones que nunca criatura tuvo. Y, por eso, es dicho de Él que es más hermoso sobre todos los hijos de los hombres. (I:5, 244, emphasis mine)

There is a strong parallel between Juana's prior descriptions of Mary's beauty and purity and that of Christ. Mary is "limpísima, hermosísima, pura y perfecta" (I:3, 235). Whiteness denotes the purity of both bodies and, in fact, alludes to her virginal state and the purity of her flesh. For example, in Sermon 9, the angels present Christ with a statue of the Virgin Mary "ceñido por los lomos con cinta de cristal muy blanca y clara y hermosa y olorosa. A significar la virginidad y limpieza y puridad de Nuestra Señora la Virgen María, de la cual tomó Él carne. En cuanto hombre, fue muy virgen y limpio; y en cuanto Dios, muy alto y fuerte y poderoso e incomprehensible" (IX:14, 452). Mary is like Christ, who is "virgen y limpio" and "fuerte, poderoso e incomprehensible." He dresses himself with her flesh (or "humanidad") and that is further interpreted as being the "limpio, puro, blanco" nature of her womb. In the end, it is not the virtue of the Most High that covers or dresses the Virgin, but rather it is Mary and her immaculate flesh that "covers" or builds Jesus' body.

This articulation of the Doctrine of the Incarnation as a form of "dressing in Mary's flesh" is not unique to Juana. We see other traces of the sartorial metaphor in both literature and iconography. Alfonso X's *Cantigas* contain the first documentation of a common practice that was part of popular religious praxis:

E daquest' un gran miragre / vos quer' ora retraer
que mostrou Santa María, / per com'eu pud' aprender,
a un Rei que sas figuras / mandava sempre fazer

muit' apostas e fremosas; / e fazia-as vestir [...]

De mui ricos panos d' ouro / e de mui nobre lavor,

pōya-lles nas testas / pera parecer mellor

corōas con muitas pedras / ricas, que grand' esprandor

davan senpr' aa omagen / e faziana luzir. [...]

E outrossí nas sas festas /ar fazia-lle muda

senpr' outros panos mais ricos / pola festa mais onrrar [...] (*Cantiga* 295, 85)

This “cantiga” refers to the practice of dressing and adorning Marian effigies in churches first seen, according to Webster, in the treatment of the Virgen de los Reyes in Seville.¹²⁹

This tradition seems not to have emphasized the Virgin’s individuality but rather her standing as the Queen of Heaven (Bynum 2011, 53).¹³⁰ Not only were her statues adorned with sumptuous garments, but they also became a material container of the divine, as many were devotional figures called “Vierges ouvrantes” that opened to reveal relics or consecrated hosts (2011, 88):

In such devotional objects, body and material thing (the pregnant or lactating Mary and the Eucharist cabinet; the lap of Christ’s mother, a relic container, and a piece of furniture) seem to fuse or become each other. And there is a theology underlying the fusion/confusion, for Mary *is* the container and revealer of the divine. Queen of heaven,

¹²⁹ According to Susan Webster, the “imagen de vestir” is “a specialized genre of sculpture that was specifically intended to be clothed in actual garments” (2004, 252).

¹³⁰ Webster remarks: “The actual garments and physical mobility of the sculptures contributed significantly to their emotional impact and persuasiveness. Simultaneously, the splendor of the clothing and adornments made a powerful and very public statement about the material as well as spiritual wealth and status of the [individuals] that carried them through the streets in procession” (2004, 254).

she is a throne for one mightier than herself, simultaneously providing and displaying the child who will rule and save the world. Yet this Mary is also a body—and a body that contains a body. (2011, 88)

These devotional objects visually present a Mary as a sort of “dressing chamber” for her holy son.

We see even more compelling evidence of this metaphor in other religious works. Francisco de Osuna's *Primer Abecedario* (ca. 1540), for example, describes Jesus' flesh as a tunic (“manta”) and the Crucifixion as a losing his clothing:¹³¹

Entendiendo más profundamente estas vestiduras, que son manto y túnica, podremos dezir que son aquellas de que dize Job hablando Dios: ‘De piel y carnes me vestiste’. Las carnes son como túnica, que es la vestidura que está debaxo de todas, y el cuero que está encima es como manto. Estas vestiduras son las que Dios crió al hombre, y, para que no uviesse menester sastres, Él mesmo se las dio y que con Él vayan creciendo y duren tanto como el hombre durare; todas estotras, por causa del pecado, vinieron y los hombres las inventaron. Estas dos vestiduras quitaron a Christo estos sus malos siervos a poder de llagas y açotes, y aun los huesos le hizeroan pedaços, como a ladrón, si les fuera consentido. (XIV:5, 401-2)

The “manto” and “túnica” represent human flesh, and at the Cross, Christ is stripped of both.

Bernardino de Laredo's *Subida del Monte Sion* (1535/1538) has another almost identical description to Juana's Sermon 1.¹³² In Part II, he treats at length the image of Christ's body as a woven, seamless tunic:

¹³¹ I gratefully acknowledge Jessica Boon for directing me to this connection.

¹³² Again, I gratefully acknowledge Jessica Boon for directing me to this connection.

Mas pregunto ¿o, triunfante vencedor! essa túnica inconsútil tramada de toda la Trinidad con la virginal urdiembre, ¿quién os la pudo rasgar con tanta ferocidad? Por ventura, ¿no estava allí vuestra Madre lastimada, la Madalena y sant Juan, que echaran suertes sobre ella? ¿O si la conocerá por túnica de su hijo (viéndola despedaçada) la madre que la texió dentro en sus mismas entrañas? Y essa sangre de rubicunda tintura, ¿es del Cordero de Dios, o es de sus mismas entrañas o es quizá de ambos a dos, o de un mismo corazón de un ánima assossegada? Mas bien sé, mi dulce amor, que quien la ha de conocer es verdadero Jacob o el verdadero Israel, padre de vuestra inocencia, aunque la tintura dio el corazón de la Madre que la vido derramar. (II:26, 292)

Here the metaphor of Christ dressing himself in Mary's flesh is intertwined with the image of her sewing a tunic for her beloved son out of herself. Bernardino ponders whether it is Mary or God himself that fashions the fleshly garments of the Incarnate Jesus:

Cierto está que esta tan rasgada túnica era tan puro hilado y de tan subtiles hilos, que la vista intelectual, ni el entendimiento angélico, ni los cielos de los cielos, ni aun los altos serafines a comprehender la inmensidad del misterio. E pudiéronla romper, pero no se descosió, porque no tuvo costura, compostura, ni doblez, mas pura simplicidad. Sólo el Padre dio la trama; texióla el Espíritu Santo; sólo el Verbo la visitó; e no se excluyen los dos quando dize 'sólo el uno', mas entiende en tres distintas personas sola una simplicidad en una sola sustancia, o digo una essencia sola. (II:26, 292)

As with Juana's description of the Incarnation, Bernardino's explains that the Father produces the weave ("trama"), which is crafted by the Holy Spirit and then donned by the Son ("Verbo"). It is a mystery that is beyond the comprehension of even the most angelic beings ("ni los altos serafines") and in which Mary plays a crucial role:

Esta túnica inconsútil, que la Virgen le texió en la infancia de su inmensa Magestad, es sobre la que sortearon los carníferos sayones, que rompieron la sacra túnica mística, que se ha de entender del sacratísimo cuerpo de esta divina bondad, porque el cuerpo sacratísimo crucificado en la cruz es la túnica del Verbo eterno divino y en ella es el rompimiento de quien es la relación que nos da aqueste capítulo. (II:26, 292).

Interestingly, this exact description of an un-seamed body of Christ (“túnica inconsútil”) is also found in María de Ágreda’s work *La mística ciudad de Dios* (1670), which devotes an entire chapter to the Incarnation and describes Mary as the immaculate tabernacle wherein God dwells with men and assumes human flesh:

Pero como los dones de Dios no son con penitencia, porque no retrata el bien, que haze, aunque desobligado de los hombres, dize, que ya esta hecho: como si nos dixera, que aunque por nuestra ingratitud le tenemos irritado, no quiere retroceder en su amor; antes aviendo embiado al mundo à Maria Santissima sin culpa original, ya da por hecho todo lo que pertenece al Mysterio de la Encarnacion, pues estando Maria Purissima en la tierra, no parece que se podía quedar el Verbo Eterno en solo el Cielo sin baxar à tomar carne humana en sus entrañas. (Vol. I; Book 1, Chapter XVII; p. 81)

For María de Ágreda, the seamless and fleshly tunic that clothes Jesus mystically grows as he develops, and is never removed until he dies on the cross.

Para vestir al Niño Dios la tunicela texida con los paños, y sandalias, que la Madre misma avia trabajado con sus manos, se puso la Prudentissima Señora arrodillada en preferencia de su dulcissima Hijo, y le hablò de esta manera: Señor Altissimo, Criador de los Cielos, y de la tierra, yo deseaba vestiros, si fuera possible, según la dignidad de vuestra Divina Persona: también quisiera poder aver hecho el vestido que os traygo de la sangre de mi

coraçon; pero juzgo será de vuestro agrado, por lo que tiene de pobre, y humilde.

Perdonad, Señor, Dueño mio, las faltas, y recibid el afecto de este inútil polvo, y ceniza, y dadme licencia, para que os le vista. Admitiò el Infante Jesus el servicio, y obsequio de su Purissima Madre: y luego ella le vistiò, le calçò, y le puso en pie. La tunicela le vino à su medida, hasta cubrirle el pie sin arrastrarle, y las mangas le cubrían hasta la mitad de las manos, y de nada se tomò antes medida. El cuello de la túnica era redondo, sin estar abierto por delante, y algo levantado, y ajustado casi à la garganta: y con ser assi, se le vistiò su Divina Madre por la Cabeça del Niño, sin abrirle; por que la obedecia el vestido, para acomodarle graciosamente à su voluntad. E jamàs se le quitò, hasta que los Sayones le desnudaron, para açotarle, y después para curicificarle: porque siempre fue creciendo con el Sagrado Cuerpo, todo lo que era necesario. Y nada se gastò, ni envegeciò en treinta, y dòs años: ni la túnica perdiò el color, y lustre con que la facò de sus manos la gran Señora; y mucho menos se manchò, ni fuciò, porque siempre estuvo en un mismo ser. Las vestiduras que despuso el Redentor del mundo para labar los pies à sus Apostoles era un manto, o capa, que llevaba sobre los hombres: y este le hizo también la misma Virgen después que bolvieron à Nazareth; y fue creciendo como la túnica, y del mismo color, algo mas obscuro, tejido de aquel modo. (Vol. II: Chap. 29, Sec. 691: pp. 229-30)

Like Osuna, María sees Christ's laying down his life as removing his garments. Weaving together these examples we can see the common metaphor that shapes their understanding of Christ's Incarnation.

Clothing Christ's Frail Human Flesh

It is Mary's immaculate flesh—functioning as a protective shroud from original sin—that becomes the focal point of Christ's divinity; yet, concomitantly there is an emphasis on Christ's

physicality, his susceptibility to hunger, thirst, cold, and the like: “Y cuando él nació y padeció no solamente la muy cruda y amarga pasión, más aún desde niño empezó a padecer muy grande frío, pobreza, hambre, sed y otros muchos trabajos, persecuciones, injurias y menosprecios, nos dio la vida” (I:2, 233). In contrast with Mary’s nativity, which we will discuss momentarily, Christ must be swaddled to protect his frail flesh from the elements. As Oosterwijk (2007) has astutely studied there is indeed a connection between the sartorial practice of swaddling and shrouding.¹³³ Thus, the swaddling of Christ’s flesh can be seen as a symbol of his fleshly nature that ultimately culminates in his Passion, death, and subsequent shrouding.

There is a subtlety to Juana’s theological doctrine of the Incarnation that should not go unnoticed. It is grounded on the chronology of his life and encompasses the before, during and after of his life. Prior to his Incarnation, Juana tells that the angels ask Christ to come and redeem sinful humanity.¹³⁴ His response sounds anything but divine: “Y muchas veces voy a salir del seno del Padre y me torno luego a encerrarme, temiendo, como soy tan tierno y delicado, la cruda y amarga pasión que me han de dar, y todas las angustias, penas y trabajos que tengo que padecer” (I:2, 234). He is anxious even before the Incarnation, because he is frail and frightened. Nevertheless, he proclaims that he will make himself flesh: “Ahora os digo en verdad, mis amigos, que me habéis vencido con esa demanda y a mí me place encarnarme e ir al mundo, aunque sepa que me han de blasfemar, matar y desagradecer la redención que les haré. Yo lo sufriré todo de buena voluntad y no dejaré por todo esto de ir a mostrar me y manifestarme a

¹³³ For an in-depth discussion on the similarities and significance of these practices see Sophie Oosterwijk (2008) especially, pp. 317-26.

¹³⁴ They cry “Oh Señor, encarna ya y ve a remediarlos, que te llaman con tantas lágrimas y gemidos. Y si no pudieras ir por remediar las sillas ni por dar la salud ni la vida ni la redención, ve ya siquiera porque no se quejen de ti y digan que no tuvieron Dios vivo y verdadero que los alumbrase, enseñase y amonestase; y porque no digan que nunca tuvieron Señor que los alquilase. Ve tú, allá y alquilalos, alúmbralos y enséñalos” (I:2, 234).

todos, clara y abiertamente” (I: 2, 234-35). The angels rejoice at Christ’s decision and then heed his command to “id vosotros y decidlo a María y a Juan, que quiero ir” (I:2, 235).

Juxtaposed to this description of Christ is Juana's description of Mary:

Y en este tiempo nacieron sus padres de Nuestra Señora, y también nació ella muy limpísima, hermosísima, pura y perfecta: y lleváronla al templo de Dios a la ofrecer y sacrificar. Y estando ella allí, rogaba al Señor, muy afincadamente, siempre la conservase y guardase en pureza y en virginidad y limpieza de ánima y cuerpo. (I:3, 235)

The parallelisms are undeniable—a very human Christ, who has yet to actually conjoin his divinity with human flesh and a human Mary who has yet to ascend to Heaven but is already “divine.” The angels draw further attention to her perfection as they proclaim “¡Oh Señor, mira a María, cuán perfecta es! Cierto es muy perfecta criatura, y parece angélica y no persona humana. Y tan excelente es en sus obras que cierto es más perfecta que nosotros, por lo cual nos holgamos y deleitamos mucho en contemplar en ella” (I:3, 235). She does not even seem to be a “persona humana” but rather an angel because of her beauty and perfection.¹³⁵

Adorned in Suffering, Crowned in Thorns

This use of sartorial imagery to describe the Incarnation cannot be complete without also examining Juana’s treatment of Christ’s body during the Passion. In my discussion of Sermon XIX, “De lo que el Señor padeció el día de Viernes Santo,” I argued that Juana’s Marian

¹³⁵ See also Boon’s footnote 24 on p. 46 of *Mother Juana de la Cruz: Visionary Sermons*. Here Boon discusses briefly the contrast between Mary’s perfection and Christ’s humanity. In “Agony of the Virgin: The Swoons and Crucifixion of Mary in Sixteenth Century Castilian Passion Treatises” (2007) Boon further expounds this trend of increasing devotion to Christ’s humanity in Spain starting in the early 1500s and continuing on throughout Spain’s Golden Age (1500-1650).

theology leads her to portray a Christ, whose divinity seems almost rooted in the immaculate flesh of his Holy Mother. This is supported by her sermon on Christ's Passion, which begins with a portrayal of the interaction between Jesus, Pilate and the Jewish leaders.

The latter vehemently argue that Christ is entirely human and should be crucified for feigning a royal and divine origin: “¡Oh Pilato! ¿Para qué dices esas cosas? Que cierto él no es rey, que nosotros sabemos de a dónde es y conocemos a su padre y a su madre que son de Nazaret, y su padre era un pobre viejo y herrero y su madre es una mujercilla pobre y tejedora” (XIX:2, 664). To their knowledge Christ cannot be a king because of his parentage and the fact that his mother is nothing but a poor seamstress (“tejedora”).¹³⁶ They jeer at Jesus stating: “Pues éste se hace rey, razón es que le coronemos y adornemos la cabeza, pues todo el cuerpo le habemos adornado con azotes según que él merece” (XIX:4, 664). The lashes are metaphorical adornments for Christ's body similar to the Crown of Thorns on his head: “Y dijo el Señor, que luego trajeron e hicieron la corona de espinas y se la pusieron en su realísima cabeza de majestad, las cuáles espinas, dijo él mismo, eran cada una de ellas tan largas como el dedo y tan recias como clavos de hierro” (XIX:4, 664). The crown is a polyvalent symbol that normally points both to a physical covering and to his divine nature. Juana, however, elaborates:

Y que viendo Herodes cómo su Majestad no le respondía, pensando alcanzar de él que en su presencia hiciese milagros y maravillas, mandóle quitar la corona de espinas que traía tan cruel en su sacratísima cabeza, como que le quería hacer alguna piedad, y darle alguna honra. Y como nuestro Señor Jesucristo, dijo él mismo, venía tan herido y lastimado y las espinas con tanta crueldad hincadas y apuñadas en su sacratísima cabeza

¹³⁶ This sartorial detail can be traced back to *Protoevangelium of James* that depicts Mary as one of the virgins selected to craft the temple veil. See Boon's footnote 157 on p. 130 in *Mother Juana de la Cruz: Visionary Sermons*.

le herían y lastimaban y atormentaban, mandósela quitar. Y que luego Herodes tomó la corona de oro que tenía en su cabeza y se la puso a él en la suya, con la cual le hería y lastimaba mucho más, por cuanto él venía muy herido y lastimado y la cabeza toda hinchada y los cabellos pegados a la garganta con la mucha sangre que le salía. Por lo cual, dijo el Señor, que miremos y consideremos qué tal estaría él con al corona de oro, estando desnudo y escarnecido y con muy desechadas vestiduras, todo llegado y herido y cubierto de sangre desde encima de la cabeza hasta las plantas de los pies, y en las llagas de los azotes pegadas las vestiduras, todo temblando y muy desfallecido que no se podía tener. Y que así mismo, miremos y consideremos y hayamos compasión de él, pensando lo que su divina Majestad padecería en carne tan delicada y lastimada cuando le quitaban y desnudaban unas vestiduras y le ponían otras por escarnio, renovándole cada vez las llagas y sacándole los pedazos y vueltas de las vestiduras. (XIX:5, 665)

For her, the crown is the nexus between Christ's suffering body (symbolized by the painful thorns) and his glorified body (symbolized by the gold). His physical body ("carne tan delicada"), once adorned and enshrouded by Mary's immaculate flesh at conception, is now weak ("carne tan delicada"), naked, wounded and bleeding from many beatings. The repeated dressing and undressing draws our attention and stirs our emotions by contemplating the suffering, tortured flesh of Christ.

Juana's narrative questions his nature—is Christ truly divine, when his flesh appears entirely human and corruptible? As the scene unfolds, the tension grows, and Christ's divinity seems to be, quite literally, hanging by a thread. His interstitial state—somewhere in the continuum between divinity and humanity— is once again indicated by a change in his corporeal adornment:

Y dijo su Majestad, del poderoso Dios que, viendo Herodes cómo por ninguna cosa ni honra que le hacía no quería responder ni hacer ningún milagro delante de él, que le mandó quitar la corona de oro que le había puesto y que le tornasen luego a poner la de espinas que él se traía, y allí luego, delante de él, le escarneciesen y diesen muchos golpes y palos y heridas. (XIX:5, 665)

The crown of gold is once again removed from Christ's head, and he is forced to don the crown of thorns before suffering yet another round of beatings. Just before Jesus is finally crucified, he is stripped and in place of his clothing he is adorned by a wooden cross upon which he will most fully display his humanity:

Y llevándole así con muchas penas y tormentos llegaron con él al monte Calvario. Y allí le desnudaron luego la vestiduras arrancándoselas con gran crueldad, renovándole sus llagas, dándole golpes y heridas sin cuento. E hicieronle tender desnudo en tierra, encima de la cruz, y allí le enclavaron la mano derecha. (XIX:14, 669).

The physical pain and suffering of Christ was a contemplative image well known to religious devotees, among them Juana, whose autobiographical works reveal that she was intensely devoted to Passion meditation.¹³⁷ For Juana we see here the materiality of the crown of thorns

¹³⁷ Several examples from *Vida y fin*: “Todas las veces que ella se podía desocupar para rezar y contemplar, hacía oración muy fervorosa, bañada en lágrimas salidas de su corazón y lloradas con compasión a la Pasión de Jesucristo Nuestro Señor, y, hecha de otra manera, la tenía no por tan acepta para ser recibida delante del acatamiento divino” (fols. 513-14) and “traía siempre en su memoria su Pasión de muchas maneras y también hacía otras penitencias con la boca, trayendo una piedra algo grande que le daba dolor” (fol. 521). Traditionally, this affective meditation on the Passion is traced back to Saint Francis himself; however, Sarah McNamer has challenged this long-standing assumption asserting that “compassionate devotion to the Passion was most certainly an affective practice central to the lives of religious women before its adoption by the Franciscans” (2010, 87). She grounds her claims in a careful study of medieval Passion iconography. See Sarah McNamer (2010).

becomes the means she uses to invite her audience to enter into a deeper spiritual (ie. non-physical) communion with Christ.

Juana does not shy away from the gruesome image of the cross, in keeping with the infatuation of medieval iconography with the bleeding and tormented body of Christ:

Y estando él así colgado en la cruz, tan llagado y atormentado, bañando y cubierto de sangre desde encima de al cabeza hasta las plantas de los pies, no cesaba, con todos estos tormentos y lágrimas y gemidos, de hacer plegarias al Padre. [...] Y cuando Nuestra Señora, la Virgen María, veía cómo él derramaba tantas lágrimas y sangre de los ojos de misericordia y de todos sus sacratísimos miembros y cuerpo de Majestad, que mojava y teñía todo el suelo, poníase ella debajo de al cruz para cogerlo todo en su rostro. Y que no solamente estaba Nuestra Señora llena de sangre su rostro y persona, más aun San Juan y la Magdalena lo estaban así mismo, como se metían debajo de la cruz y se abrazaron con ella, y como se echaban en tierra a besar la sangre que en ella caía. (XIX:17-19, 671, 674)¹³⁸

Juana embellishes the plain description of the biblical account by showing Mary in a highly charged emotional state by her rhetoric:

¡Ay, Hijo mío muy amado! Yo te parí, yo te crié, yo so tu triste y desconsolada madre. ¿Cómo me haces extraña, llamándome mujer? ¿Qué trueque tan amargo es este que conmigo, tu dolorosa y triste madre, has hecho, dándome a Juan en tu lugar, al siervo por el Señor y al discípulo por el Maestro, al sobrino por le Hijo verdadero y cierto? Bien sabes tú, Hijo mío muy amado, que yo nunca parí ni crié a otro sino a ti solo, mi Dios y

¹³⁸ Bynum notes the paradox of Christ's dying, yet life-giving, blood which predominated in many depictions of the Passion. For further reading and examples of Passion iconography see Bynum (2007) at 6, 14-15, 153-155. See also Cynthia Robinson (2014).

mi Señor y mi Hijo y mi Criador, pues, ¿cómo me das la criatura en lugar del Criador?
[...] Cierta hijo Juan que, aunque tú [Juan] eres bueno y hermoso y santo, mucho más
bueno y santo y hermoso y perfecto es mi amado y dulce Hijo, porque tú eres criatura y él
es Criador, tú eres siervo y él Señor, tú eres hombre mortal y él Dios verdadero. (XIX:18,
673)

Mary, as in the account of Christ's conception, becomes the authorizing source of her son's divinity. Not only that, but she becomes the focal point of the entire crucifixion. Christ's physically bruised, and bloodied body—his humanity—serves as a material reminder of the spiritual crucifixion of the Virgin Mary: “Y así, dijo nuestro Redentor, era toda crucificada en el ánima, así como él lo era en el cuerpo” (XIX:16, 671).¹³⁹ Her greater, spiritual suffering (“en el ánima”) is contrasted to Christ's corporeal suffering. The humanity of Christ is once again accompanied by a description of the divine nature of his Holy Mother, as once again, she draws our attention to several sartorial images, namely burial cloths (“sábanas”), headdresses (“tocas”) and handkerchiefs (“paños”).

Sermon 19 on the Crucifixion and Sermon 20 on the Resurrection are held together by verbs of enveloping (“envolver” and “desenvolver”). Prior to his burial, Christ's body is wrapped in a burial cloth (“sábana”) in order to conceal his many wounds:

Y dijo el Señor que, como vinieron Nicodemus y José Arimatea, en la tarde, con los ungüentos y aparejos necesarios para descolgar y ungir y envolver, y, en alguna manera, honrar y dar sepultura a su venerable y sacratísimo cuerpo, que, después que le hubieron

¹³⁹ See Boon “Agony of the Virgin” for an in-depth discussion on the suffering of both Mary and her son. Concerning the genre *Passio Christi*, Boon concludes: “Despite the interest in Christ's suffering and death that such a title might suggest, the originality of the Castilian technique is actually found in Mary's role in imaginative meditation on the events of Holy Week. It is Mary, not Christ, who is the ultimate focus of the envisioned physical pain in these new works” (2007, 3).

descendido de la cruz con grande dolor y trabajo, le pusieron envuelto en una sábana y le comenzaron a ungir, estando su muy dolorosa Madre amortecida y enajenada de sus sentidos. La cual, cuando tornó en sus sentidos y le vio delante de sí muerto y descoyuntado, llagado y herido y muy desfigurado, y cómo le salía de todas sus llagas tanta sangre que no la podían restañar ni abastar de coger y empapar en todo cuanto lienzo trajeron los bienaventurados Nicodemus y José de Arimatea, ni en las tocas y paños de la Magdalena y de las otras bienaventuradas mujeres [...]. (XIX:29, 679)

The linen shrouds and Mary Magdalene's headdress ("tocas") and handkerchief ("paños") are not sufficient to soak up all of the blood pouring from Christ's wounds. Their attempts to cover them are foiled both by their depth and by the Virgin Mary's unwillingness to let go over her beloved son's body. Mary's body becomes almost indistinguishable from that of her son as she presses her lips and face into his wounds: "[...] comenzó a hacer tantos dolorosos llantos, poniendo su boca y ojos y rostro en sus sagradas llagas y costado" (XIX:29, 679). Thus, the linen meant to conceal and shroud Christ's body serves rather to more prominently display his corporeal suffering. Mary's intimacy with Christ in these final moments before his burial harken back to his conception—Mary's body is yet again, the protective shroud that envelops her son.

Interestingly, Saint John makes the Virgin Mary swoon, in order to remove her from her son and finish the burial process. The unveiling Christ's mortified flesh evokes such intense pain within the Virgin in Saint John's Gospel that she faints, allowing the disciple and others to quickly bury Christ before she awakes:

Y dijo el mismo Redentor que, viendo el glorioso san Juan cómo ya era tarde y casi de noche y que no podía partir ni sacar del sepulcro a Nuestra Señora para le cubrir y acabar de sepultar su sacratísimo cuerpo, que acordó y pensó en sí, con gran dolor y

quebrantamiento, de desenvolver el su sacratísimo cuerpo o algo de él y mostrar las sus crudelísimas llagas a su Santa Madre para que, viéndolas, se amorteciese, según hacía al pie de la cruz, y después de ella amortecida, pudiesen cubrir y acabar de sepultar su precioso y sacratísimo cuerpo. (XIX:29, 680)

They are finally able to cover and bury Christ's body, and the scene further highlights the intimate connection between Christ's corporeal suffering and Mary's internal suffering. The extreme emotional response elicited by Christ's nude body was very common in popular religious practice and particularly within medieval iconography; thus it is not surprising that Juana would emphasize the intense emotional response of the Virgin Mary. Sherry Lindquist in *The Meaning of Nudity in Medieval* (2012) remarks, "[...] the most dramatic scenes of Christ's birth, torture, death and resurrection often picture him unclothed. These Latin passion tracts were disciplinary, as Thomas Bestul shows; they were meant to control Passion worship, to enforce orthodoxy and combat heresy" (13). Therefore Mary becomes the figurehead for the ideal (understood, "orthodox") worshipper. Upon removing the linen clothes and beholding his wounded body, Mary's emotional response is just as intense as when she clung to his bloody body hanging on the cross.¹⁴⁰ This same image of a disfigured, bloody corpse is carried into the following sermon on Christ's Resurrection.

Bloody Headdresses and Handkerchiefs

Juana not only uses sartorial imagery in her descriptions of the Incarnation, but she also uses them to describe true devotion to and contemplation of the Incarnate Christ. The

¹⁴⁰ For an in-depth discussion of Spanish Passional culture in the late Medieval/Early Modern period, see Timothy Mitchell (1990). Regarding Mary's pain, and particularly the *Mater Doloroso*, see pp. 164-80.

Resurrection sermon opens with another vivid picture of Christ's bleeding flesh and blood-soaked linen shroud:

Y fue metida dentro de, en el mismo sepulcro, y vio su sagrado cuerpo todo destellando sangre en tanto grado que estaba toda la sábana en que estaba envuelto bañada y muy yerta de la continua sangre que nunca cesaba de manar de todas las llagas y heridas que en su precioso cuerpo le habían hecho. (XX:2, 686)

She begins to unwrap the linen shrouds in order to gaze once more upon the wounded flesh of her beloved son ("Y que su preciosa Madre y Señora empezó, con muy gran dolor, a desatarle las cintas con que estaba liado, por verle las llagas que el día antes le habían hecho," XX:2, 686) and examine his wounds, especially the "cinco puertas o ventanas de sus preciosas manos y pies y costado" (XX:2, 686-87); she notices Christ's side gash is as large as her face ("Y que cuando miraba la llaga del costado y la veía tan grande y cruel que le cabía toda la anchura del rostro de ella," XX:2, 687). This image is steeped in Franciscan tradition. As Boon notes, "Franciscan devotees often imagined themselves entering into the wounds of Christ" (2016, 155).¹⁴¹

Therefore the materiality of his bloodied flesh is in consonance with the contemplation of a true follower of Christ. But in these sermons, the human, suffering savior—Jesus—is merely a platform to elevate this holy, contemplative mother, Mary. Other subtle parallels in the description of the scene evidence this. Christ's body is blood-soaked, Mary's is drenched with

¹⁴¹ Thomas Bestul (1997) describes this intense devotion to the bloodied wounds of Christ (26-68). In reference to one devotional work he observes, "The meditator enters into the bleeding wounds of the body of Christ, kisses them, and stains her lips with his blood. Highly physical and affective devotion to the wounds of Christ characterizes much of the piety of the later Middle Ages, but the elements of this devotion can be found as early as the middle of the twelfth century, as this example from Aelred shows" (39-40). Amy Hollywood (2010) assumes a gendered approach and interprets the bloody depictions of Christ as a conflation of "the wound with the female sex" (116).

tears: “toda cubierta de lágrimas y todo el suelo mojado donde ella estaba en contemplación” (XX:3, 687)—such tear-filled devotion was commonplace in medieval devotional iconography.¹⁴² Vibeke Olson has recently noted the importance of bodily effluvia (blood, tears, milk, etc.) in affirming “the idea of presence or a manifestation of corporeality for the devotee” and thus encouraging “tactility as a mode of piety” (2017, 11).¹⁴³ This leads to yet another sartorial allusion in both Sermon XIX and Sermon XX, namely the headdress (“toca”) of Mary Magdalene and the bloodstained handkerchiefs (“pañós” or “pañuelos”) of the faithful.

Once Christ is resurrected he reveals himself corporeally first to his mother (“así como su preciosa Madre fue la que más padeció en la su muy cruda y amarga pasión, así fuese la primera y la que más gozase de su gloriosa y alegre resurrección,” XX:6, 688). Mary Magdalene is the second person to whom Christ chooses to reveal his resurrected body, and she is so filled with emotion that she rushes to tell the others leaving behind her headdress (“toca”) and cloak (“manto”): “Y todos iban con tan gran prisa a buscarle, que la Magdalena tropezaba muchas veces y cayó. Y yendo ella con este fervor, perdió el manto y la toca; y nunca más lo halló ni se curó de tornarlo a buscar, con este grande amor y fervor que llevaba” (XX:9, 691).

¹⁴² The theme of holy tears within devotional iconography has been well studied. Several recent studies include, Vibeke Olson (2012); Elina Gertsman (2011); Kimberly Christine Patton and John Stratton Hawley (2005); Emile M. Cioran (1995).

¹⁴³ Olson further notes: “Fluids served as the vehicle for a sensory experience of the absent body; Christ’s blood, sweat, and tears, along with Mary’s milk were venerated as relics, hence physical proof of their bodily existence. Christ’s blood and Mary’s milk symbolized not only their roles in the drama of human salvation, but they also signified humanity, as did Christ’s sweat that poured forth as a result of his physical suffering on his way to Calvary. Their tears likewise further proof of their humanity, and with them the encouraged believers to physically and emotionally experience their suffering through acts of *imitatio*” (2017, 13-14). For more reading see Olson’s chapter “Blood, Sweat, Tears and Milk: “Fluid” veneration, sensory contact, and corporeal presence in Medieval Devotional Art” in *Binding the Absent Body in Medieval and Modern Art: Abject, Virtual, and Alternate Bodies* (2017): 11-31.

Mary Magdalene's headdress has already been mentioned in the burial scene of Sermon 19; when she places it on Christ's wounds along with other "paños" when she attempts to stop the blood pouring from his body. Ruth Matilda Anderson notes that the "toca" was a type of veil "turned back from the head in a double fold" (1979, 173). A hood was typically worn over this headdress and thus it makes sense that she was wearing both the headdress and cloak.

Boon suggests that this "unique detail possibly resulted from conflating the famous Marian relics (the cloak at Aachen and the veil at Chartres) and attributing them to Mary Magdalene instead" (2016, 151). Christ, through Juana, provides the theological meaning for these sartorial images: "Y declaró el Señor, diciendo: que entonces perdió la Magdalena el manto y la toca y no se curó más de tornarlo a buscar, cuando por las injurias y menosprecios que le decían nunca volvió las espaldas a él ni le dejó de amar y servir" (XX:10, 691). Leaving her corporeal adornment behind symbolizes her true devotion to Christ.¹⁴⁴

Mary Magdalene's blood-soaked "toca" anticipates the miraculous transformation of bloodstained handkerchiefs of Christ's disciples. In his resurrected body, Christ asks them to

¹⁴⁴ This lack of shame is reminiscent of the scene from Juana's *Vida y fin* where Juana is so enraptured with Christ that she prays naked and goes before the confessional unclothed: "Oyendo esta sierva de Dios leer en un libro llamado Floreto de santo Francisco, y oyendo cómo había mandado una vez a un fraile que fuese a predicar, sin capilla y desnudo, pensó entre sí: "Si el Padre San Francisco mandaba ir al fraile a predicar desnudo, no teniendo pecados, ¿cómo no iré yo a confesarme de los míos y desnudarme dellos, desnuda en carnes y hiriéndolas con piedra o palo a cada pecado que dijere? Encomiéndome a Dios y, a vos Padre S. Francisco, y sola la cuerda ceñida a mi cuerpo y cuello quiero ir a confesar como malhechora, y por tal me pregonaré ante Dios y mi confesor". Y con mucha contrición de sus pecados, entró en el confesionario y comenzose a confesar, hincada de rodilla con muchas lágrimas, y era tiempo de mucho frío y comenzó a dar grandes temblores del gran frío que sentía, de manera que no lo podía encubrir, y fue tanto que el confesor le preguntó que si estaba enferma, que de qué temblaba; respondió la bienaventurada que no estaba enferma, que temblaba de frío. Y acabada la confesión, salió del confesionario, y ella, que se empezaba a vestir y otra religiosa que iba a confesar, y vídola, y entró en el confesionario y dijo al confesor que riñese a Juana de la Cruz por tan ásperas penitencias como hacía, que había entrado a confesar desnuda con solo un silicio" (fols. 522-23).

approach gently as his wounds still hurt him (“Sí, mis amigos, duélenme y dolerme han y tendré sentimiento en todos los clavos que fui herido y llagado, hasta que suba al Padre,” XX:11, 692). Christ’s frail human flesh is brought clearly into focus and, interestingly, Boon has already analyzed in great detail Juana’s theological assertion that Christ maintains eternally a glorified and a suffering body;¹⁴⁵ thus my emphasis here is not on the theological implication of Christ’s resurrected state, but rather on Juana’s depiction of devotion to Christ’s wounded body. The disciples ask Christ how they might relieve his suffering and they are told:

Yo os agradezco, mis hermanos, la compasión que de mí tenéis, que no he menester que me curéis, pues poder tengo yo para sanarme si quisiese, pero tomad unos pañuelos mojados en agua fría y ponédmelos en las llagas para que las refresque, que me arden y merman mucho del fuego de amor y caridad con que las padecí por redimir el humano linaje. (XX:12, 692)

What ensues is a sartorial miracle with theological importance. The disciples follow Christ’s instructions and after placing their cold, wet handkerchiefs in his wounds they become too hot to handle: “era tan grande el fuego y ardor de los pañuelos que no los podían tener en las manos” (XX:12, 693). The handkerchiefs then turn into beautiful relics:

Y dijo el Señor, que mirando los discípulos aquellos pañuelos y besándolos con grande amor y reverencia y compasión, veían en ellos algún poquito de sangre, que se les había pegado de sus preciosas llagas cuando se los pusieron en ellas. Y como los unos a los otros se mostrasen aquella tan grande reliquia, diciendo: mirad, hermanos, qué gran reliquia tengo del Señor, que nos apareció y le vimos y hablamos y nos consoló mucho; y como ellos estuviesen mirando los pañizuelos y vieses aquella poquita de sangre que en

¹⁴⁵ See Boon (2007), at pp. 253-54.

ellos estaba, besándolo muchas veces, poniéndolo sobre sus cabezas con muy gran amor y fervor y reverencia, a deshora se les desaparecía aquella sangre preciosa y se tornaba al mismo redentor y salvador Jesucristo, y veían aquellos pañuelos blancos como la nieve y muy olorosos. Y entonces, los discípulos quedaban muy maravillados y espantados de ver este tan grande milagro y maravilla. (XX:12, 693)

The miracle clearly unveils a devotion to relics, and particularly blood relics.¹⁴⁶ The cloth symbolizes the disciples' devotion to the physical body of the Incarnate Christ and quite literally gives way to a spiritual, non-material contemplation and miracle.¹⁴⁷ Christ's body appears in

¹⁴⁶ Bynum discusses the theological quandary regarding Christ's whole, immutable identity and his fragmented, shed blood. See *Wonderful Blood: Theology and Practice in Late Medieval Northern Germany and Beyond* (2007). She notes that not all theologians agreed on the matter: "Franciscans, following Scotus, held (at least in the fourteenth century) that Christ might appear *sensibiliter* in cases where many saw the vision or host wonder. But Thomas' position tended to win out in the fifteenth century and, according to it, the faithful did not see Christ in such miracles. The substance was unseeable; and if the seeable accidents (bread and wine) were replaced by other accidents (something red and flowing), these were only appearances substituted by God to indicate the unseeable divine substance underneath. Because God cannot change, his substance is not changed but changed into; moreover, his accidents cannot suddenly appear. Behind Thomas's concern that Christ's body and blood remain unseeable lay an explicit concern that they remain immutable. 'It is not unsuitable for the bread to change but it is unsuitable for Christ to change.' This position is echoed by Cusanus' decree of 1451: '...the glorified body of Christ has glorified blood completely un-seeable in glorified veins...' (139).

¹⁴⁷ Within the Franciscan tradition there were heated debates surrounding the paradoxical nature of blood relics. Bynum notes: "Franciscan arguments at Rome in the 1460s were not propaganda for blood relics but defenses of Christ's sacrificial death against what Franciscans saw as a literalizing fixation on only a portion of his humanity. In a sense then, they came close to agreeing, in their basic premise, with Dominican arguments that supposed relics of left-behind blood or foreskin could not be Christ because they corrupt. By the later fifteenth century, polemical discussions of Christ's bodily relics, like those of host wonders, reflect a determination to preserve holy matter entirely from an *mutatio*, so much so that such matter is ontologically demoted to an inessential part of Christ or the imposition of something merely bloodlike on hosts the moment there is any suggestion of change" (2007, 144). Compared to other religious orders, Franciscans were more sympathetic to host miracles (Bynum 2007, 89). Bynum further adds in *Christian Materiality* (2011) that "despite Aquinas's dismissal of effluvial relics from Christ's body, a number of other theologians (many of them from the Franciscan order) defended blood relics, both ontologically and as supports to popular piety. They would

place of the droplets of blood and the handkerchiefs are made white as snow. Boon postulates that this miracle refers to the relic of *sudarium* that has been housed in the Cathedral of Oviedo since the ninth century (2016, 161).¹⁴⁸

The vision also hints at the question of Christ's transubstantiation within the sacrament of the Eucharist. In *Holy Feast, Holy Fast* (1987) Bynum notes that there is an intimate connection between an emphasis on Christ's humanity and subsequent devotion to the sacrament of the Eucharist within medieval (particularly female) mystics.¹⁴⁹ Though Juana is not explicitly referring to the Eucharist, there is an implicit connection.¹⁵⁰ Christ's blood is symbolic of him

have argued that Christ could have left bits of his blood behind as traces to stir up enthusiasm at times of crisis or lukewarm religiosity" (156).

¹⁴⁸ This is also reminiscent of the Shroud of the Turin. Thomas de Wesselow's recent work *The Sign: The Shroud of Turin and the Secret of the Resurrection* (2012) provides helpful overview and through bibliography of the scholarship on this sacred relic. In his words, the shroud's place within the modern world is mostly "unseen, discredited and ignored" (12). However, within the medieval period it was lauded as one of the most precious of holy relics "attracting hordes of pilgrims" (14). The Shroud of Turin first appeared in Europe in the mid fourteenth century in Lirey, a small city in northeastern France (Wesselow 14). Juana's knowledge of the shroud is questionable, however it during her apogee of her preaching career, the shroud's popularity was also flourishing— "Pope Julius II instituted the Feast of the Holy Shroud, to be celebrated locally every May 4 and by 1516, the cult was well enough established for King Francis I of France to visit Chambéry as a pilgrim" (Wesselow 16).

¹⁴⁹ "Certain devotional emphases, particularly devotion to Christ's suffering humanity and to the Eucharist (although not, as it is often said, to the Virgin), where characteristic of women's practices and words" (1987, 26).

¹⁵⁰ Sermon 30 evidences that Juana makes a direct connection between the crucifixion and the sacrament of the Eucharist. After commemorating the crucifixion Christ states: "Ahora, mis amigos, comed y hartaos y embriagos de los manjares y dulcedumbres de mí mismo. Y, después que seáis hartos y abastados, hincad los hinojos y alzad las manos y ofreded al Padre mío celestial este mi precioso cuerpo y sangre, en sacrificio por los pecadores, pues yo fui el Cordero sacrificado en la cruz" (XXX:19, 911-12).

and is the blood that devotees are to drink in keeping with the Gospels.¹⁵¹ Thus the Eucharist and kissing Christ's bleeding wounds have a similar function. They are reminders of the suffering flesh of Christ's humanity. This is perhaps why Juana shows a post-resurrection Christ with wounds that continue to bleed—they are representative of the sacrament of the Eucharist. This connection is explicit in Sermon XIX, when angels descend to collect Christ's blood in chalices while he hangs suffering on the cross:

Y haciendo su Majestad estos doloroso clamores, habiendo los ángeles les muy gran compasión de él, demandaban licencia al Padre celestial y descendían cubiertos de luto, con cálices en las manos para coger la sangre que de él salía. Y dando muy grandes golpes consigo en tierra sobre la sangre que estaba derramada, cogíanla en los cálices.

(XIX:23, 675-76)

The blood pouring from Christ's wounds is shed for the forgiveness and cleansing of all humanity; and is symbolized by the pure white color of the disciples' handkerchiefs.¹⁵² Such devotion is essential to Juana, both in her teaching and her religious praxis—she encouraged her followers to regularly contemplate the body of Christ “desde las uñas de los pies y plantas hasta

¹⁵¹ The words of institution for the sacrament of the Eucharist appear in all four Gospel accounts: “Now as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and after blessing it broke it and gave it to the disciples, and said, “Take, eat; this is my body.” And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he gave it to them, saying, “Drink of it, all of you, for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. I tell you I will not drink again of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom” (Matthew 26:26-29). Parallel accounts occur in Mark 14:12-26, Luke 22:7-39 and John 13:1-4.

¹⁵² In Sermon XXX “El día del Santo Viernes” Juana plainly states “Y que le salía tanta muchedumbre de sangre, sin cesar, porque hubiese harta para lavar y bañar y limpiar a todos” (XXX:15, 909).

encima de la cabeza, que son los cabellos.”¹⁵³ This religious fervor culminates in the sacrament of the Eucharist—which serves as a poignant, material symbol of the humanity—the literal flesh and blood—of Christ. Devotees are continually reminded of the wounded and bleeding flesh of Christ as he hung on the cross in order to purify humanity’s sin-stained flesh.¹⁵⁴ Yet, ultimately, this emphasis on Christ’s bleeding flesh serves to humanize Christ and divinize his Holy Mother. Sartorial imagery blurs the lines between divinity and humanity, thus proposing a humanization of Christ that serves as a mere backdrop for a divinized Mary. Now that the sartorial stage has been set, Christ fades to the background and our attention is drawn to Mary and her immaculate flesh.

¹⁵³ “Era devotísima de la santa cruz y enseñó a las monjas una adoración en esta manera: “Adórote, cruz preciosa; adórote, santa cruz de Dios; adórote, santo madero; adórote, trono de Dios; adórote, escaño de sus pies con el cual justiciará y pisará los pecadores y les hará ver y conocer cómo solo Él es el Señor y Criador del Cielo y de la tierra y juez de los vivos y de los muertos; adórote, galardón de los justos por el cual se salvan y justifican; adórote, deleite de los ángeles; adórote, penitencia de los pecadores; adórote, tálamo de Dios, en el cual está puesta su corona real; adoro los clavos, tenazas, martillo, escalera y lanza; adoro al Redentor en ti puesto; adoro a mi Salvador; adoro su santo rostro; bendigo, glorifico y adoro sus santos miembros todos, desde las uñas de los pies y plantas hasta encima de la cabeza, que son los cabellos: adórote, árbol santo de la vera cruz” (*Vida y fin*, fol 530).

¹⁵⁴ “This sense of *imitatio* as becoming or being (not merely feeling or understanding) lay in the background of Eucharistic devotion. The Eucharist was an especially appropriate vehicle for the effort to become Christ because the Eucharist is Christ. The doctrine of transubstantiation was crucial. One became Christ’s crucified body in eating Christ’s crucified body. Thus the reception of the Eucharist led so naturally to stigmata, visible or inward, that contemporaries hardly worried about how to account for their appearance” (Bynum 1987, 256-57).

CHAPTER 4: IMMACULATE CLOTHING, IMMACULATE CONCEPTION THE DOCTRINE OF MARY'S IMMACULATE CONCEPTION

The Development of the Doctrine of the Immaculate Conception

Juana's articulation and defense of Mary's Immaculate Conception long predates its official incorporation as a universally accepted dogma of the Catholic Church by Pope Pius IX on December 8, 1854.¹⁵⁵ Prior to this date, it was a topic debated among theologians, and particularly between the Franciscans and the Dominicans.¹⁵⁶ I will not trace this doctrine's development at length, however, I do want to draw attention to the intimate connection between Juana's Franciscan Order and the propagation of the dogma.¹⁵⁷

¹⁵⁵ As Gómez López notes quite frankly about Juana's sermon on the Immaculate Conception: "un hecho evidente destaca en la doctrina inmaculista del sermón: el haberse anticipado 345 años a la verdadera doctrina, tal como fue definida por la Iglesia en el concilio Vaticano" (1984, 613). Marilyn Fedewa in *María of Ágreda: Mystical Lady in Blue* (2009) points to the crucial importance of María of Ágreda in solidifying the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception. She states: "To this day, Marian scholars credit Sor María of Ágreda and King Felipe IV with favorably influencing Pope Alexander VII on the doctrine. [...] Alexander VII's 1661 decree is considered the turning point in the evolution of the Immaculate Conception. Many consider it the definitive statement on the doctrine until it was fully established by Pope Pius IX in 1854" (100).

¹⁵⁶ For more on the debate see Sarah J. Boss (2007), at pp. 207-35. Several recent studies that provide more details on the opposition of the Dominicans see T.M. Izbicki (2005); and J. Creamer (2010). Patrick Preston (2004) has demonstrated that even among the Dominicans there was some debate about the issue.

¹⁵⁷ For a concise overview of its development see previously cited Sarah J. Boss (2007), specifically at pp. 207-17. For an exhaustive study of its development from Mary in the Apocryphal *Gospel of James* up to its official articulation in 1854 see Edward D. O'Connor (1958), and Mirella Levi D'Ancona's thorough introduction "Doctrine and Liturgy" in *The*

The debate over Mary's virginity and role in Salvation began to really take shape in the twelfth century surrounding the initial celebration of the Conception Feast in Winchester (Twomey 2008, 23).¹⁵⁸ Theologians began to ponder exactly what this feast was commemorating. If, as St. Anselm (1033-1109) declared, the “Virgo tamen ipsa unde assumptus est in iniquitatibus concepta est et in peccatis concepit eam mater eius, et cum originali peccato nata est” (“The Virgin herself it is assumed is conceived in sin and in sin her mother conceived her, and with original sin she was born”), celebrating her conception implied celebrating her conception “in peccatis.”¹⁵⁹ It troubled some theologians that there should be a celebration of such a sinful event.¹⁶⁰ However, not everyone was equally appalled.¹⁶¹

Iconography of the Immaculate Conception in the Middle Ages and Early Renaissance (1957): pp. 5-14.

¹⁵⁸ D’Ancona mentions an earlier reference to the feast stating: “The First mention of the feast of the Conception in the West is in a marble calendar for the years 840-850 A.D. in Naples. [...] It should be noted, however, that the feast is called the ‘Conception of the Virgin’ in the Naples Calendar, while it is called the ‘Conception of St. Anne’ in Constantinople” (11). Fedewa cites 850 AD as a landmark date for the doctrine’s garnering popular support within the church but does not give any indication as to what her sources are for this date. See Fedewa *María of Ágreda: Mystical Lady in Blue* (2009) at p. 36. She provides a brief overview of the development of the doctrine and María of Ágreda’s contribution to its full flowering.

¹⁵⁹ See Anselm’s *Cur deus homo* Vol. II, Lib. 2, Ch.16, p.116, ln. 20.

¹⁶⁰ St. Bernard of Clairvaux (1090/91 – 1153), in voicing his disapproval of the celebration of the Conception Feast, is famously remembered for posing the question: “How indeed was sin not present where lust was not absent?” (*The Letters of Saint Bernard of Clairvaux* 1998, Letter 215, p. 292). Twomey observes that paradoxically, Bernard’s work on the doctrine of Mary’s *sanctification in utero* was used to further support the celebration of the Conception Feast and ultimately defend the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception (2007, 26-27). See also Giovanni Miegge (1955).

¹⁶¹ A number of scholastics and theologians in favor of the Immaculate Conception voiced their support. Prior to the famous Franciscan Duns Scotus (1266-1308) a several individuals further developed the defense of the doctrine. Some of the most notable include, Eadmer of Canterbury (1060/64-1124), Anselm the Younger (1036-1086), and Osbert of Clare (d. c. 1158) (Twomey

Eadmer of Canterbury, a former pupil of St. Anselm, wrote the first known treatise in defense of the Immaculate Conception entitled *Tractatus de conceptione B. Mariae Virginis*.¹⁶² The work, erroneously attributed to St. Anselm, provided a defense of the celebration by making an analogy with the fruit of a chestnut tree, whose thorny shell (i.e. the sinful world) does not taint the interior (i.e. Mary).¹⁶³ He also argued that because of her role in Redemption, she must be free from original sin even at conception.¹⁶⁴ The *Tractatus de conceptione* circulated quite broadly and denoted a definite change to the face of Mariology (Stacpoole 1982, 228).¹⁶⁵

In both theological debates and devotional practice, the Franciscans were some of the strongest supporters of the Immaculate Conception— John Duns Scotus (1266?-1308) was its main defendant.¹⁶⁶ But by the time he articulated his defense, the central issue in the debate had

2008, 24; Lamy 2000, 35; Boss 2007, 210-12; and D'Ancona 1957, 8). For more on Eadmer's influence see Alberic Stacpoole (1982), at pp. 217–231.

¹⁶² For the critical edition of this work see: *Eadmeri Monachi Cantuariensis Tractatus de Conceptione Sanctae Mariae*. H. Hurston and T. Slater. Eds. Freiburg-im-Breisgau: Herder, 1904. The exact date of this work is uncertain; some scholars guess 1123 or 1139. For a discussion on the date of publication see Edward D. O'Connor (1967), at p. 380 or Barbara Sella (1998): at p. 601, note 8.

¹⁶³ Eadmer. *Eadmeri Monachi Cantuariensis Tractatus de Conceptione Sanctae Mariae*. H. Hurston and T. Slater. Eds. Freiburg-im-Breisgau: Herder, 1904: 10: pp. 10-11.

¹⁶⁴ For Eadmer's explanation of how Mary redeems the fallen race from the sin of Eve (and Adam), see *Tractatus de Conceptione Sanctae Mariae* 27: pp. 34-35.

¹⁶⁵ I find intriguing Sella's remark that "Eadmer's treatise marks the beginning of a divergence between theological speculation and public devotion" because we do indeed see a disconnect between legislated church doctrine and popular religious practice (1998, 601). And in concert with Boss' conclusion, it appears that the drive to defend the Immaculate Conception was rooted primarily in popular devotion than in Marian doctrine (2007, 210).

¹⁶⁶ Some have even called him the "first" defendant of the Immaculate Conception. See Twomey (2008), p. 32 and her corresponding reference to Amorós Paya 1956, p. 301 and Lamy 2000, pp. 371-78.

shifted from a preoccupation with the liturgical festival to the nature of the conception itself (Twomey 2008, 31; Tavard 1992, 216). Scotus depicts an optimistic view of humanity and its spiritual potential and indeed “it is not surprising that such a defense should have been proposed by a Franciscan, since the Order had at its heart a reverence for even the humblest aspects of the created order” (Boss 2007, 214-15).

Scotus, as a pupil of Anselm, supported his views on original sin—understood as the “deprivation of grace” and not a physically inherited trait—and maintained a distinction between the material flesh and the immaterial soul.¹⁶⁷ He also addressed the two resounding critiques posed by the Maculist school of thought, the problem of original sin and Christ’s divine nature. Put quite simply:

Redemptive grace, operative in the Virgin’s case, was activated because of the merits of Christ. Scotus adds a new dimension, that of God foreseeing the Passion. Preservation from original sin or pre-redemption, a more perfect mode of redemption, can then be perceived as a positive addition to Christ’s uniqueness, rather than detracting from it. (Twomey 2008, 33)

¹⁶⁷ Anselm discusses original sin as a “deprivation of grace” not as an inherent physical, or “fleshly”, characteristic. He writes: “Nulli ergo personae quamvis de se propagatae transmitter mala praedicta potuit, in cuius generatione nec natura illi data propaganda, nec voluntas eius quicquam operata est aut operari valuit. Quare ADAE mala praedicta nulla ratione aut rectitudine ad hominem conceptum de virgine pertranseunt” (*Opera Omnia* V.II, 12: 155). For more in-depth discussion on Anselm’s distinctions between the will and the body and the role of conception in passing original sin to the subsequent generation see the following resources: P. DeLetter (1954); Edward Epton (2016); and Atria Larson (2006).

In other words, the Virgin was “pre-redeemed” by God because in his divine omnipotence, He applied the work of Christ’s passion to the Virgin *abinicio*, and thus Christ’s divinity was upheld.¹⁶⁸

A further defense was put forth at the Council of Basel, in 1439, by Franciscan John of Segovia entitled *Allegationes et Avisamenta pro Immaculata Conceptione Beatissime Virginis*¹⁶⁹ and challenged by the Dominican John of Torquemada in his own *Tractatus de Veritate Conceptionis Beatissimae Virginis, faciendo relatione coram Patribus Basileæ*.¹⁷⁰ Part of John of Segovia’s biblical exegesis in defense of the Feast of the Immaculate Conception is drawn from Song of Songs 4:7 (“Tota pulchra es amica mea, et macula non est in te”). As Twomey notes, this verse has become “inseparable from the Conception doctrine [...] It is also found in a small number of Peninsular breviaries, such as Urgell incunabula printed in 1487, where it appears as a *responsorium* at first night prayer. Nogarolis also adopts it as one of the first vespers antiphons in his office” (2008, 20).¹⁷¹

The overwhelming popularity of John of Segovia’s defense of the doctrine, however, led many religious leaders to believe that observance of the Feast of the Immaculate Conception was

¹⁶⁸ See *Opera Omnia* vol. II, 11: 153-54.

¹⁶⁹ See the 1964 facsimile of Ioannis de Segovia *Allegationes et Avisamenta pro Immaculata Conceptione Beatissime Virginis* (prepared for Council of Basel, 1436), Balthasar Ivien (Ed.), Brussels: Culture et Civilisation.

¹⁷⁰ John of Torquemada’s case was prepared in 1437, but was published by E.B. Pusey in 1869. See the 1966 facsimile edition Pusey, E.B. *Tractatus de Veritate Conceptionis Beatissimae Virginis, faciendo relatione coram Patribus Basileæ, compilatus per Reverendum Patrem, Fratrem Joannem de Turrecremata*, Bruxelles: Culture et Civilisation.

¹⁷¹ There is also a resounding influence of the *tota pulchra* image in religious iconography of the period. See Suzanne Stratton (1994) for an in-depth analysis of its development and presence in popular religious practice (specifically pp. 40-43). See also Boss (2007), at pp. 25-27.

binding on them (Boss 2007, 207). Its presence in liturgy and popular religious culture continued to gain momentum,¹⁷² in spite of the fact that the Church ruled that the Council of Basle was not an ecumenical council, and therefore, “carried no legal force” (Boss 2007, 207).¹⁷³ Nevertheless, aside from these official councils and debates, popular religious practice throughout the Late Medieval and Early Modern Period exuded Marian devotion.¹⁷⁴

Boss has observed that for some “the doctrine’s final acceptance by Church authorities [was] a victory for popular devotion over the opinions of theologians” (2007, 207). Although this sentiment is not entirely true,¹⁷⁵ one cannot deny the weighty influence of popular devotional practice in promoting the doctrine. This is what shaped Juana’s theology.¹⁷⁶

A cursory glance at the canonical literary works of the Spanish medieval period proves the centrality of Marian devotion. Some of its best-known works include: Gonzalo de Berceo’s

¹⁷² Levi D’Ancona (1957) describes the celebration of the Conception Feast as “local affairs” that were celebrated throughout many of the religious orders (Franciscans, Benedictines, etc.) even though it was not official Church dogma (11-12).

¹⁷³ For further discussion see Wenceslaus Sebastian “The Controversy over the Immaculate Conception from after Duns Scotus to the end of the Eighteenth Century” in *The Dogma of the Immaculate Conception*. Edward O’Connor (ed.). 1958; at pp. 228-34.

¹⁷⁴ Studies on Marian devotion are numerous. I will list here several recent and canonical studies that have broached the subject from a variety of approaches. Within religious iconography see: Rosa M. C. Barreiro (2017); Suzanne Stratton (1994); Volberg Maurice (1958); Cynthia Robinson (2013); and Carla Rahn Phillips (2005). Within Spanish literature see aforementioned Lesley Twomey (2008, 2013). For a recent, comprehensive study of the Virgin Mary within Spanish culture see: Linda Hall (2004).

¹⁷⁵ See, for example, Marielle Lamy (2000).

¹⁷⁶ William Christian (1981) draws a similar distinction between, what he calls, “two levels of Catholicism—that of the Church Universal, based on sacraments, the Roman liturgy, and the Roman calendar; and a local one based on particular sacred places, images, and relics, locally chosen patron saints, idiosyncratic ceremonies, and a unique calendar built up from the settlement’s own sacred history” (3).

(1200-1265) *Milagros de Nuestra Señora* (c. 1260) and *Los Loores de Nuestra Señora* (c. 1237-1245), Alfonso X's (1221-1284) *Cantigas de Nuestra Señora*, and Juan Ruiz's (1295?-1350) *Libro de Buen Amor* (c. 1350). Even the anonymous epic poem, *Poema de Fernán Gonzalez* (c. 1250) begins by invoking the name of God and “el que quiso nasçer de la Virgen preciosa” and the Holy Spirit.¹⁷⁷ In this particular epic poem it is as though the author has adopted a “Marianized” version of the Holy Trinity that does not even mention the name of Christ, but rather emphasizes his glorious mother. During the time of the Catholic monarchs, some of their most notable poets, fray Íñigo de Mendoza (c. 1430-c.1508) and fray Ambrosio Montesino, the confessor to the Catholic Monarchs (c. 1444-c.1514) wrote Marian poetry. Stratton has noted the importance of the Catholic Monarchs in propagating the cult of the Immaculate Conception (1994, 9) by financially supporting the proliferation of Marian literature and devotional art, and by their role in founding the Franciscan Order of the Conception in Toledo in 1494 (Stratton 1994, 9).

Religious iconography was similarly affected by Marian devotion.¹⁷⁸ Stratton points to the year 1218 in which Saint Peter Nolasco founded the Order of Our Lady of Mercy as a landmark event in the iconographic Immaculist propaganda (1994, 5). Stratton remarks:

The Virgin had appeared to [Peter Nolasco] asking him to found an order devoted to the ransom of Christian captives. Her apparition was later celebrated in paintings such as that by Alonso del Arco in which the Virgin shows her wish that the Mercedarians wear white

¹⁷⁷ “En el nombre del Padre que fiso toda cosa,/ El que quiso nasçer de la Virgen preçiossa,/ Del Spiritu Santo, que es ygual de la espossa,/ Del conde de Castilla quiero façer vna prosa” (*Poema de Fernán González* I:1-4, p. 389).

¹⁷⁸ Suzanne Stratton has studied this topic and her most notable work on the topic is *The Immaculate Conception in Spanish Art* (1994). For further examples of iconography that would have been proliferated during the time preceding Juana and throughout her lifetime see pp. 5-66.

in honor of her immaculate purity. [...] Thus, from early in the thirteenth century, both the kings and the clergy of Spain together supported the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception. It was this dual support that gave the doctrine its special prominence in Spain and Spanish art. (5)

Alonso del Arco's painting, *Appearance of the Virgin to Saint Peter Nolasco*, highlights an angelic Mary draped in folds of immaculately white cloth, while she extends to Peter the white garment which he and his faithful followers, should don. The contrast between the white fabric and the dark background of the painting emphasizes Mary's immaculate nature.

At the start of the fifteenth century, artistic depictions of Virgen as *tota pulchra* began to emerge. One of the first known examples is an anonymous painting of the altarpiece of the Church of San Saturnino in Artajona (Stratton 1994, 44), but the doctrinal significance of the image is less prominent than the glistening white of the Virgin's dress portrayed by Alonso del Arco. Although the initial renditions of the Virgin *tota pulchra* "satisfied theologians, it was perhaps too abstract for immediate acceptance by the laity" (Stratton 1994, 45). Yet, artists continued to allude to the *tota pulchra* image in order to emphasize the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception.

In like manner, artists like Juan de Moreto (d. 1547) strengthened this type of depiction of the Immaculate Conception by alluding to the concept of the Virgin's creation *ab eterno* as a vessel destined to carry the divine in the Incarnation (Stratton 1994, 45-46). His Mary is furthermore draped in a sumptuous mantle that envelops her body and a small baby Jesus who is nearly lost beneath her hands, which are folded in pious prayer.

Juana was neither scholastic theologian nor a painter, yet she grapples with the same questions as the aforementioned debates between Maculists and Immaculists. However, she finds

her own mode of expressing these doctrinal truths through nuanced images and analogies.

Sermon 70 (“De la muy limpísima y santa Concepción de Nuestra Señora”) begins by rhetorically asking:

¿quién mejor y más verdaderamente podía y sabía loar a esta tan santa y limpia e
inmaculada Concepción de su gloriosa Madre que Él, por cuanto, el Padre de las lumbres,
y Él, su Unigénito, y el Espíritu Santo consolador la criaron la más pura y limpia y
cendrada que jamás fue ni será, y sin ninguna mácula de pecado original? (LXX:1, 1419)

She goes on beyond this rhetorical question to affirm that those who would say otherwise are liars and in great error:

Y los que el contrario dicen, no dicen verdad, y habrán estrecho juicio delante el su
acatamiento si no se enmiendan y salen de tan grande error. Y que los que afirman y
favorecen la limpísima y santa Concepción de Nuestra Señora, que Él los ayudará y
favorecerá y salvará y dará la vida eterna, porque dicen lo cierto y verdadero. (LXX:2,
1419)

It could not be clearer. Juana elevates this doctrine to an essential component of salvific faith; it is only those faithful who affirm Mary’s Immaculate Conception that will be helped, saved and given eternal life. She assures her audience that, although the holy apostles never spoke of Mary’s Immaculate Conception, it is only because they were preoccupied with establishing other doctrines. Nevertheless, she—as a vehicle for Christ—is prepared to present more fully the arguments in support of this doctrine:

porque los santos evangelistas y apóstoles no hablaron ni trataron de la Concepción de
Nuestra Señora, fue porque tuvieron tanto que hacer en plantar la Santa Fe Católica y en
tratar de la su santa Encarnación y Natividad y Vida y Pasión y Resurrección, que no

tuvieron lugar de hablar de la Concepción de Nuestra Señora, mas que en solo decir que ella había quedado Virgen antes del parto y en el parto y después del parto. (LXX:3, 1420)

Therefore, Juana presents herself as a being uniquely suited to delineate the details of the doctrine that were left unaddressed by the apostles. She begins with a sartorial image—Mary’s stainless flesh is a garment that dresses the sinless god-man, Jesus Christ.

Without Stain

Juana begins sermon LXX (“De ‘La muy limpísima e Santa Concepción de Nuestra Señora la Virgen María’”) with a common proof: God would have himself been stained had he dressed himself in a flesh that was sinful:

de la carne de Dios tomó carne, mucha razón era que fuese limpísima y purísima y castísima y escogida entre todas las criaturas. Porque, si Nuestra Señora tuviera en su limpísima carne alguna mácula de pecado original, también la tuviera el mismo Dios que tomó carne de ella. El cual dijo, que todos los que ponen duda en la Concepción de Nuestra Señora, también la ponen en Él mismo, que se vistió de su santa Humanidad. (LXX:3, 1419)

Therefore, to doubt Mary’s stainless flesh is to doubt Christ’s sinlessness, because he has chosen to dress himself in her flesh.

The notion of “sin mácula” or “sin mancha” is a trait commonly ascribed to the Virgin Mary elsewhere.¹⁷⁹ Spanish poets often opted for the term “manzilla”—derived from the Latin

¹⁷⁹ See Twomey (2008) at pp. 113-23 for a detailed historical use of the terms “manzilla” and “mácula” in Spanish literature.

form—meaning a stain, spot, moral blemish, stigma, insult, offence or wound (Malkiel 1947, 272-301; Twomey 2008, 113).

References to the Virgin as “sin manzilla” or “sin manciella” are numerous.¹⁸⁰ Alfonso X in his *Cantigas* writes of the Virgin: “Qual é a que sen maezela/ pariu e ficou donzela?” (III, 197: 10-11). Juan Ruiz in *Libro de buen amor* (1330) composes an epitaph in praise of the Virgin: “Graçia plena, sin mançilla,/ abogada,/ por la tu merçed, Señora, fas esta maravilla,/ señalada,/ por la tu bondad agora/ goárdame toda hora/ de muerte vergoñosa,/ porque loe a ti fermosa,/ noche e día” (stanza 1662, p. 454). This depiction is followed by yet another immaculate description: “Dominus tecum:/ estrella resplandeçiente,/ melesina de coydados,/ catadura muy bella,/ relusciente, / sin mansilla de pecados,/ por los tus gosos preçiadados/ te pido, virtuosa, que me guardes, limpia, rosa/ de foylía” (stanza 1663, p. 454). Mary is metaphorically “sin mansilla” yet she is also physically—in her body and in her dress—described as having no stain. Juana uses this metaphor and always associates the stain with the garments of the Virgin and with her flesh, itself an unstained garment for Christ.

Juana continues her sermon on the Immaculate Conception by setting forth two “figuras” that explain the necessity for the doctrine. The first “figura” uses the metaphor of a woman forming a ball of dough (“mujer que masa una masa”). We must remember that Juana’s “figuras” are typological and pedagogical,¹⁸¹ and her Mariology becomes the driving force in her exegesis of scripture. These “figuras” demonstrate this dual function as we see her mariological lens in interpreting and expounding the fulfillment of both Old Testament and New Testament

¹⁸⁰ See Chapter 6, “The Immaculate Virgin: Matchless Maiden” in Twomey (2008) for a litany of examples.

¹⁸¹ For a recent discussion on biblical typology see Tibor Fabiny (2016). See also Boon’s “Introduction” (2016) on the pedagogical nature of Juana’s sermons, pp. 4-8.

scriptures. Concerning Juana’s use of the word “figura” Boon has opted for the term “allegorical pageants” as the most fitting translation, remarking that: “Juana refers to these scenarios as *figuras*. Frequently a term for allegory, image, or symbol, evoking a variety of literary or theological connotations, *figura* also occasionally has the sense of ‘miracle’ as sign or symbol” (2016, 30). Juana begins by ascribing the crux of the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception to God’s foreknowledge, quoting Ecclesiasticus 24:9: “Y es por eso es dicho de esta purísima Virgen Nuestra Señora, y lo dice el Espíritu Santo hablando de parte suya: ‘Desde antes de los siglos y desde abinçio soy criada, y hasta el siglo que es por venir no seré acabada’” (LXX:4, 1421). This verse demonstrates the pervasiveness and influential nature of the liturgy of evening vespers because, as Twomey notes “Many fifteenth-century poets site their pre-creation references in Ecclesiasticus 24.9. [...] The text was one of the most frequently used biblical texts in Conception offices at vespers” (2008, 191).¹⁸² Gómez Manrique’s (1412-1490) “Loores e suplicaciones a Nuestra Señora” (Canción CIII) bears a striking resemblance to Juana’s description and exposition of this particular verse in Ecclesiasticus. He writes:

¡O fija de Dios y madre,
 desde abeniçio creata!
 ¡O virgo senper ynata,
 de la cual nasçió tu padre,
 tu quedando tan entera
 como sana vedriera
 finca del sol traspasada!
 Por ti, lunbrosa lunbrera,

¹⁸² See also corresponding footnote 8 on p. 191.

nuestra cayda primera
fue, Señora reparada! [...]
¡O pura virginidad
sin pecado concebida,
para ser templo escogida,
de la santa Trenidad!
Cuyas personas en vna,
syn diferençia ninguna,
y la vna en tres e dos,
en ti mas clara que luna
que rynas sobre fortuna
son fechas ombre con Dios! [...]
Pues feste desde abeniçio
criada pulchra y decora
para ser la causadora
de tan grande beneficio
como fue ser redemidos
los que fueron esemidos
de la soberana gloria,
faz, oyendo mis gemidos,
que tus contrarios vencidos
no ayan de mi vitoria. (CIII: Copla II, IV, VI; pp. 288, 289, 291)¹⁸³

¹⁸³ See *Cancionero de Gómez Manrique*. Francisco Vida González (Ed.). Madrid: Cátedra, 2003.

Manrique, like Juana, argues that the Virgin Mary was created “abinicio” (“from the beginning”) as the sinless source through which God has chosen to redeem the faithful (“para ser la causadora/ de tan grande beneficio”).¹⁸⁴

The exegetical use of Ecclesiasticus 24:9 as support for the Doctrine of the Immaculate Conception is documented as early as the eleventh century.¹⁸⁵ However, Pero Díaz de Toledo’s gloss of Gómez Manrique’s *canción* alludes to both the Macculist and the Immaculist positions regarding the conception of the Virgin, thus demonstrating that despite its widespread popularity, the Immaculist position had not been accepted by the Catholic Church universally.¹⁸⁶ He explains:

Esto es porque la cosa criada mas perfecta mente es en Dios cirante que en si mesma. E asi, si en si mesma tiene ser o vida temporal, en Dios la tiene perpetua. E por eso, dixo el Ecclesiastico con Jhesus, fijo de Sirac, a los xxxiiiij capítulos: *Abinicio et ante secula creata sum, et usque ad futurum seculum non desinam*, etc., que quiere decir: *Desde el*

¹⁸⁴ Twomey (2008) briefly discusses Gómez Manrique’s use of “abinicio”. She notes “He vernacularizes the Latin ‘abenicio’ and interprets it as a noun, instead of an adverbial phrase, requiring the tautological ‘desde’ to render ‘time from when’. Gómez Manrique keeps ‘creata’ in Latin to maintain the rhyme with ‘intata’” (191).

¹⁸⁵ Mirella Levi D’Acona (1957), traces the development of the doctrine within iconography and finds this verse (Eccl. 24:9) present in one of the first representations of the Immaculate Conception in a Benedictine monastery in New Minster, Winchester. For more on this verse specifically, see Chapter 1 “The Triumph of the Virgin Over Original Sin” pp. 20-21.

¹⁸⁶ D’Acona remarks: “One of the strange aspects of the cult of the Immaculate Conception is that, though its feast was celebrated in local centers, for along time it was not officially accepted by the Catholic Church. It is only after the proclamation of the dogma in 1854 that the feast was officially introduced into the Catholic Church and universally accepted by it. Before that date, especially during the Middle Ages, the celebration of the feast of the Conception was principally a local affair, or it was connected with some monastic order (the Benedictines, the Franciscans, and, later, the Jesuits)” (11).

comienço e ante de los siglos soy criada, e ante el siglo venidero durare. De donde tomo el autor, puesto que esto sea dicho por la sabiduría e el entendimiento espiritual para Nuestra Señora la Virgen María en la susodicha manera. [...] Entiendase porque en esta materia ay dos opiniones famosas. La una, que Nuestra Señora en su concebimiento fue preservada del pecado original. Segunt esta opinion, no fue santificada. La otra opinion dice que fue concebida en pecado original, e segunt esta opinion fue santificada del para ser madre de Dios. (Pero Díaz 291, 293)¹⁸⁷

Juana's exegesis of Ecclesiasticus 24:9 as referring to the Virgin Mary demonstrates that she was familiar with its presence in liturgical iconography, devotional works, and poetry. She also presents herself as God's vessel for bringing salvation to the world.¹⁸⁸

God, just like the woman making bread, foreknows the damaging effects of sin ("levadura del pecado") and saves for himself a perfect lump of dough ("sacar aquella tan blanca y floreada rosca"). This pure "rosca" is none other than the Virgin Mary:

Que, aunque a su generación no quiso librar ni reservar de este pecado, que reservó en su voluntad a Nuestra Señora. Lo cual es mayor cosa, por cuanto lo que Dios reserve en su voluntad sólo aquello es reservado. Y que de quien Dios tomó carne, Dios puede ser

¹⁸⁷ For further discussion on the importance of this gloss see Juan Vidal's *Sermo de Conceptione gloriosae Virginis Genitricis Dei* and *Defensorium beatae Virginis Mariae*, both of which are found in *Monumenta antiqua seraphica pro Immaculata Conceptione Virginis Mariae*. Petrus Alva y Astorga (Ed.). Lovanii: Immaculatae Conceptionis, 1665: at pp. 80-88, 89-190.

¹⁸⁸ "Although pre-creation references may not be used in dedicated Conception poems, the way poets refer to Ecclesiasticus 24.9 places the Virgin's predestination at the heart of immaculacy" (Twomey 2008, 194). Though Juana elsewhere depicts Mary as possessing an autonomous will that appears at times to usurp (and even direct) God's divine will, in this instance, it is God's predestining will that is paramount.

llamado. Y pues que en Dios no hay ninguna mácula, que no la hay de quien Él se vistió, y con quien Él se ayuntó, y en quien Él moró. (LXX:4, 1421)

Juana appears to be conflating several familiar biblical analogies. Christ, in the Gospels, refers to the “leaven of the Pharisees” (Matthew 16:6; Mark 8:15; Luke 12:1) and Paul in Romans 9, lifts the Old Testament analogy from Jeremiah 18 that describes a potter (i.e. God) working with clay and making some “lumps” for honorable use and some for dishonorable use (Romans 9:21).

Mary is the stainless lump predetermined by God for the most honorable use—namely the salvation of mankind. Juana stresses, yet again, that it is imperative that Mary be sinless: “¿Que cómo había de tener mácula de pecado la que fue criada y nacida para remediar el pecado?” (LXX:4, 1421). Her reason being, the source that came to remedy sin could not itself be stained with sin. For Juana (and again, exactly like Manrique’s *coplas*), Mary becomes the perfect foil to reverse the effects of Eve. She is the “Second Eve”—whereas death was introduced to the world through Eve, life has now come through Mary; hence Mary is responsible for undoing Eve’s sin.¹⁸⁹ She remarks: “Lo cual fue al contrario en la Santa Encarnación de Nuestro Señor Jesucristo, que la mujer sola parió a Dios y hombre verdadero. Y que, así como Eva fue nacida de varón sin mujer, así por semejante nuestro redentor Jesucristo nació de mujer sin varón” (LXX:4, 1422).

¹⁸⁹ For further analysis on Mary as the “Second Eve” see Marina Warner (1985), at pp. 50-67. Also see Eva De Visscher (2007). Moholy clearly describes the parallel between Eve and Mary in the following quote: “The parallel is unavoidable: as Eve is the cause of death both to herself and the entire human race. Mary is indeed, the ‘Advocate’ and ‘The Patroness’ of Eve, not merely inasmuch as there is an interesting parallel of opposition between the two after some poetical anacrostic; rather poetry attains the apex of truthful art precisely because Mary is effectively both to herself and to all mankind the cause of salvation” (171-72). See also Lesley Twomey (2008), at pp. 217-39.

It can be deduced from Juana's logic that man (i.e. Adam) is culpable for sin and for its entrance into the Garden of Eden. This shift in blame is also evidenced in her novelesque retelling of the Genesis account of Adam and Eve's interaction with the Serpent in Sermon LXXII "Que trata de la creación de los cielos y la tierra." In it, Juana never mentions Eve's eating the fruit but instead draws her audience's attention to Adam's lustful desire and his subsequent eating of the fruit as a means of bribing his wife into submission.¹⁹⁰ Thus, Mary is the predestined "blanca rosca" that reverses the effects of sin; Mary is the sinless woman who—without any help from man—bears a sinless son (Jesus) forever eliminating the damage wrought by a sinful man (Adam) and a sinful woman (Eve).

Juana's second *figura* in her unfolding of the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception demonstrates, beyond any shadow of a doubt, that sartorial imagery makes up the warp and woof of her theological explanations. She begins by setting forth this question for those who might doubt the validity of Mary's immaculate birth:

"Que consideren, todos los dudosos que en la santa Concepción de Nuestra Señora ponen o tienen duda, que ¿cuál rey poderoso que es muy limpio y lúcido y galán y presume mucho de andar muy pulido y adornado, se preciará de vestirse camisa sucia y mancillada? (LXX:4, 1422)

¹⁹⁰ According to Surtz "Juana effectively sidesteps Eve's guilt in the Fall: the serpent is not mentioned, and the apple episode is introduced but obliquely as an example of Adam's desire to bribe and thereby control Eve" (1990, 21). The following excerpt is the only mention of the forbidden fruit: "Y dijo su divina Majestad que, cuando Adán comió la manzana que le dio Eva, que lo hizo por el desamor que Eva le tenía, y porque no se apartase de él y se fuese huyendo, como otras veces solía hacer; de manera que la discordia y paz y desamor que entre ambos había fue causa y raíz y principio del pecado tan grande en que cayeron" (LXXII:6, 1458). Not only is the serpent missing from this account, Juana never says that Eve actually eats the forbidden fruit, it is only Adam who "comió la manzana." She claims that the true "causa y raíz" of the original sin falls mainly on Adam for his insatiable desire to pursue Eve and force her into submission.

It is Christ, speaking through Juana, who poses the question. Her analogy is similar to the previous *figura* that posits, essentially, how could Christ, who is sinless, remain so unless he dressed himself in the flesh of a similarly sinless person (“Y pues que en Dios no hay ninguna macula, que no lay hay de quien Él se vistió, y con quien Él se ayuntó, y en quien Él moró”)? In this second *figura*, Christ is analogous to the “rey poderoso” who walks around “muy pulido y adornado.” This image of the king and his attire brings to mind the well-established sumptuary laws from Alfonso X’s *Siete Partidas*. In the *Segunda Partida*, Law V declares that gold, silk and precious stones are appropriate dress for the King alone,¹⁹¹ because his external body represents the kingdom itself, and must manifest his God-appointed status.¹⁹² There is an intimate link between the clothing and its wearer, thus those of the most noble and pure birth must exude this attribute in their external appearance.¹⁹³

¹⁹¹ “Vestiduras facen mucho conoscer á los homes por nobles ó por viles, et por ende los sabios antiguos establecieron que los reyes vestiesen paños de seda con oro et con piedras preciosas, porque los homes los pudiesen conoscer luego que los vieses á menos de preguntar por ellos [...]” (28-29).

¹⁹² “[...] et aun en las grandes fiestas quando facien sus cortes trayesen coronas de oro con piedras muy nobles et ricamente obradas, et esto por dos razones; la una por sinificanza de nuestro señor Dios, cuyo lugar tienen en tierra; et la otra porque los homes los conociesen, asi como desuso deximos para venir á ellos á servirlos, et honrarlos, et á pedirles merced quando les fuese mester” (29).

¹⁹³ This metaphor is particularly salient within the Judeo-Christian understanding. The inner character and worth of the individual should be outwardly visible in their adornment. Jung Hoon Kim (2004) provides an in-depth analysis of sartorial imagery within the biblical narrative and specifically focuses on the Apostle Paul’s appropriation of the dress metaphor. He notes this intimacy between the individual and their corporeal adornment. Beyond this, Kim notes that: “When Paul describes this reality with the metaphor of ‘putting on Christ’, he thinks of a garment dominating its wearer’s appearance. As a garment is dominant in expressing its wearer’s appearance, so Christ is dominant in Christians’ lives. As a garment tends to be identified with its wearer, so Christ becomes one with Christians. As a garment also reveals its wearer’s character, so Christ reveals a Christian’s character. Yet as a garment maintains a difference from its wearer, so Christ is not equated with Christians; although Christ like a garment clothes

What proceeds is an interesting twist to the metaphor nuanced by Juana's previous articulations of Christ's dressing himself in Mary's flesh. Juana establishes a distinction between the wearer and his lineage:

Por de bajo linaje que sea el tal rey, como suelen acontecer algunas veces que el rey es muy poderoso y los parientes muy pobres y despreciados y se visten camisas sucias y mancilladas, lo cual no hace el rey aunque ve que sus parientes lo hacen, mas antes se procura siempre de vestirse la camisa muy blanca y limpia y delgada y labrada, por cuanto el tal rey es amigo de limpieza y gentileza. Que así, por semejante, hizo Él mismo, que es amigo de toda limpieza y puridad y virginidad y virtudes: Que cuando quiso encarnar y vestirse la camisa de la su santa Humanidad, buscó para sí la más limpiísima y sin mancha de pecado original. Que, aunque nosotros pecadores, los que le somos sus parientes por cuanto vistió nuestra carne y tomó nuestra humanidad, somos vestidos de camisas sucias y mancilladas, conviene a saber que somos concebidos en pecado original, Él, que es Dios y Rey de los reyes, y Señor de los señores, nunca conviene a saber, nunca quiso ni fue su voluntad de tomar carne humana de mujer que fuese concebida en pecado original, mas escogióla y crióla para sí la más pura y limpia de pecado y delgada en contemplación y adornada de virtudes que en todo el humano linaje hubo ni habrá.

(LXX:4, 1422)

Following this analogy, a king must wear royal attire regardless of his poor lineage, because garments indicate his character as a friend of "limpieza y gentileza." He should not wear the lowly "camisas sucias y mancilladas" of his parents. What is interesting is that Juana almost exclusively talks about Christ's taking on the "santa humanidad" as referencing Mary's flesh,

Christians, he remains himself and they remain themselves" (117-18). Thus the corporeal adornment is merely a metaphor for the character of the individual.

and not the flesh of humanity as a whole.¹⁹⁴ However she remarks that we, as human beings, are the “parientes” of Christ, because he decided to take on human flesh. Therefore, we humans are the poor “parientes” in the *figura*, dressed in “camisas sucias y mancilladas” that reflect our being born under original sin.¹⁹⁵

This analogy demonstrates a multifaceted understanding of Christ’s being (“vistió nuestra carne y tomó nuestra humanidad”). Juana, therefore, has a far more robust understanding of the interplay between the doctrine of Christ’s Incarnation and Mary’s Immaculate Conception. Mary’s Immaculate Conception becomes the bedrock of her Christology. Based on her logic, Christ’s Incarnation is not possible apart from Mary’s unstained flesh. Sartorial imagery is at the crux of her theological defense of the doctrine and functions to harmonize both. In her sermons, dressing is exploited to express this immaterial theological concept.¹⁹⁶

¹⁹⁴ For example: “Ven acá, Gabriel, sé tú mi casamentero, que yo quiero que trates tú este matrimonio y seas embajador de este tan alto secreto que te quiero descubrir, el cual es que vayas a María de Nazaret y la saludes de mi parte y la digas que se pare a la ventana, que quiero encarnar en ella y vestirme de su humanidad” (I:5, 238).

¹⁹⁵ Thankfully, the faithful followers of Christ are not left in the pitiful state of dirtied, soiled garments of sin-stained flesh. Returning to Sermon I on Christ’s Incarnation Juana has already revealed how the believers can be adorned in good works: “Y los que se desnudaban de sus vestiduras muy ricas y las tendían por tierra para que el Señor pasase por encima, significaban las personas que están adornadas de muchas buenas obras y virtudes. Porque, así como la vestidura cubre todo el cuerpo, así las buenas obras y virtudes cubren y adornan toda el anima” (I:15, 254).

¹⁹⁶ Quite fittingly, the *figura* ends with a very explicit description of the “limpieza” of Mary’s unstained flesh: “Que así como simple puede conocer que el rey no se debe vestir camisa sucia ni mancillada, así por semejante, deben creer y saber y conocer todas las gentes cómo Él nunca se vistió ni tomó carne de mujer que fuese concebida en pecado original, mas que sola la Virgen, Nuestra Señora y Madre suya, fue la reservada y privilegiada de este y de todos los otros pecados, porque Él nació y tomó carne de ella. Y que así como Él en cuanto hombre, después de encarnado y nacido, aunque tomó nuestras flaquezas y necesidades no tomó nuestros pecados ni vilezas, así por semejante, su gloriosa Madre, aunque fue mujer y tuvo nuestra ternura y delicadeza, no tuvo nuestras suciedades ni ascos y hediondeces de pecado; porque limpia fue en su concebimiento, y limpia en su niñez, y limpia antes del parto y en el parto y después del parto.

Naked, Yet Clothed

A comparison of Juana's treatment of Mary's naked flesh versus that of Christ reveals an interesting shift in the spectrum that separates divinity from humanity. Mary's flesh—and by extension Mary herself—is divinized while Christ is humanized.¹⁹⁷ This is an expansion of the observation noted in the previous chapter on Christ's Incarnation; indeed, Juana's Mariology and Christology are so intimately intertwined that one cannot discuss one without the other.

In “De la natividad de Nuestra Señora” (Sermon XXX), Saint Anne attempts to swaddle the newborn, but angels remove the coverings saying that Mary's body is perfect and without blemish: “Descúbrete niña que no estés cubierta, que no tienes en todo tu cuerpo cosa que hayas menester cubrir, mas todo eres limpia y pura y hermosa y perfecta y acabada de ver y de mirar” (L, 1: 1147). Mary's flesh, because it is *abinicio* “limpia y pura y hermosa y perfecta is not in need of the *sanctificatio* proposed by the opposing Macculist view.¹⁹⁸ Her flesh, by its very

Y limpia en todos los tiempos, y limpia en el cuerpo y en el ánima, y en las obras y deseos y pensamientos” (LXX, 4: 1422-23).

¹⁹⁷ Graña Cid, in comparing Juana with other female mystics, has likewise noted the “divinization” of female flesh with regard to the incarnation: “Santa Brígida subraya el protagonismo del María en la entrada de Dios en la historia, la encarnación, con el consiguiente reconocimiento de la mediación materna, su lugar principal en la salvación y una importante consecuencia: la divinización de la carne, concretamente del cuerpo femenino. Aspectos expuestos en el *Conorte* de forma muy similar” (2014, 195). She makes no mention of the clothing metaphor that Juana employs to further emphasize Mary's divine flesh.

¹⁹⁸ St. Bernard of Clairvaux was foundational in formulating this objection to the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception. In his letter to the Canons of the Church of Lyons (c. 1139) he states that no flesh can be immaculate apart from the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit. In section 7 of the letter he questions: “But she [Mary] could not have been holy before she existed, and before her conception she did not exist. Or was sanctity present in the act of her conception, so that she would be holy at the time she was conceived? But reason cannot accept this, for how can anything be holy without the presence of the Sanctifying Spirit, and how can the Holy Spirit have any part in sin? [...] If therefore it was quite impossible for her to have been sanctified

essence, is immaculate and has no need of the Spirit's sanctifying work. In Sermon XXXIX (“Que trata de las excelencias y vida y acabamiento de la gloriosa Santa Ana”), Juana explicitly states “Y dijo el Señor: Que como él tuviese, dende *ab initio*, sacado aquel pecadito de masa sin corrupción de levadura, les otorgó la petición que ella [la Virgen] fuese concepta sin pecado original” (5: 1020). The infant Mary has no need of swaddle or cloak, because her flesh is pure, not damaged or dirtied by the carnal lust of her parents: “Porque no hubo más pecado ni ensuciamiento, en aquel ayuntamiento tan santo y casto y limpio que Joaquín y santa Ana tuvieron para concebir a Nuestra Señora” (XXXIX, 5:1020). Whereas Mary's elaborate mantle cascading around her shoulders—more on this sartorial image in the following chapter—is present in most depictions,¹⁹⁹ Juana chooses rather to associate nakedness with purity and Mary's lack of clothing becomes a symbol of her immaculate nature; thus departing from

before her conception, because she did not then exist; or in the act of her conception, because of the presence of sin; it remains that she was sanctified after her conception, when she was already in the womb, and that this sanctification excluded sin and rendered her birth, but not her conception, holy” (1998, letter 215: pp. 292-93).

¹⁹⁹ See Suzanne Stratton (1994). See the color plates listed after page xvi, preceding the introduction. The most salient works include: Vicente Macip, *The Virgin “Tota Pulchra”*; Francisco de Zurbarán, *Virgin of the Immaculate Conception with Saint Anne and Saint Joachim*; Jusepe de Ribera, *Virgin of the Immaculate Conception*; Gregorio Fernández, *Virgin of the Immaculate Conception*; Bartolomé Esteban Murillo, *Virgin of the Immaculate Conception*; Antonio Palomino, *Virgin of the Immaculate Conception*. In fact, the mantle was one of the most elaborate pieces of clothing associated with the Virgin, and its symbolism was well known in Medieval Europe. Rich materials were used to make the mantles—“[...] generally [the mantles] were made of rich velvet, taffeta, brocade, or damask, and were often adorned with silver stars, gold and silver embroidery, ribbons, aglets, and appliqué” (Webster 2004, 255). Catherine Oakes (2008) provides an in-depth analysis of Mary's protecting mantle as a symbol of mercy. She points out that the image known as the “Virgin of Mercy shows Mary wearing a cloak, standing with outstretched arms, and sheltering humans under them” (2008, 102). The earliest known depiction of Mary as the embodiment of God's mercy is that of a fourteenth-century wall painting in a small Norman church of St. Cèneri-le-Gèrei near Alençon (Oakes 2008, 102).

traditional artistic renditions of the Virgin's Immaculate Conception, as she opts to depict Mary's pure, unadulterated flesh as perfect—without folds of elaborate garments.

This sartorial detail is also quite interesting theologically when situated within the broader context of devotional literature of the period. Alfonso Fernández de Madrigal (c. 1410-1455), more commonly known as “El Tostado”, wrote an extensive devotional work entitled, *Las cinco figuratas paradoxas* (c. 1437), which he dedicated it to Juan II of Castile's wife, María of Aragon.²⁰⁰ Pedro Cátedra has described the work as “enciclopedia teológica y naturalista” (1991, 79). Cardinal Cisneros took a great deal of interest in El Tostado's writings and requested that a number of his theological works be sent to Venice in order that a first edition might be compiled of Tostado's works.²⁰¹ That Juana had direct contact with El Tostado's works is highly unlikely, yet the similarities in their articulations of various theological questions are quite striking. In this instance, both refer to material clothing as an unnecessary, and ultimately unwelcome, addition to immaculate, pure flesh. In Chapter 363 (“Que non ay vestiduras en parayso para cubrir el cuerpo de Christo et de los otros santos”) he explains: “Et non es ansí de las vestiduras de Christo, pues luego non tiene Christo vestiduras en la gloria. [...] Enpero según orden de naturaleza, más perfecto es el cuerpo humano que las vestiduras fechas de lana de animalias brutas, pues non es razonable nin puede seer den gloria alguna al cuerpo humano” (574). Based on Juana's treatment of Mary's naked flesh, she certainly would agree with El Tostado's conclusions that “vestiduras fechas de lana de animalias brutas” are a degradation of her holy flesh. In that sense, they both use the sartorial image to emphasize the same theological point;

²⁰⁰ For more biographical information see “Lecturas regias” (pp. 1-10) and “Historia del texto” (pp. 57-63) in Carmen Parrilla's critical edition of *Las cinco figuratas paradoxas* (1998).

²⁰¹ See “Historia del texto” in Carmen Parrilla's critical edition of *Las cinco figuratas paradoxas* (1998), at pp. 57-58.

however, El Tostado applies the principle to Christ and Juana applies it to the Virgin. Moreover, in Sermon XVI (“Secretos, misterios y figuras del domingo de ramas”) Juana describes a sort of celestial game of “dress-up” in which the faithful saints bring lavish clothing to adorn Christ’s body.²⁰² Whereas El Tostado sees Christ’s flesh as perfect in and of itself, Juana’s Christ is draped in ornate clothing from head to toe. The contrast in El Tostado’s and Juana’s appropriation of this sartorial image further evidences Juana’s theological bent that fashions the Blessed Virgin as far more immaculate than her son.

Returning to the Nativity sermon, we learn that shortly after her birth, Mary is raised up to Heaven in body and spirit. What follows is a rather erotically charged festival in which virgins, clad in elaborate dresses of gold and precious stones, dance in front of the Holy Trinity.²⁰³ Mary is naked,²⁰⁴ and the Lord declares “Y muy más linda y apuesta y adornada aparecía ella, desnuda en carne, que todas las otras vestidas y apuestas” (L, 7: 1150-51); clearly privileging Mary’s body over the material covering of the other virgins. After she finishes dancing, Mary takes her Heavenly Father by the hand and He envelops her in his divinity:

²⁰² “Bienaventurados con sobramiento de amor, y vistieronle [Jesús] de vestiduras más resplandientes y claras que el sol, todas muy pintadas y labradas; y besándole sus sacratísimas manos, le ponían anillos en sus dedos y le calzaban guantes muy hermosos y llenos de joyas. Y de que le hubieron ceñido cinta de oro y puesto collar de cadena en su garganta, y adoradole de diversas maneras de adoraciones, y servídole de muchas maneras de servicios, cantando infinitos cánticos en cada vestidura y joya que le vestían y ponían, acatábanle y mirábanle hincados de hinojos, adorándole” (XVI, 16: 586).

²⁰³ For further reading on the erotic elements of his sermon see Surtz Chapter 5 “Juana de la Cruz and the Secret Garden” in *Writing Women in Late Medieval and Early Modern Spain* (1995).

²⁰⁴ Juana specifies that Mary is not simply “desnuda” but rather “desnuda como nació” (L, 1: 1147). This is the same rhetoric that Christopher Columbus used to describe the natives on his first encounter with the “new” world: “Ellos andaban todos desnudos como su madre los parió [...]” (24)

Y el Padre celestial extendió el su brazo poderoso y le dio el dedo meñique y ella alzó la mano y se asió de él. Y así la tomó el Padre y la encerró en sí. Y con su gran poderío y virtud, fue luego Nuestra Señora vestida y adornada muy rica y preciosamente. (L, 7: 1151)

Mary's flesh is, not only immaculate and pure, but also elevated to divine status. God himself has spiritually clothed her in his mantle and now she will serve as the mantle for Christ and, by extension, for all humanity.²⁰⁵ The full extent of the metaphor is made explicit shortly after this scene:

A significación que, cuando Nuestra Señora la Virgen María concibió al redentor, la virtud y fortaleza y claridad del Padre y del Hijo, la cubrió y la cercó y rodeó—que es el Espíritu Santo procediente del Padre y del Hijo—y ella cercó dentro de sus entrañas a toda la Trinidad, y la cobijó, así como con manto muy precioso y claro, cuando la persona del Hijo tomó carne humana de su precioso vientre virginal, encubriendo y escondiendo con ella la su muy alta y clarísima divinidad, así como con manto muy grande y claro y precioso. Y dijo el Señor que por eso es llamada Nuestra Señora la Virgen María, en el reino de los cielos, manto y cobertura de Dios; porque, con su muy preciosa humanidad, cubrió la muy alta y poderosa divinidad de Dios. (L, 10: 1154)

²⁰⁵ Jesus' gloss, spoken through Juana's mouth, explains the meaning of Mary's elevation to heaven: "Que estar Nuestra Señora desnuda en medio de todas las vírgenes y parecer más hermosa que todas ellas, fue significación que ella fue siempre desnuda de todos los vicios y pecados, así mortales como veniales, como actuales y originales. Y nacerle tetas desde chiquita, fue significación que desde que ella nació del vientre de su madre tuvo tetas de buenos deseos y de muy grande amor con su Dios y creador. Y aunque todas las vírgenes estaban entonces vestidas y adornadas de pecados, los cuáles nunca tuvo Nuestra Señora, mas en todas las cosas fue más privilegiada que todos los santos y santas de la corte del cielo" (L, 7: 1151).

Juana appropriates the sartorial metaphor by attributing its transformative power to the Virgin, who covers not only the faithful believers but also the Holy Trinity. Christ may very well be the only road to salvation, but Juana insists that entrance into Heaven is only gained through Mary—the metaphoric “puerta del cielo” (I, 8: 245). Thus, the Holy Mother mediates her son’s salvific power.

The juxtaposition of the nativity sermons of Christ and Mary makes Juana’s extension of the metaphor most salient. In “De la natividad del Salvador” there is great concern for covering Jesus’ body immediately after his birth. Mary tells Joseph “Venid acá, José, id ahora vos por la Villa y buscad alguna cosa con que abriguemos y calentamos al Niño cuando nazca [...]” (II, 4: 260). Although the angels scold Saint Anne for covering Mary’s immaculate flesh, the sermon portrays Jesus as a helpless baby in the care of a divinized Mother Mary, and the shepherds that come to worship him are equally concerned over the baby’s physical wellbeing, offering him a covering and saying, “Señora, ¿quieres un pellejito que tengo yo para que le envuelvas que me parece que está muerto de frío?” (II, 10: 265). These seemingly minor details intimate that without covering, the baby cannot live. For Juana, Christ’s humanity overcomes his divinity in this sin-cursed world.

Juana continues to develop this idea by alluding to Christ’s Passion during a prophetic vision in which she sees Mary suckling the newborn. An angel explains to Mary that: “[...] viéndole [María] a él padecer tales tormentos y heridas y llagas en el cuerpo tan tierno y tan delicado, como le amas tanto, todos sus tormentos padecerás tú dentro de tu ánima y traspasaran tu corazón” (II, 8: 263). According to this, Mary will experience the same pain as Jesus. Like him, he pleads with God to revoke “la tal cruel y amarga sentencia” (II, 8: 263) and threatens to refuse to touch the child’s body—depriving him of his sustenance—until God revokes his cruel

sentence.²⁰⁶ This rejection of Christ's physical body parallels her own refusal of the milk offered by the shepherds for her own sustenance,²⁰⁷ making her an active agent in this scene, controlling even the Divine through her supplication. Her flesh is also food—as Bynum also writes—and this flesh not only nurtures and sustains the Incarnate God but is also leveraged to control and redirect God's divine plan.²⁰⁸

Mary's naked flesh is not only more beautiful than the elaborately bedecked celestial virgins that appear with her but, unlike her shivering infant, her flesh must not be sullied by the inadequate trappings of material clothing. Instead, her flesh is spiritually covered in the divine mantle of God and infused with salvific power. Contrasted with Paul's use of the sartorial metaphor, it becomes evident that the believer need not put on Christ's flesh to receive salvation (Galatians 3:27), but rather put on the salvific flesh of Christ's divine Mother.

More so than the doctrine of Christ's Incarnation, the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception as unfolded by Juana unveils the power that popular religious practice would eventually have on official church dogma. Her articulation of it draws from commonly held

²⁰⁶ As Bynum has observed, “food-related behavior was central to women socially and religiously not only because food was a resource women controlled but also because by means of food women controlled themselves and their world” (1987, 193). Mary prays fervently (and quite stubbornly) declaring she “ni tomaría el Niño en sus brazos hasta que el Padre le otorgase que el niño no había de morir ni padecer” (II, 12: 265).

²⁰⁷ For further reading on how medieval women used food to control themselves and their environment see Chapter 6 “Food as Control of Self” in Bynum's *Holy Feast and Holy Fast* (1987).

²⁰⁸ María del Mar Graña Cid discusses the importance of the Eucharist for mystics like Juana. For medieval mystics, Christ's body shares in the nutritive capacities and redemptive blood that women have (2004, 326). As Graña elaborates in her study “La dignidad sacerdotal de las mujeres,” “...la Eucaristía, alimento fundamental de las místicas, presenta un evidente paralelo femenino al ser la alimentación un trabajo de mujeres en las sociedades medievales y la propia mujer fuente alimenticia de los hijos” (2004, 326). See also María Luenga Balbás (2012) more recent analysis of food (specifically the renunciation of food) within *El Conhorte*.

beliefs that is filtered through the lens of sartorial imagery, as she weaves an immaculate, theological tapestry that centers around the stainless, pure flesh of the Virgin.

CHAPTER 5: MARY, MANTLE OF MERCY AND CROWN OF HEAVEN
THE DOCTRINE OF MARY'S ROLE IN REDEMPTION AND INTERCESSION

Mary as Intercessor in Devotion and Iconography

It is a familiar image—the crowned Mother Mary holding her infant son, Jesus. The Virgin herself becomes a sort of throne that dwarfs the infant on her lap. One thinks of Margarito di Arezzo's 13th-century *The Virgin and Child Enthroned* or Andrea di Vanni's 14th-century *Madonna and Child*.²⁰⁹ Visually these images communicate theological concepts about Mary's role within the economy of salvation. Her crown denotes her celestial authority and reign, yet her overwhelming size and the sumptuous folds of the blue mantle that cascades down her shoulders and covers her son irresistibly attracts the viewer's eye. One is drawn, not to the image of the divine child placed upon her lap, but rather to the elements of dress that inundate the viewer's senses with deep shades of royal blue. Mary reigning on the throne is the throne; Christ, by all appearances, is subject to his mother's reign.

Bynum makes a similar observation saying that it is usual for devotional sculptures to either use Mary's body as a throne or as a container for her son. She especially remarks that as "Vierge ouvranter" [Opening Virgins], these works posed a quandary for theologians insofar as Mary became a container for all three persons of the Trinity: "To the theologians, this seemed incorrect Trinitarian theology. But what the devout saw was not just the Trinity inside Mary;

²⁰⁹ For a thorough and well-represented collection of images of the Virgin Mary see Jacqueline Orsini (2000).

they also saw Mary as a box, a physical container that opened and closed like a winged altarpiece” (2011, 88).

The materiality of these devotional objects was nevertheless part and parcel of popular religious praxis. These material objects were a means of conceptualizing spiritual realities while concealing deeper theological truths, and Bynum adds “there is a theology underlying the fusion/confusion, for Mary *is* the container and a revealer of the divine. Queen of heaven, she is a throne for one mightier than herself, simultaneously providing and displaying the child who will rule and save the world” (2011, 88). Bynum's statement cuts through the materiality of the object to its theological implications, and that is, in a sense, what we have been doing throughout this entire study—cutting through Juana’s vibrant imagery, filled with ornate detail, to the very warp and weft of her theology that knits her visionary sermons together.

The idea of Mary’s intercessory role in redemption ultimately seeks to look at her role within the economy of salvation. Warner (1976) summarizes it in the following manner:

The economy of the Catholic salvation is completely anthropomorphic: the model of the human family is projected twice onto the divine realm, once in the filial relation between Jesus and Mary, and again in the motherhood of Mary and sinners. Such anthropomorphism runs smoothly with the grains of Christian theology, in which God is the “Father” and Christ the “Son.” In the case of the Virgin’s mediation, it does beg a serious question: that the natural role of a mother is intercession. (1976, 288)

Yet for Juana, Mary’s role in intercession goes beyond this familial anthropomorphism. As Surtz has astutely noted Juana “enhances [Mary’s] role as co-redeemer” through the use of the

“Mother Hen” motif (1990, 37),²¹⁰ and Catherine Oakes (2008) notices that it leads to a change in the iconography of Mary and in devotional objects that reveals a subtle shift in her role and agency within the economy of salvation:

Early medieval versions of this type show a fused image as if the mother is indeed an attribute of the human—and therefore merciful—aspects of her divine child. Such an image shows two figures as if they were part of one profile; they seem to be ageless. As her intercessory role developed, so Mary came to be shown, by contrast, in dialogue with her son. They concentrate on each other, they are composed by the artist as two different people, one adult, one a child; one protective, one vulnerable. A relationship is thereby expressed. (2008, 7)

Thus Mary as a merciful intercessor on behalf of helpless sinners was not always a universally accepted doctrine of the church, but rather one that developed in popular religious devotion and within scholastic circles.²¹¹

Although many scholars point to the second-century bishop of Lyons, Irenaeus, as the forerunner of Mary’s intercessory role, Oakes finds the prayer at the end of Basil of Seleucia’s sermon on the Annunciation a far clearer marker of the doctrine’s inception and acceptance (2008, 20). She concludes,

²¹⁰ For his analysis of the “Mother Hen” image and Mary’s role in redemption see chapter 2 “The Mother Hen” in *The Guitar of God* (1990). Within this analogy, Surtz teases out the “masculinizing” of Mary as a means of increasing her power and authority within redemption.

²¹¹ We have already noted a similar trend in the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception in Chapter Three and its concomitant development in popular and scholastic religious spheres. However, unlike the Immaculate Conception that was universally accepted as official dogma of the Catholic Church, Mary’s role as Co-Redeemer and intercessor has not been officially accepted as a Marian Dogma. For a brief and helpful overview of the debate see Peter S. Dillard (2009). For a more recent analysis, that is situated within the broader context of Marian theology see Aidan Nichols (2015). The most well known scholar on this topic is Mark Miravalle (1995, 2003). For further reading see also: John D. Miller (2004), especially at pp. 13-83.

The Virgin becomes the attribute of mercy. [...] [T]he two attributes of the Divine are distributed between two beings, but the relationship and not the individuals distinguish which attribute is just and which is merciful. God is not the bliss of the just and the Virgin is not the reconciliation of sinners, but the divinity of God is tied up with justice, and the humanity expressed by being Mary's son, with mercy. (2008, 28)

This progression of the doctrine's development is important, because it brings us back to one of the most salient sartorial images used to convey Mary's mercy, namely her mantle.²¹² Surtz briefly mentions Mary's mantle within *El Conhorte* and the well-known motif of "The Madonna of the Cloak" summarizing that "this iconographic motif depicts the Virgin with a voluminous mantle that shelters a multitude of supplicants" (1990, 48).

The earliest known depiction of Mary as the embodiment of God's mercy is that of a fourteenth-century wall painting in a small Norman church of St. Cèneri-le-Gèrei near Alençon (2008, 102).²¹³ Webster, who has studied the development of the mantle (1998, 2004) says that its symbolism was well known and that it was one of the most elaborate pieces of clothing associated with the Virgin, "generally [...] made of rich velvet, taffeta, brocade, or damask, and [...] adorned with silver stars, gold and silver embroidery, ribbons, aglets, and appliqué" (2004,

²¹² Surtz briefly mentions Mary's mantle (1990, 48-56). He sees a connection between the protective wings of the "Mother Hen" with the protective folds of Mary's mantle. His analysis looks specifically at Sermon LVIII ("Que trata de cómo nuestro Redentor Jesucristo habló un día del seráfico y alférez suyo San Francisco"), though he does mention Mary's mantle in the assumption sermon that we will study in-depth in this chapter.

²¹³ For further reading the Virgin's intercession in the "Psychostasis," or the Weighing of the Souls, see chapters four and five in Oakes' study: "The Image of the Virgin of Mercy" and "The Marian *Psychostasis*," pp. 101-66.

255). For example, the image of the “Virgin of Mercy shows Mary wearing a cloak, standing with outstretched arms, and sheltering humans under them” (2008, 102).²¹⁴

Juana was familiar with the image of the Virgin and child, and indeed there are references within the *Vida y fin* to one such image²¹⁵ that probably influenced Juana’s own articulation of Mary’s role within Redemption.²¹⁶ In Juana’s Incarnation sermon Gabriel informs Mary of her unique role in mediation and intercession

Y sepas, Señora, que es voluntad del Padre celestial de hacer la redención del humanal linaje y quiere que, en esto, seas tu medianera. Y, por tanto, quiere enviar su amado Hijo

²¹⁴ For a concise, yet helpful, analysis of Mary’s mantle see Kathryn M. Rudy (2008) at pp. 28-33. She also makes a connection between the mantle of Mary and the mantle of Christ.

²¹⁵ “E las mismas insignias de la santa Cruz y los clavos y todas las armas de la sagrada Pasión trae pintadas e dibujadas, por muy rica manera, en un lindo pendón. E junto con ello trae figurada e dibujada la imagen de Nuestra Señora con el Niño Jesús en los braços, e de otras maneras e misterios, así como quando Él y ella estaban acá en la tierra, e como después entrambos subieron a los Cielos; en especial la trae pintada como ella está en su trono real, sentada e cercada de vírgines e santos ángeles, que la están sirviendo. Y estos motes y armas tan preciosas son así para defensión de las ánimas que él tiene en guarda, como para provecho de las del Purgatorio. E también los santos ángeles se arrear e precian de adornar sus personas e vestiduras de las insignias e armas con que su Dios y Señor hizo la obra de la redempción. Las ánimas del Purgatorio se gozan mucho con su visitación, que se recuerdan de su Dios en los tormentos que padecen. Este mi santo ángel siempre anda en buelo, e otras vezes de hinojos, e también en buelo véole venir algunas vezes e descender de lo alto hazia el lugar que yo estoy; deciende y viene asentado en un trono e silla, y en buelo por el ayre. Y es todo muy rico e resplandeciente e adornado de muchas pedrerías, e trae en su mano algunas vezes a manera de cetro muy precioso, e otras vezes trae un instrumento con que tañe de tan admirable especie que, en solo tocarle, haze qualquier son e armonía que quiere hazer quien lo tañe; dize las palabras como las puede dezir e cantar qualquiera persona humana, pero muy más suaves e deleytosas de oír” (fols. 26v-27r).

²¹⁶ Anselm of Canterbury (d. 1109) again becomes a key figure in the development of this Marian doctrine. Oakes perceives his intercessory prayers to the Virgin were widely read and recited (2008, 27; and corresponding fn. 47). For further reading on the prayers and their circulation see Benedicta Ward (1973) and R.W. Southern (1990).

a ti par que sea encarnado en tu vientre virginal, y, para esto fuiste criada y escogida, para ser Madre de Dios. (I:5, 240)

This quotation hints at what becomes a resounding theme within Juana’s sermons—Mary is the mediator—not merely an intercessory agentless mediator—in bringing about the salvation of sinners, but one who wields queenly power and authority.²¹⁷ Although “the theology of the Virgin’s intercession maintains very strictly that the Virgin does not have the power to grant any boon by herself, but only intercedes with her son, who as God is the only source of salvation” (Warner 1976, 286), Juana’s Mary far outshines her son and in some instances, becomes the sole agent in bringing about the salvation of sinners. Juana therefore uses Mary’s mantle and crown(s) to fashion a uniquely powerful Holy Mother.²¹⁸

Mary’s Mantle—“Abogada” and “Abrigo” of Sinners

²¹⁷ Graña Cid, in comparing Juana with other female mystics, has likewise noted the “protagonism” of Mary within salvation: “Santa Brígida subraya el protagonismo del María en la entrada de Dios en la historia, la encarnación, con el consiguiente reconocimiento de la mediación materna, su lugar principal en la salvación y una importante consecuencia: la divinización de la carne, concretamente del cuerpo femenino. Aspectos expuestos en el *Conorte* de forma muy similar” (2014, 195).

²¹⁸ Warner points out that Mary’s intercessory role has always been intimately linked with her maternal role. She observes: “The most consistent theme in the theology of the Virgin’s intercession, however, is her motherhood. She is approached as a human mother who brims over with a mother’s love. This element in her cult is present in earliest Byzantine times, recedes in the early middle ages, when she is at her most queenly and hieratic, and then re-emerges in the thirteenth century, to last undiminished to the present day. Her love of mankind is maternal, and her qualities of mercy, gentleness, loving kindness, indulgence forgiveness, are all seen as motherly. All men are her children through Christ her son, who gave her to them from the Cross; and so she lavishes a mother’s love and pity on all her brood” (1976, 286).

Mary appears as “abogada” and “abrigo” of sinners in Spanish devotional literature.²¹⁹ Alfonso X’s *Cantigas de Santa Maria* begin with a reference to Mary as “abogada”: Filla, Madr’e e Criada;/ e porên nos dev’ ajudar,/ ca x’ é nós’s’ avogada” (Cantiga I: Stanza VIII, ll 78-80). For Alfonso, the “abogada” role is intimately linked with her motherly role, which is precisely the observation that Warner makes regarding the development of the doctrine; that is Mary’s intercession is a natural development of her motherly disposition (1976, 286).

Another devotional work that would have been widely circulated during Juana’s time, Fray Iñigo de Mendoza’s *Vita Christi* (1482), addresses Mary as the “abogada” and “abrigo” of sinners. He cries out: “En el mar de tu exçelencia,/ ¡o virgen, nuestra abogada!” (Copla LVIII: 1-2), and he describes Mary as the “abrigo”: “De nuestra noche candela,/ de nuestras cuitas abrigo,/ reno de nuestro enemigo,/ muerte de nuestra tristeza,/ vida de nuestros plazerres,/ arca de nuestra riqueza,/ fuerça de nuestra flaqueza/ corona de las mugeres” (Copla XIII: 1-10). Mendoza couples both the “abrigo” and “corona” image for Mary; interestingly, these same images are interwoven by Juana to fabricate a Marian theology that conflates both Mary’s queenly authority with her intercessory role. However, her articulation of the role asserts her queenly role and privilege, and suggests that her son’s salvific work is unnecessary.

Mary’s mantle and crown are the central iconographic elements that Juana uses to depict Mary’s role within redemption. Sermon XLVI (“Que trata de la gloriosa Asunción de Nuestra Señora la Virgen María”) first describes the size of Mary’s mantle and equates it with the wings of bird:

Que el manto de su gloriosa y sagrada madre era tan grande que cabían debajo de él más de quinientos mil millares de los que subieron a la postre. Y teniéndolos ella así a todos,

²¹⁹ In her discussion on Mary’s Immaculate Conception, Twomey (2008) highlights Villasandino’s *cancionero* that also refers to Mary as “abogada” (177-78).

debajo de sus alas y manto, estaba mayor que todo el mundo. A significar que ella es continua rogadora y abogada de todo el universo mundo, y tiene a los pecadores metidos debajo de sus alas, para los defender y amparar. (XLVI: 27, 1100)

The best contemporary image of that captures this attribute is *La Madonna della Misericordia* (mid-15th century) of Piero della Francesca. The painting shows the Virgin with arms outstretched, protecting her faithful followers.²²⁰ Juana's Mary boasts a mantle that can fit countless sinners, for whom she is "rogadora" and "abogada." Yet her "manto" is also an emblem of defense, security, and salvation.²²¹ Yet again harkening to mind another famous image that was proliferated throughout Spain as propaganda for imperial colonization—the Virgin of the Seafarers (1531-36) by Alejo Fernández.²²² Fernández's rendering shows a billowing mantle that is far more expansive and fluid than the stoic *La Madonna della Misericordia*. Juana would have no doubt been familiar with these depictions of Mary's mantle.

²²⁰ The reference to "alas" also brings to mind the "Mother Hen" motif that Surtz has examined in *Guitar of God* (1990): at pp. 49-62.

²²¹ There is a parallel image in Sermon LVIII ("Que trata de cómo nuestro Redentor Jesucristo habló un día del seráfico y alférez suyo San Francisco"). Saint Francis' habit forms a protective shroud (understood as *the* means of salvation) for sinners that he is bringing up from Purgatory: "A significar que por la Orden de san Francisco se salvan muchas ánimas, así de hombres como de mujeres, por muchas maneras. Unos, por tener devoción con el hábito, por cuanto es figura y semejanza de la su cruz, y porque, en persona que tenía tal hábito imprimió él las sus llagas. Esto fue en el glorioso san Francisco, el cual debajo de aquel hábito las trujo por espacio de dos años escondidas, por lo cual tiene tantas indulgencias y perdones. Y que otros se salvan porque tienen devoción de morir en este santo hábito, y otros porque tienen devoción con el mismo san Francisco más que ningún otro santo del cielo" (LVIII: 5, 1244). For Surtz's analysis of Saint Francis' habit and its connection to Mary's mantle see *Guitar of God* (1990) at 48-50.

²²² For further reading on this powerful image and its significance in the Spanish Empire see Carla Rahn Phillips "Visualizing Imperium: The Virgin and Spain's Self-Image in the Early Sixteenth-Century." *Renaissance Quarterly* 58.3 (2005): 815-56.

Beyond these images, I would argue that the material practice of adorning Marian effigies with crown and mantle is most influential in Juana's descriptions of Mary. Her descriptions mimic, point by point, the chronicler Hernando Pérez de Gúzman's (1376-1458) lengthy account of the Virgen de los Reyes' elaborate regalia in Seville's Royal Chapel:

y la imagen de Santa María es fecha en torno y la levantan y asientan cuando quieren vestir a ella y al su Fijo: sus paños de carmesí, mantos pelotes, y sayas, y la imagen de Santa María tiene una corona de oro en que están muchas piedras granadas, que son e zafiros e rubíes, esmeraldas e topacios. [...] E tiene la imagen de Santa María un anillo en el dedo, de oro, en que está una piedra rubí, tamaño como una avellana. [...] E están todos tres vestidos sus paños, camisas, paños menores.²²³

Iten debajo de ésta tiene una camisa de seda colorada con unas barras y unas líneas de oro tejida por ella. [...] Iten dos camisas, la una labrada con oro y seda y la otra con orillas de seda morada y labradas de diversos colores y labradas las bocas de lienzo casero, la una y la otra de olana. La cinta de Nuestra Señora, forrada sobre texillos verde de piedras de oro que peso con su cabo y hevilla y pasador guarnecida de ciertas girgonzas pequeñas [...] Por último el collar era de cuentas de oro y cuarenta y cinco perlas.²²⁴

Pérez de Gúzman's descriptions enumerate the precious stones, rich garments and other regalia in a manner that parallels Juana's descriptions of the Virgin, especially at her coronation and assumption. Sermon LXVIII ("Que trata de los misterios y secretos declarados por Nuestro

²²³ Quoted in Martínez Alcalde *La Virgen de los Reyes: Patrona de Sevilla y su Archidiócesis: Historia, arte y devoción* (1989) at pp. 16-17. See also Webster (2004), at pp. 266-67.

²²⁴ Quoted in Carrero Rodríguez *Nuestra Señora de los Reyes* (2010), at pp. 37-40. See also Webster (2004), at pp. 267-68.

Señor en un día de Presentación”), for example, provides an excellent example to compare with Pérez de Gúzman’s description:

Cuando ella empezó a subir por las gradas al templo, todos se detuvieron, que ninguno no subió con ella, si no fueron los santos ángeles que la llevaban cercada, haciendo alrededor de ella muy concertadas danzas y humillaciones, y llevando todos en las mano unos como sombreros de oro muy hermosos y grandes y todos llenos de muchas joyas. [...] Y cantaban y tañían, y derramaban muchas tazas de perfumes, e incensaban con muchos incensarios de oro alrededor de ella. Y que, si en una grada la vestían de vestidura muy rica, en otra la calzaban de chapines y zapatillas de oro de perlas y piedras preciosas, y en otra la ponían muchas ajorcas y manillas y sortijas, y en otra muchos collares y cadenas y joyeles, y en otra la coronaban de corona muy grande y preciosa, y en otra le cubrían un manto muy grande y precioso, y en otra, por semejante, le vestían otra vestidura muy más preciosa que la primera y le ceñían cinta muy resplandeciente y llena de perlas. Y en fin, dijo el Señor, que antes que acabarse de subir todas las gradas la habían los ángeles vestido y calzado y enjoyado y cubierto de infinitas maneras y colores y pinturas, unas muy más ricas y resplandecientes y preciosas y olorosas que otras. (LXVIII: 6, 1401)

Pérez de Gúzman, as a chronicler, obviously has a keener eye and utilizes more precise language when describing the different “piedras preciosas,” yet the similarities are still quite striking. Mary is layered with multiple garments full of precious stones in both descriptions. Each successive garment exceeding the other in splendor and sartorial intricacy, but although Juana finds herself at a loss of words when trying to fully express the splendor and richness of Mary’s

garments and accessories, both descriptions come from an observed reality: the adorning of statues of the Virgin.²²⁵

The practice of adorning statues of the Mary is documented in Alfonso X's *Cantigas de Santa María*.²²⁶ Susan Webster calls them "imágenes de vestir" (1998, 2004).²²⁷ She remarks that the aforementioned "cantiga" is referring to the Virgen de los Reyes in Seville and, according to Webster, it is the origin of the practice of adorning Marian effigies.²²⁸ She remarks: "The actual garments and physical mobility of the sculptures contributed significantly to their emotional impact and persuasiveness. Simultaneously, the splendor of the clothing and adornments made a powerful and very public statement about the material as well as spiritual

²²⁵ Interestingly, although the processional vestments grew more and more elaborate, the "easel paintings of the Virgin remained within the traditional simple, somber canon" (Webster 2004, 259). We must remember that Juana, in her articulation of the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception, has before emphasized Mary's naked flesh as more beautiful than all of the fancily clad virgins dancing in heaven. The Lord declares "Y muy más linda y apuesta y adornada aparecía ella, desnuda en carne, que todas las otras vestidas y apuestas" (L: 7, 1150-51). Thus, depending on what Juana is wanting to emphasize, she manipulates the sartorial image accordingly.

²²⁶ In Cantiga 295 we read "E daquest' un gran miragre / vos quer' ora retraer / que mostrou Santa María, / per com'eu pud' aprender, / a un Rei que sas figuras / mandava sempre fazer muit' apostas e fremosas; / e fazia-as vestir [...] / De mui ricos panos d' ouro / e de mui nobre lavor, / pōya-lles nas testas / pera parecer mellor / corōas con muitas pedras / ricas, que grand' esprandor / davan senpr' aa omagen / e faziana luzir. [...] / E outrossí nas sas festas / ar fazia-lle muda / senpr' outros panos mais ricos / pola festa mais onrrar [...]."

²²⁷ See *Art and Ritual in Golden-Age Spain: Sevillian Confraternities and the Processional Sculpture of Holy Week* (1998) and "Shameless Beauty and Worldly Splendor: On the Spanish Practice of Adorning the Virgin" in *The Miraculous Image in the Late Middle Ages and Renaissance* (2004).

²²⁸ "Most scholars agree that the wooden sculpture of the Virgen de los Reyes is a work of the thirteenth century, and that it was carried into the city of Seville in triumphal procession by King Ferdinand III upon his liberation from the Moors in 1248" (Webster 2004, 263). For the angelic forging of the statue and the mystical nature surrounding King Ferdinand III's receiving the statue see: Juan Carrero Rodríguez (2010), at pp. 22-23; José Hernández Díaz (1996).

wealth and status of the [individuals] that carried them through the streets in procession” (2004, 254). Despite the immense popularity of the religious practice, she notes that there was “widespread clerical condemnation in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries” (2004, 251). Prominent figures like Juan de Ávila (1499-1569) decried the practice claiming its inability to truly insight worship but rather distract the devotees.²²⁹ Yet, as we have observed with the Feast of the Immaculate Conception, popular religious devotion seems to be the driving factor in doctrinal development and religious praxis. Despite clerical fears of idolatry, devotion to the "imágenes de vestir" persisted and gained momentum—her mantles growing ever longer and more elaborate. These "processional Virgins were outfitted with imperial crowns made of gold or silver that were typically composed of a diadem that could be bolted to the head, surmounted by the traditional curled lobes (Webster 2004, 257). As Bynum notes:

Statues were often dressed and festooned with jeweled necklaces. Indeed, in Catholic Spain, where such practices continue to this day, some statues of the Virgin lost their inside bodies almost entirely and became simply frames from which a gorgeous wardrobe was hung. [...] The emphasis is neither on identification of her physiognomy nor on realism or naturalism, on making her look like a woman. It is clear she is a kind of coat hanger with a head and a torso. (In some cases, such statues appear to have only heads and hands.) The emphasis is on the glory and complexity of her attire—on her garb as regal, suiting the queen of heaven. (2011, 53)

Juana’s Mary—whether bedecked in sumptuous mantles and diamond-encrusted crowns, or standing naked before God himself—is undoubtedly set apart as the Queen of Heaven.

²²⁹ “Muy mal uso hay en los vestidos de las imágenes que se ponen en las iglesias, porque las atavían con toda profanidad que las mujeres profanas se atavían; de lo cual se siguen tales males ni son para decir, y a duras penas se podrían creer” (VI: 74) in *Obras Completas* (Madrid, 1971), ed. F.M. Hernández.

Crowns Fit for a Queen

The crown that adorns the Virgin's head is not ordinary; indeed, it is more than a symbol of her royalty. In Revelation 12:1 there is a depiction of a woman in heaven: "And a great sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars." This crown of twelve stars is known as the *stellarium* and according to Stratton, the Franciscan version of the rosary, "called the Stellarium, was especially popular in the seventeenth century when it was linked to the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception" (122). The twelve stars represent "twelve different meditations on the privileges of the Virgin [...] and was one of two beadroll devotions favored by the Franciscans" (Twomey 2013, 179). They are a "reminder to recite the twelve *Aves* and three *Pater Nosters*, an abbreviated form of the rosary established by the Franciscans in contemplation of the virtues and joys of the Mary" (Stratton, p 136 & Calil Zarur p 22). Stratton (1994) sees an intimate link between the *stellarium* and the development of the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception although Twomey (2013, 187) notes that images of the Virgin with the *stellarium* were not limited to the Immaculist contexts but also are found in Maculist paintings. What is clear is the link between the *stellarium* and rosary devotion.²³⁰ Albert-Guillem Hauf i Valls (1987) points to one of St. Bernard's sermons on the Assumption as providing the link between the stars and the rosary devotion and meditation.²³¹

²³⁰ See Twomey (2013) "The Crown of Twelve Stars and Franciscan Rosary Devotion" (pp. 179-203) in *The Fabric of Marian Devotion*.

²³¹ See Hauf "La *Vita Christi* de Sor Isabel de Villena y la Tradición de las *Vitae Christi* Medievales." *Studia in honorem Prof. M. de Riquer*. Vol II. Dámaso Alonso (Ed). Barcelona: Quaderns Crema, 1987: 105-64. See, also, Twomey (2013) at pp. 198-99.

For we can discover in Mary three kinds of prerogatives, which I will call the prerogatives of heaven, the prerogatives of the flesh, and the prerogatives of the heart. And, if now these three constellations be multiplied by four, as each containing three stars, we shall have perhaps the twelve stars which make the diadem of our glorious queen resplendent beyond all others. (1984, 214)²³²

The crown placed upon the Virgin's head—both in art and literature—does not merely demonstrate an influence of aristocratic fashion, but rather unveils a deeper-rooted theological meditation on the nature and work of the Blessed Virgin.²³³

We have already discussed Fray Ambrosio Montesino (1444-1514) and his influence as a Franciscan advocate of the Immaculate Conception. One of his poems, “A las doze estrellas de la corona de la reyna del cielo hizo fray ambrosio las doze coplas que siguen”, enumerates each of the twelve different aspects of the Virgin's nature, one of which includes a metaphor of Mary as a “fino cendal” in which Christ dressed himself and was protected from original sin: “Tú de tal fino cendal/ Al Rey del cielo vestiste,/ Que en el vientre maternal/ De la culpa original/ Todo tiempo careciste” (Stanza II, vv. 1-5; p. 440).²³⁴ There is also evidence in Juana's *Libro de la Casa* that the *stellarium* was familiar to Juana and the women of her convent. In the “Versos laudatorios a la Virgen” one of the stanzas reads: “Su rica corona/ texida de estrellas,/ la ermosura en ellas/ más se perfecciona./ Con voces pregona/ sus gracias divinas/ mírala” (fol. 67r).

²³² See Luddy's (1984) edition and translation of St. Bernard's sermons on the Blessed Virgin.

²³³ Twomey (2013) makes this conclusion regarding Isabel de Villena's *Vita Christi* and places her findings in dialogue with Hauf's (1987) more simplistic understanding of the crown. He remarks that the presence of the crown in convent literature is “más fácil de entender, dado el interés de las monjas, en general procedentes de familias de la aristocracia, habían sentido y posiblemente sentían, por las galas y aderezos” (114).

²³⁴ See Sancha, Justo de (1950) for his edition of Ambrosio's works.

Within Marian iconography the investiture and crowning of the Virgin are often depicted at her Assumption, however, some paintings have the Virgin receiving a crown at Christ's nativity.²³⁵ Juana follows both traditions, but we begin our analysis with Sermon XLVI "Que trata de la gloriosa Asunción de Nuestra Señora la Virgen María." Though one of the most salient theological themes is Mary's immaculate nature, the sermon also hints at a queen-like role in which Mary assumes a powerful position in the economy of God's salvific work. However, it begins with the Virgin's coronation:

Y dijo el Señor que cuando él subió a su muy preciosa madre al trono real, la presentó y ofreció al Padre celestial con gozo inefable, y que el Padre celestial al recibió y le dijo: es mi hija muy amada. Y el Hijo le dijo: Esta es mi madre muy honrada. Y el Espíritu Santo le dijo: Esta es mi esposa muy pura y deseada. Y así recibió y cercó y coronó toda la Santísima Trinidad. Y viendo todos los bienaventurados la grande honra y recibimiento y coronación que la Santísima Trinidad le hacía, cantaban y tañían todos juntos a una voz muy alta y dulce diciendo: Subida es ya María y asentada en el trono de la Santísima Trinidad y sobre todos los coros de los ángeles reina. (XLVI: 3, 1084)

Mary stands before the throne of the Holy Trinity to be crowned by all three persons.²³⁶ Jones and Stallybrass have observed "[i]t is through the investiture, through the putting on of a crown

²³⁵ See, for example Jan van Eyck's *Virgin and Child with Saints and Donor* (1442) and Twomey's (2013) discussion of the coronation events of the Virgin's life at pp. 189-96.

²³⁶ Though she stands here, Mary is elsewhere described with as powerfully seated on her throne and adorned in her heavenly crown. See Sermon XXXII ("Que trata de la Visitación de Nuestra Señora") at p. 944.

and of coronation robes—that a monarch becomes a monarch” (2000, 2). Similarly, Mary is marked by this moment of coronation by her royal and divine privilege.²³⁷

Shortly after her coronation Christ joins the angels in praising his holy mother. His praise clearly expounds the Virgin’s role as Queen and Co-Redemptrix:

Madre mía y gloriosa y muy gozosa asunción. Y cantan y dicen de vos que sois ensalzada en los cielos sobre todos los coros de los ángeles, y pues os llaman reina de los cielos con mucha razón sois llamada reina, pues yo reiné y vos nueve meses y vuestro corazón y reinado y reinaré para siempre vámonos yo y vos ahora por vuestros reinos y verán los bienaventurados cómo sois vos su reina y su señora. (XLVI: 3, 1084)

Within the celestial hierarchy, Christ and Mary share an equal place. In fact, it appears that for the nine months that Christ was dressing himself in Mary’s flesh through the Incarnation, it was she alone that enjoyed complete rule. This is perhaps similar to Jan van Eyck’s painting of *Virgin and Child with Saints and Donor* (1442) in which the coronation occurs concomitantly with the Incarnation, initiating Mary’s role as a redeemer alongside her son.²³⁸

²³⁷ It is interesting to note the sartorial detail of the women present at the coronation. Juana goes into detail describing how all of the women bedecked themselves in their most beautiful garments for the occasion: “Y salieron todas las mujeres, lo más lindas y apuestas que podían” (XLVI: 4, 1084). Nonetheless, it is still Mary who is the most beautiful of all the women present: “mi reina, mi madre y mi amiga, es hermosa y escogida entre millares, y , sobre todas las hijas de Sión, es más pura y perfecta y acabada” (XLVI: 5, 1085).

²³⁸ Traditionally the Co-redemptrix role was based in Genesis 3:15: “I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel.” In the same papal bull, *Ineffalibis Deus*, that defined the Immaculate Conception. It states: “Just as Christ, the Mediator between God and men, by taking our nature, cancelled the decree of condemnation against us, triumphantly nailing it to the cross, so too the most holy Virgin, intimately and indissolubly united to Christ, became with Him the everlasting enemy of the venomous serpent, and thus shared with Her Son His victory over the serpent, crushing as she did the serpent’s head with her virginal foot” (qtd. in “*With Jesus*”: *The Story of Mary as Co-Redemptrix* (2003) at p. 22).

Although the Virgin's crown does not precisely boast the twelve stars of the *stellarium* within Juana's sermon, the references to Mary's exuding beams of light are of theological and sartorial importance. Mary becomes so resplendent that the seraphim cannot gaze upon her face: "salían de ella [María] tan grandísimos rayos de claridad y resplandores que quitaban la vista a todos los de la corte del cielo" (XLVI: 8, 1086). Her radiant glory must be shrouded by veils: "[...] entonces, los altos serafines le ponían delante unos velos muy lindos y delgados y pintados y enjoyados, porque le detuviesen algo los rayos y la pudiesen ver algún poco" (XLVI: 8, 1086). The interweaving of sartorial imagery and theological meaning is potent in this scene.

The image of the seraphim covering their faces is steeped in Old Testament imagery. In Isaiah they cover their faces and their feet, not before the Virgin, but before God himself: "Above him stood the seraphim. Each had six wings: with two he covered his face, and with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. And one called to another and said: 'Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory!'" (6:3). The veil that shields unworthy sinners from God's uncontainable glory is at the very heart of the Old Testament ceremonial in which a veil was placed around the Holy of Holies.²³⁹ Only the high priest was permitted to go behind the curtain to intercede for the people.²⁴⁰ Juana's description also closely echoes one of

²³⁹ Exodus 26: 31-35 describes the veil in the tabernacle: "And you shall make a veil of blue and purple and scarlet yarns and fine twined linen. It shall be made with cherubim skillfully worked into it. And you shall hang it on four pillars of acacia overlaid with gold, with hooks of gold, on four bases of silver. And you shall hang the veil from the clasps, and bring the ark of the testimony in there within the veil. And the veil shall separate for you the Holy Place from the Most Holy. You shall put the mercy seat on the ark of the testimony in the Most Holy Place. And you shall set the table outside the veil, and the lampstand on the south side of the tabernacle opposite the table, and you shall put the table on the north side." See cross reference in Hebrews 10:19-22.

²⁴⁰ Exodus 26: 31-35 delineates the instructions for how the people of God were to construct the veil: "And you shall make a veil of blue and purple and scarlet yarns and fine twined linen. It shall be made with cherubim skillfully worked into it. And you shall hang it on four pillars of

the most well known Old Testament passages, namely, the veil that Moses placed over his face after communing with God on Mount Sinai as he received the ten commandments.²⁴¹

Baert sees an intimate connection between veils and their power to both conceal and reveal: “The material, with its fluid folds possesses the capacity both to mask and unveil. [...] The veil floats inside the nearly boundless symbolic apparatus that relates to ‘revelation’. The revealing veil embraces theological premises, iconographical motives and devotional practice” (2007, 159). It conceals a theological premise: that Mary’s function is similar to that of Moses’ intercession for God’s chosen people.

There is an interlude between the veiling of the Virgin’s radiant glory and her explicit intercession for helpless sinners, and this interlude is literally replete with images of adornment and dress. As Mary is being shrouded by the seraphim, suddenly “torzales de oro” [cords of gold] spring from her shoes and clothes:

Y que estando Nuestra Señora toda cercada de serafines, que estaban poniéndole velos delante de ella para que la pudiesen ver, a deshora, salieron de sus chapines y de todas

acacia overlaid with gold, with hooks of gold, on four bases of silver. And you shall hang the veil from the clasps, and bring the ark of the testimony in there within the veil. And the veil shall separate for you the Holy Place from the Most Holy. You shall put the mercy seat on the ark of the testimony in the Most Holy Place. And you shall set the table outside the veil, and the lampstand on the south side of the tabernacle opposite the table, and you shall put the table on the north side.” As described in Leviticus 16, it was only on the Day of Atonement that the high priest could enter behind the veil. See also Hebrews 9:7.

²⁴¹ “When Moses came down from Mount Sinai, with the two tablets of the testimony in his hand as he came down from the mountain, Moses did not know that the skin of his face shone because he had been talking with God. Aaron and all the people of Israel saw Moses, and behold, the skin of his face shone, and they were afraid to come near him. [...] Whenever Moses went in before the Lord to speak with him, he would remove the veil, until he came out. And when he came out and told the people of Israel what he was commanded, the people of Israel would see the face of Moses, that the skin of Moses' face was shining. And Moses would put the veil over his face again, until he went in to speak with him” (Exodus 34: 29-30, 34-35).

sus vestiduras muchedumbre de torzales de oro más resplandecientes que los rayos del sol. (XLVI: 10, 1086)²⁴²

Golden threads depict the connection that the faithful followers have with the Virgin; thus suggesting the interconnectedness of the materiality of the rosary cords and the spiritual experience they elicit.²⁴³ Enraptured by the beauty of the cords, the “ciudadanos” grab hold of the cords in hopes drawing the Virgin closer that they might kiss her feet; yet in their zeal, the Virgin becomes so entangled by the cords that the seraphim cannot break them. It is undeniably apparent because Christ’s subsequent interpretation of the fact that the golden cords symbolize the rosary is yet further evidence to Juana’s Immaculist bent. The sermon explains that when the chosen faithful grabbed the golden cords, they received a variety of material objects (“flores”, “oro”, “cipreses”, etc.) that symbolized spiritual blessings (“vida perpetua”, “encendido amor”, “devoción”, etc.). He concludes

Que los torzales de que Nuestra Señora estaba asida y arraigada de todos los escogidos , los cuáles la tenían asida, significaban los muchos y grandes merecimientos y virtudes que ella tuvo, más que todos los santos y escogidos juntos. (XLVI: 16, 1089)

Clinging to the Virgin’s cords of gold draws one closer to her limitless supplies of grace and mercy, and, as the following scene reveals, it is the Virgin’s role, as Queen of Heaven to intercede for helpless sinners.

²⁴² “Rocks and gold symbolized the Immaculate Conception in both art and literature in the late fifteenth century, and could do so alone or in combination” (Twomey 2013, 185).

²⁴³ Nathan D. Mitchell (2016) notes this “full-body experience” that merges the materiality of religious praxis with its spiritual devotion: “Praying by hand is one of the things that distinguished the Catholic rosary from other forms of popular devotion in the early modern period. For even in the absence of a string of beads, one’s ten fingers could serve as prayer counters and physical reminders that one’s whole body and being were focused on God as one meditated on the mysteries of Christ and the Virgin Mary” (152).

Mary's queenship comes to full fruition in the subsequent dialogue between God the Father and Mary. As the Heavenly Father embraces the Virgin, He asks her what kind of "gracia o merced" she would like to receive, and her response is both authoritative and final: "Y el Padre celestial le dijo: 'Hija mía, aunque yo lo sepa, quiero que Vos me lo digáis y pidáis lo que quierdes.' Y entonces, Nuestra Señora, le dijo: 'Padre mío poderoso: Pecadores quiero y os demando'" (XLVI: 20, 1092). She desires to rescue sinners. Not only is her wish granted, but also God responds to his beloved Mary:

Pecadores, hija, que os sean otorgados. Pecadores, hija mía muy amada, con condición que se conviertan a vuestro Hijo precioso, y amen y sirvan y vengan a Vos. Y ya sabéis Vos, hija mía, que os habemos dado poder que seáis reina y señora de todos estos reinos celestiales y que mandéis en ellos y vedéis todo cuanto quisiéredes. Y ya sabéis, que Vos habemos hecho tesorera y secretaria de todos los dones y bienes que son otorgados y dados en el cielo y en la tierra y en el purgatorio y por vuestra mano pasan todos. Y Vos sabéis todos nuestros secretos, antes que otro ninguno de los cielos. (XLVI: 20, 1092)

Everything is to pass through the Virgin's hands—she has been given the authority to decide how many sinners are saved and what graces are dolled out to each. She boasts more agency than even the Holy Trinity. She is again and again referred to as the "reina y señora" of the heavens; and reigns over everything. Her agency is not merely important, but rather it is essential within the economy of salvation.

Juana's theological understanding of Mary as Co-Redemptrix is at variance with the Church. In 1964, *Lumen Gentium* distinguished between Mary and her son's roles in redemption: We have but one Mediator [Jesus Christ] [...] The maternal duty of Mary towards men in no way obscures or diminishes this unique mediation of Christ. [...] For all the saving

influences of the Blessed Virgin originate, not from some inner necessity, but from the divine pleasure. They flow forth from the superabundance of the merits of Christ, rest on his mediation, depend entirely on it, and derive all their power from it.²⁴⁴

Devotional prayers could at times be addressed to Mary but only as the means of mediation with Christ and his mercy.²⁴⁵ In Juana's sermon, however, Christ shares his reign with Mary and asks her to descend and rescue sinners from their shared kingdoms: "Madre mía muy amada, descendamos yo y Vos para nuestros reinos y alcázares, y veros han todos los bienaventurados cómo sois Vos reina y señora de ellos, y serviros han todos, y Vos darles a ellos muchas consolaciones" (XLVI: 21, 1093). Yet Juana does not stop at positing an egalitarian co-reign. She fashions a scene in which Christ's strips himself of his crown and vestments and places them on the Virgin, symbolizing her complete sovereignty:²⁴⁶

Y que luego descendió él del seno del Padre, con su gloriosa madre, y la voló por todo el reino de los cielos. Y dijo, su divina Majestad, que iba él en un caballo muy resplandeciente y adornado y encima del mismo caballo iba puesto su trono real, y él y su gloriosa madre asentados en él, llevándola delante de sí, besándole y abrazándola muchas

²⁴⁴ This excerpt is found in the Chapter 8 paragraph 60 of the *Lumen Gentium* and can be also found in *Documents of the Vatican II* (1966). Walter M. Abbott and Joseph Gallagher (eds.) at pp. 90-91.

²⁴⁵ See Warner "Icons and Relics" in *Alone of all her Sex* (1976) for her analysis of these prayers, especially at pp. 287-88. She references the *sub tuum praesidium* (one of the earliest known Christian prayers dated, by some scholars, to the third century) that pleads to the Virgin Mary for mercy as the "Mother of God" and asks that she "not reject our supplication in need but save us from perdition" (1976, 387).

²⁴⁶ The scene lends itself to a myriad of interpretations, especially those of gender and authority. My discussion will remain focused on the theological implications of Mary's sovereign authority over the salvation/damnation of sinners. Jessica Boon's treats the topic of gender and cross-dressing quite well in her recent study "At the Limits of (Trans)Gender: Jesus, Mary, and the Angels in the Visionary Sermons of Juana de la Cruz, 1481-1534" (2018).

veces, y quitándose su corona y poniéndosela a ella, y quitándose su vestidura y cadenas y joyas y poniéndoselo todo a ella. E iba diciendo con muy alta dulce voz: ‘Mirad, todos, a mi pura madre y a mi amiga y a mi escogida, la cual yo escogí entre millares para mí, la cual me contentó y agradó sobre todas las mujeres. (XLVI: 22, 1093)

If the adage “clothing oft proclaims the man” is true, this scene posits a greater theological issue than a discussion of the doctrine of her immaculate nature. In donning Christ’s kingly robes, Mary becomes both King and Queen of Heaven. She is the summation and the center of the economy of salvation—those sinners for whom she cajoles and intercedes become her subjects, including her divine son. She is “Virgen reina y emperadora de los cielos” (XLVI: 23, 1094). The (re)coronation of Mary with Christ’s own crown and garments is followed by a processional that mimics the processions described by Susan Webster in *Art and Ritual in Golden-Age Spain: Sevillian Confraternities and the Processional Sculpture of Holy Week* (1998).²⁴⁷ The Virgin Mary is paraded through the streets surrounded by a cacophony of trumpets and dancers and singers. The processional ends in a plaza of purest gold and precious stones, where thousands of devout followers kiss her feet, hands and garments: “le besaban los pies y las manos y las ropas que tenía vestidas [...]. Y ellos, viendo su grande humildad, a ellos queriéndoles también besar

²⁴⁷ Webster notes the theological importance of processional images: “Thus, it can be said that the distinction between processional and all other types of sculpture is the distinction between immanence and transcendence. While stationary sculptures symbolize the transcendence of the deities they represent, implying a separation between the earthly and heavenly realms, processional sculptures—when activated—become immanent: they merge the represented deity with the synchronic and empirical existence of the world. The human and divine, the material and the spiritual, are conflated in the activated processional sculpture” (1998, 59). In her later study (2004) she adds “[...] by the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the churches and streets were filled with opulently attired and bedecked Virgins, all competing for popular attention and devotion” (2004, 270).

las manos. Y ellos, viendo su grande humildad, a ellos queriéndoles también besar las manos” (XLVI: 23, 1095).

What more can be said of Christ? He has willingly stripped himself of his garments—and by extension the very royalty and divinity that they symbolize—and placed them upon his blessed Mother.²⁴⁸ His presence fades into the background while she takes center stage, Juana nowhere mentions that he takes back his clothing.

Sherry Lindquist’s observations in *The Meanings of Nudity in Medieval Art* (2012) add an interesting element to the (re)coronation scene. She notes that

Because the unclothed body is associated with extreme states and emotions—purity, innocence, sacrifice, shame, humiliation, sexual desire—depictions of it invite a particular frisson of identification and discomfort. How and when we adorn our bodies is connected to our social identities, and dressing and undressing therefore figure prominently in rituals that govern changes of status in societies (for example, boy to man, maiden to wife, novitiate to monk, dauphin to king). Such rituals have a transitional liminal phase, a moment of non-status that has the potential to be socially disruptive. (2012, 2)

²⁴⁸ Christ’s disrobing is particularly problematic, because it recalls a defrocking ritual by which a priest was relieved of his function by symbolically stripping him of his vestments (Elliot 60). This ceremony was intended to be an exact reversal of the procedures for ordination, stressing the shame of losing one’s elevated religious status (Elliot 61). For more reading see Dyan Elliott (2004).

Christ remains in this “transitional liminal phase,” while his mother has clearly ascended the celestial hierarchy. Her son’s status is not only uncertain,²⁴⁹ but it is theologically disruptive, insofar as it usurps his divine authority.²⁵⁰

This inversion in power—as we observed in the previous chapter on the inversion of their divinity—is intensified when Mary and Christ debate over which souls are worth saving. Mary identifies for her son those she wishes to save, stripping him of his intercessory authority. Moreover, when he tells his mother that sinful souls that have spent many years in purgatory do not merit salvation, because “tuvieron muchos pecados y ningún merecimiento” (XLVI: 24, 1095), the Virgin disagrees and protests his request:

Hijo mío amado, pues aquellos quiero yo que son pequeños y pobres. Y, pues vos me hicisteis reina y señora de todos estos reinos, no me iré de aquí hasta que todos suban a mí, que ninguno quede, que yo los quiero consolar y dar mi bendición maternal. (XLVI: 24, 1096).

She reminds her son that *he* made her queen, and it is now within her authority to advocate for whomever she deems worthy of salvation. Her son makes little effort to contradict his mother

²⁴⁹ Scholars have debated the topic of Christ’s liminal state with regard to his gender. Though that is not in view for my discussion it is worth mentioning. For further discussion on the portrayal of Christ’s gender in Medieval iconography, a topic not lacking in scholarly attention, see Sherry Lindquist (2012). She provides an extensive overview of the existing criticism and highlights the debate over Christ’s masculinity/femininity between Leo Steinberg and Caroline Walker Bynum, pp. 11-13. Also see within the same volume Corine Schleif’s “Christ Bared: Problems of Viewing and Powers of Exposing,” pp. 257-278. Schleif likewise mentions the Steinberg-Bynum dispute. For Steinberg’s seminal study in which he focuses on the biological gender of Christ see *The Sexuality of Christ in Renaissance Art and Modern Oblivion*. For Bynum’s reply to Steinberg’s assertion that Christ was “fully male in gender” see “The Body of Christ in the Later Middle Ages: A Reply to Leo Steinberg” (1986).

²⁵⁰ Warner observes that prayers to the Virgin “were generally worded with care: Mary and the saints be begged to ‘pray for us’ and not to act directly and gran the ultimate object of the prayer” (1976, 288). However, in Juana’s sermon, Mary is not sought after by the sinners for “prayer on their behalf.” Mary appears to take Christ’s authority and ability to offer salvation.

and asserts that she has the ability to “manda[r] a esos ángeles que están ahí, a par de Vos, que vayan por ellos y os los traigan” (XLVI: 24, 1096). The angels, like Christ, do not believe these dreadful sinners are worth saving, and Mary stands her ground with resolute and absolute power:

se levantó y se puso en pie en su tálamo con grande poder, mostrándose rigurosa contra ellos [los ángeles], diciéndoles: ‘Amigos, no me digáis esas cosas, que no las quiero oír ni puedo sufrir que en mi presencia sean despreciados y acusados los pecadores, porque yo so la que tengo que amansar y abogar delante de Dios por ellos. Mas, id luego y traedme acá a todos, y subidlos donde yo estoy. Y si vosotros no lo queréis hacer, hacerme habéis a mí hacer una cosa que nunca hice, después que en este reino estoy. (LXVI: 24, 1097)

This is arguably one of the most powerful images of the Virgin in the entirety of *El Conhorte*.²⁵¹ She appears enraged and assertive, wielding her unique power to save and intercede for sinners. Christ is merely a passive agent. She also has the ability to “amansar” the Almighty God and coerce him into accepting them.

Her act of intercession is also an act of sartorial significance. Juana describes the sinners’ arrival before the great “abogada,” by mentioning the state of their garments:

yo soy continua abogada por ellos, y, por mi intercesión y ruegos, son todos salvos y perdonados. Por tanto, mis amigos y amados hijos, subid, aunque no tengáis tan preciosas vestiduras como estos poderosos que están cercanos a mí, que yo os enriqueceré de los sobramientos de mis dones y tesoros y riquezas. (XLVI: 24, 1098)

²⁵¹ Christ himself is shocked at the sight of his mother so enraged: “Y dijo el Señor que, viendo él a su piadosa madre tan encendida a favor de los pecadores, le decía, con grande gozo y placer de ello tenía: ‘Madre mía, siendo vos la humilde y la mansa y la paciente, ¿cómo estáis ahora tan encendida y brava contra esos señores’” (XLVI: 24, 1097).

Their garments, while not initially as clean and precious as those of the powerful angelic beings that surround the Virgin, can be transformed.

Elsewhere in *El Conhorte* (Sermon XVI: “Secretos, misterios y figuras del Domingo de Ramos”) the clothing of the faithful is intimately connected with their humanity and thus when the *bienaventurados* lay their garments down beneath Christ on Palm Sunday, they represent the humanity that Christ took upon himself.²⁵² This sermon on Palm Sunday, shows Christ washing their sullied “garments” of their humanity: “Y todos los que hubieron de ser limpios y lavados de la suciedad y mancillas de sus pecados, lo son y lo serán mediante los méritos de mi Sagrada Pasión” (XVI: 12, 583). Yet Christ boasts no such salvific agency in the Assumption Sermon; he is completely overshadowed by his powerful queen mother. Mary does not merely wash their garments, she clothes them in new, glorious vestment and, thus adorned, the sinners are grateful that they can now cover their shame: “Señora, gracias os damos porque ya nos vemos tan adornados como esos señores que están alrededor de Vos, y, ya sin vergüenza, osaremos llegar a vuestro trono” (XLVI: 26, 1099). Mary’s act harkens back to the Garden of Eden where God himself makes “garments of flesh” to cover Adam and Eve’s shamefulfulness.²⁵³ Mary, in her queenly role, becomes the sole source of mercy and intercession for feeble sinners.

²⁵² Christ states “de aquel día de la mi pascua y solemnidad, en la cual vosotros me honrasteis y ensalzasteis [...] en señal de lo cual derramábades ramos y flores y echabábades vuestras vestiduras por donde pasase el asna en que yo venía caballero, lo cual significaba la mi Santa Humanidad que yo tomé de mi madre Santa María, sobre la cual llevé yo cargados los pecados del mundo, y todas las ánimas son salvas y se han de salvar” (XVI: 11, 582). A few moments later the sartorial metaphor is extended to say that Christ will wash away the stains from those sinners who have soiled their garments with sin (XVI: 11, 583).

²⁵³ For an insightful exegesis of this Biblical text and an in-depth study of clothing imagery within the Judeo-Christian tradition see Jung Hoon Kim *The Significance of Clothing Imagery in the Pauline Corpus* (2004). Regarding the Genesis account he remarks: “The genitive ‘of skin’ also reinforces our interpretation, because a skin presupposes the sacrifice of a living being. Investiture with a garment of skin may be regarded as being clothed with the life of the sacrificed

The Assumption sermon perfectly harmonizes Mary's queenly role and Mary's intercessory role. It ends by interweaving the symbols of the crown and the mantle. Mary has covered countless sinners within the folds of her sumptuous mantle and Christ cites a passage from 1 Peter 4:8 to explain the image— "Above all, keep loving one another earnestly, since *love covers a multitude of sins* (emphasis mine)," and associates Mary with the woman described in Revelation 12:1 that is crowned with the *stellarium*:

Y dijo el Señor: Que si su primo, san Juan evangelista, decía que había visto *la mujer puesta la luna a sus pies y cercada del sol y coronada de estrellas*, que mejor podía él decir, pues, era verdadero Dios, que había visto la mujer asentada en muy rico tálamo y haciendo delante de él cantares muy dulces y gozosos, y a la misma Virgen estar cubierta con manto mayor que todo el mundo y teniendo debajo de él muchedumbre de pecadores. (XLVI: 28, 1101)

Mary's crown designates her as queen of heaven and "causa que se llenen de hombres todas las sillars del cielo" (XLVI: 29, 1103). It is because of Mary that any of those seats are filled. Sermon 15 ("Cómo los pecadores demandan a Dios mercedes") lends further support to Juana's theological understanding of Mary as "especial abogada y señora a la Reina de los Cielos" (XV: 16, 571).

creature. As far as Adam's being clothed (3.21) signals his restoration to the original life which is hinted at in Gen. 2.7, it can further signal his restoration to his original kingship; in light of the motif of movement from dust to kingship in 1 Sam. 2.6-8, 1 Kgs 16.2 and Ps. 113.7 [...]" (2004, 14-15). The topic of "shame" within the Judeo-Christian tradition as been well studied. In *Saving Shame* (2008) Virginia Burrus examines the "cultural legacy of shame conveyed by ancient Christian literatures of martyrdom, and asceticism, Christology and confession" (5). For an in-depth look at what Burrus names the "embarrassment of the flesh" see Chapter 2 (44).

A starred crown of authority and a mantle of mercy are old iconic elements that indicate her function as intercessor and her role as celestial queen.²⁵⁴ The first image of *Maria Regina* is found in the S. Maria Antiqua and is believed to have been painted in the beginning of the sixth century.²⁵⁵ In this image Mary is “arrayed in the pear-laden, jewel-encrusted regalia of a contemporary secular monarch, she also proclaims, in a brilliantly condensed piece of visual propaganda, the concept that the Church is a theocracy of which the agent and representative is the pope, the rule of Rome” (Warner 1976, 104). However, in Juana's sermons, Mary alone is the source of intercession. Sermon XXXII (“Que se trata de la Visitación de Nuestra Señora”) more fully describes her encounter with the Angel of the Annunciation by showing Mary's queenly authority: “Y hallaron a Nuestra Señora, la Virgen María, asentada en un trono real muy poderoso y grande y resplandeciente, y adornado y cercado de muchedumbre de joyas y variedad y hermosura y gentileza y rosas y flores y lirios, y al poderoso Dios asentado con ella, abrazándola y besándola y sirviéndola y coronándola” (XXXII: 6, 944). Mary is not standing before God in a posture that marks a subservient queenly authority, but rather, seated on it while God himself is serving her. Outside the folds of Mary's mantle there is no hope for sinners.²⁵⁶

²⁵⁴ The crown so obviously points to her status as Queen of Heaven, but Warner notes that there are theological subtleties hidden beneath this symbol. She remarks: “At the assumption, Mary becomes Queen of Heaven, and the crown she wears on her head is a token of her triumph. Her crown seems the simplest symbol to express her supremacy, an accessory so natural and so commonplace that it is almost invisible. Yet its appearance subtly underlines many arguments and tenets of the Catholic Church, not only about the glory of Mary the individual, but also about the power of the Church itself, for which the Virgin stands” (1976, 103).

²⁵⁵ See Warner (1976), at p. 104. See also corresponding footnote on p. 374.

²⁵⁶ Sermon 15 “Cómo los pecadores demandan a Dios mercedes,” supports this theological underpinning: “Por lo cual, dijo el Señor, debemos hacer buenas obras y humillarnos debajo su mano poderosa, y tomar por especial abogada a su Madre—Santa María, y Señora Nuestra—, y algunos o a todos los Santos y Santas de la corte del Cielo. Porque es muy bueno y saludable para la salvación de nuestras ánimas, tener por especial abogada y señora a la Reina de los

Daza's 1610 biography includes an illustration of Juana, holding a rosary in her right hand and a palm branch in the left, that is adorned with two crowns. Alongside, he writes,

Y aunque la ley común y ordinaria—como parece por muchos derechos y concilios de la Iglesia—no pueden las mujeres predicar y, por consiguiente ni merecer la Aureola de Doctores, debida a los que predicán o enseñan la virtud, por haberlo hecho Santa Juana, con particular asistencia del Espíritu Santo, que la concedió esta singular prerrogativa, gozará en el cielo las dos aureolas de Virgen y Doctor, merecidas por su predicación y virginidad: Y así la suelen pintar con una palma en la mano y dos coronas en ella.²⁵⁷

As with Mary, those who seek to portray the inner virtue of Juana resort to material symbols—rosary beads, crowns, and the like. Surtz has observed this intimate link between the two, because, by empowering Mary, Juana “makes possible the widening of her own sphere of action” (1990, 38).²⁵⁸

Cielos; por cuanto, delante el su acatamiento divino, es la más digna y que más cuidado tiene de lo que a nosotros pecadores conviene” (XV: 16, 571). Indeed, without Mary's intercession all hope would be lost, she demands of her son: “¡Oh Hijo mío muy amado, habed ahora piedad del humanal linaje, y mirad cómo hay algunos que se quieren desesperar!” (XV: 4, 564).

²⁵⁷ For a reproduction of the image and quote see García de Andrés' edition of *El Conhorte*, at p. 224. For original quote see chapter XII in Daza's biography (1610).

²⁵⁸ Surtz's conclusions are drawn from a different approach. He looks at the interplay between the “masculine” and “feminine” elements. He writes “Although a woman, she appropriates certain “masculine” powers that later turn out to be “feminine,” for another of her strategies consists of demonstrating the feminine aspects of masculine figures, in order to associate herself with them (as in the case of Christ) or to surpass them (as in the case of Saint Francis)” (1990, 37-38).

CONCLUSION

As we ponder the nature of the theology of *El Conhorte*, we return to the question posed by García de Andrés: Do Juana's sermons represent an “ortodoxia fuera de toda duda”? His introduction to *El Conhorte* cautions scholars not to fixate on individual images or phrases, as it would cause them to lose sight of its orthodoxy. In his estimation, the error committed by the inquisitors: “fue quedarse en frases sueltas o en el ropaje de las figuras, para criticarlas y rechazarlas, sin darse cuenta de que seguidamente, en el propio sermón, se ofrecía la interpretación de las mimas” (“Introducción” 217).

However, these “frases sueltas” and “ropaje de las figuras” must be examined carefully as they are integral to the very fabric of *El Conhorte* and hide the answers to Juana’s (un)orthodoxy. There is not a systematic articulation of doctrine within the sermons, because Juana is not a trained theologian; however, to not examine her images is at best naïve. Although she is not a theologian, Juana’s contribution to vernacular theology and popular religion is undeniable. She was heralded as a mystic and as a “predicadora,” implying that she functioned as an authority in scriptural exegesis for her flock.²⁵⁹

²⁵⁹ In Daza’s biography (1610) of Juana he affirms that preaching is not an office held by women, but that Juana was uniquely gifted by the Holy Spirit to fulfill this role: “Y aunque la ley común y ordinaria—como parece por muchos derechos y concilios de la Iglesia—no pueden las mujeres predicar y, por consiguiente ni merecer la Aureola de Doctores, debida a los que predicán o enseñan la virtud, por haberlo hecho Santa Juana, con particular asistencia del Espíritu Santo, que la concedió esta singular prerrogativa, gozará en el cielo las dos aureolas de Virgen y Doctor, merecidas por su predicación y virginidad: Y así la suelen pintar con una palma en la mano y dos coronas en ella” (qtd. in García Andrés *El conhorte*, at p. 224). Boon discusses this at length in her “Introduction” to *Mother Juana de la Cruz: Visionary Sermons* (2016). Surtz

We have seen that behind Juana's sartorial images there is a theological shift in her assessment of the Virgin's role, but it is due more to the material religious practice of her period and not so much to a transgressive attitude that makes incursions into scholastic theology or dogma.²⁶⁰ Although her visionary sermons make assertions that are shocking to us, what is most intriguing is that her audience was not alarmed. We know this because of a number of people, including Cardinal Cisneros and Emperor Charles V, heard and lauded her sermons and believed in her saintliness.²⁶¹ As García Andrés remarks, “sólo el reconocimiento y protección del cardenal Cisneros hizo posible que una mujer como Juana, de humilde cuna y ningunas letras, llegara a gozar tan gran autoridad espiritual” (1999, 55).

also discusses this in *Guitar of God* (1990) especially his “Introduction” and Chapter 1 “The Beard and the Apple.”

²⁶⁰ Graña Cid (2010) traces the development of feminine religious experience. She systematically divides the development into periods and the most active period (1475-1510) corresponded to the reign of the Catholic Monarch: “se desarrolló un período que, iniciado con la reforma promovida por los Reyes Católicos e implantada por Cisneros, coincidió con el triunfo definitivo de las observancias en las distintas religiosas. Significó la culminación del proceso de institucionalización, con disminución drástica y reorientación de los espacios laicos” (2010, 31). In Chapter 7, “La espiritualidad femenina en el naciente sistema urbano,” Graña Cid further discusses the influence of the Catholic Monarch's religious reforms and even addresses the specific impact on the Franciscan Order (2010, 292-94). In contrast with the advancement of feminine religious experience, Jane Tar elaborates in “Flying Through the Empire: The Visionary Journey of Early Modern Nuns” the tense relationship between the Spanish Inquisition and the visionary nuns during the sixteenth and seventeenth century. Her study situates Juana within the context of other female mystics, for example, Sor Magdalena de la Cruz of Córdoba (1487-1560), Madre Luisa de la Ascensión (1565-1635) and Sor Ana María de San José (1581-1632). Central to Tar's analysis is the supernatural phenomena of bilocation. I agree with her assertion that “[...] from a feminist perspective, there are clearly transgressive components to early modern Spanish Franciscan nuns' supernatural journeys” (292). Tar notes that it is not until the late 1520's that the Spanish Inquisition vigorously began persecuting suspected Lutherans and “Alumbrados”—curtailing the relative religious openness of Queen Isabel and Cardinal Cisneros toward mystical experience (263).

²⁶¹ See *Vida y Fin*, fols. 27v – 28r.

She also preached during a time distinguished by an extreme openness to mystical spirituality:

Una de las más acusadas características de la religiosidad de Cisneros fue [...], dentro de la más austera virtud, su predilección y debilidad por la espiritualidad religiosa femenina. Así vemos la preferencia con que eligió para la siembra mística de sus ediciones la obra de varias de las más interesantes escritoras místicas experimentales de la Reforma italiana. Protegió y mostró siempre simpatía por las beatas que abundaban en la vida religiosa de su tiempo, entre ellas la célebre Beata de Piedrahita. (Sáinz Rodríguez 35)

We must remember this openness to mystical expression when we read that Juana was transformed from male to female in her mother's womb,²⁶² that Jesus claims to be female,²⁶³ or that Mary dances naked before God.²⁶⁴ Each of these statements perplexes the modern reader. It seems that her embellishments of biblical texts could never have been produced by a devout Catholic nun of the early sixteenth century. Yet they were.

²⁶² In Boon's most recent study on gender in *El Conhorte* she remarks: "Juana comfortably inhabited multiple gender dynamics, ranging from being transgendered as a fetus while retaining a male secondary sex characteristic, to cross-dressing, to voice register changes when Jesus gave sermons through her enraptured body, all of which experiences she claimed to be authorized by the Virgin Mary and enabled by God. These gender dynamics were central to the construction of Juana's authority in her Marian convent—she was born female to be its abbess—while also giving Juana a platform from which she could preach, or rather by which Jesus could speak through her" (2018, 266).

²⁶³ In Sermon VI ("Huida de Nuestra Señora a Egipto") Jesus states: "Gozáos y alegráos conmigo, mis hermanas, que si vosotras morísteis por mí, también morí yo por vosotras, y mucho os amo y os quiero. Y también soy niña como vosotras, pues soy hijo de mujer" (VI: 25, 401).

²⁶⁴ See Sermon L ("De la Natividad de Nuestra Señora) at pp. 1147-51. For further reading on the erotic elements of his sermon see Surtz Chapter 5 "Juana de la Cruz and the Secret Garden" in *Writing Women in Late Medieval and Early Modern Spain* (1995).

Juana was praised as a saint, counted among the orthodox,²⁶⁵ and captivated those who heard her. Her audience considered her a credible voice and was far less shocked by her claims than we are today. She did not stand out for her edgy gender claims or feminist agenda, but was considered a “normal” faithful servant of God. Scholars have nevertheless read “modern” concerns into her work. All that this demonstrates is that there might still be much to be learned about the period. Interestingly, my study of the sartorial imagery in *El Conhorte* has revealed that there are layers of theology and doctrine that have been nuanced in interesting ways, most of which center around the Virgin Mary. These mariological nuances reveal a different type of “orthodoxy” that was powerfully shaped by the popular religious praxis of its time period.

This popular religious praxis boasts a great deal of clout in the ultimate formulating and expressing of her doctrine.²⁶⁶ As Shakespeare said, “apparel oft proclaims the man.” We began by looking at the larger-than-life persona of “La Santa Juana” and have seen that clothing is critical in fashioning an autonomous and supernaturally inspired female mystic. *Vida y Fin* and *Libro de la Casa* are works that present (or “proclaim”) Juana as intimately connected with the divine through their metaphorical “ropaje.”

These clothing images “authorized” her to preach and unfold her visions. In Chapter 3 (“(Ad)Dressing Christ”), she articulated the doctrine of the Incarnation (from conception to crucifixion) by means of a sartorial imagery at once literal and metaphoric. Christ dons Mary’s

²⁶⁵ Daza (1610) praises Juana for her supernatural spiritual anointing from the hand of God: “Con lenguas de serafines, y espíritu del cielo, quisiera manifestar al mundo las cosas tan soberanas, que para honra y gloria suya depositó Dios en su fiel and devota esposa Sor Juana de la Cruz, con quien alargó tanto de la mano de sus misericordias, que por ser tan singulares, piden singular atención para leerlas, y particular devoción para escribirlas” (“Prólogo y Advertencias al Lector”).

²⁶⁶ A topic treated well by William A. Christian in *Local Religion in Sixteenth-Century Spain* (1981). He lays out a premise in the beginning of this study that establishes, what he calls, “two levels of Catholicism—that of the Church Universal [...] and a local one” (1981, 3).

immaculate flesh and Juana uses the image to advance an Immaculist theology. Perhaps the most novel of her theological assertions is about Christ's flesh—naked, cold and hungry—already in his pre-incarnate state. Prior to clothing himself in Mary's virginal womb, she paints a picture of a very human child who longs for his mother. Later, it even seems that the source of Christ's divinity—and not so much his humanity— appears to be safely tucked within the folds of the Virgin Mary's perfect and holy flesh. His physical body must be clothed and blanketed, while his mother's spotless flesh is far more angelic than human. Sartorial imagery blurs the lines between divinity and humanity, as it serves as a mere backdrop for a divinization of Mary.

In Chapter 4 (“Immaculate Clothing, Immaculate Conception”) we saw even more clearly the divinization of Christ's Blessed Mother. What is most fascinating about Juana's articulation of the Immaculate Conception is its striking similarity to scholastic theology, to popular devotional literature, and to the iconography about Mary. In content, the sermons seldom stray from the analogies employed in other devotional works. The evidence seems to suggest that there was a near uniformity in the way that the Virgin was presented and that this was driven primarily by popular religious culture, namely the Feast of the Conception. More so than the doctrine of Christ's Incarnation, the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception in Juana's sermons adumbrates the changes in official dogma that the Church would eventually make.

Our analysis ends with Chapter 5 (“Mary, Mantle of Mercy and Crown of Heaven”), wherein the powerful Marian bent to Juana's theology shines forth most brightly. Juana's articulation of Mary's role within redemption is a conflation of images that present an altogether self-sufficient being. One might even argue that Mary is not a co-redeemer, but *the* redeemer. In Sermon XLVI she shows no need of her divine son. In fact, he merely hinders the salvation of those that he deems unworthy. And her rage at his delay is in stark contrast to the maternal

gentleness that traditionally served as the very foundation of her intercessory role. Mary asserts herself, not as a mother, but as a crowned queen who does not merely plead for the salvation of sinners, but rather demands it. When her mantle mercifully covers “quinientos mil millares” of sinners, it appears that she has enveloped and surpassed her son, and the necessity of his salvific work within God’s redemptive plan. Juana was steeped in the popular religious praxis of her time and the materiality of such religions praxis forms a foundational component of her cleverly crafted visions.²⁶⁷ Her skillfully woven imagery alludes to their deeper theological truths.

It would appear that even Juana herself was aware of their mixed reception. The final sermon in *El Conhorte* (LXXII: “Que trata de la creación de los cielos y la tierra y de todas las cosas que en ella son”) ends with an exhortation from Christ:

Que esta santa escritura [*El Conhorte*] es tan grande y maravillosa y provechosa que no la podrá entender ni gozar ni gustar la persona que no amare ni gustare las dulcedumbres de Dios. Porque, así como la persona que está enferma y maldispuesta tiene el gusto de la boca muy amargo y todo cuanto come, por dulce y bien guisado que sea, le amarga y le sabe mal, que así por semejante, cualquier persona que tuviere el ánima enferma de pecados y el gusto amargo de incredulidad y dureza y malicia y envidia y otros pecados

²⁶⁷ Bynum has summarized the materiality of spiritual, especially female, experience during this time period: “[...] descriptions of visions are filled with concrete objects. Especially in the accounts of visionary women, the holy and the other is not only understood and imaged but also mediated through what we moderns would call inanimate things. Thus, these visions, so often used by recent critics as evidence or examples of medieval theories of seeing (in the sense of optics) or of the visual, are in fact textual in form and material in content” (2011, 41). Triviño analyzes several artistic forms of Juana’s sermons in demonstrating Juana’s eloquent use of literary devices to captivate her audience and communicate the Divine: “He aquí una gran mujer, una mujer de Dios empeñada en hacerle amar desde su sencillez y su talento. He aquí una mujer franciscana claustral que nos precedió 500 años, y todavía tiene algo que enseñarnos acerca de: el arte y el buen gusto al servicio de la pastoral. Sor Juana de la Cruz, La Santa Juana, es una contemplativa de la Belleza divina, capaz de contagiar la fascinación sentida al expresarla en la copla, en la descripción, en la escena” (Triviño 2004, 1269).

semejantes, no le sabrá bien esta santa escritura, porque cuanto ella es más excelente tanto menos la sabrán gustar los malos. Empero, que así como el que está sano y bien dispuesto tiene el gusto de la boca bueno y le sabe bien lo que come, así, por semejante, cualquier persona que tuviere su ánima sana y bien dispuesta, sin ninguna enfermedad de pecado, y tuviere el gusto bueno y sabroso para con Dios le sabrá muy bien esta santa escritura y le parecerá en su paladar más dulce que el panal de la miel. (LXXII: 22, 1472-73)

The implication is that those who are sinful cannot savor the sweetness and soundness of *El Conhorte*, while those who are holy will enjoy its goodness. The sermon is cunningly fashioned with self-justifying, circular logic and images that emanate from the very mouth of Christ. Thus who could dare to question Juana's teaching, for it would mean their soul was "enferma y maldispuesta"?

Was Juana orthodox beyond any shadow of a doubt? We conclude by saying that no, not orthodox "beyond a shadow of a doubt." However, there might be a more nuanced sense of the term "orthodoxy" that better fits her and does not imply close adherence to official church dogma.²⁶⁸ Her orthodoxy is rooted far less in scholastic theological debates or papal authority than it is situated within a person who has had visionary experiences and practiced extreme

²⁶⁸ Regarding the approval of Juana's orthodoxy Surtz notes: "Shortly after Mother Juana's death a certain Ortiz, who possibly can be identified as the celebrated Franciscan spiritual Francisco Ortiz (1496-1547), wrote a series of annotations, mostly approving, in the margins of the Escorial manuscript of *El libro del conorte*. Then an anonymous Inquisitional censor, apparently a close relative of Mother Juana, examining critically both the sermons and Ortiz's marginal glosses. He crossed out countless passages and even entire columns and, in the case of the Trinity sermon, obliterated nearly the entire chapter with ink-soaked pieces of cotton. Finally, in 1567-1568 Father Francisco de Torres filled the margins of the Escorial manuscript with annotations intended to defend both Juana's orthodoxy and her status as a female visionary" (1990, 8).

spiritual asceticism.²⁶⁹ Juana did not fabricate religion in the sense that she did not falsify it; rather her extraordinary visionary experience—ever so steeped in her intense Marian devotion—formed part of the warp and weft of contemporary theological development as a whole. Juana fabricates religion only in the sense that the doctrinal threads of *El Conhorde* are part of the ever-evolving tapestry of religious orthodoxy.

²⁶⁹ Dyan Elliot has come to a similar conclusion about the fluidity between orthodoxy and heresy in *Proving Woman: Female Spirituality and Inquisitional Culture in the Later Middle Ages* (2009). Elliot's study traces different modes of institutionalized religious practices (i.e. confession and penance) that were used as part of controlling the bounds of orthodoxy under the Inquisition, especially with regard to women. She notes: "The deployment of women's confessional and penitential practices was one of orthodoxy's most subtle but, arguably, most powerful campaigns against heresy" (2009, 299). Orthodoxy, thus defined, is more a matter of right practice (that is, religious devotional practices approved by the Church) and less a matter of right theology and teaching. Elliot surmises that women themselves—in their very bodies and life practices—"prove" that which is orthodox: "Contemporary representations of female sanctity were in many ways sculpted to confound the heretic. Central features of women's spirituality that first emerged during this period—its physicality, eucharistic devotion, confessional practice—all answer to this need, providing vivid proof of orthodox contentions. [...] the phenomenon of women as proof of orthodoxy means: how female spiritual claims were first established, subsequently wielded, and then ultimately discredited. Both the supporters and the detractors of holy women looked progressively to more or less formal versions of the inquisitional procedure in order to prove (or disprove) the authenticity of women's spiritual lives" (2009, 2).

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