IN THE SHADOW OF THE MEXICAN INQUISITION: THEOLOGICAL DISCOURSE IN THE WRITINGS OF LUIS DE CARVAJAL AND IN SOR JUANA’S CRISIS DE UN SERMÓN

DISSERTATION

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by

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this project is to look for traces of inquisitorial ideology as well as resistance to the Inquisition itself in theological texts by two subaltern writers in colonial Mexico: Luis de Carvajal as a crypto-Jew in a Catholic empire, and Sor Juana as a woman theologian in a male-dominated church.

In the first chapter, I give a brief overview of the history of medieval Inquisitions, through the founding of the Spanish Inquisition in 1478, the reasons the Spanish Inquisition came to Latin America, and the goals of the Inquisition in Mexico.

In chapter two, I explore the concept of an inquisitorial literary analysis, as well as controversies in Inquisition scholarship. I also analyze "El sacrificio de Isaac," a play written by an anonymous Franciscan in 1540 in an effort to evangelize the indigenous population of Tlaxcala, and which demonstrates an inquisitorial ideology.

In chapter three, I examine the writings of Luis de Carvajal, a crypto-Jew who was executed by the Inquisition in 1595. Memorias, the letters of Luis de Carvajal, and his Testamento all show traces of inquisitorial ideology.
Nonetheless, Carvajal manages to interpellate his inquisitors by reversing their own ideological tropes. Carvajal resists the Mexican Inquisition through his discursive strategies.

In chapter four, I examine *Crisis de un sermón* by Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz, which is the text that provoked *La carta de Sor Filotea de la Cruz* and Sor Juana’s *Respuesta a Sor Filotea*. One can see inquisitorial traces in *Crisis de un sermón*. In this text God is shown as jealous and does not permit competition, people are weak and sinful, there are performative aspects in God’s examples, and punishment is a means of saving souls. Also, intentions are more important than acts. The texts examined here, especially *Crisis de un sermón*, demonstrate not only that Sor Juana thoroughly understood inquisitorial theology, but that she also possessed a clearly articulated fear of that institution. The Inquisition was an important subtext in the works of Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz.
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"The historian who ignores this hierarchy of period values, might offer us an exhaustive and well-documented narrative of the historical events, but...will never penetrate the secret interior of the most important significant events."

- Edmundo O’Gorman, on the importance of religious beliefs in New Spain, cited in Myers

There are few institutions which have invoked as much fear or launched as many polemics as the Spanish Inquisition, which has been utilized in the construction of the Black Legend, and apologized for in the configuration of the White Legend. During the fifteenth, sixteenth, and seventeenth centuries, the mere mention of the Inquisition was, on occasion, enough to strike terror in the hearts of many subjects of the Spanish Empire.

So what, precisely, was the Spanish Inquisition? Haliczer defines it as the "centralized agency distinct from the Dominican and papal institution" which existed prior to that time. (Haliczer, 13) It began on November 1, 1478, when a papal bull gave the Spanish monarchs the right to name inquisitors who had the same powers as bishops and papal inquisitors. The goal of the Spanish Inquisition was to
suppress heresy. (Haliczer, 11) In 1483, the central office of what became known as the Spanish Inquisition was formed. The Consejo de la Suprema y General Inquisición (Council of the Supreme and General Inquisition), referred to simply as the Suprema, was the final authority to which all inquisitions in the Spanish Empire answered. (Giles, 2) In this study, "Inquisition" refers to the apparatus of the Suprema, including the regional inquisitions, such as the Mexican Inquisition, which answered to it.

Historians have studied the Spanish Inquisition extensively, from a variety of angles. Surprisingly, however, until recently there has been very little mention of the Inquisition in colonial Latin American literary analysis. Craig Kleinman, discussing the exclusions based on borders by many in the United States in the construction of "America," writes, "Such exclusions...make it easier to overlook the inquisition as part of the contextual canvas of what became the United States." (Kleinman, 5) I would argue that by excluding the Inquisition from the study of colonial texts, we overlook a significant part of the contextual canvas of colonial Latin America.

The purpose of this project is to examine traces of inquisitorial ideology as well as resistance to the Inquisition itself in theological texts by two subaltern writers in colonial Mexico, that is, two writers who lived in the margins of their society - Luis de Carvajal as a crypto-
Jew in a Catholic empire, and Sor Juana as a woman theologian in a male-dominated church. The first texts are the autobiographical *Memorias* and the *Testamento* of crypto-Jew Luis de Carvajal as well as letters written by him to his sisters. Carvajal lived in late sixteenth-century Mexico and was eventually burned by the Inquisition because he was considered a judaizante, one who practiced the forbidden religion of Judaism.

The other text considered in this study is Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz *Crisis de un sermón*, also known as *Carta atenagórica*, in which Sor Juana disputes the concept of divine love in the 1650 Maundy Thursday sermon (in Portuguese - *Sermão do mandato*) of the Luso-Brazilian theologian Antonio Vieira who had been brought before the Portuguese Inquisition between 1661-1667. When Sor Juana wrote *Crisis de un sermón* at the behest of the Bishop of Puebla she did so under the assumption that it would not be published. Nonetheless, the Bishop did publish the missive, changing its name to *Carta atenagórica* and writing an introductory letter, *Carta de Sor Filotea de la Cruz*, under the pseudonym of Sor Filotea de la Cruz, which chides Sor Juana for conduct supposedly unbecoming of a nun. The *Carta de Sor Filotea* led to the eventual silencing of Sor Juana.

At first glance, it would seem that these two authors have little in common, dying almost exactly a century apart, one male, one female, one a crypto-Jew, the other a Catholic
nun. Upon closer inspection, however, several similarities emerge. Both Carvajal and Sor Juana were of European descent and lived in Mexico - Carvajal was born on the Iberian Peninsula and moved to Mexico City, while Sor Juana was a criolla (Creole). Both were fluent in Latin and indigenous languages. Both received a Church education. Both were letrados (literate/educated). Both were economically subaltern, or marginalized, but had powerful patrons. Both were engaged in colonizing/Christianizing projects - Carvajal through his work with his uncle between 1584 and 1586 and later as a teacher at the Colegio de Tlatelolco, and Sor Juana through her autos and songs in Nahuatl. Both came to the attention of the Inquisition - Carvajal was brought before the Tribunal twice, and Sor Juana was mentioned in the case against the Valencian priest Francisco Xavier Palavicino Villarrasa, who, shortly after the publication of Carta Atenagórica, preached a sermon at the convent of San Jerónimo which refuted both Vieira’s and Sor Juana’s positions, but in doing so legitimated Sor Juana as a theologian, which was considered inappropriate praise for a woman. Both Carvajal and Sor Juana wrote autobiographical texts - Carvajal’s Memorias and Sor Juana’s Respuesta a Sor Filotea. Most importantly, both created discursive identities for themselves which were at odds with the hegemonic constraints of their society. Kleinman, discussing the (auto)construction of Jewish subjects, writes, "Cultural contact with Jews or ideas
about ‘the Jew’ inscribed a margin out of which several American Jews chose to write themselves into being."
(Kleinman, 9) Carvajal and Sor Juana may have written out of different margins inscribed by the Inquisition, but they both "wrote themselves into being" in the context of theological essays.

In chapter one, "Navigating the World of the Inquisition: Historical Background," I give a brief summary of the history of the Inquisition and controversies surrounding Inquisitorial studies, in order to place this study in its historical context. In chapter two, "Setting the Stage: Towards an Inquisitorial Literary Analysis," I explain my concept of searching for Inquisitorial traces as literary criticism. In addition, I analyze the early sixteenth century play "El Sacrificio de Isaac," written in order to evangelize the Nahua in Mexico, showing how it demonstrates an inquisitorial ideology. In chapter three, "The Fate and Faith of a Crypto-Jew: Luis de Carvajal and the Mexican Inquisition," I examine the writings of Luis de Carvajal, and the subtext of the Inquisition which can be found in Memorias and Testamento. In chapter four, "Love in the Time of Fear: Divine Love and the Inquisition in Crisis de un Sermon," I study Crisis de un sermón by Sor Juana, as well as various texts and debates surrounding that text, again looking for an inquisitorial subtext.
The Spanish Inquisition remains alive in the popular imagination. It has been invoked by writers as diverse as Dostoyevsky and Edgar Allan Poe, and satirized in the twentieth century by Mel Brooks in "History of the World, Part I," and by Monty Python ("Nobody expects the Spanish Inquisition!"). Nonetheless, it is usually seen as an institution outside society, one which imposes its will on resisting subjects who are aware of how it controls them, and whose values diametrically oppose those of the culture in which it exists. I agree with Haliczer when he says "that institutions created by a specific society and culture are so imbedded in that society and culture as to be inseparable from it." (Haliczer, 359) To understand colonial texts, we must consider the culture which produced them, and that culture includes the Inquisition. Perry explains, "Religion functioned publicly and daily as a symbolic framework within which men and women could explain their lives and judge their neighbors. Religion provided...a common symbolic language for these people." (Perry, 44) Even writers resisting the Inquisition wrote within this symbolic framework, and much of the discourse of this framework was controlled by the Inquisition. This is why, before approaching the texts studied here, it is important to consider the history and motives of the Spanish and Mexican Inquisitions.
CHAPTER 1

NAVIGATING THE WORLD OF THE INQUISITION: HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

What would it have been like to live under the Inquisition? How would it have affected what Baroque and colonial subjects thought? What impact would it have had on their relationships with their family, their neighbors, and their society? How would it have shaped the texts they read, or perhaps even wrote?

The two authors examined in this study, Luis de Carvajal and Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz, lived their entire lives in this world defined by the Inquisition. Their texts reflect both their interpellation by the Inquisition, as well as their resistance to that institution. In order to analyze their writings, we must have a clear understanding of the history and ideological underpinnings of the Inquisition. To that end, this chapter will briefly examine the formation and history of the Inquisition, as well as controversies in contemporary inquisitorial historiography.
Medieval Inquisitions

In popular perception, there is only one Inquisition—a monolithic and all-powerful institution which began in the Middle Ages and struck terror in the hearts of all Christians. In fact, there were numerous inquisitions, with different motives and different structures.

The corner stones of what would become the medieval Inquisitions were laid by the office of the Pope in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. (Ayllón, 42) By the High Middle Ages, heresy, or more specifically organized heretical groups such as the Cathars, had become a problem for Catholic Europe. Both civil authorities and common people engaged in persecuting heretics, believing that by attacking Christianity, heresy undermined the social order itself, which was based on Christianity. (Allyón, 49) The kings in France, Lombardy, and Aragon, having difficulty with heretics, asked Pope Alexander III to establish a uniform set of standards, rules, and punishments to deal with heretics. (Ayllón, 51)

The Pope’s response would shape the institution later to become the modern Inquisition. Ayllón writes

También se aprobó que las autoridades cristianas no debían esperar denuncias del pueblo o de la
jerarquía eclesiástica sobre herejías sino que, más bien, actuarían de oficio inquiriendo sobre la materia. La palabra con tiempo se consagró. En principio se trataba de una innovación en el derecho feudal al abolir la necesidad de la instancia de parte; luego daría el nombre al Tribunal encargado de la defensa de la fe. (Allyón, 52)

[[The Pope] also approved that Christian authorities did not have to wait for denunciations from the people or the ecclesiastical hierarchy about heresies but that, rather, they would act officially inquiring about the matter. The word became established with time. At first it was about an innovation in the feudal right to abolish the necessity of the petition to the jury; later it would give name to the Tribunal in charge of the defense of faith.]¹

In other words, instead of merely judging accused heretics or punishing those guilty of heresy, church officials now had the responsibility to seek out heresy in order to stop it. This of course radically reconfigured the way in which the Church and laypeople interacted, since the Church now had the function of policing Christians. In 1184 at the Council of
Verona, Pope Lucio III issued *Ad abolendum*, establishing episcopal inquisitions. Bishops were expected to inspect their dioceses once or twice a year to root out heresy. They only had the authority to apply canonical punishments. The goal was to permit heretics to reconcile with the Church. If the Pope thought Bishops were too lax in uprooting heresy, he had the authority to send out papal legates to conduct their own inquisition. (Ayllón, 52-53)

Pope Innocent III originally established a project for the conversion of the heretical Waldensians, but after the assassination of papal legate Pedro de Castelnau, the Pope authorized a crusade against them. (Ayllón, 55) After this, he developed harsher methods to deal with heretics in the future. At the Fourth Lateran Council, Innocence III ordered that

1. -En adelante toda herejía deberá ser perseguida concertadamente por autoridades civiles y eclesiásticas.
2. -Los procesos que tratan esta materia deberán ser incoados de oficio.
3. -Los obispos deberán disponer la realización de inquisición en cada parroquia de su diócesis.
4. -Las propiedades de los herejes deberán ser confiscadas en beneficio de los gobernantes civiles.
5. -Los recalcitrantes serán entregados al brazo secular para ser sancionados por este. (Ayllón, 55-56)

[1. -In future all heresy shall be persecuted systematically by civil and ecclesiastical authorities.
2. -The trials that treat this issue shall be initiated by the court.
3. -Bishops shall arrange the realization of the inquisition in each parish of their diocese.
4. -The properties of heretics shall be confiscated for the benefit of the civil rulers.
5. -Recalcitrants shall be turned over to the secular authorities to be sanctioned by them.]

Innocence III introduced several key concepts which would later be adopted by the Spanish Inquisition - that heresy should be persecuted systematically, that property of heretics could be confiscated, and that punishment was to be meted out by secular authorities, even though the offenses were religious in nature. At this time, the greatest threats to Catholic hegemony were the Waldensians and Cathars. According to Ayllón,

Se empleó en forma paralela la actividad misionera destinada a convertir a las ovejas descarriadas.
Habiendo sido ambas disposiciones insuficientes para lograr la desaparición de la herejía fue introducida una organización eficaz para velar por la defensa de la fe: la Inquisición. (Ayllón, 56)

[Missionary activity destined to convert the stray sheep was employed in a parallel form. Both provisions having been insufficient to achieve the disappearance of heresy an effective organization to guard the defense of the faith was introduced: the Inquisition.]

A new arm of the Church had been born in order to combat the Waldensians and Cathars, one whose sole purpose was the defence of the faith, which of course positioned heretics as the enemy.

The organization of the Tribunal de Santo Oficio became further defined by Gregory IX, who decreed that all Catholics would be subject to it. (Ayllón, 59) At the Council of Toulouse in 1229, it was decided that the faithful had an obligation to denounce heretics. There were three possible categories of sentences for heretics:

1. -Que los procesados se presenten libre y voluntariamente a confesar sus faltas; en cuyo caso serían sancionados con medidas espirituales;
2. –Que los enjuiciados se arrepintiesen solamente por miedo a la muerte; caso en que sufrirían penas de prisión; y
3. –Que se mostrasen obstinados en sus errores; por lo cual serían entregados al brazo secular para que se les aplique como sanción la hoguera. (Ayllón, 60-61)

[1. –That the accused present themselves freely and voluntarily to confess their faults; in which case they would be sanctioned with spiritual measures;
2. –That those sentenced only repented for fear of death; in which case they would suffer penalty of prison; and
3. –That they show themselves obstinate in their errors; on account of which they would be handed over to the secular branch so it could sentence them to the stake.]

These three classes of heretics - the faithful, who repented upon realizing their errors and who would only face spiritual penances; the fearful, those who repented in order to save their lives and who were sentenced to imprisonment; and the unrepentant, who would not renounce their beliefs and thus could not be allowed to live; - would be retained by the
Spanish Inquisition later in the fifteenth century. It also demonstrates the power the episcopal inquisitions held over accused heretics. However, the accused had the right to recuse their enemies as witnesses, and could call witnesses in their own defense. (Ayllón, 61)

Because of the difficulty experienced by bishops and Papal legates in rooting out heresy due to their other obligations, Pope Innocent IV, in 1243, turned the Inquisition over to the Dominicans. If Bishops needed help, they could ask for a Dominican Inquisitor. (Ayllón, 63-64) In the fourteenth century, Dominican Nicolau Eimeric and Bernardo Gui wrote treatises defining the nature and goals of the Inquisition. (Haliczer, 10) Heresy was expanded to include such offenses as sacrilege, blasphemy, witchcraft, adultery, bigamy, sodomy, and usury. According to Ayllón, "La Inquisición resultaba así la defensora de la fe católica y de sus valores morales, al mismo tiempo que de la sociedad y del estado cristianos." (Ayllón, 66) ["The Inquisition thus proved to be the defender of the Catholic Faith and of its moral values, at the same time as the defender of Christian society and state."] This set the stage for the early modern Spanish Inquisition, as will be discussed below.
From the Middle Ages to the Early Modern Era: The unexpected Spanish Inquisition

At the end of the Middle Ages, Spain was a multicultural society, including Christians, Jews, and Muslims. There were also conversos - those of Jewish descent who had converted, either willingly or forcibly, to Catholicism. A segment of the population, mostly from the "disenfranchised popular classes", began to be concerned that many among the conversos, who were now allowed to practice professions that were forbidden to Jews, were still secretly practicing Judaism. (Haliczer, 210) They lobbied Fernando and Isabel, who sanctioned an inquisition into judaizing among conversos. Pope Sixtus IV granted permission for an inquisition in 1478. (Kamen, 44)

At first, this inquisition was no different than those which took place in the Middle Ages. However, since the Suprema was the only crown council which operated in both Aragon and Castile, in 1481-1482, Fernando took control of inquisitorial appointments and of operating funds for the Inquisition, as well as receiving confiscated wealth from those convicted. (Kamen, 48-49) In order to take back control and because he had heard of many abuses, Pope Sixtus
IV issued a bull in April of 1482 to stop the Spanish Inquisition. He wrote,

that in Aragon, Valencia, Mallorca and Catalonia the Inquisition has for some time been moved not by zeal for the faith and the salvation of souls, but by lust for wealth, and that many true and faithful Christians, on the testimony of enemies, rivals, slaves and other lower and even less proper persons, have without any legitimate proof been thrust into secular prisons, tortured and condemned as relapsed heretics, deprived of their goods and property and handed over to the secular arm to be executed, to the peril of souls, setting a pernicious example, and causing disgust to many.

(Kamen, 49)

The Pope, while attempting to assert his authority over King Ferdinand, also sought a fairly thorough reform of the Inquisition in Spain, in order to protect the rights of the accused. Kamen explains the rules for inquisitors which Sixtus IV outlines in his bull, "Accordingly, in future all episcopal officers should act with the inquisitors; the names and testimony of accusers should be given to the accused, who should be allowed council; episcopal gaols [jails] should be the only ones used; and appeals should be allowed to Rome."
These were major procedural changes. Fernando’s reply was astonishing:

Things have been told me, Holy Father which, if true, would seem to merit the greatest astonishment. It is said that Your Holiness has granted the conversos a general pardon for all the errors and offenses they have committed...To these rumours, however, we have given no credence because they seem to be things which would in no way have been conceded by Your Holiness, who have a duty to the Inquisition. But if by chance concessions have been made through the persistent and cunning persuasion of the said conversos, I intend never to let them take effect. Take care therefore not to let the matter go further, and to revoke any concessions and entrust us with the care of this question. (Kamen, 49-50)

The King of Aragon not only refused to listen to the Pope, but demanded that the Pope grant what had been ecclesiastical power to the Spanish crown. Even more amazing, considering that as a Catholic monarch Ferdinand was in theory subject to the Pope, was that Sixtus IV backed down. Kamen explains, Papal cooperation was definitively secured by the bull of 17 October 1483, which appointed Torquemada as Inquisitor General of Aragon, Valencia and
Catalonia, thus uniting the Inquisitions of the Spanish crown under a single head. The new tribunal came directly under the control of the crown and was the only institution whose authority ran in all the territories of Spain, a fact of great importance for future occasions when the ruler of Castile wished to interfere in other provinces where his sovereign authority was limited. (Kamen, 50)

The Inquisition served as a unifying force for the newly formed Spanish crown, and answered directly to it, not to the Pope.

In the beginning, the Inquisition maintained its focus on conversos accused of judaizing. Kamen writes,

The figures indicate clearly who bore the brunt of the Inquisition: 99.3 per cent of those tried by the Barcelona tribunal between 1488 and 1505, and 91.6 per cent of those tried by that of Valencia between 1484 and 1530, were conversos of Jewish origin. The tribunal, in other words, was not concerned with heresy in general. It was concerned with only one form of religious deviance: the apparently secret practice of Jewish rites. (Kamen, 57)
This would soon change, when the Inquisition expanded its mandate to all baptized Christians who deviated from the norm. Moreno de los Arcos explains that The Tribunal of the Holy Office of the Inquisition against Heretical Perversity and Apostasy had jurisdiction over the entire kingdom. He writes, "The principal crimes that it originally prosecuted were Christians' acts of heresy, that is, departure from or error concerning dogma in its two forms, material (i.e., through ignorance or confusion) and formal (through pertinacity), and apostasy, or the rejection of the true faith in order to embrace another religion, which was fundamentally the case with the conversos." (Moreno de los Arcos, 8) He goes on to say that the list of punishable offenses expanded over time, and the Tribunal "gained enormous importance and respect." (Moreno de los Arcos, 26) Private life became subject to public scrutiny and censure, and the Inquisition became omnipresent in Spanish society. The question arises as to why the Inquisition went from persecuting conversos to regulating all aspects of Catholicism. According to De Bujanda, Exigit sincerae devotionis affectus, the founding bull of the Spanish Inquisition, indicates that "the Holy Office functioned as a coercive instrument of defense of the Catholic faith against heretical depravity." This mandate was very precise, restricting the Inquisition to perceived threats to the Catholic faith. Of course, the definition of "faith" itself, as well as transgressions against the faith, turned out to be
fairly elastic, permitting the Inquisition a wide latitude. (De Bujanda, 227) Bethencourt explains that in designating infidelity, heresy, and apostasy as crimes, the Spanish Inquisition gained authority over all spheres of behavior and strayed beliefs. (Bethencourt, 20) Thus, the Spanish Inquisition proved to be an extremely flexible institution over the years for enforcing orthodoxy. The challenge facing the Spanish crown was how to import this institution to the New World.

The Inquisition comes to the Americas

When Spain colonized the Americas, it found many diverse societies already in existence. Further, representatives from various subcultures from the Iberian Peninsula emigrated to the New World. Empire-building had to take this heterogeneity into account, as Quezada explains,

From the very beginning of the conquest of New Spain, the Spanish Crown attempted to impose a Catholic world view upon which to base a system of normative practices that would organize the entire society within the framework of religion. The problems presented by the social and ideological heterogeneity of New Spain were extremely difficult to solve. (Quezada, 38)
The Spanish Empire, in the New World, was comprised of conquistadors, colonists, rival religious orders (Franciscan, Dominican, Jesuit, and Augustinian,) merchants, as well as the numerous and diverse Amerindian cultures, which had their own beliefs, conflicts, and ideological differences. The interpellation of subjects by the Spanish crown proved far more difficult in the Americas than it had in Spain, "At times even unconsciously, civil and religious authorities strove to achieve their assigned goal of social integration; unity, however, was at best superficial in a society where diverse ideologies coexisted and interrelated, ultimately resulting in a less strict and orthodox situation than in Spain."

(Quezada, 38) Quezada goes on to say that the shift in the balance of power between crown and Church led to conflicts between civil and religious authorities in the Spanish American colonies. (Quezada, 38) Of course, this situation was untenable for the colonizers, and many decided that drastic measures were needed.

The trial and execution in 1540 of the cacique Chichimecatecotl, baptized as don Carlos de Mendoza, is a case in point. After the seemingly successful conversion of Native Americans to Catholicism after the Conquest, Catholic priests gradually became aware that many Native Americans were either secretly or syncretically practicing old beliefs. Even though the Inquisition officially would not come to the Americas for another thirty years, many among the Catholic clergy resorted
to Inquisitorial methods - "imprisonment, torture, confiscation of goods, and burning at the stake for those accused" of heresy. (Elkin, 25-26) In Mexico in 1540, don Carlos was prosecuted by Franciscan bishop Juan de Zumárraga for heretical dogmatizing against the faith and for idolatry. At his auto de fe, don Carlos confessed his Christian faith and told his people to be good Christians. In violation of the Inquisition’s rules of due process, he was burned rather than reconciled. (Elkin, 26) The case of don Carlos was infamous, causing many in the colonies to write to Spain in protest. Because of the lack of approved legal procedures, the Spanish Crown launched an investigation. Inquisitorial power was taken from the bishops. The Inquisition itself never had Native Americans under its jurisdiction, because the Crown declared that "as newcomers to the faith, they were not to be charged with heresy." (Elkin, 27)

It should be noted that this was not the first nor the only time that Spanish colonists protested treatment of Amerindians. The most famous example is that of the Dominican friar Bartolomé de las Casas, who felt that all acts of violence by Spaniards against the indigenous population were unjustifiable atrocities. (Rabasa, 87) Indeed, his texts formed the heart of the debate between him and Juan Ginés de Sepúlveda, official chronicler for Carlos V and preceptor for Phillip II. Sepúlveda believed that Spaniards had a right to use violence against the indigenous population in order to
"civilize" them to prepare them for becoming Christian. (Rabasa, 103) Ultimately, while las Casas was able to influence the letter of the law - Spaniards were in theory required to make every effort to coexist peacefully with Amerindian settlements - Sepúlveda was successful in convincing the Spanish crown that it had the right and the obligation to subjugate, with force if necessary, Native American societies. (Rabasa, 136)

In response to perceived chaos in the New World, many officials sent petitions to Felipe II which explained the need to establish a Tribunal of the Holy Office which, like that in Spain, would have total disciplinary control, thus avoiding the frequent abuses and jurisdictional equivocations of the civil authorities. Phillip II authorized the tribunal in 1569 with royal letters-patent, and it was established in New Spain in November, 1571. As in Spain, the New Spanish inquisitors were, above all else, men of law who scrupulously carried out their duties in order to maintain social control. (Quezada, 39)

Officials in charge of colonizing the New World for Spain needed the apparatus of the Spanish Inquisition to bolster their own authority in the face of jurisdictional conflicts. Felipe thought that
To maintain order and to ensure the system’s equilibrium, constant vigilance was needed via the institution created in Europe in the thirteenth century and adopted by the Catholic Kings at the end of the fifteenth century. The Tribunal of the Holy Office of the Inquisition, which functioned as a disciplinary apparatus, ‘an organism of internal security,’ controlling dissidents within the religious, moral, and social order. (Quezada, 38–39)

The Spanish Inquisition, originally instituted in 1478 to ensure religious orthodoxy in the Iberian Peninsula, was transformed into a tool for the new Empire, which included the Americas as well as the newly united kingdoms of Spain. There was now a centralized institution to help implement Spain’s colonizing project. In practical terms, this meant that settlers from the Iberian peninsula now had to contend with an Inquisition which was interested in virtually every aspect of their lives, as Klor de Alva explains:

In the New World the history of the Inquisition is primarily the story of the struggles over power and truth that marked the changing fortunes of the various ethnic, racial, and social sectors...One edict, aimed at Europeans, opposed heretics and Jews; the other, whose vagueness was more a license
to prosecute than a guide to proper behavior, was 'against any person who through deed or word did anything that appeared to be sinful'! (Klor de Alva, 8)

It was not merely heretical behavior that was punished; people had to avoid even the appearance of heresy ("anything that appeared to be sinful"). In other words, in Spain and in the Spanish colonies, subjects were to monitor themselves and each other, becoming an informal policing agency for the Inquisition.

The Mexican Inquisition

The Inquisition formally arrived in Mexico in 1571, with much pomp and ceremony. After publicly reading the edict of faith, officials declared an edict of grace, a period of time in which people could confess their crimes without fear of persecution, of six days rather than the customary thirty, because the Inquisition had taken so long to arrive in Mexico that there was no time to lose. (Ayllón, 510-511) Richard Greenleaf explains the impact of the Inquisition:

With the establishment of the tribunal, there began three decades of energetic effort to combat heresy and immorality within a Counter Reformation framework. Procedures were formalized; permanent
and orderly channels for investigation of heresy were established; the rule of law prevailed.

(Greenleaf 1969, 160)

The Inquisition quickly became a permanent and standardized institution in colonial Mexican society. This was a far cry from the overzealous or excessive ecclesiastical inquisitions which had taken place previously in Mexico. Standardized rules of due process were established, and efforts were made to keep the Mexican Inquisition in line with the Spanish institution. The new branch in Mexico of the Spanish Inquisition was welcomed, at first, by much of the populace:

There seems to be little doubt that the colonial population looked upon the tribunal as a benign and popular institution which was protecting religion and Spanish society from traitors and fomenters of social revolution. The tribunal maintained close and voluminous communication with the Council of the Supreme Inquisition in Spain, and the Mexican inquisitors were au courant with the changing Iberian intellectual climate and the European political scene. (Greenleaf 1969, 160)

Thus, the inquisitors were prepared to ferret out religious and ideological lapses imported from Europe. The Mexican Inquisition, of course, had no control over the indigenous
population, since they were considered to be too new to the faith to be held responsible for heresy. Instead, the Tribunal sought control over Old Christians, \textit{conversos}, and foreigners. Most trials in sixteenth century were for moral offenses such as bigamy and blasphemy. There were fewer cases of crimes against the faith, such as formal heresy and judaizing, (Ayllón, 512) although Protestantism was a concern.

The first trials of the Mexican Inquisition, in fact, were against French and English pirates. After attacking the Yucatan coast, a pirate ship was captured. Ten were killed during battle, and the Governor sentenced four others to be hanged. The remaining six were sent to serve Spanish colonists. The Tribunal eventually brought charges against them for being Anglicans or Hugenots. Ayllón suggests that the Inquisition saw them as the principal danger to the faith, and also that charges against these men could win popularity for the Inquisition. In that the Inquisition was correct. The colonists saw the Inquisition as protecting their interests from foreigners. The pirates were sentenced to Spanish galleys. (Ayllón, 512-513)

After the English and French, the Inquisition turned its attention to crypto-Jews.\footnote{2} The first person in Mexico accused of judaizing, García González Bergemero of Portugal was burned as unrepentant at the auto de fe on October 11, 1579. (Ayllón, 515-516) By the end of the sixteenth century, the
Carvajal family fell victim to this new direction of the Mexican Inquisition.

In the beginning of the seventeenth century, the persecution of conversos became linked to the conflict between Spain and Portugal. Portugal was fighting for its independence from Spain, and in the Spanish Americas there was the perception that conversos supported the Portuguese. The Inquisition was not only concerned with the heresy of crypto-Jews, but wanted to prevent converso aid to Portugal.

Ayllón suggests that the Spanish government viewed crypto-Jews not merely as heretics but as agents of a possible separatist movement, and the Inquisition as a tool of the State equipped to stop them:

Durante la gestión reformista del conde duque de Olivares, la Inquisición recobró su anterior vigor, volviendo a ser respetada y considerada como componente esencial del estado. El gobierno hispano tenía temor de que el creciente poder económico de los criptojudíos produjese un movimiento separatista en sus colonias. Esto explica la conducta del Tribunal indiano hacia esta poderosa minoría. (Allyón, 524)

[During the reformist management of the Count Duke of Olivares, the Inquisition recovered its previous vigor, becoming respected again and accepted as an
essential component of the State. The Hispanic government was afraid that the growing economic power of the crypto-Jews might produce a separatist movement in its colonies. This explains the conduct of the Tribunal of the Indies towards this powerful minority.]

This passage of Ayllón’s is valuable for the concept of the Inquisition as a tool of the State dedicated to fighting heterogeneity. Nonetheless, he seems to make no distinction between conversos, New Christians of Jewish ancestry, and crypto-Jews, conversos who secretly practiced Judaism. Furthermore, while there is little doubt that the Inquisition did indeed persecute crypto-Jews and conversos it suspected of judaizing because it was concerned with the ability of a Jewish conspiracy to undermine the Spanish government and perhaps even appropriate part of the colonies, it does not follow that conversos were engaged in such a project, or were truly powerful. It seems from this passage that Ayllón does not make clear whether the fears of the Spanish government were grounded in the actions of the converso community or in anti-Semitism.

Towards the end of the seventeenth century, the Inquisition became less concerned with Protestants and crypto-Jews, focusing on relatively minor offenses:
En estos años la acción del Tribunal se puede dividir en dos fases: la primera se caracterizó por la actuación rígida contra los judaizantes o criptojudíos; la segunda, que abarca desde mediados del siglo, por una actividad decreciente y rutinaria, con escaso número de procesos mayormente de poca importancia y con sentencias benignas...El Santo Oficio mexicano fue una de las instituciones de mayor prestigio y aceptación popular en su época. (Ayllón, 528)

[In these years the action of the Tribunal can be divided in two phases: the first was characterized by rigid conduct against judaizers or crypto-Jews; the second, which ranges from the middle of the century, by a decreasing and routine activity, with a small number of trials mostly of little importance and with benign sentences...The Mexican Holy Office was one of the institutions of most prestige and popular acceptance in its era.]

Instead of focusing its energy and resources on finding and punishing those who resisted the Catholic faith, as it had when it first arrived in Mexico, the Mexican Inquisition now turned its attention almost exclusively to censorship of texts and errors of faith in those professing to be Catholic, which
previously had only been part of its mandate. By the eighteenth century, the Mexican Tribunal was trying to prevent the spread of Enlightenment philosophies and masonic practices. It was not nearly as active as it had been in previous centuries, and no one was sentenced to death. (Ayllón, 529) The Inquisition no longer had a need to eliminate threats to the colonizing project—colonization had by that time been accomplished.

Controversies and Issues of Inquisitorial Studies

Almost from the start, Inquisitorial history and analysis have been controversial. It is very difficult to avoid one’s personal ideological beliefs from informing one’s attitudes towards the Inquisition and Inquisitorial society. In this section I will examine several controversies in Inquisitorial studies and, when applicable, how these impact my thesis.

The classic ideological battle, of course, has been the polemic between "la leyenda negra" and "la leyenda blanca." The Black Legend exaggerates the cruelty and scope of the Spanish Inquisition, and treats Spanish colonization of the Americas as a unique sin among European nations. The White Legend, a direct response to the Black Legend, attempts to whitewash the deeds of the Inquisition and deny, for the most part, any wrongdoing on the part of Spaniards. In
contemporary scholarship, this polemic is less extreme, but traces can still be found.

One theory states that the Inquisition destroyed creativity in Spanish society. Kamen explains,

Central to the belief of the Castro\textsuperscript{3} school was a vision of the Inquisition as the great oppressor of creativity in Spain, precisely because they saw most creativity as Jewish. Some adepts of the school, going further than this, visualized a Spain in which every aspect of thinking and printing was directly controlled by the Holy Office. (Kamen, 313)

This theory is problematic for a number of reasons. First and foremost, who defines creativity? While institutions can prohibit publication of ideas, it is far more difficult to stamp out the ideas themselves. Creativity here might be read as artistic production, which, as I argue, sometimes does show an Inquisitorial influence, but this is by no means universal. Nor is there much evidence for an all-out attack by the Inquisition on all literary texts and artistic works. The Inquisition did have some control over publishing, but no institution could control every aspect of thinking by all subjects.
Another problem arises from scholars analyzing Inquisitorial society from an Enlightenment mentality, as Greenleaf explains,

There is considerable disagreement among historians over the proper role of religion in colonial Mexican society. Interpretation of the Church is made difficult because of the disagreement. Evaluation of the Inquisition is even more polemical because those who interpret the documents wish to do so from an Enlightenment and twentieth-century standard of political and legal theory, and they insist upon making religious toleration the central focus of their evaluation. (Greenleaf 1991, 268-269)

The temptation for readers of today is to examine the Inquisition only in order to judge it from a contemporary moral stance. To understand any society one must examine it through that society’s lens, not through a privileged position of a late twentieth or early twenty first century reader. However, it is also important to realize that colonial Mexican society was heteroglossic, and that there are subaltern voices which can be recovered.

Terminology also presents difficulties. Terms such as Jews, New Christians, conversos, Marranos, and crypto-Jews signify different concepts, but are used interchangeably.
After 1492, Jews did not legally exist in Spain or the Spanish Empire. Those of Jewish descent who did not leave became New Christians, or conversos. They were legally Christians. New Christians, Yerushalmi explains, were "descendants of those many Jews who had been baptized in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries." (Yerushalmi, 2) Some New Christians were very devout Catholics, but others were what some call crypto-Jews. Stanley Hordes defines crypto-Jews as "those baptized as Catholic Christians and living outwardly as such, but secretly practicing Judaic rites and customs." (Hordes, 215) It is very important to point out that not all conversos were crypto-Jews. During that time, crypto-Jews were referred to as "marranos," an insulting term ironically referring to the fact that Jews did not eat pigs; it also implied that marranos, like pigs, returned to their own waste. I prefer to avoid use of this term. Gitlitz gives us several definitions of "Jewishness" used by scholars: 1) "a Jew is someone who has a Jewish mother;" 2) "a Jew (or Judaizer) is a person who believes what a Jew believes." Gitlitz points out that this is problematic because there is no central Jewish authority to certify certain beliefs as true (a function the Pope serves in Catholicism), but that there were beliefs that many considered to be central to Judaism. 3) "a Jew (or Judaizer) is a person who practices what a Jew practices;" 4) "Judaizers are people who think of themselves as Jews;" and 5) "Judaizers are people whom other people think of as Jews." (Gitlitz, 82-
In this study, I will use the fourth approach as defined by Gitlitz—Jews are those who consider themselves Jewish. This seems both the simplest and fairest way to determine who is or is not Jewish—self-definition. I will use the term crypto-Jew to designate those people in the Spanish Empire who considered themselves Jewish but were legally Christian.

The issue of Jewish identity during the time of the Spanish Inquisition is very polemical. One position holds that all conversos were truly Christian, and the Inquisition persecuted people innocent of the crimes for which they had been accused. Another theory is that all conversos were crypto-Jews. There is also debate as to the "Jewishness" of the crypto-Jews, since they had little access to Jewish texts and synagogues. Gitlitz explains the polemic:

Another way of putting the question is to ask just how Jewish the conversos were. Over the past five centuries most answers to this question have tended to reflect the political agendas of their authors. A second controversy, related to the first but much more universal in scope, arises from the historical difficulty in agreeing on the criteria for deciding just exactly what being a Jew means. This conundrum cannot be ignored, because it shapes the terms of the Judaizing-versus-assimilating controversy. (Gitlitz, 82)
Because crypto-Jews had no access to synagogues or sacred Jewish texts, their beliefs frequently diverged from mainstream Judaism, leading some scholars to conclude that crypto-Jews weren’t practicing a genuine religion. I.S. Révah, for example, "has called the Marrano religion 'a potential Judaism, which entry into a Jewish community transformed most often into a real Judaism.'" (Yerushalmi, 39) While I grant that many of the beliefs of most crypto-Jews were not orthodox Judaism, and in fact were strongly influenced by Catholic beliefs of the time, I would argue that, far from merely attempting (and failing) to practice Judaism, crypto-Jews were indeed practicing a religion.

David Gitlitz, in his book entitled *Secrecy and Deceit: The Religion of the Crypto-Jews*, explains that

> ...almost all of those in Spain, Portugal, and the colonies who continued to think of themselves primarily as Jews clung to five basic principles that constituted the essence of their Jewishness: (1) God is one; (2) the Messiah has not come, but is coming; (3) belief in the Law of Moses is a prerequisite for individual salvation; (4) observance is required in addition to belief; and (5) Judaism is the preferred religion. These five principles defined crypto-Judaism... (Gitlitz, 101)
Thus, crypto-Jews had a more or less unifying set of beliefs, one criteria for a religion. Another criteria would be the religious practices performed by the believers. Hordes writes, "Perhaps more than any other factor, religious observances served as a vehicle for achieving and maintaining a sense of religious identity within the Mexican crypto-Jewish community." (Hordes, 210-211) In other words, crypto-Jews had both a set of beliefs and of religious practices which informed their identity. By definition, this means that they were practicing a religion. It should not be claimed that because crypto-Jewish religious beliefs and practices were not identical to Jewish beliefs in places where Judaism was legal that crypto-Jews did not have a genuine religion. It is dangerous, and beyond the scope of this dissertation, to attempt to judge the validity of anyone’s stated religion. Luis de Carvajal believed himself to be Jewish. The Inquisition condemned him for being a Judaizer, not for attempting to practice Judaism. Furthermore, many Jewish scholars (Martin Cohen, Seymor Liebman) refer to Carvajal as Jewish. Therefore, in this study I will refer to Carvajal’s religious beliefs, not implying that they are more (or less) authentic than others, but honoring that they were his beliefs. It is certainly valid to distinguish between crypto-Judaism and Orthodox Judaism, just as one can distinguish today between American and Mexican Catholicism, or Liberal, Conservative, Orthodox and Hasidic Judaism. Thus, when I
write that Carvajal practiced his faith, I refer to the acts he performed which he believed were part of his religion, and which were also frequently practiced by other crypto-Jews of New Spain. Ultimately, I do not believe that one can say that all conversos were truly Christian or truly Jewish. Some were practicing crypto-Jews, some were faithful Catholics, still others could not be defined so neatly. Luis de Carvajal considered himself Jewish, thus he was a crypto-Jew, not by birth, but by belief.

As we may conclude from this chapter, the Inquisition was developed to enforce religious homogeneity, which was thought to be necessary to the ideological underpinnings of society. The Spanish Inquisition took this to new levels, exerting influence over almost every aspect of life in the Spanish Empire. While the Inquisition in the New World had different concerns than those on the Iberian Peninsula, the institutions operated within the same ideological framework. In subsequent chapters, I will examine how subjects were both constrained within and resisted this framework.
CHAPTER 2
SETTING THE STAGE: TOWARDS AN INQUISITORIAL LITERARY ANALYSIS

Why Inquire into the Inquisition?

It is my belief that colonial subjects were interpellated or influenced by the Mexican Inquisition, and that this influence can be seen in texts of the era. There seems to have been a dialectic (which could take many forms) between certain writers, such as Carvajal and Sor Juana, and the Inquisitions which shaped the world view of colonial subjects. For example, many crypto-Jews used Inquisitorial proscriptions against Jewish customs to shape their own religious practices. In other cases, such as in Carta atenagórica, divine love seems to function in a manner similar to the Inquisition.

In this study inquisitorial ideology is seen as an integral component of colonial Mexican consciousness of which traces can be found in the literature, one which surprisingly has not been studied extensively, even though all writers of the time would have kept the Inquisition in mind, at least as far as worrying about censorship. Writers would also have had their values defined by the Inquisition, which they could elaborate upon, reinforce, or repudiate. However, studies of
censorship (even self-censorship) ignore the role the Inquisition played in the construction of Spanish imperial society. If we are to better understand colonial Mexican texts, we need to take into account the impact of the Inquisition.

Far from being a foreign agent in Colonial Latin American society, which most colonial subjects either rebelled against or ignored, the Inquisition formed an integral part of the fabric of everyday life and thought. It is my contention that evidence of this can be found in texts of the period.

Even though subjects were interpellated by the Mexican Inquisition, this does not mean that they were incapable of resistance. While operating within an orthodox framework, some writers still managed to critique, either openly or in a coded form, the very institutions that shaped their world view. Rabasa explains this paradox:

Writing entails power structures: writing as the memory of subordination, as the record of theft, as the erasure of culture, as the process of territorialization, and as the imposition of regimes of law, regardless of the type of script or form of representation. In writing we are circumscribed by these power structures though not ineluctably co-opted or blocked from doing other things than those intended by discourses of domination. (Rabasa, 14)
Subjects are constrained within certain boundaries set by the power structures of their societies. Nonetheless, they are also capable of using "discourses of domination" as a means of subverting that very domination. The Mexican Inquisition of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, through its ability to approve or censor texts, was able to form the nature of discourse itself. However, many writers were able to use that discourse for their own ends.

**Review of Literature: The Spanish Baroque**

Several critical texts, such as Antonio Márquez’ book *Literatura e Inquisición en España* (1980), and Ciriaco Morón Arroyo’s article "The Inquisition and the Possibility of the Great Baroque Literature" (1984) examine the relationship between the Inquisition and literature, but their analyses are concerned only with Spain, not Latin America. In the first, Márquez suggests that both *La Celestina* and the writings of fray Luis de León formed a dialectic with the Spanish Inquisition:

Los capítulos dedicados al teatro del Renacimiento y a *La Celestina*, respectivamente, tienen por objeto un tipo de análisis a la vez detallado y profundo en busca de posibles fibras inquisitoriales. ¿Fue *La Celestina* una respuesta al reto inquisitorial? Indudablemente, la obra de
fray Luis de León parece haberlo sido. (Márquez, 13-14)

[The chapters dedicated to Renaissance theater and to La Celestina, respectively, have as their aim a type of analysis at the same time detailed and profound in search of possible inquisitorial grains. Was La Celestina an answer to the inquisitorial threat? Undoubtedly, the work of fray Luis de León seems to have been.]

Marquez raises the possibility of a literary analysis aimed at uncovering inquisitorial "fibras" in Peninsular texts, which would open the door to examining other texts with the same motive. In Arroyo’s article, he explores the question of whether or not there was a causal relationship between the Inquisition and Baroque literature. Authors such as Calderón de la Barca and Cervantes are examined, in addition to theological issues in Baroque Spain. Arroyo concludes that the Spanish Inquisition, while certainly influencing the culture, had little discernible impact on the literature. He writes, "What has been said of Alemán, Cervantes, and Calderón can be extended to other authors. In the language of literary criticism, the Inquisition may have determined the choice of isolated signs in the literary works, but the works as such are not inspired by that institution. Indirectly, through its
impact on cultural attitudes in general, of course, it also affected literature." (Arroyo, 371-372) Here we have two very different views. Márquez accepts the possibility of the Inquisition as subtext for several prominent Baroque texts. Arroyo reaches the opposite conclusion, stating that there is little overt evidence of influence by the Inquisition on Baroque authors. He does, however, leave open the possibility that since literature can reflect society, and Baroque society was in part shaped by the Inquisition, then there may be an indirect influence. It is precisely that possibility which will be studied here.

Review of Literature: Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz and Luis de Carvajal

In this study, I will explore evidence of the influence of the Inquisition on theological texts of Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz. Very little work has been done with Sor Juana’s Crisis de un sermón, one of the texts to be examined in this project. Kothe’s article "Whose Letter Is It, Anyway? Print, Authority, and Gender in the Publication of Sor Juana’s ‘Carta Atenagórica’" (1996) focuses on the dissemination of the text and on its rhetorical character, rather than on the content of the letter itself. Alfonso Junco in his article "La Carta Atenagórica de Sor Juana," offers a detailed analysis of this text, but in regards to its relation to the Inquisition,
merely says that it is not heretical. Junco is more concerned
with the debate on the nature of divine love in the texts by
Sor Juana and Vieira. Little has been done with the
possibility that Sor Juana internalized an inquisitorial
ideology in Carta atenagórica. One study that does explore
the relation between Sor Juana’s writings and the Inquisition
appears as an article written by Virginia M. Bouvier, "Sor
Juana y la inquisición: las paradojas del poder" (1999), in
which she suggests that in Sor Juana’s poetry, and in the auto
sacramental Divino Narciso, one can find a coded critique of
the Inquisition. She writes, "La paradoja es que, dentro de
los límites de la Inquisición, el trabajo de Sor Juana desafía
al celo inquisitorial, señala la injusticia inherente a los
juicios humanos, y crea un lenguaje nuevo y polivalente que
disimula su resistencia en expresiones de amor e ironía."
(Bovier, 74) ["The paradox is that, within the limits of the
Inquisition, the work of Sor Juana challenges Inquisitorial
zeal, points out the injustice inherent in human judgement,
and creates a new and polyvalent language that conceals her
resistance in expressions of love and irony."] The 1998 book
Sor Juana & Vieira, Trescientos Años Después, edited by K.
Josu Bijuesca and Pablo A. J. Brescia, examines in detail
texts by Sor Juana and Vieira, the history surrounding them,
and a previously unpublished letter by "Serafina de Cristo,
" presumed to be Sor Juana. Among the articles are Pablo A.
Brescia’s "Towards a New Interpretation of the Carta
"Atenagórica," Enrique Martínez López’ "Sor Juana, Vieira y Justo Lipsio en la Carta de Sor Filotea de la Cruz," Antonio Marquet’s "Para atravesar el espejo: De Sor Juana a Serafina de Cristo," "Una carta finamente calculada, la de Serafina de Cristo" by Sara Poot Herrera, and "El silencio final de Sor Juana" by Elías Trabulse. Among the themes examined in this book are the heretical strands in Crisis de un sermón, Vieira’s problems with the Inquisition, references to Sor Juana in the records of the Santo Oficio in Mexico City, and the publication and analysis of the letter of Serafina de Cristo.

Regarding Luis de Carvajal’s Memorias and Testamento, a few studies have appeared recently. Moshe Lazar mentions Carvajal in his 1991 article "Scorched Parchments and Tortured Memories: The 'Jewishness' of the Anussim," in which he examines the influence of Jewish sources on Crypto-Judaic texts, as well as the unwitting role that the Inquisition played in shaping the concept of Judaism among those secretly practicing Judaism. Lazar suggests that one of the subtexts of Luis de Carvajal’s confession is the "Thirteen Principles of Faith" by Maimonides. However, he does not mention possible interpellation or influences of Christian subtexts. Craig Kleinman’s 1995 dissertation Jews in Space: On an American Road to Know Where examines Carvajal’s autobiography in depth and touches on the dialectic relations that Carvajal had with the Inquisition. He writes,
there are also ambiguities in the text which display an awareness of the inquisitioners finding his secret writing. The Inquisition’s presence shaped his everyday practices and, therefore, his textual practices in constructing himself. It should also be remembered that Carvajal did not find out about his "Jewish blood" until after he had received three years of formal education in a Jesuit school, thus a particular doubleness informed his (and other crypto-Jews’) understanding of the margins inscribed by and within him. Writing himself into being, for Carvajal, means operating through the overlapping spaces of conversion, contradiction, ambivalence, and secrecy which positioned his subjectivity. (Kleinman, 112)

Kleinman focuses, however, on the construction of Carvajal as a pan-American Jewish subject; I plan to examine Carvajal’s construction as a subject of inquisitorial Mexican society, that is, as a subject of colonial Mexican society whose ideology was shaped by the Inquisition.

**Towards an Inquisitorial Literary Analysis**

The question arises as to what is meant by an Inquisitorial analysis. The phrase conjures up images of an
inquisitor minutely examining a text for signs of heresy, which, of course, is not my intent. Nor is this an enumeration of censored texts, a study of why certain works were banned by the Inquisition. Instead, I wish to examine the way in which certain texts written in colonial Mexican society reflect the influence of the Mexican Inquisition.

There are a number of ways to accomplish this. The most obvious is to look for signs of resistance by writers against the Inquisition. This would include both overt critiques and covert attacks.

One can also find evidence that the Inquisition had a hand in shaping the subject position of the author of a given text. The author might place himself or herself within the orthodox world view. For example, not questioning that punishment should be public might demonstrate an internalization of an inquisitorial ideology.

The Inquisition could be seen as an Ideological State Apparatus. According to Louis Althusser, an ideological state apparatus is an entity, such as the Church, which controls subjects primarily by their own belief in its legitimacy, that is, the ideological state apparatus interpellates them. Interpellation is the way in which a society (or rather ideological state apparatuses within a society) exert control over the world view of subjects. Paul Smith defines subjects as individuals whose identities are determined by social forces. He writes, "'Individuals' are interpellated as
subjects’ in the discourses of the ideological apparatuses which guarantee the reproduction of social relations; and Althusser claims that ideologies can only function ‘by constituting concrete subjects as subjects.’” (Smith, 16)

The concept of ideology is complex. According to Žižec, ideology "is a social reality whose very existence implies the non-knowledge of its participants as to its essence." (Žižec, 316) In other words, subjects are completely unaware of the ideology which shapes the way in which they see the world and their place in it. This notion is certainly an important component in textual analysis. However, I also believe that resistance is possible. Rabasa discusses "Indians who pledged obedience [to the Spanish Crown and Church] but whose everyday life practices made manifest that interpellation had missed its mark.” (Rabasa, 283 - 284) An exploration of the impact of Inquisitorial ideology should not only take into account subconscious interpellation, but also the practices which demonstrate that it may have "missed its mark."

It would be useful to define what I mean by Inquisitorial ideology. Inquisitorial ideology involves the following components: 1) a rejection of heterodoxy; 2) a concept that Catholicism was one body, and if any part of that body was "diseased" it was necessary and just to either heal it or amputate it; 3) an emphasis on intention as well as on actions; 4) a performative function of punishment; and 5) a system of regulation similar to Foucault’s panopticon, that
is, that subjects were made to monitor and censure their own behavior. In this study, when I refer to Inquisitorial ideology, I mean the ideas as expressed above.

Below is a sample analysis of a text which may have traces of an inquisitorial ideology.

"El Sacrificio de Isaac:" Theology of Fear

"El Sacrificio de Isaac" was a play produced in 1539 for a festival in Tlaxcala for the evangelization of Aztecs. According to Eduardo Matos Moctezuma, there were two conquests of Mexico - one military and the other spiritual, and Church could be considered the ideological apparatus of the conquistador. María Sten and Rodolfo Usigli say that theater was one of the primary weapons of the spiritual conquest. (Partida, 27) Thus, "El sacrificio de Isaac" can be seen as a tool of conquest. While this text was written before the arrival of the Tribunal of the Inquisition in Mexico, and the intended audience, the indigenous population of central Mexico, was soon to be considered exempt from the Inquisition (although at this point in history they could be subject to episcopal inquisitions), the anonymous Franciscan author would have had an opportunity to be interpellated by the Inquisition. This text is further valuable in that it depicts the sacrifice of Isaac, a central myth in both Carvajal’s
letters to his sisters and in Crisis de un sermón by Sor Juana.

The play begins by implying that it is Sara who inadvertently precipitates God’s command that Abraham sacrifice Isaac. After praising Isaac for being such a well-behaved boy, Sara begins to worry that someday in the future he might cease to obey the law of God, "Tal vez no cumpla los mandamientos que (Dios) dejó en la tierra...Se angustia mi alma porque mi leche habrá sido desperdiciado. ¡Ojalá no lo hubiera criado! ¡Ojalá no lo hubiera parido!" (Partida, 80) ["Perhaps he will not obey the commandments that God left on the Earth...It distresses my soul because my milk will have been wasted. If only I had not raised him! If only I had not borne him!"] An angel overhears her, and arranges for her not to have to worry about Isaac straying in adulthood. The lesson for the audience in this passage is inescapable. It is better for one’s child to die than to stray from the laws regarding religious conduct.

Another character also has an expanded role – Ismael, who in the Bible is Isaac’s half-brother, but here is only referred to as the son of a slave. A demon comes to help Ismael corrupt Isaac after Ismael cries that he suffers from the excessive goodness of Isaac, "Padezco por el niño Isaac. Lleva una vida muy buena. Nunca ha querido ser mi amigo ni jugar conmigo como los otros niños. Cumple con todo lo que mandan su padre y su madre; nunca falta en nada." (Partida,
80) ["I suffer because of the child Isaac. He leads a very good life. Never has he wanted to be my friend nor to play with me like the other children. He obeys all that his father and mother command; he never disobeys in anything."] The most curious part of this passage is the elimination of the family relations of Isaac and Ismael, since Ismael as the hated son would have had motive for wanting to bring Isaac down. It may have been considered confusing for the audience if Abraham had had two wives, because that would have been seen as endorsing bigamy. The concept of good as portrayed here is also significant. Isaac is good because he obeys his parents; Ismael is bad because he likes to play. Obedience is set up in this play as the primary virtue to which one should aspire. Obedience as the center of religious observation is invoked by Abraham in his admonition to Isaac:

Ahora escúchame, hijo querido; nunca, de ninguna manera, vayas a manchar tu corazón, tu alma. Cuídala como si fuera jade, como si fuera una perla, pues es hechura de Dios. No vayas a pecar contra la amada, santa y soberana voluntad de Dios Nuestro Señor, ni contra los tres mandamientos que se refieren a Él. No quebrantes ninguno de ellos. (Partida, 80-81)

[Now listen to me, dear son; never, under any circumstances, go to stain your heart, your soul.}
Care for it as if it were jade, as if it were a pearl, because it is the handiwork of God. Do not go to sin against the beloved, holy and sovereign will of God Our Lord, nor against the three commandments that refer to him. Do not break any of those.

The play attempts to interpellate the new subjects of the Spanish Crown into viewing obedience, and especially obedience to God’s laws as interpreted by the Catholic Church, as the greatest virtue.

The price of disobedience is high, as Ismael intimates to his mother, Agar, "Cuando haya comenzado el banquete lograré que salga (Isaac) a jugar conmigo. Así desobedecerá las órdenes de su padre quien no lo amará con todo el corazón." (Partida, 81) ["When the banquet has started I will arrange for Isaac to leave to play with me. Thus he will disobey the orders of his father who will not love him with all his heart."] If a son disobeys his father he loses the right to his father’s love. This concept has multiple readings beyond filial responsibility. It can be seen as an exhortation for the colonized subjects watching the play to obey their colonizers in the form of the priests, for Christians to obey God, and also sets the stage for subjects in colonial Mexico to obey the mandates of the Inquisition - or suffer the consequences.
Although Isaac refuses to disobey his father to go off to play with Ismael, Sara is concerned that Isaac might be corrupted, and tells her husband of Ismael’s tendency to play rather than work. (In the Biblical story in Genesis, Sara sees Ismael and Isaac playing together and is worried for Isaac’s inheritance, so she orders Abraham to send her slave Hagar and Abraham’s son Ismael away. Again, there is no mention in the play that Abraham fathered Ismael on Agar.) Abraham calls Agar and Ismael before him and says to Agar, "Escucha, madre: tú eres la perdición de tu hijo. Se pasa la vida jugando. Si no lo dominas será pecado tuyo, y mañana o pasado lo enviarás al infierno." (Partida, 82) ["Listen, mother: You are the perdition of your son. He spends his life playing. If you do not control him it will be your sin, and tomorrow or the day after you will send him to hell."] Parents are held to be responsible for their children’s souls. Taken one step further, this can be read as warning to parents that they will be held accountable for their children’s actions, a situation of which the Franciscans would have been aware, having come from Inquisitorial Spain. Sara expresses her desire to see Agar and Ismael exiled, "Si no los corres, si no dejan a nuestro amado hijo, le enseñarán a vivir la vida jugando y a no tener respeto." (Partida, 82) ["If you do not run them off, if they do not leave our beloved son, they will teach him to live life playing and not to have respect."] It is a form of inquisitorial logic - sinners
(heretics) must be exiled (punished) to keep them from influencing good sons (subjects.)

After exiling Agar and Ismael, Abraham prays to God that Isaac never grow to disobey the laws of God. God takes this literally, ordering Abraham to sacrifice Isaac:

Si en verdad guardas mis divinos mandamientos, lleva a tu hijo Isaac, a quien tanto quieres hasta la cima del monte que se llama Moria. Allí lo matarás para que quede satisfecho mi corazón de que cumpes con mis órdenes. (Partida, 82)

[If in truth you keep my divine commandments, take your son Isaac, who you love so much to the summit of the mountain called Moria. There you will kill him so that my heart may remain satisfied that you obey my commands.]

God wants Abraham to prove his faithfulness by killing his son. For the God of this play, obedience is the most important quality in mortals, superseding the bonds of parental love. Under the Inquisition, too, parents were expected to turn in their own children if suspected of heresy.

Abraham obeys without question or hesitation, modeling proper behavior for the indigenous audience. In a chilling aside to the audience, Abraham responds, seemingly without remorse, to Isaac’s question as to why he needs to carry wood
up the mountain, "Se necesita para que tu carne quede hecha cenizas, pues te voy a sacrificar." (Partida, 83) ["It is necessary so that your flesh can be turned to ashes, because I am going to sacrifice you."] Abraham’s comment calls to mind not only human sacrifices of the Aztec empire, but also those burned at the stake in autos-de-fe. This scene seems to be playing to the horizons of expectation for the indigenous audience, who might believe that this is the tale of a sacrifice to the gods. Isaac’s line reinforces this when he proves himself a willing sacrifice when Abraham tells him of God’s command, "No llores, padre mío querido, pues recibiré la muerte gustosamente. Hágase [la] sagrada voluntad de Dios tal como Él lo ordenó." (Partida, 84) ["Do not cry, my dear father, because I will gladly receive death. Do God’s sacred will such as he ordered it."] Isaac shows himself to be a proper monotheistic subject by accepting his death graciously, and gratefully. The example he sets is one the Inquisition would wish all accused would follow.

At the last minute, an angel comes to save Isaac and says that God "Ya ha comprendido que lo amas, que lo obedeces y que no lo olvidas." (Partida, 84) ["has already understood that you love him, that you obey him and that you do not forget him."] God’s motive, according to the Franciscan author, was to test Abraham’s faithfulness to God’s word. At no point does anyone in this play judge God’s right to subject Abraham
and Isaac to such a test. Indeed, they are expected to be grateful, as Abraham expresses to Isaac:

Si todos nosotros, los hombres del mundo, cumplimos con su santa voluntad, seremos dichosos. Y tú, amado hijo, has visto cómo Él te salvó de la muerte. Ahora durante toda la vida lo amarás con todo el corazón. (Partida, 84)

[If all of us, the men of the world, comply with his holy will, we will be fortunate. And you, beloved son, have seen how He saved you from death. Now during all your life you will love him with all your heart.]

Isaac should consider himself fortunate to have nearly been killed. God, far from being the cause of his suffering, is seen as his salvation. The trial that Isaac underwent serves to make him a better subject, just as trials of the Inquisition were meant to do. At the end of the play, the Angel addresses the audience directly:

Recordad que os enseña a guardar los mandamientos divinos. Educad a vuestros hijos de manera que no se perviertan, de manera que sirvan a Dios Nuestro Señor y se hagan merecedores del reino de los cielos. (Partida, 85)
[Remember that it [the play] taught you to keep divine commandments. Educate your children in a manner in which they do not become perverted, in a way that they serve Our Lord God and become worthy of the kingdom of heaven.]

The moral of the play is to be obedient to holy law. One interpretation is that it is very useful for colonizers to convince the colonized that obedience is the greatest virtue, and that leisure is perversion. However, we should keep in mind that it is also very valuable to the Inquisition to have subjects who are primed to obey religious laws and subject themselves to religious authority.
In 1596, Luis de Carvajal was burned at the stake in Mexico City for the crime of practicing his religion (his professed religion, if not that of his birth), a crime for which he had been found guilty once before. Knowing the penalty was death, Luis de Carvajal had still chosen to follow "the law of Moses." Upon his death, Alonso de Contreras, a Dominican friar who attempted to convert him at the auto-de-fe, was moved to say about Carvajal, "I have no doubt that if he had lived before the Incarnation of Our Redeemer, he would have been a heroic Hebrew, and his name would have been as famous in the Bible as are the names of those who died in defense of their Law when it was necessary." (Liebman 1970, 182) What could move an inquisitor to have such high praise for a convicted crypto-Jew? It seems ironic that a Dominican inquisitor would praise a convicted heretic for the strength of his faith. Carvajal may not have been successful in convincing the Inquisition of the validity of Judaism, but he
certainly made a favorable impression. For that matter, how was it possible to practice a forbidden faith at a time when the Spanish Inquisition was persecuting those who did not follow Catholicism? What would that faith have been like?

In this chapter, I examine several texts written by Luis de Carvajal to discover what impact the Inquisition had on his ideology, and further, how he questioned the Inquisition through a dialectical discourse, resisting the institution that sought to define him.

Life of Luis de Carvajal

Childhood - Luis was born in 1566 in Castile near the Portuguese border to Francisco Rodríguez de Matos and Francisca de Carvajal. He was the fourth of nine children. His older surviving siblings were Isabel, Gaspar, and Baltasar, and younger siblings were Catalina, Leonor, Mariana, and Anica. Luis was raised as a Catholic, attending a Jesuit school in Medina del Campo. His older brother Gaspar was a Dominican monk. Unbeknownst to Luis, his parents were crypto-Jews, hiding behind a Catholic facade to avoid persecution by the Inquisition.

In 1579, when Luis was 13 years old, everything changed. His brother, Baltasar, in the presence of his mother and older sister, Isabel, told him that the family was Jewish. In Jewish tradition, one becomes an adult at 13, an event usually
celebrated by a bar or bat mitzvah. The day on which Luis was told was Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement, also very significant for crypto-Jews because on this day they atoned for their outward Catholic practices. (M. Cohen, 33) Luis chose to embrace Judaism. He remained in the Jesuit school in which he was enrolled for another year, where he secretly studied the Bible to learn more about Judaism. (M. Cohen, 34)

Adolescence - In 1580, Luis’ uncle, Don Luis de Carvajal y de la Cueva, governor of the New Kingdom of Leon (which ranged from Tampico, Mexico to San Antonio, Texas), arrived in Spain to convince his sister, Francisca de Carvajal, and her family to come to the New World. His brother-in-law Francisco Rodriguez had already been thinking about moving the family to France both for business reasons and to escape the Inquisition. Don Luis persuaded him that there were many opportunities in Mexico.

Upon arriving in Mexico, the Carvajal family was quickly disillusioned. Finding work was difficult, and they received little help from Don Luis. Francisco became an itinerant peddler. Relations between Don Luis and his sister Francisca’s family, already strained, worsened dramatically when Isabel tried to convert Don Luis to Judaism. Don Luis, despite being a New Christian, was a devout Catholic. He struck Isabel to the ground, and then confronted her parents, who confirmed that they were crypto-Jews. The governor did not denounce the family to the Inquisition as required by law,
but distanced himself from them. He then spoke with his nephew, Luis, who pretended that he was not a crypto-Jew. Don Luis determined to "protect" young Luis from the influence of his family. He groomed him to become governor one day. (M. Cohen, 91 - 93)

Adulthood - In 1585, Luis' father Francisco Rodriguez died, which caused Luis to take a greater role in taking care of the family. Luis, tired of being unable to practice his faith, left Don Luis. He and his brother Baltasar became peddlers like their father, selling wine, clothing, confections, and silver throughout Mexico’s mining districts, all the while surreptitiously making contact with other crypto-Jews. (M. Cohen, 127) Luis eventually learned Mixtec, Zapoteco, Nahuatl, and Tarascan. The economic situation of the Carvajal family improved when Catalina and Leonor were married to successful New Christians, who were also crypto-Jews.

By this point, the entire family, with the exception of Fray Gaspar and Don Luis, were practicing crypto-Jews. Isabel and Luis, especially, felt it was their mission to convert New Christians to Judaism. They were fairly successful in most cases. Luis and Baltasar attempted to convert their brother, the Dominican friar Gaspar, without much luck; however, like his uncle Don Luis, Gaspar failed to denounce his family to the Inquisition.

In 1589, political events precipitated the fall of the Carvajal family. Don Luis had been involved in a territorial
dispute with the viceroy of New Spain, Don Álvaro Manrique de Zúñiga, who sought "to find Carvajal’s Achilles’ tendon." (M. Cohen, 110) If Don Luis were revealed to be of New Christian ancestry, he would be unable to remain governor, and if it were proven that he knew of his family’s judaizing tendencies, he could be prosecuted by the Inquisition. (M. Cohen, 85) The viceroy ordered Don Luis’ arrest on false charges, (M. Cohen, 110) which of course made the family’s position more precarious. Shortly thereafter, Isabel was denounced by Felipe Núñez, a New Christian she had tried to convert who was also a close friend of Don Luis. (M. Cohen, 144) Isabel’s testimony led to the arrest of Don Luis by the Inquisition, and he was transferred from the Royal Prison to the Inquisitorial jail. (M. Cohen, 146)

Luis and his mother were also soon brought before the Inquisition. At first Luis denied everything, and then he tried to protect his family by only implicating those who already would likely be condemned by the Holy Office or who were out of its reach - himself, Francisca, and Isabel (because Luis, his mother Francisca, and his sister Isabel would probably be convicted by the Inquisition no matter what); his father, who was dead; and Luis’ brother Baltasar, who was safely away. In 1590, the whole family was found guilty - Don Luis (the governor) and Gaspar (the Dominican friar), for not informing the Inquisition about the others; and Francisca, Isabel, Luis, as well as Luis’ sisters
Catalina, Mariana, and Leonor were convicted of Judaizing. Francisca, Isabel, and Luis were sentenced to perpetual imprisonment; Catalina, Mariana, and Leonor received lesser sentences. Due to her young age, 9-year-old Anica was not convicted, but was sent to live with the family of Pedro de los Ríos, secretary to the Inquisition. (M. Cohen, 177) Don Luis was sentenced to one year imprisonment, but died before the year was over.

While there was an Inquisitorial jail in Mexico in the sixteenth century in which the accused were kept prisoner during their trials, there was not an Inquisitorial prison as such which was used to house those found guilty and sentenced to perpetual imprisonment. Cohen writes

The Holy Office distinguished between two types of life terms: "perpetual prison," from which there could be no parole and "irremissible perpetual prison," from which, theoretically at least, there could not be. In New Spain the designations were largely academic, since the Inquisition had no prison of its own. If it did not send prisoners to the galleys, it customarily assigned them to menial duties in hospitals, monasteries, and convents, under the vigilance of the religious. (M. Cohen, 174)
This also frequently occurred in Spain, as Kamen explains:

By the Instructions of 1488 inquisitors could at their discretion confine a man to his own house or to some other institution such as a monastery or hospital,...The main reason for this surprising concession was that the tribunals often lacked prison space when their cells were already full, and had to make do with alternatives. (Kamen, 201)

Because of this, the women were under house arrest and Luis was sent to work at a hospital.

Eventually, because he was well-educated, Luis was sent to the Colegio de Santiago de Tlatelolco, a school designed to educate the native elite. Here he was secretly able to study texts which helped him learn more about Judaism, which he describes in the Memorias:

también el tiempo que le sobraba después de la lección de los estudiantes le ocupaba el fraile en sacarle las moralidades de oleastro sobre el pentatehuco en orden y tablas por el alphabeto el cual ejercicio era tan conforme a su incynacion y buen deseo, que si diera por el buen deseo que si diera por el la sangre no lo pagaba sea el sr. bendito y enzalsado quien ansi agrada a los buenos deseos, en este libro le descubrio el sr. los
santos treze artículos y fundamentos. de nuestra fe y religión cosa no sabida y oídas en las tierras de captiverio. (Carvajal, 481-482)

Whatever free time I had left was used by the friar, who requested me to make an abstract of the doctrine in Oleaster’s Commentaries on the Pentateuch...This was a task that was compatible with my inclinations and liking. I so greatly desired to do this that I would have given my life for it. Blessed and praised be the complies with our worthy desires. In these books the Lord unveiled to me the thirteen articles and principles [Maimonides’ Creed] of our faith and religion, things I had not heard of in this land of captivity. (trans. Liebman 1967, 72)

These texts, made available to him through an Inquisitorial punishment for his judaizing, were ironically enough fundamental to Luis’ construction of his Jewish subjectivity.

By secretly continuing to practice Judaism, Luis was playing a very dangerous game. If he were discovered, he would be executed. Interestingly, despite their status as reconciliados of the Inquisition, the Carvajal family seemed to retain friends in high places who were willing to help
them, which is unusual as associating with condemned heretics was strongly discouraged in the Spanish Empire. The Carvajals received a full pardon from the Inquisition in return for the payment of 850 pesos. Luis was able to get this money from priests and Christian friends. (Liebman 1970, 168) Nonetheless, Luis’ proselytizing activities couldn’t remain hidden forever. Perhaps aware of being denounced, he tried, and failed, to flee Mexico. In 1595, knowing that he would be captured by the Inquisition, Luis de Carvajal hastily wrote Memorias, his spiritual autobiography. Accused of being relapsed Judaizers, Francisca, Isabel, Luis, Catalina, and Leonor were jailed, tortured, and eventually burned at the stake in an auto-de-fe on December 8, 1596.

In the Shadow of the Inquisition: Crypto-Jewish Theology in "Memorias" by Luis de Carvajal

Part of the evidence held by the Mexican Inquisition against the Carvajal family was an extraordinary document entitled Memorias, written by Luis de Carvajal, which detailed the spiritual awakening of the crypto-Jew Joseph Lumbroso, in fact a pseudonym for Luis de Carvajal. The portrayal of Judaism in this text is very interesting in that it seems to appropriate an Inquisitorial ideology (that is, it adopts various discursive strategies employed by the Inquisition) for a very anti-inquisitorial project. In other words, the very
tools used by the Inquisition for suppressing Judaism are used in this text to defend it. For example, in his text Carvajal reconfigures the meaning behind imprisonment by the Inquisition as an act of God to punish crypto-Jews who publicly practiced Catholicism, as will be demonstrated later in this chapter. David Spurr writes that "the terms of authority, once given voice, are far from having a direct and unambiguous effect; on the contrary, they can be reappropriated by the colonized and used against the institutions from which they emanate." (Spurr, 186) This is clearly the case in the Memorias.

While there were many Inquisitions throughout the Middle Ages and Early Modern Era, the Spanish Inquisition (answering to the Spanish Crown rather than the Pope) as established under Isabel was originally instituted in Spain to ensure that Jews who converted to Catholicism were not practicing their old faith in secret. (Ayllón, 114) It later expanded to include "Old Christian" heretics and Muslims converted to Catholicism. Kamen writes, "From about 1511, various decrees attempted to make the new converts modify their cultural identity and abandon Muslim practices....(In 1526) It was also decided to transfer the local tribunal of the Inquisition from Jaén to Granada." (Kamen, 216) Writing of the underlying motivation of the Spanish Inquisition, Ayllón says, "Indiscutiblemente, el Tribunal fue ... un arma de los Reyes Católicos para su proyecto de centralización y unificación
política." (Ayllón, 119) ["Indisputably, the Tribunal was...an arm of the Catholic Monarchs for their project of centralization and political unification."] With the addition of much of the Americas to the Spanish Empire, there was a growing concern about heterodoxy, and the ability of so much territory to remain unified under one rule. The primary goal of the Spanish American Inquisitions was to maintain a unity of Catholic belief. Numerous scholars have written on the subject. Henry Kamen in his 1997 book *The Spanish Inquisition: A Historical Revision* explores, among other topics, the causes of the establishment of the Inquisition. While he acknowledges that the official motive was to eradicate Jewish practices among conversos, he suggests that the primary reasons were political rather than religious. Fernando Ayllón in his 1999 book *El Tribunal de la Inquisición: De la leyenda a la historia*, examines myths about the Inquisition and the history behind them. This study is notable for discussing the Inquisition in Mexico and Peru as well as in Spain. Stanley M. Hordes in his article "The Inquisition and the Crypto-Jewish Community in Colonial New Spain and New Mexico," studies the impact of the Inquisition on the Spanish-American crypto-Jewish community.

David Spurr, when speaking of subaltern strategies of resistance in colonial discourse, writes, "In another ironic reversal, the terms of the discourse are reappropriated and turned against their source." (Spurr, 187) This is perhaps
most clear in the episode when Joseph Lumbroso, imprisoned by the Inquisition, converts his cellmate, a Catholic friar. Carvajal writes

[From that point on, we talked and discussed [matters of faith] for over eight days until the poor blind man entered into the knowledge of the divine truth, with which he was greatly rejoiced and comforted. He sang hymns and praises to the Lord, especially that which says, mas nus Dns. ey laudabilis nimis, and he translated them into the vernacular, saying, "Great and worthy of praise is the Lord, because He enlightened this sinner." (trans. Liebman, 69)]

Here, the priest has been sent by the Inquisition into prison, where his soul is saved by a crypto-Jewish theologian, who
opens his eyes to the "divine truth." While reading this passage, it is important to remember that Judaism is a non-prostelytising religion. Carvajal seems to be reconfiguring Judaism as a hegemonic belief for all, even those without Jewish ancestors. Even more importantly is Carvajal’s appropriation of the Inquisition apparatus for his purposes.

He writes,

"Estando en la prisión dicha con el trabajo augmentado de no poder orar y ayunar como solia por al ocasion del compañero con ayuda del sr. D. suyo fue este alli en la misma carzel alumbrado y convertido al verdadero D. y a su sta. ley, y fue este el medio que el sr. tomo pa. remor de aquella alma." (Carvajal, 478)

[While I was in prison, I was additionally pained because I was not able to pray and fast as I used to. God gave me the chance to serve Him through my cellmate. The latter was ultimately enlightened and converted to the true God and His holy law. This was the road that God chose for the guidance of that soul. (trans. Liebman, 69)]

In Carvajal’s eyes, the real reason the friar was arrested by the Inquisition was not because he had transgressed canonical Catholic law, but because God wanted to lead him to the true
faith. In other words, Carvajal thinks that the priest was sent to the Inquisition jail in order to repent and to be reconciled with the true religion, in this case, Judaism.

Is resistance futile? Resistance to an established order within established restraints.

Kleinman, discussing Carvajal’s "writing the Jewish self" in Memorias, explains the importance of the passages describing Carvajal’s imprisonment: "He also finds comfort in conversing with his cellmate, a Franciscan friar, who quickly converts to Judaism. Carvajal’s emphasis on the friar’s speedy conversion lends itself to the context of decolonisation which is driving the memoir." (Kleinman, 115) Carvajal is very actively engaged in resistance against the dominant order, especially the Inquisition, nonetheless using the rhetorical methods of his adversaries. The question arises, however, as to whether every appropriation of inquisitorial ideology was a conscious act, or whether Carvajal was interpellated by his environment. Kleinman points out that Carvajal was aware that the Inquisition could very well one day read his Memorias, creating a subtext for a hostile reader. Kleinman explains that

The Inquisition’s presence shaped his everyday practices and, therefore, his textual practices in
constructing himself. It should also be remembered that Carvajal did not find out about his "Jewish blood" until after he had received three years of formal education in a Jesuit school, thus a particular doubleness informed his (and other crypto-Jews’) understanding of the margins inscribed by and within him. Writing himself into being, for Carvajal, means operating through the overlapping spaces of conversion, contradiction, ambivalence, and secrecy which positioned his subjectivity. (Kleinman, 112)

It seems likely that, having been brought up in an inquisitorial society, Carvajal would have been influenced in his reconstruction of Judaism by the ideological state apparatus of the Inquisition.

This interpellation, I believe, can be seen in the attempts of the Carvajals to convert others of Jewish descent. Luis writes that his Jewish persona in Memorias, Joseph Lumbroso and his brother Balthasar had attempted to save another brother, Gaspar, a Dominican priest, from "heresy:"

mas parecioles cosa lastimosa dejar a un hermano mayor suyo ciego y fraile dominicano predicador y maestro ya en su orden, y ansi con animo fuerte y amoroso ambos a dos hermanos se fueron a verle a su
convento que estaba junto a la carcel de la Inquisión. en el qual el a la zazon era pedagogo de los nouicios, con yntento de procurar traerle al conozimito. de la xdad. de D. y de su sta. ley. (Carvajal, 472)

[However, we considered it regrettable to leave our other elder brother [Gaspar], a narrow-minded Dominican friar who was already a preacher and teacher in his Order. With a strong and loving hope we went to see him in his monastery, which was near the Inquisition prison. He was a teacher of novices at that time. We intended to try to show him the truth of the Lord and of His holy law. (trans. Liebman, 64)]

Carvajal accepts as axiomatic the fact that there can be only one true faith, and that those who don’t follow it are blind. By attempting to convert his brother, Luis is following the hegemonic practices of the Inquisition, which also holds the belief of one true faith. That Carvajal attempts to convert others to Judaism rather than to Catholicism does not negate the interpellation of the Inquisition over him; it illustrates his resistance to the established order within certain established restraints. Spurr writes, "Although writers can hardly break free from the basic cultural presuppositions that
give their work meaning, there are nonetheless ways of writing that resist the imposition of value inherent in any colonizing discourse." (Spurr, 189) Carvajal can resist the Catholic faith, in which he was educated as a child, but not the notion that there can be only one true religion, as he states at the beginning of Memorias, "despertado por el divino spu. las puso con su vida hasta los beinte y cinco años de su peregrinación en orden de brebe historia y haziendo ante todas gras. promete trayendo por to. al sr. de las verdades." (Carvajal, 463) ["awakened by the Divine Spirit which He places in them, and I present this brief history as an account of my life up to my twenty-fifth year of peregrination. First, I kneel on the ground before the universal God, sanctified by all, and promise to say in the name of the Lord of Truth..." (trans. Liebman, 55)]

In Memorias, Joseph Lumbroso is not the only member of his family engaged in the project of recolonizing colonial ideology. Carvajal writes of an episode in which his sister, Isabel, was denounced by someone of Jewish descent whom she was trying to convert, "empero por mas bien de ellos todos ordeno la infinita mya. y sabiduria diuina que en este tiempo prendiese la ynquisición a una su hermana viuda, la cual fue acusada de un hereje aunque de nra. nación a quien ella un año antes abia intentado enseñar la verdad diuina." (Carvajal, 473-474) ["However, for the benefit of us all, the Infinite Mercy and Divine Wisdom decreed that, about this time, the
Inquisition should take prisoner one of my sisters, a widow [Isabel], who was accused by a heretic [Felipe Núñez], one of our own nation [a Jew], to whom she had tried to teach the divine truths a year earlier." (trans. Liebman, 65)]

Carvajal’s sisters not only practiced Judaism in secret, but also sought to convert others. In Carvajal’s invention of self and nation, not openly practicing Judaism becomes sinful. (Kleinman, 113) It is not enough simply to practice Judaism in one’s own home; in Carvajal’s ideology Judaism must be spread for those not practicing it to be saved. It is interesting that Carvajal refers to the man who denounced his sister as "un hereje aunque de nuestra nación." Someone of Jewish descent who does not practice Judaism, and even betrays someone who does, is not simply a traitor but a heretic.

Un hereje aunque de nuestra nación: loyalties in conflict

The very concept of nationhood and religious identity is problematic in Luis’ construction of self and society. Luis de Carvajal was born a Catholic in Spain to crypto-Jewish parents, learned of his Jewish heritage, moved to Mexico City in New Spain and at the same time as he was attempting to convert others of Jewish descent back to Judaism he was forced to help colonize and convert to Catholicism the indigenous populations, first through his work with his uncle the governor, who had the responsibility to protect Spanish
colonists and Spanish silver mines as well as subdue Indian rebellions (M. Cohen, 105), and then during Carvajal’s time in the Colegio de Santiago de Tlaltelolco, a school for educating indigenous children in Latin and religious studies (M. Cohen, 199-200). Kleinman writes of Carvajal’s dilemma after he was sentenced by the Inquisition in his first trial to perpetual imprisonment working in a mental hospital. Due to his skills as a letrado who knew Latin, Spanish, and native languages, he was transferred to the Colegio de Tlaltelolco to be a teacher and secretary in service to the Church. Kleinman explains Carvajal’s position in the Colegio, a school for the indigenous (and subjugated) population:

In exchange for getting out of the hospital, Luis’ identity as a writer is interpellated and held captive. He is forced to help colonize the Indians by teaching them grammar, and he is also constantly required to transcribe Latin scriptures into Spanish for the friars. So even though Luis loves to write, the act of writing is made ambivalent because it builds the power of the colonial regime trying to erase Carvajal’s identity, and, like torture, shrinks his world....
Displaced as an American/Jewish/writer, Carvajal was caught between a mediated space of operations between colonizer and colonized. (Kleinman, 116-117)

Carvajal found himself forced to proselytize and colonize others in the name of those who had proselytized and colonized his ancestors. This of course produced multiple and conflicting subjectivities for Carvajal. At the same time he was secretly trying to learn more about Judaism, he had a front row seat to the conversion of others to Catholicism. It is not surprising that he appropriated certain ideas when he embarked on his own project of recolonization/reproselytization.

Luis de Carvajal did something very interesting with his discursive construction of the Inquisition. Speaking of the priest converted to Judaism, Carvajal wrote, "que merezio despues ser confesor de D. verdadero y de su ley sma. y asi la corona de martir como adelante contare despues de haberlas sacado de la carcel con las penitencias y habitos que suelen poner en semejantes casos por la guardia de la ley de D. los enemigos de ella." (Carvajal, 479) ["The friar acted in such a way that he deserved to be a confessor of the true God and His holy law and to wear the crown of martyrdom as will be told. After we were released from prison with the customary penances and garments assigned in such cases in the name of]
the law of God by the enemies of that law..." (trans. Liebman, 70)] The priest was to become a martyr to the Jewish faith, which might be seen as something of an ironic reversal in and of itself, as Carvajal quite possibly might have derived "la corona de martir" from the trope of Catholic martyrs. Even further, however, is his positioning of the Inquisition as the Other by which he defines his faith. Otherness, as Hutcheon reminds us, is the opposite against which a subject defines itself. (Hutcheon, 6) For the Spanish Inquisition of the early modern period, Jews were the Other, which makes Carvajal’s inversion so brilliant. According to Carvajal’s view, when the Inquisition was responsible for the death of crypto-Jews, the victims received a martyr’s crown and proved their faith. The Inquisition, then, was not simply the enemy; it served as a proving ground for the faithful. Carvajal reversed the privileged position of the Inquisition over crypto-Jews and recast the role of the latter as heroes and defenders of the faith.

In sum, Memorias is a text shaped in many ways by the Inquisition. In many instances, Carvajal could not escape Inquisitorial influences, living in Spanish colonial society. For example, he did not question the concept that there can be only one religion, and that it was necessary to proselytize. At the same time, however, his text, which demonstrated a colonial subject as an active colonizing agent, nonetheless marked his resistance to the "colonization of the imaginary."
Costigan, 306) Carvajal deliberately appropriates and inverts Inquisitorial tropes in order to undermine the very institution that was ultimately unsuccessful in completely interpelling him, as will also be seen in the letters Luis wrote to his family while imprisoned.

Martyrdom

In traditional Judaism, the emphasis is on this life, not the next. Life is held to be sacred, and losing it, even in the name of faith, is something to be avoided. In contrast, medieval and early modern Catholicism placed a high value on martyrdom, and on the rewards in heaven for dying for God in this life.

In constructing a Jewish faith, Luis de Carvajal assimilated the trope of Catholic martyrdom. In a May 26, 1595 letter to his sister Isabel, Carvajal writes,

"y henchirnos de eterno gozo y alegria de la qual hara lyndas coronas pa. poner en las cabezas de sus hijuelos queridos que son los que le creen, y esperan y tienen su temor, ea ea benditas martyres gozaos...ally comereis a aquella sactisima mesa de vro. verdadero pe. que os dio a criar en este mundo, o como os a de abrazar, o como a de sacar el pañuelo de la faltriquera de sus consuelos...dira vestimelas de brocado, o que guirnaldas de gloria..."
os a de mandar poner, o que bayles y saraos el día
del desposorio ally cantaremos todos nros. cantemos
con alegria... (Carvajal, 508)

[and fill us with eternal happiness and joy. He
will weave beautiful crowns to place on the heads
of His beloved children who believe in Him and who
await and obey Him. There, there, blessed martyrs,
rejoice...You will eat at the same holy table with
your true Father, who sent you down to earth to be
reared. Oh, how He will embrace you and take from
His pocket of comforts His handkerchief...He will
order that you be dressed in brocades or that
crowns of glory be placed on your head. Oh, what
feasts and dances will be celebrated on the day of
your nuptials to the Lord! We shall sing there.
Let us sing with joy. (trans. Liebman, 97-98)]

"Martyres gozaos" - according to Carvajal, those who die
martyrs - in this case those who die for the Jewish faith -
will enjoy the eternal grace of God. Carvajal’s physical
descriptions of heaven bring a fascinating immediacy to this
passage. Martyrs not only will wear crowns, but will be well-
dressed in brocade and feast and dance. Equally important to
note is the "desposorio:" female martyrs will become the
brides of God. This is strikingly reminiscent of legends of
Catholic virgin martyrs, who become the brides of Christ. In the sixteenth-century Spanish Empire, Carvajal would have been very familiar with these legends.

In a May 28, 1595 letter to his sister Leonor, Carvajal repeats his tangible description of heaven, "que te dire de las dulces comidas de aquella boda sancta, o que azucares rosados, o que principios, y postres si un reyezuelo de la tierra como Asuero hizo tal combite como as leydo el del rey de los reyes que tal sera..." (Carvajal, 512) ["What can I tell you about the sweet foods that will be served at your holy nuptials, what rosy sweets and relishes and desserts! If an earthly king such as Ahashuerus celebrated a banquet like the one we have read about, just imagine what a feast the King of kings will celebrate." (trans. Liebman, 101)] In other words, when Leonor dies, she will wed God, and then the family will celebrate with feasting and dancing. Carvajal’s heaven is very concrete, as opposed to an abstraction. With the experiences the Carvajal family had with poverty, it makes sense that his concept of heaven would involve plentiful food and clothing.

This vision of a festive and glittering heaven may be a result of the Baroque culture in which he lived. Texts frequently employed elaborate descriptions, evoking a textural feel to written texts. Walter Benjamin writes, "This is what happens in the baroque. Both externally and stylistically—in the extreme character of the typographical arrangement and in
the use of highly charged metaphors—the written word tends toward the visual." (Benjamin, 175-6) Carvajal would also most certainly have seen the numerous mascaradas and parades with lavish spectacle that Irving Leonard describes in his book Baroque Times in Old Mexico. (Leonard, 118-119) The emphasis Carvajal places on the clothes his sisters will wear in heaven after their martyrdom seems especially significant in light of what García Pabón calls "una preocupación muy barroca por el vestido." (García Pabón, 429) ["a very Baroque preoccupation with clothing."] Perhaps most important is Carvajal’s configuring of the afterlife as a party or wedding celebration. In his article "Indios, criollos y fiesta barroca en la Historia de Potosí de Bartolomé Arzánz," Leonard García Pabón writes, "De cualquier manera, lo que sí está claro es que un momento privilegiado de la fiesta como expresión social y reconocimiento de un sujeto social se da en el Barroco español y americano. Nunca como entonces, sociedad, arte, literatura y fiesta se unen para representar el ser, los sueños y la historia de un sujeto social." (García Pabón, 424) ["Regardless, what is clear is that a privileged moment of the fiesta as social expression and recognition of a social subject occurs in the Spanish and American Baroque. Never as then, society, art, literature and fiesta unite to represent the being, the dreams and the history of a social subject."] Having grown up in a Baroque society, Carvajal undoubtedly would have witnessed the fiestas
and parades which were so prevalent at the time, so it is not surprising that he would legitimate his construction of a Jewish subject to his sister by describing a glamorous fiesta. The lavishness of the divine wedding celebration he imagines has parallels in the Baroque celebrations described by José Antonio Maravall, "En la fiesta pública barroca lo que sucede es que,...su objetivo es la ostentación...hasta el punto de que el predominio de aquélla llega a tanto que, más que divertir, la fiesta pública busca asombrar." (Maravall, 85) "In the public Baroque festival what happens is that...its objective is ostentation...until the point that the predominance of that becomes so much that, more than to entertain, the public festival seeks to astonish."

In another letter to Leonor, Carvajal writes, "yo de mi solo e confesado verdad de D. esperando el premio del paraiso y gloria eterna a vosotras mis almas os prendieron por sospecha solamente porque yo al Sr. Dios gracias no e lebantado a nadie falso testimonio porque vosotras no teneis culpa..." (Carvajal, 516) "I only confessed of God’s truth concerning myself, hoping for the prize of paradise and eternal glory. You, my dearest, were arrested on suspicion only. I have not given false testimony against anyone, thank God...You are not guilty." (trans. Liebman, 105) Carvajal hopes for the prize of Paradise and eternal glory, which is more of a Catholic concept than a Jewish one, as the Jewish faith focuses on this life.
In yet another letter to Leonor, this one dated May 30, 1595, Carvajal returns to his description of an afterlife, trahe angeles a mys hijas a mys esposas dessas ricas vestiduras que les e mandado hazer denseles en lugar de paño sayas de raso blanco, y en lugar de raso jubones de brocado de siete altos, tocadmelas muy bien y ponedles ricos escofiones, y guirnaldas no quede dedo syn su anillo pues tanto passaron por mi, y mira que primero que las vistas las labeis en ricas aguas olorosas que an de comer a mi mesa amen. (Carvajal, 521)

[‘Angels, fetch the beautiful gowns I have ordered for My daughters and spouses. Give them skirts of white satin in exchange for their cotton ones; dress them in brocade jackets, and attire them well with rich headdresses and garlands. Let no finger be without a ring, for they suffered much for Me. But before all this, bathe them in perfumed waters, for they shall sit and eat at My table.’ Amen. (trans. Liebman, 110)]

Most of the letters describing heaven as a place full of riches and God as a bridegroom are written to Leonor. Leonor was 12 when she was married, and was executed when she was barely out of her teens. Before she married, her family was
very poor, and her marriage and that of her older sister Catalina drastically improved the situation of the Carvajals. Luis was describing the afterlife in terms his sister could understand.

He also brings up the concept of sacred marriage with his youngest sister, Anica, in a June 3 letter to her,

que todas estas sanctas an de baylar en el paraiso a vuestras bodas quando os reziba por esposa vra. anima el rey soberano de la gloria ea my Saba reyna aparejaos que aveis de yr a la sancta ciudad de Jherusalem de los cielos a ver al hermosisimo rey de los angeles rey lleno de sabiduria. (Carvajal, 524)

[all the saints will dance in paradise at your wedding, when the Royal Sovereign of glory receives your soul as spouse. There, my Queen of Sheba, prepare yourself, for you will go to the holy city of Jerusalem of the heavens to see the beautiful King of angels, a King full of wisdom. (trans. Liebman, 114)]

Because of Anica’s youth, perhaps Luis thought his description of a heavenly reward had to be concrete.

It is important to compare the differences in the concept of Jewish and Christian afterlives. According to Arthur
Hertzberg, "the central emphasis of Judaism has remained, from the beginning, on this world. It is here and not in any world to come that man (sic) has the possibility to choose and to justify his life by choosing the good." (Hertzberg, 213)

There is a concept of heaven, but it differs quite a bit from Carvajal’s lavish descriptions of celebrations and feasts. Maimonides, a medieval Jewish scholar, explains,

In the world to come there are no bodies, but only the souls of the righteous alone, without bodies, like the angels. Since there are no bodies in the world to come, there is neither eating or drinking nor anything at all which the bodies of men require in this world. Nothing occurs in the world to come which would involve bodies, such as sitting and standing, sleep and death, sadness and laughter, etc (Hertzberg, 213)

There was a Jewish concept of martyrdom which may have influenced Carvajal, as Gitlitz explains:

Conversos might understand this virtue within the Jewish tradition of sanctifying the Holy Name of God (Kiddush ha-Shem) through martyrdom, or within the Christian tradition of achieving personal salvation through extreme sacrifice, or in terms of the honor of being an example to other Judaizers to remain steadfast in their faith. (Gitlitz, 95)
Other crypto-Jews also saw themselves as martyrs to the faith: "Some of the accused courted martyrdom, confessing to Jewish beliefs and practices in great detail in the belief that their virtue would thereby increase." (Gitlitz, 78) Thus, Carvajal’s appropriation of the trope of martyrdom as part of his configuration of a Jewish subjectivity is not unprecedented. Further complicating the question is the fact that many Old Christians viewed the deaths of conversos convicted of Judaizing as a form of martyrdom. Stuart Schwartz, in his paper "'Each in His Own Law:' Popular Expressions of Toleration in the Hispanic World, 1500-1700," writes that

The idea that Jews dying for their faith were martyrs like the Christians who had died for theirs was expressed from time to time not only by conversos but by Old Christians as well. One man in Evora, Portugal told Inquisitors he would not attend an auto de fe because when Santa Barbara had been martyred there had been lightening bolts from heaven and that he would not go to see the Jews martyred for fear that God would do the same again. (Schwartz, 14)

Gitlitz relates a similar incident:

In 1689 Pedro Onofre Cortés reported that he had asked a man named Billa about a Judaizer who had been burned: ‘Do you think that Jew whom they
burned, the one named Alonso, did right in letting himself be burned? Because he could easily have asked for pardon and mercy and saved his life and later emigrated to his own land if that was his wish and not commit suicide, for that is a great sin... Billa replied that Alonso had done well because whoever dies for his God is crowned in Heaven.’ (Gitlitz, 601)

However, none of these concepts of Jewish martyrdom concern marriages to God or sumptuous banquets. Luis de Carvajal seems to be drawing from other sources.

So where, then does Carvajal’s celebration of martyrdom come from? The medieval Catholic church exalted and celebrated martyrs, those who died for their faith. St. Ambrose wrote, "By the death of martyrs, religion has been defended, faith increased, the Church strengthened; the dead have conquered, the persecution been overcome." (Brantl, 228) Such ideas persisted well into the Baroque era. Elizabeth Davis writes, "The early Christians considered martyrdom the greatest blessing they could receive from God, and this belief persisted even in Golden Age Spain." (Davis, 145) Mary Elizabeth Perry speaks of the importance of martyrs such as Justa and Rufina in Early Modern Spain. Carvajal could easily have been influenced by this belief. Further, martyr brides of God also come from Catholic hagiography:
a female saint is constructed as a form of ideal marriage to Christ. As much as any courtly romance heroine, the virgin is a nuptial figure, and her narrative destiny is union with her bridegroom. This union takes place beyond death, in the heavenly court or bower to which these brides of Christ look as they make their final prayers before decapitation. Death in this genre is the equivalent of marriage in romance. It signals the appropriate happy ending, which is the beginning of the heroine’s new life. (Wogan-Browne et al., xviii)

Carvajal’s tales of his sisters’ marriage to God clearly come more from Catholicism than traditional Judaism.

In another letter Carvajal discusses the regard in which God holds martyrs: "los que tubieron fee viva con D. vivo desta la raiz de la eterna vida los que el conozimiento della tienen en el corazon en el cielo seran transplantados desta tierra baja." (Carvajal, 526) ["All those who had faith in God, from which stems the root of eternal life, all those whose hearts are filled with this knowledge, will be transplanted from this base earth." (trans. Liebman, 116)] Those who have faith in God should have nothing to fear in this life, but should look to the next.
Carvajal’s final letter was to his sister Mariana, the member of the family who most wanted to die a martyr rather than hide her religion. He writes, "o que bayles, y saraos el día del desposorio, o como emos de danzar ally el cantemos con alegria a su harpa sta. nos a de hazer el son el sancto David para que baylemos con los angeles y stos. que con grande gozo nos espera el bendice o anima mia, quien con tal esperanza teme carzeles, ni muertos ni fuegos." (Carvajal, 532) ["What dancing and what a festival there will be on the day of your nuptials! How we shall dance and sing with joy! The holy David will play the harp so that we may dance with the angels and saints, who await us with great happiness." (trans. Liebman, 122)] By appropriating the Catholic concept of martyrdom, Carvajal transforms it into a tool of resistance against the Inquisition, the so-called "Defender of the Catholic Faith."

Imprisonment

The letters of Luis de Carvajal examined here are those he wrote to his sisters when he and his mother and sisters were imprisoned by the Inquisition. One would expect that his view of his family’s incarceration would be negative, and in many places it is. However, in a few of his letters he places a different significance on being held in an Inquisitorial jail. He reconfigures Inquisitorial imprisonment, not as
punishment for secretly practicing Judaism, but as punishment for publicly practicing Catholicism.

In a May 28, 1595 letter to his sister Anna, he writes of a vision he had in which God says, "que sy os pongo en carzeles es porque estando sueltos os dexais yr tras el mundo y no os acordais de my como debeis pongo os estas espinas en el camino por dovais a perdeos, no por lastimaros, si no por que os bolbais a mi, convertios y bolbeos a vro. padre mis hijas." (Carvajal, 511) ["If I have placed you in prison, it is because you follow [the ways of] the world and do not remember Me as you should, when you are free. I place thorns on the road through which you walk to perdition, not because I want to hurt you but to force you to come back to Me..., to your Father, My daughters." (trans. Liebman 1967, 100)]

God is speaking in the voice of an inquisitor who is concerned that believers, in this case Jewish, are straying too far from the one true faith. It is not, in this quote, the Mexican Inquisition which has put Ana, Leonor, Catalina, and Mariana in prison, but God ("os pongo en carzeles"). Furthermore, imprisonment is not for the benefit of Catholic souls, but for the souls of Jews who fail to live up to their religious obligations. Carvajal appropriates the trope of inquisitor and superimposes it his concept of God.

In a letter to his sister Leonor, written on the same date as above, Carvajal writes almost exactly the same thing, adding,
que vivo soy yo, y Sr. de vida y muerte llagueos para sanaros dios esas purgas para echar fuera del alma los malos humores que os la querian matar, sangreos para que salgan las iras las embidias las renzillas, calla que yo soi vuestro medico y medico que como pe. pongo de mi casa las medizin as medico que hiero y sano calla, que yo os sanare amen. (Carvajal, 515)

[for I live and am the Lord of life and death. I sent you wounds only to heal you. I purged you so as to cast out the evil that would have destroyed your souls. I made you bleed so as to rid you of faults and angers. Be quiet, for I am your physician, a physician who, like a father, supplies cure and medicine, a physician who wounds and heals. Be quiet, for I shall heal you.’ Amen. (trans. Liebman 1967, 104)]

In other words, when crypto-Jews become spiritually ill, the Inquisition prison became a hospital for their souls, with the suffering they underwent as medicine. By being named medicine, the Inquisition ceases to be a persecuting agency, and is transformed into an object used by the God of Luis de Carvajal to help His followers be more Jewish. Carvajal is not alone in this belief. Other crypto-Jews also saw
Inquisitorial prisons as a (Jewish) spiritual birthplace: "In his poetic paraphrase of the Psalms, written in the safe haven of Amsterdam, David Abenatar Melo (d. ca. 1646) declared that the Inquisition and its prisons were ‘the school where he was taught the knowledge of God.’" (Yerushalmi, 40) These crypto-Jewish authors use their very subalternity to claim a space of authorization and power.

So far, we have imprisonment by the Inquisition, as configured by Carvajal, both as punishment for not being better Jews and as medicine for spiritually ill souls. In a letter to his sister Catalina, Carvajal suggests that imprisonment might lead to something else - eternal salvation. He writes, "animo animo mis encarzeladas que no quiere D. vra. muerte no syno daros la vida eterna y verdadera por estos paszos." (Carvajal, 529) ["Courage, courage, my imprisoned ones; God does not want your death, but wants to give you eternal and true life through this experience." (trans. Liebman 1967, 119)] The Inquisition then is the path to redemption, as it claims, but for Luis and his family, not to Catholic redemption. It is important to note that redemption through suffering is a Christian idea, one which Carvajal could easily have picked up in church or in the Jesuit school he had attended. However, he transforms it to a Jewish religious path. Being brought before the Inquisition becomes a sign of faith, and a test of one’s convictions of Judaism which will lead to the salvation of one’s soul.
In a letter to his sister Mariana, Carvajal develops his concept of the path to eternal salvation leading through the Inquisition’s jails,

y pues vemos claro que la voluntad del altísimo es llevaros por estas carceles a su paraiso y gloria sin los rodeos y desbanes de castilla do ybamos no contradiga la nra., pues es tam aventajado el trueque, aunque esta en medio del camino la cuesta desta carcel, y soledades, y pues pa. subirla tenemos tam buen baculo de las divinas promesas no desmaye nadie. (Carvajal, 530)

[Now we can clearly see that it was the will of the Almighty to take you to His paradise and glory by way of these prisons without further detours or the distractions of Castile, where we were to go. The change in our plans is a change for the better rather than a denial of our wishes, even though in the middle of the road there is this uphill path this prison and our loneliness. Since we have the divine promises to sustain us in our climb, let no one be discouraged. (trans. Liebman 1967, 120)]

In this passage, as in earlier ones, Carvajal removes the agency of the Inquisition and places it with the subject of God. With "trueque", however, which means exchange or barter,
Carvajal takes it one step further and suggests that time in prison is the coin to be paid by Mariana in order to get to heaven. Imprisonment becomes a voluntary sacrifice made by crypto-Jews to become worthy of salvation.

It is important to note that no one volunteered to be taken by the Inquisition, and one could not simply choose to leave. I suggest that Carvajal is making an ideological shift in the way he perceives events, which takes power from the apparatus of the Inquisition and grants it to imprisoned crypto-Jews. Carvajal’s insistence that his travails and those of his family are their path to heaven is a survival technique. Eva Uchmany’s statement corroborates this argument:

En efecto, como lo señaló Gershom Scholem, el mesianismo hebreo es, en sus orígenes y por su naturaleza, una teoría de catástrofes. Es indudable que por esta misma razón encierra en sí una fe inquebrantable en la redención final, la cual es al mismo tiempo una teoría futurista y por tanto un camino de supervivencia. Es ésta la causa que hizo florecer las ideas mesiánicas durante los terribles terremotos históricos que Israel vivió...
(Uchmany, 118)

[In effect, as Gershom Scholem indicated, Hebrew messianism is, in its origins and by its nature, a
theory of catastrophes. There is no doubt that for this very reason it locks within itself an unbreakable faith in the final redemption, which is at the same time a futurist theory and as such a road for survival. This is the cause that made the messianic ideas flourish during the terrible historic earthquakes that Israel lived.

Carvajal’s belief in a better afterlife in which he, his family, and indeed all crypto-Jews who keep the faith will be rewarded was a common path of resistance for crypto-Jews, a way in which they could claim self-determination in the face of an implacable enemy.

Abraham and Isaac

Chapter 22 of Genesis in the Bible relates a very important story for this study. God tells Abraham to take his beloved son Isaac to the land of Moriah to sacrifice him. Abraham agrees to do so without hesitation, but upon raising his knife, an angel appears and prevents him. Because of Abraham’s loyalty to Yahweh, he and his descendants will be showered with blessings. The traditional Jewish interpretation of this passage is that Jews were to be prohibited from performing human sacrifices (unlike in other cultures of the time, in which the practice was common.) Carvajal cites the story of Abraham’s sacrifice no less than
three times in his letters to his sisters, but his interpretation is somewhat different from the traditional Jewish concept.

In a letter to his sister Catalina on May 30, 1595, Carvajal writes,

Abrahán nuestro sancto pe. ato de pies y de manos a su hijo, y el bendito Ysac con maravillosa obediencia esperaba el golpe del cuchillo, animo animo cargadas mias que entonze andaba el angel del señor trayendo el carnero que por el fue ofrezido no es su voluntad no que muera Ysac sino daros esta merito en la tentación para daros el premio de la eterna vida que esta no es sino larga muerte y tormento. (Carvajal, 517)

[Abraham tied his son’s feet and hands; and the blessed Isaac, in marvelous obedience, awaited the slash of the knife. Have hope, for the angel of God entered and stayed Abraham’s hand and brought a ram as an offering to God in place of Isaac. He did not want Isaac’s life, but [He wanted to test] Abraham’s fortitude against temptations. So He does with you. He does not desire a long or tortuous road to death but rather [to give] the gift of eternal life. (trans. Liebman 1967, 106-107)]
Carvajal completely repositions the reader’s horizon of expectations from identifying with the sacrificer Abraham to the sacrifice Isaac. "y el bendito Ysac con maravillosa obediencia esperaba el golpe del cuchillo" does not appear in the biblical version of the story: "Then he bound his son and put him on the altar on the top of the wood. Abraham stretched out his hand and took the knife to kill his son. But the angel of Yahweh called to him from heaven." (Gen 22:9-11) Isaac in Carvajal’s version gains subjectivity. Carvajal is drawing a parallel between Isaac’s near sacrifice and the plight of crypto-Jews in the hands of the Inquisition. Catalina should accept with "maravillosa obediencia" the will of Yahweh, which seemingly is her sacrifice, so she can receive eternal life.

It is important to note that in the biblical version, there is no mention of eternal life, nor a discussion of the torments of this one. The angel says of Yahweh’s will, "I will shower blessings on you and make your descendants as numerous as the stars of heaven and the grains of sand on the seashore. Your descendants will gain possession of the gates of their enemies. All nations on earth will bless themselves by your descendants, because you have obeyed my command." (Gen 22:17-18) Carvajal’s rewriting of the angel’s words is an echo of Catholic doctrine of the time, that life on earth is suffering, and people should look to eternal life. He also does not seem to question the right of the Inquisition to
"sacrifice;" he merely suggests that they are unwitting tools of God’s will that crypto-Jews be granted eternal salvation.

The story of Abraham and Isaac is so important to Carjaval that it is the main topic in his June 1, 1595 letter to Leonor. Here, God speaks specifically to Isaac: "y a Ysac dixo por que odedeziste a my mandado y a la voz de tu pe. en ti cumplire las bendiciones mias bendito A. amén grandes mysterios tenia que te dezir sobre esto bendita mas ay que son ya las doze." (Carvajal, 522-523) ['He [the Angel] then said to Isaac: ’You have obeyed My command and were willing to die, and for this reason all the Lord’s blessings will be fulfilled in you, blessed be Adonai.’ I have many more mysteries to speak to you about, but it is twelve o’clock." (trans. Liebman 1967, 112)] Isaac, more than simply a test of faith for his father, successfully passed his own test. He accepted the possibility of his death without question or complaint, and he obeyed "la voz de tu pe." Again, I see this as an example Carvajal provides for his sister to follow. Isaac’s reward for obeying his father’s voice (which was not mentioned in the biblical version) is especially interesting. What is the father’s voice which Leonor should be obeying? Quite possibly the religion of her ancestors - Judaism. If Isaac, not solely Abraham, was the subject of God’s test, then Isaac too must have a reward, and so, by extension, must crypto-Jews in inquisitorial cells. They, like Isaac, are to be
sacrificed for their faith, and should take comfort in the fact that they were chosen by God.

This interpretation is borne out in a subsequent letter to Catalina. Carvajal writes a dialogue between Abraham and Isaac, giving Isaac a voice:

aviendo llegado a lo alto del monte dixole Abraham a su hijo as de saber hijo mio que el Sr. D. nuestro me a mandado que te offrezca a su divina magestad en sacrificio, bienaventurado y dichoso tu pues como sea cierto y sin duda el morir en todos los hijos de Adam tu mueres por soberano modo ofrecido al D. altisimo Sr. de la vida eterna antes te tengo embidia que manzilla hijo mio que a buen Sr. bas offrezido. (Carvajal, 528)

[Upon arriving at the top of the mountain, Abraham said to his son: ’My son, you have to know that the Lord our God has commanded me to offer you as a holy sacrifice to His Divine Majesty. Blessed and fortunate are you, since it is certain and without doubt that, among the sons of Adam, you [will be the first to] die in a royal manner as an offering to God, the almighty Lord of eternal life. I envy you rather than feel sorry for you, my son.’ (trans. Liebman 1967, 118)]
Isaac responds, "por cierto padre mio pues el Sr. ansi lo manda cumplase la voluntad suya que aqui estoy obediente." (Carvajal, 528) ["Certainly, my father; if the Lord orders it this way, may His will be carried out, as I am here, obedient." (trans. Liebman 1967, 118)] Here, Abraham needs to convince Isaac to be sacrificed; it is not simply Abraham’s decision. Further, unlike the biblical version, Abraham actually envies Isaac the opportunity he has received to die for Yahweh. In a complete reversal, Isaac gives Abraham permission to kill him first when he says "por cierto padre" in response to Abraham’s explanation regarding God’s command, and then when he tells his father "cumplase la voluntad suya," claiming the very agency that would seem to be denied a sacrificial victim.

Carvajal clearly states his intentions in elaborating on this story to Catalina: "animo animo mis encarzeladas que no quiere D. vra. muerte no ayno daros la vida eterna y verdadera por estos paszos." (Carvajal, 529) ["Courage, courage, my captives, for God does not want your death but to give you true and eternal life through these events."] Carvajal is interpelling his sisters with the example of Isaac, that is, trying to get them to see themselves as Isaac, so that they too might accept this opportunity for eternal life that God has given them. Like Isaac, they should take power for themselves by giving permission for their fate, thus subverting the role of the Inquisition in their deaths.
The legend of Abraham and Isaac seems to have been significant for crypto-Jewish communities, especially in Portugal. In 1583, a crypto-Jew, Guiomar Cardosa, confessed to the Coimbra Inquisition that she had recited the story of Abraham and Isaac as a prayer. (da Costa, 62) According to Manuel da Costa Fontes in his article "Between Oral and Written Transmission: ‘O sacrificio de Isaac’ in the Portuguese Oral Tradition", the source of the transformation of Isaac from victim to agent dates back to a ballad version published in 1535 (da Costa, 62), which itself can be traced to the Midrash, a compilation of Jewish oral literature. (da Costa, 62) Living near the Portuguese border of Spain, it is quite possible that the Carvajal family would have heard this ballad. Carvajal, as an oppressed crypto-Jew, finds comfort in the tale of an empowered Isaac. He has only to consent, and then he will be set free.

Carvajal’s reworking of the Abraham and Isaac story is an act of resistance. By reconfiguring the role played by Isaac, Carvajal and his sisters are transformed from passive victims to active agents. They are consenting to their sacrifice, and with this consent, they not only gain God’s blessing but take power from the Inquisition, which ceases to be the oppressor in control of the fate of relapsed Judaizers and instead is reconstituted as an unwitting tool of Yahweh. Carvajal cannot control the actions of the Mexican Inquisition, obviously; but through the discourse of his
letters he can rearticulate, through his version of Abraham and Isaac, the circumstance of his imprisonment and execution. As Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe point out in *Hegemony & Socialist Strategy: Towards a Radical Democratic Politics*,

An earthquake or the falling of a brick is an event that certainly exists, in the sense that it occurs here and now, independently of my will. But whether their specificity as objects is constructed in terms of 'natural phenomena' or 'expressions of the wrath of God,' depends upon the structuring of a discursive field. (Laclau et al, 108)

In other words, Carvajal cannot physically break out of his cell, but he can structure the discursive field of his letters to his sisters to resist, through his interpretation of his imprisonment, the Mexican Inquisition.

Carvajal’s reading (and retelling) of the story of Abraham and Isaac differs considerably from Sor Juana’s interpretation that I will deal with more thoroughly in a subsequent chapter. Sor Juana suggests that God ordered Abraham to sacrifice Isaac to prove that Abraham would obey him. In *Carta atenagórica* she writes,

Bien sabemos que Dios sabía lo que Abraham había de hacer y que le amaba más a él que a Isaac; pues ¿para qué este examen? Ya lo sabe, pero quiere que lo sepamos nosotros, porque es Dios tan celoso, que

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[We well know that God knew what Abraham had to do and that he loved him more than Isaac; well, why this test? He already knows it, but he wants us to know it, because God is so jealous, that he not only wants to be loved and preferred to all things, but he wants this to be understood and that all the world know it; and because of this he tests Abraham.]

In other words, God wanted to send a message across the centuries. He wanted to make an example of Abraham and Isaac, according to Sor Juana, to teach people that they should love God more than their own children. This performative aspect is significant in terms of a possible interpellation of Sor Juana by the Inquisition, because the autos-de-fé were also public. Punishments existed to teach everyone the proper way to act and to demonstrate the fate of those who fell into heterodoxy.

In other words, Sor Juana’s interpretation of the biblical story follows "party lines." It legitimates the Inquisition, and Isaac is merely an object lesson for Abraham. In contrast, Carvajal’s reconfiguration and identification
with Isaac subverts the meaning the Inquisition would wish to impose on the execution of crypto-Jews.

Testamento

At the conclusion of his second trial, Luis de Carvajal wrote a testament in which he expressed the articles of his faith. This document, entitled by the Inquisition "Testamento de Luis de Carvajal, debajo del cual dijo quiere morir" (under which he said he wants to die), is extraordinary in its passionate defense of Judaism and denunciation of the Inquisition. With this text Carvajal, a prisoner of the Mexican Inquisition, attempts to interpellate his inquisitors, that is, attempts to convince them to see themselves as villains in God’s eyes.

He starts by constructing himself as a martyr: "te pido y suplico en limosna que en el peligroso trance de mi muerte, que por la honra de tu nombre santísimo y verdadera Ley quiero recibir, no me desampares; acepta en sacrificio esta pobre vida que me diste." (Carvajal, 412) ["I...beg and implore in charity that Thou, in the impending moments of my death, which I wish to welcome in honor of Thy holy name and genuine law, mayest not forsake me. Accept in Thy mercy this poor life that Thou gavest me." (trans. Liebman 1967, 125)] The text is addressed to God, but the intended readers are of course the inquisitors, who are positioned as eavesdroppers to a
conversation between God and the man they will condemn to
death.

There are several subtexts to Carvajal’s "Testamento." His statements of faith resemble at least superficially the Nicene Creed, articles of faith of the Catholic Church written in 381 A.D. (Brantl, 163): "Primero creo en un solo Dios Todopoderoso y verdadero, criador de cielo, tierra y mar, y de todas las cosas visibles e invisibles, y reniego del diablo y de todos sus embustes." (Carvajal, 412-413) ["First: I believe in the one and only God, almighty and true, Creator of heaven, earth and sea, and of all the visible and invisible things; and I renounce the devil and all his lies." (trans. Liebman 1967, 126)] The Nicene Creed states, "We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is seen and unseen." One possible interpretation of this similarity is that in recreating his Jewish faith, Carvajal utilized the omnipresent Catholic religion, using the Nicene Creed as a model for his own. Moshe Lazar, however, suggests that "Luis de Carvajal el Mozo...writes his final testament a short time before his anticipated auto de fe (December 1596), in which he states the ten principles of his monotheistic creed, partly modeled after the 'Thirteen Principles of Faith' of Maimonides." (Lazar, 185) The two declarations of faith do match up at several points. Compare the second declarations of Carvajal and Maimonides. Carvajal writes, "creo que Dios Nuestro Señor y Universal Criador es
uno y no más," (Carvajal, 413) ["I believe that God our Lord and universal Creator, is one and no more." (trans. Liebman 1967, 126)] Maimonides wrote, "I believe with perfect faith that the Creator, praised be He, is a Unity, and that there is no unity like His in any manner, and that He alone is our God." (Hertzberg, 222) It would seem that Carvajal had access to some Jewish texts beyond the Old Testament. While he was at the Colegio de Tlaltelolco, Carvajal was able to study many writings which he found invaluable for shaping his Jewish theology, such as the Bible (including apocrypha), Nicholas of Lyra’s Glosses, and most importantly, a commentary to the Pentateuch written by Dominican Jerome Oleaster which included Maimonides’ Thirteen Articles of Faith. (M. Cohen, 201-202) Carvajal’s "Testamento" is a syncretic blend of Catholic and Jewish sources.

However, the Testamento is more than just a declaration of faith - it is a cleverly constructed act of resistance. Carvajal writes, "Lo décimo, creo que aquel rey Antíoco, a quien la Sagrada Escritura llama raíz de pecado, por ser perseguidor del pueblo de Dios y de su Santa Ley, y fue figura de los reyes de España y Portugal, los cuales han sido y son la raíz de que han procedido y proceden los ramos de las inquisiciones que han procedido y proceden los ramos de las inquisiciones y persecuciones del pueblo de Dios Nuestro Señor y de su Santa Ley." (Carvajal, 416) ["Tenth: I believe that King Antiochus, whom the Holy Scriptures called root of sin
because he was the persecutor of God’s people and of His holy law, represents the kings of Spain and Portugal. They have been and still are the root from which originate the branches of the inquisitions and the persecutions of the people of God and His holy law." (trans. Liebman 1967, 131)] Carvajal’s intended readers are the very inquisitors about whom he writes. He means to interpellate them, to force them to see themselves as the "perseguidores del pueblo de Dios."

In the next paragraph, he again attempts to interpellate his inquisitors, this time by allowing them to see themselves in a slightly better light. He writes of his actions when the inquisitors sent two theologians to try to convince him of the error of his ways: "y también por convertirlos a ellos si pudiera y aun a los mismos príncipes inquisidores, porque con gran afecto de c. me mostraron deseo de mi salvación." (Carvajal, 417) ["Also, I tried if possible to convert them and the inquisitor princes, since they have shown me much affection and wished for my salvation." (trans. Liebman 1967, 131-132)] The inquisitors, according to Carvajal, are not evil men - they are following an evil path due to ignorance. They are, however, worthy of being saved. In essence, Carvajal is saying, "Forgive them, Lord, for they know not what they do," which positions Carvajal as Christ and the inquisitors as the Roman soldiers crucifying him. Carvajal subtly uses a myth which he does not believe to interpellate
those who do believe it into accepting that Carvajal is right not to believe.

Carvajal articulates himself as a willing martyr, which means that the Inquisition is a tool of God, but for the glory of the souls of crypto-Jews, not those who follow the religion of the inquisitors. He writes, "y ansi quiero y es mi voluntad de morir por su santa fe y verdadera Ley." (Carvajal, 417) ["and so I wish and it is my will to die for his holy faith and true Law."] If it is Carvajal’s choice to die, then he, not the Inquisition, is in control. Carvajal emphasizes the power he has in choosing to be martyred when he says to God, "y seas servido de enviar en mi socorro y defensa a aquel santo ángel Michael, príncipe nuestro, con su santa y angélica milicia, que me ayude a perseverar y morir en tu fe santa," (Carvajal, 418) ["May it please Thee to send the angel Michael, our prince, to defend and help me with his holy and angelic host, and to aid me to persevere in, and die for, Thy holy faith." (trans. Liebman 1967, 133)] Like Daniel, Carvajal is to receive help from the archangel Michael, the angel of choice in Catholic martyr legends as well. Without directly accusing or attacking the Inquisition, Carvajal constructs his Testament in such a way as to interpellate the inquisitors who are reading it; that is, he positions his readers to see themselves (he hopes) as the villains.
Memorias, the letters of Luis de Carvajal, and his Testamento all show traces of Inquisitorial ideology. Nonetheless, Carvajal manages to interpellate his inquisitors by reversing their own ideological tropes. Carvajal resists the Mexican Inquisition through his discursive strategies.
CHAPTER 4

LOVE IN THE TIME OF FEAR: DIVINE LOVE AND THE INQUISITION IN

CRISIS DE UN SERMÓN

Introduction

The Carta atenagórica by Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz was "this nun’s one incursion into theological argumentation - the only one in prose, written down and printed, that is." (Arenal, 12) The Carta is intriguing, not only for the importance that it had in her life - it provoked the famous Respuesta a Sor Filotea and the silence at the end of Sor Juana’s life - but also for its concept of divine love. It seems to me that Sor Juana was interpellated by the ideology of the Inquisition, an organization which was omnipresent in Imperial Spanish society in the seventeenth century. Jean Franco points out, "It is important to understand that Sor Juana, like other ‘baroque’ personalities, was not a lone sniper resisting the state, but was, at times, the very voice of that state." (Franco, 49) On occasion Sor Juana’s writing defended the prevailing ideology of her society. I believe
this can be seen in Crisis de un sermón, especially since the God in that text shows traces of an inquisitorial point of view.

War of Words: A Discursive Battle for Minds and Souls

It is important to place the Carta atenagórica in the context of "la guerra de las finezas" (Trabulse, 203), that is, in a textual debate which had two phases and (primarily) consisted of four texts: Antonio Vieira’s Holy Thursday sermon, Carta atenagórica, Carta de Sor Filotea de la Cruz, and La respuesta a Sor Filotea. The first part of the debate explored the nature of Christ’s love for humanity, and the second part the rights of women to write and study.

As Elías Trabulse points out, the importance of Carta Atenagórica cannot be overestimated: "De todas las obras de Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz ninguna tuvo en su época tantas repercusiones ni levantó tantas polémicas como la Carta Atenagórica." (Trabulse, 203) ["Of all the works of Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz none had in her time period such repercussions or raised as many polemics as the Carta Atenagórica."] Examining divine love and free will, problematizing discourses of authority, and challenging concepts of a "woman’s place," Sor Juana’s essay and the texts that followed it seemed to push all the buttons of the age. Trabulse writes,
Lo que sí resulta incontrovertible es que la Carta Atenagórica levantó una polémica cuyas repercusiones se percibían todavía en textos publicados varios decenios después de la muerte de Sor Juana. Cuando apareció la obra surgieron en la Nueva España detractores y defensores cuyos escritos al parecer versaban sobre una gran variedad de aspectos, desde los estrictamente teológicos hasta aquéllos que discutían los derechos de una mujer, que además era monja, a impugnar las tesis de una de las glorias literarias de la Compañía de Jesús. (Trabulse, 205)

[That which remains incontrovertible is that the Carta Atenagórica raised a controversy whose repercussions were still observed in texts published several decades after the death of Sor Juana. When the work appeared detractors and defenders emerged in New Spain whose writings apparently dealt with a large variety of aspects, from the strictly theological to those that debated the rights of a woman, who besides was a nun, to refute the thesis of one of the literary glories of the Company of Jesus.]
Carta atenagórica, then, was the text that launched a thousand essays. Pamela Kirk explains the importance of this debate in the Baroque era:

the seemingly academic or obscure topic, which is the greatest fineza (demonstration of love) of Christ, moves Viera and, subsequently, Sor Juana to consider other related issues: the meaning and nature of the death and suffering of Christ and consequently human suffering and death; the character of Christ’s presence in the Eucharist; and the relationship between love of God and love of neighbor. (Kirk, 83)

The Holy Thursday Sermons and Crisis de un Sermón caused such contention because they went to the heart of the Catholic faith, which was at the center of Latin Baroque society. José Pascual Buxó in his article "Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz: Los desatinos de la Pitonisa", on the other hand, believes that the letter was controversial as much for its arrogant tone as for the theological content, as he says when explaining the possible motivation for actions of the Bishop of Puebla in criticizing Crisis de un sermón:

No fue sólo el inequívoco tonillo de sonriente superioridad intelectual empleado por Sor Juana en su disputa teológica con Vieyra lo que más inquietaría al obispo, sino la paladina afirmación
de que "la mayor fineza del Amor Divino, en mi sentir, son los beneficios que nos deja de hacer por nuestra ingratitud", toda vez que el obrar bien o mal es elección del libre albedrío que Dios otorgó al hombre como "carta de libertad auténtica." (Buxó, 223)

[It was not only the unmistakable tone of smiling intellectual superiority employed by Sor Juana in her theological dispute with Vieyra which most disturbed the Bishop, but the public affirmation that "the greatest token of Divine Love, in my opinion, are the benefits that he takes from us for our ingratitude," since doing good or bad is a choice from free will which God granted to man as a "letter of authentic liberty."]

According to this interpretation, Crisis de un sermón was transgressive both as a theological text written by a woman and as a perceived attack against the Jesuits, a very powerful order in Colonial Latin America and to which Antonio Vieira belonged.

Vieira and Sor Juana, although writing from very distinct loci of enunciation, nonetheless shared many similarities, as Pamela Kirk points out. Both were identified with the Americas - Sor Juana was born in Mexico and Vieira, while born
in Portugal, moved to Brazil when he was six, and remained concerned with Brazil his entire life. Both enjoyed powerful patronage - Sor Juana had been a lady-in-waiting in the Viceregal court in Mexico, and after becoming a nun, maintained friendships with successive vicereines; Vieira was a royal preacher in the Portuguese court from 1644 to 1662, and was also the confessor of Queen Christina of Sweden. They were both internationally famous. (Kirk, 82-83) As Kirk writes, "Even the language used to describe them is similar. Sor Juana had been entitled variously the 'Mexican phoenix' and 'empress of the language,' as was Vieira the 'Lusitanian...phoenix,' and 'emperor of the Portuguese tongue.'" (Kirk, 83) Perhaps it should not surprise us that their debate (of which Vieira was unaware) would create such a controversy.

**Vieira’s Holy Thursday Sermon**

In 1650, the Jesuit missionary Antonio Vieira preached the mass of Holy Thursday to D. João, ruler of Portugal, in Lisbon. The prescribed gospel text for that mass is John 13, the passage in which Jesus washed the feet of his apostles; Vieira approached it as an example of the greatest fineza of Christ. (Kirk, 83) This sermon, and other texts written by Vieira, were published and widely disseminated, both in Portuguese and Spanish translation (Paz, 389).
According to Thomas Cohen, Vieira’s goal in the Holy Thursday sermon was to affirm the humanity of Jesus, and his love for humanity. According to Vieira, the perfect example of this love was when Jesus washed the feet of the apostles, especially those of Judas. (T. Cohen, 86) This passage is important because Christ does not make distinctions between people in terms of good or bad. Vieira says,

The perfection of the love [of Christ] shows itself in making equal in favors those who are unequal in deserts: not in making deserving men out of undeserving ones, but in treating them as if they were deserving. Love must have some traces of injustice to be perfect. (T. Cohen, 89)

Vieira says that "Christ requires not that we requite his love but that we love each other." (T. Cohen, 89) Vieira wanted to convince his listeners that everyone ("whether missionary, Amazon settler, crown official, or Inquisitor") had the duty to love each other, even the Indians. (T. Cohen, 90) Vieira wanted to form an integrated Brazilian community in God.

Of course, by stating that the greatest gift of Christ was that humanity should love one another, Vieira had to refute several Church Fathers, as Antonio Marquet explains,

A las tesis de los Padres de la Iglesia, San Agustín (morir en la cruz); Santo Tomás (permanecer en la Eucaristía); y San Juan Crisóstomo (lavar los
pies de los apóstoles); Vieira responde que constituye mayor fineza de Cristo el solicitar que el género humano se amara en vez de pedir una retribución por el amor divino que había dado. (Marquet, 121)

[To the theses of the Fathers of the Church, Saint Augustine (to die on the cross); Saint Thomas (to remain in the Eucharist); and Saint John Chrysostom (to wash the feet of the apostles); Vieira responds that asking that humankind love one another instead of asking for retribution for the divine love that he had given constitutes the greatest gift of Christ.]

This would come back to haunt him.

Interestingly, Vieira himself was brought to trial and convicted by the Portuguese Inquisition (a sentence later overturned by Pope Clement X) (T. Cohen, 146-147). Cohen explains this struggle, which he says was based on Vieira’s challenges to the church hierarchy:

The Spanish preacher Diego aptly called the Inquisitors clockmakers, ‘who set all the clocks of Christendom to Rome time and correct them when they deviate.’ Vieira sought to change the terms of the relationship between Rome and the rest of
Christendom, especially the New World. His prophetic writings demanded the integration of the New World ('the exotic and marginalized,' in Eduardo Lourenco’s phrase) into the consciousness of the Old. (T. Cohen, 121)

This raises the question as to how transgressive Crisis de un sermón truly was if it criticized an author censured by the Inquisition.

**Carta de Sor Filotea de la Cruz**

Vieira’s sermon was published in Mexico by the Jesuit Francisco de Aguiar y Seijas, bishop of Michoacán. His rival for the archbishopric of Mexico, Fernández de Santa Cruz, bishop of Puebla, asked Sor Juana to attack Vieira’s ideas in order to annoy Aguiar. Also, Sor Juana could take revenge for Aguiar’s misogyny. (T. Cohen, 87) Nonetheless, even though Fernández had promised her that he would not publish the letter, he did so without notifying or asking permission from Sor Juana. (Arenal, 13)

When he published the text (giving it the name of Carta atenagórica) Fernández included as an introduction a letter written under the pseudonym "Sor Filotea," in which he both praises and warns Sor Juana. He suggests that her conduct is not appropriate for a nun. It seems strange that the bishop
of Puebla asked Sor Juana to write the letter, and then attacked her for it. Lavrin suggests that the bishop

Admiraba a Sor Juana, pero más allá de su interés en leer sus ideas teológicas y de admirar su genio, se vió obligado a ejercer su autoridad episcopal para corregirla y tratar de llevarla al buen camino de la religión...Su relación con la monja ha sido interpretada diversamente como la de amigo y enemigo, pero quizás la verdad se encuentre en el medio aúreo: pastor impresionado por su genio, pero decepcionado por sus lazos con el siglo.
(Lavrin, 618-619)

[Lavrin, then, feels that the bishop was concerned with the state of Sor Juana’s soul, and wished to guide her back to the]
proper path of a nun. Ana Kothe agrees with Lavrin’s thesis when she states that "The Bishop disclosed Sor Juana’s critique - not as wrong - but as straying wantonly into the male dominated public sphere." (Kothe, 357) It is also possible that the bishop wanted to defend himself while attacking Aguiar. Octavio Paz believes that "Fernández de Santa Cruz’s reprimand, in addition to its tactical utility as a weapon of self-defense, accurately represented his point of view...He believed that 'any science that does not serve Christ is but ignorance and vanity.'" (Paz, 413) Nonetheless, Paz also suggests that Fernández could have had another motive - a defense of Sor Juana. "If Sor Juana’s enemies attack the Bishop, if they are startled that he published such a text, he can reply that he had already reprimanded the nun; at the same time, that reprimand offers her an opportunity to defend herself." (Paz, 414) Alan Trueblood believes that Fernández was acting under a somewhat different impulse. He says it is possible that the Bishop saw a storm brewing between the unbending misogynist cleric and the proud cloistered nun who dared to point her words and her interests toward the world beyond the convent walls. On this reading, the Bishop’s covering letter is a lightning rod intended to deflect the thunderbolt he saw coming from the archbishopric of the capital city now that Sor Juana no longer could
count on strong viceregal protection. (Trueblood, 8)

According to this interpretation, Fernández wished to protect Sor Juana from the archbishop in Mexico City.

Examining the text of the letter itself, the motives of "Sor Filotea" seem much less benevolent. First, as Kirk points out regarding the author of the letter, "His most obvious assertion of power is his publication of her work against her express request, thereby making it clear that the destiny of the letter is not in her hands, but in those of another." (Kirk, 101) Thus, despite the facade of equality of discourse between two nuns, the Bishop positions the implied reader (Sor Juana) as subject to his authority. Taking this veiled authority into consideration, the threat in the following passages becomes clear. Sor Filotea explains to Sor Juana the traps of human knowledge:

Por grande ponderación de la sabiduría de José, le llama la Sagrada Escritura consumado en la erudición de los egipcios. Y con todo eso, el Espíritu Santo dice abiertamente que el pueblo de los egipcios es bárbaro: porque toda su sabiduría, cuando más, penetraba los movimientos de las estrellas y cielos, pero no servía para enfrenar los desórdenes de las pasiones; toda su ciencia tenía por empleo perfeccionar al hombre en la vida política, pero no ilustraba para conseguir la
eterna. Y ciencia que no alumbrá para salvarse, Dios que todo lo sabe, la califica por necedad. (Glantz, 448)

[For great consideration of the wisdom of Joseph, the Sacred Scripture calls him consumed in the erudition of the Egyptians. And with all that, the Holy Spirit says openly that the Egyptian civilization is barbaric: because all its knowledge, at most, penetrated the movements of the stars and heavens, but did not serve to bridle the disorders of passions; all its science had as its task to perfect man in political life, but did not illustrate how to obtain the eternal. And science that does not illuminate how to save oneself, God that knows everything, assesses it as foolishness.]

The scholarly pursuits of Sor Juana, then, are dismissed not merely as "necedad" but as against God. Sor Filotea then goes on to explain what happens to those who prefer human knowledge to that of the divine:

A San Jerónimo le azotaron los ángeles porque leía en Cicerón, arrastrado y no libre, prefiriendo el deleite de su elocuencia a la solidez de la Sagrada Escritura; pero loablemente se aprovechó este Santo
[The angels beat San Jeronimo because he read Cicero, miserable and not free, preferring the pleasure of his eloquence to the solidity of the Sacred Writing; but laudably this Holy Doctor took advantage of his warning and of the profane erudition that he acquired in similar authors.]

San Jerónimo, the patron of Sor Juana’s order, is meant to be read as a stand-in for Sor Juana herself. Unless she learns, as San Jerónimo did, to leave worldly pursuits behind, Sor Juana should expect "just" punishment.

Even the pseudonym chosen by the bishop ("Philotea" - "lover of God") is not without subtext, as Kirk explains:

Its literal meaning serves to strengthen the invitation to Sor Juana to leave secular letters for holy pursuits, a function emphasized by the worldly or heathen name which the bishop has attached to the nun, Athena. Ludmer sets up a similar contrast, but compares Philotea (lover of God) with an implied Sor Philosophia (Sor Juana) whose athenagoric letter means to refer to the wisdom of Athenian philosophers rather than to the wisdom of the goddess Athena. (Kirk, 102)
All of this could be read as a threat of inquisitorial intervention if Sor Juana does not mend her ways. Sor Juana is compared to various pagan (non-Christian) authors and societies – Egyptians, Athenians, Cicero, – and must be taught by a "lover of God," or in other words, a defender of the faith. She is also compared to San Jerónimo, who learned the error of his ways after being punished by angels (Inquisitors?) for reading a proscribed book. This is why Sor Juana decided that she had to defend herself in what became her most famous work, Respuesta a Sor Filotea.

Respuesta a Sor Filotea: Theological Self-Defense

One would be remiss in analyzing "Crisis de un sermón" without at least mentioning the "Respuesta." Easily Sor Juana’s best known work, this reply to a reply to her original letter "Crisis" has been studied extensively both as autobiography and as a feminist defense for women’s right to study. What I propose here is not a thorough analysis of this canonical text, but a brief examination to show how Sor Juana’s awareness of the presence of the Mexican Inquisition shaped her response to the Bishop of Puebla.

Arenal and Powell suggest that one of the subtexts of "La respuesta" was the discourse of legal defense. They write that in setting up her self-defense, Sor Juana kept the potentially treacherous Inquisition in mind. While...
it is not known how much real cause she had to fear being called for questioning, nor how directly she had been threatened with such an action, the Holy Office is a presence mentioned four times in the Answer...She is careful to delegitimize vague threats and ill-phrased opinion; from the onset she makes clear her assumption that expressions of opinion, praise or opprobrium, and the pursuit of art itself are immune from punishment. (Arenal & Powell, 29)

Sor Juana systematically sets out to prove that she is innocent of unnamed charged against her. That she felt threatened is not in doubt. Almost immediately in "Respuesta" she attempts to construct a subject position of one unworthy/invisible of scrutiny: "Ni al primer imposible tengo más que responder que no ser nada digno de vuestrros ojos;" (Cruz, 40) ["I can answer nothing more to the first obstacle than that I am entirely unworthy of your gaze." (trans. Arenal & Powell, 41)] This is of course the trope of false modesty commonly found in nuns’ vita of the time period, but false modesty can also be construed as a defense - "I am too insignificant to have committed heresy."

Sor Juana goes on to state that the publication of "Crisis de un sermón" was a punishment for her (according to
arguments put forth in "Crisis") which would imply that there is no need of further punishment. She writes

porque me pareció que vuestro favor no era más que un reconvención que Dios hace a lo mal que le correspondo; y que como a otros corrige con castigos, a mí me quiere reducir a fuerza de beneficios. Especial favor de que conozco ser su deudora, como de otros infinitos de su inmensa bondad; pero también especial modo de avergonzarme y confundirme: que es más primoroso medio de castigar hacer que yo misma, con mi conocimiento, sea el juez que me sentencie y condene mi ingratitud. (Cruz, 40)

[For it seemed to me that your great favor was nothing other than God’s reproof aimed at my failure to return His favors, and while He corrects others with punishments, He wished to chide me through benefits. A special favor, this, for which I acknowledge myself His debtor, as I am indebted for infinitely many favors given by His immense goodness; but this is also a special way of shaming and confounding me. For it is the choicest form of punishment to cause me to serve, knowingly, as the judge who condemns and sentences my own ingratitude. (trans. Arenal & Powell, 41)]
Since she is suffering, and suffering publicly, there is no point to further action. Even more significant is her statement that she is her own judge. In inquisitorial trials, the accused were not told with what crimes they had been charged, and if they chose to confess, sometimes they would confess to a charge of which the Inquisition had been unaware. In essence, the accused would denounce themselves, a practice Sor Juana claims in her text.

Sor Juana makes it clear, however, that the real authority is "Sor Filotea." She writes

Y así, debajo del supuesto de que hablo con el salvoconducto de vuestros favores y debajo del seguro de vuestra benignidad, y de que me habéis, como otro Asuero, dado a besar la punta del cetro de oro de vuestro cariño en señal de concederme benévola licencia para habalr y proponer en vuestra venerable presencia, digo que recibo en mi alma vuestra santísima amonestación de aplicar el estudio a Libros Sagrados, que aunque viene en traje de consejo, tendrá par mí sustancia de precepto. (Cruz, 42-44)

[Thus, sheltered by the assumption that I speak with the safe-conduct granted by your favors and with the warrant bestowed by your goodwill, and by the fact that, like a second Ahasuerus, you have
allowed me to kiss the top of the golden scepter of your affection as a sign that you grant me kind license to speak and to plead my case in your venerable presence, I declare that I receive in my very soul your most holy admonition to apply my study to Holy Scripture; for although it arrives in the guise of counsel, it shall have for me the weight of law. (trans. Arenal & Powell, 43-45)

Immediately Sor Juana shows "Sor Filotea" to be someone with the power to grant "salvoconductos" and "seguros." She goes on to compare "Sor Filotea" with the biblical king Ahasuerus, who, when (crypto)Jewish Queen Ester committed the capital offense of appearing before her husband without being summoned by him, pardoned her by extending his golden scepter. Sor Juana places the scepter in the hands of the Bishop of Puebla, thus revealing his true position of authority in society. Kirk writes:

Sor Juana’s description of Philotea as ‘another Ahasuerus giving me the tip of the golden scepter of your affection to kiss as a sign of conceding to me the benevolent license to speak’ is rich in associations with the bishop Sor Juana is addressing. First and most obviously, in the seventeenth-century Mexican church, the bishop was the official who licensed the publication of books.
Like Ahasuerus, Santa Cruz gives her ‘license to speak.’ (Kirk, 112)

Furthermore, Sor Juana cleverly interprets the "Carta de Sor Filotea" as Ahasuerus’ scepter, thus granting Sor Juana "benévola licencia para hablar." In other words, just as the "Crisis de un sermón" was written at the behest of the Bishop of Puebla, so is the "Respuesta" written with permission from Sor Filotea. Almost immediately, however, Sor Juana reconfigures Sor Filotea from a "benevolent" ruler to an antagonist through her use of the word "proponer," which, as Arenal and Powell point out, means to present arguments as in a legal defense (Arenal and Powell, 109-110). Thus, Sor Juana subtly accuses "Sor Filotea" of being her prosecutor, and so Sor Juana has no choice but to defend herself. Finally, Sor Juana writes that Sor Filotea’s advice carries "sustancia de precepto," which, even though the tone is playful, suggests that Sor Juana did indeed feel threatened, as well as further unmasking the identity of the Bishop of Puebla.

Sor Juana uses several strategies in constructing her defense. She writes:

Pues ¿cómo me atreviera yo a tomarlo en mis indignas manos, repugnándolo el sexo, la edad y sobre todo las costumbres? Y así confieso que muchas veces este temor me ha quitado la pluma de la mano y ha hecho retroceder los asuntos hacia el
mismo entendimiento de quien querían brotar; el cual inconveniente no topaba en los asuntos profanos, pues una herejía contra el arte no la castiga el Santo Oficio, sino los discretos con risa y los críticos con censura. (Cruz, 44)

[Then how should I dare take these up in my unworthy hands, when sex, and age, and above all our customs oppose it? And thus I confess that often this very fear has snatched the pen from my hand and has made the subject matter retreat back toward that intellect from which it wished to flow; an impediment I did not stumble across with profane subjects, for a heresy against art is not punished by the Holy Office but rather by wits with their laughter and critics with their censure.] (trans. Arenal and Powell, 45)

First, when Sor Juana states that her sex and age prevent her from venturing too far into theology, underneath her irony and the trope of false modesty, she implies that she is not capable of heresy because of her "diminished" mental capacity. Obviously, Sor Juana does not truly believe this, nor does she truly expect the Bishop to accept this statement at face value. However, youth and ignorance were sometimes employed as a successful defense in Inquisitorial cases (Perry, 122).
Furthermore, this statement echoes the previous passage in which Sor Juana described herself as "no ser nada digno de vuestros ojos." She is claiming that she is not important enough to be brought before the Inquisition. Interestingly, she makes the same claim of her work when she says that heresy against art is not punished by the Holy Office. Neither she nor her work should be judged by the Inquisition. Sor Juana emphasizes this point a few sentences later – "Dejen eso para quien lo entienda, que yo no quiero ruido con el Santo Oficio, que soy ignorante y tiemblo de decir alguna proposición malsonante o torcer la genuina inteligencia de algún lugar." (Cruz, 46) 

["They can leave such things to those who understand them; as for me, I want no trouble with the Holy Office, for I am but ignorant and tremble lest I utter some ill-sounding proposition or twist the true meaning of some passage." (trans. Arenal and Powell, 47) In other words, Sor Juana strives to lead her life in such a way that the Inquisition should take no notice of her.

In a move strikingly reminiscent of Carvajal’s reconstruction of self, Sor Juana articulates herself as a martyr. In a passage in which she describes the difficulty of having (God-given) intelligence and desire to study in a culture where women are encouraged to be ignorant, she expresses her pain at being told to stifle herself – "¡Rara especie de martirio donde yo era el mártir y me era el verdugo!" (Cruz, 62) ["A strange martyrdom indeed, where I
must be both martyr and my own executioner!" (trans. Arenal and Powell, 63) Sor Juana chafes against the panopticon - of having to police her own actions to avoid sanctions by society.

While Carvajal was a martyr for faith ("the one true faith" - Judaism), Sor Juana saw herself as persecuted for the sake of wisdom. Kirk explains that Sor Juana

reinforces the idea that the search for wisdom brings suffering and demands courage. Her desire to follow Jesus (Wisdom) has only resulted in "bringing me nearer to the fire of persecution, to the furnace of torments" and led even to her being prohibited from studying. (Kirk, 127)

By equating Jesus and Wisdom, Sor Juana legitimizes her studies, and delegitimizes those who criticize them. She writes, "y cerebro sabio en el mundo no basta que esté escarnecido, ha de estar también lastimado y maltratado; cabeza que es erario de sabiduría no espere otra corona que de espinas." (Cruz, 66) ["And in this world it is not enough that the wise mind be scorned; it must needs be wounded and beaten. The head that is a treasury of wisdom can hope for no other crown than thorns." (trans. Arenal and Powell, 67)]

Thus, Sor Juana’s suffering mirrors that of Christ. Her persecution proves her innocence, since it is with the same
motives as the persecution of Christ. This passage is daring for several reasons. First, she is a woman in a male-dominated society claiming to be like Christ. Second, she reconfigures her critics, by implication, as nothing less than enemies of Christ.

Sor Juana becomes more direct in what she perceives as a threat of Inquisitorial censure. First, she describes a conflict she once had with a mother superior: "Una vez lo consiguieron con una prelada muy santa y muy cándida que creyó que el estudio era cosa de Inquisición y me mandó que no estudiase." (Cruz, 72) ["They achieved this once, with a very saintly and simple mother superior who believed that study was an affair for the Inquisition and ordered that I should not read." (trans. Arenal and Powell, 73)] "Cosa de Inquisición" can be interpreted in two ways. It could mean that only the Inquisition has a right to study, or it could mean that those who study are likely to be brought before the Inquisition. Either way, according to the mother superior, Sor Juana is trespassing, and must return to the proper space of nuns. It is interesting that, after having equated Jesus and wisdom, Sor Juana refers to the "prelada santa" as "cándida." By declaring the mother superior to be simple, Sor Juana calls into question the entire notion of study as "cosa de Inquisición," since the mother superior’s knowledge of such matters is suspect.
Finally in the "Respuesta" Sor Juana comes out directly to confront her anonymous accuser, "Si es, como dice el censor, herética, ¿por qué no la delata? y con eso él quedará vengado y yo contenta, que aprecio, como debo, más el nombre de católica y de obediente hija de mi Santa Madre Iglesia, que todos los aplausos de docta." (Cruz, 92) "If it is heretical, as the critic says, why does he not denounce it? Thus he would find revenge and I contentment, for I more greatly value, as I ought, the name of Catholic and obedient daughter of my Holy Mother Church than any praise that might befall me as a scholar." (trans. Arenal and Powell, 93)] In the "Carta de Sor Filotea," the Bishop of Puebla had never overtly threatened Sor Juana with the Inquisition, but as pointed out previously, he had hinted at it. Sor Juana brings the threat out into the open, challenging the concept that Crisis de un sermón is heretical, since if it were, she would have already heard from the Inquisition. She also uses her answer to this threat to declare her subject position as Catholic, rather than accept Sor Filotea’s positioning of her as worldly scholar operating outside the confines of the Church.

Crisis de un sermón

What, precisely was so controversial about Carta atenagórica, a letter the nun crafted with a great deal of
Almost immediately it becomes apparent that Sor Juana is (or constructs a writing subject who seems to be) very afraid of being judged. First she says,

[aunque este papel sea tan privado que sólo lo escribo porque V. md. lo manda y para que V. md. lo vea, lo sujeto en todo a la corrección de nuestra Santa Madre Iglesia Católica, y detesto y doy por nulo y por no dicho todo aquello que se apartare de común sentir suyo y de los Santos Padres. (Cruz, 33)]

Later she adds, "Vuelvo a poner todo lo dicho debajo de la censura de nuestra Santa Madre Iglesia Católica, como su más obediente hija." (Cruz, 36) ["I return to place all said under the censure of our Holy Mother Catholic Church, as its most obedient daughter."] As stated previously, the branch of the Catholic church responsible for censorship was the Inquisition, which had as its goal "To defend, protect, and
maintain the purity of the Holy Faith." (Leonard, 100) In the *Carta atenagórica*, a supposedly private letter, Sor Juana makes clear that she had to say that she believed that the Inquisition should censor her. She accepts (or at least she says that she accepts) that the Inquisition has the right, and the means, to examine a private correspondence. Of course the letter was not private; Sor Juana sent it to the Bishop of Puebla so he could circulate it. It is possible to read these statements as a form of self-protection, especially because she was writing to an ecclesiastic. Nonetheless, it seems formulaic, that is, that the submission to censorship is part of the process of writing a theological essay. We see here that the Inquisition is not far from Sor Juana’s thoughts. Indeed, according to Martínez López, in writing *Crisis de un sermón* Sor Juana had in mind a particular Inquisitorial trial, that of Vieira himself: "En pocas palabras: Sor Juana en su *Carta Atenagórica* parodia el proceso de Coimbra, donde se había tachado de ‘elación’...a Vieira, porque de la misma arrogancia intelectual acusaba Núñez a la escritora." (Martínez López, 90 note 2) ["In few words: Sor Juana in her *Carta Atenagórica* parodies the Coimbra trial, where Vieira had been accused of ’pride,’ because Núñez accused the writer of the same intellectual arrogance."] In parodying Vieira’s trial, Sor Juana walks a fine line - her text, by attacking someone who had been accused by the Inquisition, could be seen as operating well within orthodox parameters and as adopting
an inquisitorial voice, but at the same time it could be perceived as parodying the Inquisition itself.

For Vieira, the sign of divine love is that Christ washes the feet of Judas, the traitor. This shows that everyone deserves God’s love. It would be useful to examine that passage in the Bible:

He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, ‘Lord, are you going to wash my feet?...You shall never wash my feet.’ Jesus replied, ‘If I do not wash you, you can have no share with me.’ Simon Peter said, ‘Well then, Lord, not only my feet, by my hands and my head as well!’ Jesus said, ‘No one who has had a bath needs washing, such a person is clean all over. You too are clean, though not all of you are.’ He knew who was going to betray him, and that was why he said, ‘though not all of you are.’

...‘If I, then, the Lord and Master, have washed your feet, you must wash each other’s feet. I have given you an example so that you may copy what I have done to you...

‘Now that you know this, blessed are you if you behave accordingly. I am not speaking about all of you: I know the ones I have chosen; but what scripture says must be fulfilled:
'He who shares my table takes advantage of me.'
(John 13:6-18)

According to this, thought is more important than deed; that is, it is possible to interpret this passage (and probable that Sor Juana would have interpreted it in this way) as saying that the act of having one’s feet washed by Christ was worthless by itself. Most important was what was in the heart of the disciple. For that reason Christ said, "You...are clean, though not all of you are," which implies that Judas did not share in the gift. Not everyone was chosen. For Sor Juana this could have similarities to the Santo Oficio, which deemed it necessary for subjects to examine their conscience for interior sins. It was no longer sufficient to merely have the appearance of being a good Christian, but now one had to have correct thoughts. One of the methods of the Inquisition was that "Punishment...is...to have the self (mind/soul)...as its object." (Klor de Alva, 13)

Sor Juana rejects the idea that Judas received divine love. She writes

Hizo Dios a Judas, fuera de los beneficios generales, muchos particulares, y llegando el caso de su sacrílega traición, lamentando Cristo, no su muerte, sino el daño del ingrato discípulo...Con que parece que se arrepiente de haberle hecho el
beneficio de la creación, porque le estuviera mejor el no haber nacido que nacer para ser tan malo. (Cruz, 35)

[God made to Judas, beyond the general benefits, many particular ones, and coming to the case of his sacrilegious betrayal, Christ lamenting, not his death, but the harm of the ungrateful disciple...And so it seems that he repented of having made for him the benefit of creation, because it would have been better for him not having been born than to be born to be so bad.]

In other words, there are people who do not deserve the love of God. In Carta atenagórica those who do not support Christ deserve to be censured. Sor Juana’s thoughts about the attitude of God in terms of his "enemies" are prefigured by the Inquisition.

In that case, if love for all is not the greatest kindness of God, what is? According to Sor Juana it is the lack of kindness, because we receive greater benefit from punishment, or, according to Lavrin, "Lo que Sor Juana llama 'finezas' eran en buena teología 'castigos.' (Lavrin, 618) ["That which Sor Juana calls 'tokens' were in good theology 'punishments.'"] Sor Juana says:
Tiene el otro corta fortuna y, cuando mucho, dice que es castigo de Dios. Cuando sea castigo, el castigo también es beneficio, pues mira a nuestra enmienda, y Dios castiga a quien ama. Pero no es sólo el beneficio de castigarnos el que nos hace, sino el beneficio de exonerarnos de mayor cuenta. (Cruz, 35)

[The other has short fortune and, when much, says that it is a punishment from God. When it is a punishment, the punishment is also a benefit, so he looks to our correction, and God punishes who he loves. But it is not only the benefit of punishing us that he does for us, but the benefit of exonerating us from a larger accounting.]

It is very similar to the ideology of the Holy Office. They believe that it is important to punish the accused in order to save their souls.

Sor Juana speaks extensively about the intrinsic evilness of human beings. She believes that "es beneficio el no hacernos beneficios cuando hemos de usar mal de ellos." (Cruz, 35) ["it is a benefit not doing us benefits when we will abuse them."] She writes,

Ellos, no entendiendo la satisfacción y prosiguiendo en la calumnia, le quisieron
precipitar, confirmando con esta maldad el motivo por que Cristo no les hacía beneficios positivos, sino el negativo de no darles ocasión de cometer mayor pecado. Y éste fue el mayor beneficio que pudo Cristo hacer por entonces a su ingrata patria, en que la prefirió a aquellas dos ciudades que el mismo Señor amenaza por haber sido ingratas a las maravillas que en ellas obró. (Cruz, 35)

[They, not understanding the satisfaction and continuing in calumny, they tried to cast him down, confirming with this evilness the motive why Christ did not make positive benefits for them, but the negative of not giving them opportunity to commit a greater sin. And this was the greatest benefit that Christ could do then for his ungrateful country, in that he preferred it to those two cities that the Lord himself threatens for having been ungrateful to the marvels that in them he achieved.]

One cannot have confidence in the capacity of human beings to make the most of God’s favor. If they have the opportunity, they will fall in sin:

Porque nosotros, cuando somos tentados, las más veces caemos o en el consentimiento o en la
delectación, o podemos, al menos, caer en una de las cosas o en ambas: porque como hijos de pecado y concebidos en él, tenemos en nosotros mismos la semilla de la culpa, que es el *fomes peccati* que nos inclina a pecar. (Cruz, 27-28)

[Because we, when we are tempted, most often fall or in the consent or in the delectation, or we can, at least, fall in one of the things or in both: because as children of sin and conceived in it, we have in ourselves the seeds of the fault, that is the *fomes peccati* which inclines us to sin.]

This is considerably distinct from Vieira’s concept in which we are all capable of loving each other. It is an attack against Vieira’s optimistic vision, because for Sor Juana it would be very difficult to create a new society. In order to carry out Vieira’s missionary project, free will is necessary, or in other words, human beings need to take responsibility for working together. Nonetheless, by one reading, in the hands of Sor Juana free will seemingly is transformed into an obstacle.

Para responder a esta réplica es menester acordarnos que Dios dio al hombre libre albedrío con que puede querer y no querer obrar bien o mal, sin que para esto pueda padecer violencia, porque
es homenaje que Dios le hizo y carta de libertad auténtica que le otorgó. (Cruz, 30)

[In order to respond to this answer it is necessary to remind ourselves that God gave man free will so that he can want and not want to act good or bad, without this he could suffer violence, because it is a tribute that God made him and a letter of authentic liberty that he granted him.]

Our intrinsic liberty means that we have to be controlled in another way, for example, through a punishment from God.

However, if we look deeper, Sor Juana may well see free will not merely as a burden that humanity must bear, but the very thing that makes humans great. It is this very concept that might explain some of the controversy surrounding Crisis de un sermón, as Brescia suggests:

Sor Juana’s position was radical for the time: the greatest gift that God gives us is to leave us alone and able to take control of our own destiny; this concept is essential to understanding her struggle to create her own discourse and pervades all her documents. (Brescia, 49)

Marquet agrees:
En la Carta Atenagórica Sor Juana...afirma que la mayor fineza es respetar el libre albedrío de los hombres. Vieira pretende explicar la trayectoria cristática como una base para establecer un contrato social, sin duda idealista. Sor Juana, en cambio, redarguye para protegerse de esa falta de amor que tan cerca la asedia. (Marquet, 121)

[In the Carta Atenagórica Sor Juana...affirms that the greatest gift is to respect the free will of men. Vieira endeavors to explain the path of Christ as a base to establish a social contract, no doubt idealistic. Sor Juana, on the other hand, argues in order to protect herself from that lack of love that besieges her so closely.]

If God is willing to leave humans alone, by what right does the Inquisition try to control matters of faith? Such a dangerous notion had to be hidden in the text, and unfriendly eyes misdirected by Sor Juana’s appropriation of an Inquisitorial discourse.

Like an Inquisition which cannot accept heterodoxy, Sor Juana rejects the idea that God does not want mortals to love him. Her God is a jealous god who wants to be loved above all else. "Quiere Cristo que nos amemos, pero que nos amemos en él y por él. Luego su amor es primero." (Cruz, 24) ["Christ
wants us to love each other, but that we love each other in him and for him. Then his love is first."] She warns us, "Y aquí parece que se contenta Dios sólo con que no amemos más a los padres que a su Majestad. Pues no: más adelante pasa la obligación, pues hasta ahora sólo manda no amarlos más, pero después manda aborrecerlos si son estorbo en su servicio." (Cruz, 25) ["And here it seems that God is only content so long as we do not love our parent more that his Majesty. Well no: further on occurs the obligation, because until now he only commands not to love them more, but later he commands to hate them if they are a hindrance in his service."] It is like an inquisitorial command - spouses, children, parents, have to be ready to betray their relatives to the Holy Office.

Sor Juana implies that God could have had recourse to inquisitorial methods in the story of Isaac. God ordered Abraham to sacrifice Isaac to see if Abraham would obey him.

Bien sabemos que Dios sabía lo que Abraham había de hacer y que le amaba más a él que a Isaac; pues ¿para qué este examen? Ya lo sabe, pero quiere que lo sepamos nosotros, porque es Dios tan celoso, que no sólo quiere ser amado y preferido a todas las cosas, pero quiere que esto conste y lo sepa todo el mundo; y para esto examina a Abraham. (Cruz, 26)
[We well know that God knew what Abraham was going to do and that he loved him more than Isaac; well, why this test? He already knows it, but he wants us to know it, because God is so jealous, that he not only wants to be loved and preferred to all things, but he wants that this be understood and everyone know it; and for this he tests Abraham.]

In other words, God wanted to send a message across the centuries. He wanted to make an example of Abraham and Isaac with two distinct motives. One was to demonstrate that human sacrifice was not acceptable to him. The other, according to Sor Juana, was to teach people that they should love God more than their own children. This performative aspect is very significant, because autos-de-fé were also public. Punishments existed in order to teach everyone how to behave appropriately and to show what would happen to people who fell victim to heterodoxy. Henry Sayre tells us that the "notion of the performance as a sort of 'field situation' emphatically ties the audience into the problematics of the event itself." (Sayre, 99) The auto de fe, as performance, thus interpellates the Spanish Imperial subjects obligated to attend at least as much, if not more so, than the accused. In 1578, Francisco Peña wrote of this function of the Inquisition, "We must remember that the essential aim of the trial and death sentence is not saving the soul of the
defendant but furthering the public good and terrorizing the people." (Bennassar, 178) This is precisely the motive Sor Juana attributes to God in her analysis of the story of Abraham and Isaac. The sacrifice of Isaac was literally an act of faith performed by Abraham, "witnessed" by all who read or heard the Biblical story. González de Caldas tells us that "the intent of the auto de fe was precisely to be what its name indicates, an act of faith, an act of public exaltation of triumphant Catholicism, a collective expression of the social rejection of heresy and of the public subjection to the strictest orthodoxy." (González de Caldas, 267) The act of the Jewish patriarch Abraham is thus transformed in Carta Atenagórica into an object lesson for the social model of Baroque Catholics. As Miguel Avilés explains:

A social model is a mental image that reproduces a given social reality, reflecting the elements of that reality as they are perceived by the mind in terms of a coherent structure...It goes without saying that the society took advantage of every opportunity to teach its members the model and to maintain adherence to it...there was no more spectacular or pedagogically efficacious representation of the social model of Spanish Baroque society than the auto de fe. (Avilés, 249)
In other words, the auto de fe as a social model impressed upon Spanish Imperial subjects the behavior expected of them. Sor Juana locates the sacrifice of Isaac firmly within the social model of Spanish Baroque society with her reconfiguration of it as a textual auto de fe.

What, then, was the problem with Carta atenagórica?

According to Lavrin,

La contrición no creo fuera requerida en la situación de Sor Juana, en cuanto a que no había incurrido en ningún pecado o blasfemia al dar su opinión sobre Vieyra. Pero sí había malinterpretado la naturaleza del amor de Dios. Fernández de Santa Cruz pone a la monja en ‘su lugar,’ como lo haría cualquier confesor reprimiendo a una hija espiritual desviada en su interpretación, (Lavrin, 618)

[I do not believe contrition was required in the situation of Sor Juana, since she had not fallen in any sin or blasphemy on giving her opinion on Vieyra. But she had misinterpreted the nature of the love of God. Fernández de Santa Cruz puts the nun in ‘her place,’ as would any confessor reprimanding a spiritual daughter deviating in her interpretation.]
In other words, Sor Juana had merely misinterpreted the nature of God’s love, and Fernández showed her the error of her ways.

Alfonso Junco says,

Es injustificable fantaseo el imaginarn que la Carta atenagórica atrajo a Sor Juana dificultades eclesiásticas. Consta expresamente lo contrario. Hay un coro de autorizadisimas alabanzas, y sólo una anónima vos discordante. El Obispo de Puebla le pide cabalmente a nuestra monja que siga escribiendo así sobre letras divinas, dejando en plano subalterno las letras humanas. (Junco, 298)

[It is unjustifiable fantasy to imagine that the Carta atenagórica brought Sor Juana ecclesiastical difficulties. The evidence expressly points to the contrary. There is a chorus of very authorized praises, and only one anonymous discordant voice. The Bishop of Puebla exactly asks our nun that she continue writing thus over divine letters, leaving on a subaltern plane human letters.]

Junco feels that far from calling down ecclesiastical censure, Crisis de un sermón was seen in a very positive light, and that Fernández tried to encourage Sor Juana to write more essays such as this, and stop writing secular texts. It seems that we are left with several mysteries. Did Fernández
(intentionally) betray Sor Juana, and if so, why? Was he worried, as Lavrin suggests, with Sor Juana’s concept of divine love, or did he want to give her another lesson? It would seem to me that he had to have some idea of what Sor Juana was going to write. Did he want to protect himself in an uncertain political climate? We should also remember that Vieira and Sor Juana had very different goals. Vieira wanted to unify everyone in Brazil and Portugal, and Sor Juana wanted to humiliate a friend of the Jesuits. For that matter, Marquet suggests that Crisis de un sermón was meant as an attack on Sor Juana’s former Jesuit confessor, Father Núñez, who had a great deal of respect for the Jesuit Vieira. (Marquet, 121) Marquet explains,

La Carta Atenagórica no sólo pretendía ridiculizar al confesor, significaba una puesta en tela de juicio radical de su capacidad para dirigir la conciencia de otro. ¿Cómo pretendería guiar y recomendar lecturas o temáticas diferentes a la Escritura cuando lo que él escribe, lo que él argumenta públicamente y en el púlpito, no se sostiene? ¿Y, siendo sus interpretaciones equivocadas, aún pretende corregir a los Padres de la Iglesia? No sólo está en el error sino que la arrogancia, la megalomanía lo enceguace. Incluso una mujer, una monja a la que él dirigía, puede corregirle la plana. El golpe que Sor Juana asestó
al Padre Núñez con la Carta Atenagórica no sólo fue duro, había un cuestionamiento radical de su trabajo. Y eso era público. (Marquet, 123)

[The Carta Atenagórica not only attempted to ridicule the confessor, it meant a radical calling into question of his capacity to guide the conscience of another. How could he give advice if his interpretations were mistaken? How could he guide and recommend readings or different subjects in the Scriptures when what he writes, what he argues publicly and at the pulpit, is not held up? And, his interpretations being wrong, he even tries to correct Fathers of the Church? He is not only in error but his arrogance, his megalomania blind him. Even a woman, a nun he used to direct, can put him right. The blow that Sor Juana dealt Father Núñez with the Carta Atenagórica was not only hard, there was a radical questioning of his work. And that was public.]

Did Núñez, Sor Juana’s former confessor (whom she had dismissed) and an inquisitorial censor, have anything to do with the storm that followed Crisis de un sermón? Was Sor Juana truly opposed to Vieira’s concept of divine love, or did she merely choose to take the opposing side to his ideas in order to achieve her ends? Were all of the similarities
between Sor Juana’s concept of divine love and the ideology of
the Inquisition deliberate, or was the Inquisition so
omnipresent that it formed part of the religious consciousness
of seventeenth century Mexico? Also, how much of the ideology
of the Inquisition comes from the Catholic faith and how much
of the Catholic faith of the era was influenced by the
organization of the Inquisition, officially a judicial branch
of the Church?

As Jean Franco reminds us:

The center of Sor Juana’s world was indeed held
together by the mythical power of the divine Church
and its kingdom on earth represented in the New
World by the clergy and the viceregal court whose
power Sor Juana did much to legitimize...Help comes
from Antonio Maravall and Richard Morse, both of
whom have pointed out how different a place the
individual occupied in Hispanic Society, where
adaptation to the system took precedence over the
expression of individual principles, if, indeed, it
is possible to speak of individual principles in
this context. (Franco, 49-50)

Perhaps it should not be surprising that Sor Juana would
appropriate an Inquisitorial voice in her only theological
essay. Her locus of enunciation as a New World Baroque
ecclesiastical writer would lead her to the path of the strongest Ideological State Apparatus of her society.

**Sor Juana and the Inquisition**

Ultimately, Sor Juana was unable to avoid the Inquisition, despite her outward appropriation of an Inquisitorial framework, and various rhetorical strategies devised to create a discursive hiding place. Poot Herrera tells us that "El catálogo [de textos marginados novohispanos. Inquisición. Siglo XVII] atestigua que el nombre de Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz - quien no quería ‘ruído con el Santo Oficio’ - sí figura en los archivos de la Santa Inquisición de la capital de la Nueva España." (Poot Herrera, 128) ["The catalogue testifies that the name of Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz - who did not want 'noise with the Holy Office' - did figure in the archives of the Holy Inquisition of the capital of New Spain."] Starting with the trial of Palavicino, a case was methodically drawn up against the scholar-nun of San Jerónimo.

Fearful of the controversy generated by Crisis de un sermón, the convent of San Jerónimo invited the priest Francisco Javier Palavicino Villarrasa to deliver a sermon on "La fineza mayor." After praising both Vieira and Sor Juana, he offered a third alternative, which should have placed the convent on neutral territory, but had an unintended effect:
Cuando el 26 de enero de 1691 Francisco Xavier Palavicino predica en San Jerónimo La fineza mayor, propone que la mayor fineza de Cristo fue sacramentarse ocultándose (f.269r). Y también dice que ‘estar Cristo sin el uso de los sentidos es accidental al misterio y al sacramento.’ (f.268v). Éstas son las palabras que tienen doble marca de inquisidor motivo de censura como lo fue también su referencia a Sor Juana. (Poot Herrera, 135)

[When on January 26, 1691 Francisco Xavier Palavicino preaches in San Jerónimo The greatest gift, he proposes that the greatest kindness/gift of Christ was to become sacrament while hiding himself.’ (f. 269r). And he also says that ‘to be Christ without the use of senses is accidental to the mystery and sacrament.’ (f. 268v). These are the words that have a two-fold sign for the inquisitor a motive for censure as much as for his reference to Sor Juana.]

The sermon, meant to remove the stigma on the convent of San Jerónimo, instead resulted in an inquisitorial trial in which Sor Juana was mentioned by name.

Unfortunately for Palavicino, he was denounced to the Inquisition on the basis of this sermon. Alonso Alberto de
Velasco was scandalized by what he saw as inappropriate praise and respect for a nun:

Al referirse al discurso de Palavicino dice: "no se trae prueba alguna de sanos Padres, ni doctor de la Iglesia, sino sólo de una monja de dicho convento de San Gerónimo, a cuya adulación, aplauso y celebración parece que tira dicho sermón y su dedicatoria" (f. 253r). (Poot Herrera, 128)

[Referring to the discourse of Palavicino he says: "He does not bring any proof from Holy Fathers, nor doctors of the Church, but only of a nun of the said convent of San Gerónimo, to whose adulation, applause and celebration it seems that this sermon and its dedication are directed." (f. 253r).]

By quoting a nun, rather than Church Fathers, Palavicino, according to his detractors, gave too much legitimacy to a woman. The fiscal inquisitor Francisco de Deza y Ulloa agreed, saying that the entire sermon was directed to the praise of nun, which was indecent coming from the pulpit. (f. 259r, cited in Poot Herrera, 128) The fact that Palavicino was willing to praise the theological skill of a nun from the pulpit was scandalous to many of the time period. However, in and of itself, that should not have been enough for an
Inquisitorial trial. The inquisitors saw Palavicino’s denunciation as an opportunity, an opening to accuse Sor Juana. Trabulse explains that the calificadores, in their December 4, 1691 report, condemned Palavicino for having legitimized Sor Juana’s theological arguments,

y esto a pesar de que Palavicino no compartía la tesis de la poeta acerca de cuál era la fineza mayor de Cristo. Pero Velasco y los calificadores tenían otro propósito: señalar que Sor Juana no era teóloga, y que haber incursionado en esos territorios era un desacato y una irreverencia en alguien que no poseía los conocimientos necesarios para abordar esos temas sagradas. (Trabulse 1998, 144)

[and this in spite of the fact that Palavicino did not share the poet’s thesis about which was Christ’s greatest kindness/gift. But Velasco and the calificadores had another objective: to show that Sor Juana was not a theologian, and that to have ventured into those territories was a disrespect and an irreverence in someone who did not possess the necessary knowledge to approach these sacred themes.]
The trial of Palavicino was a warning for Sor Juana that she was, in fact, the object of Inquisitorial attention. The result of this, according to Trabulse, was a secret Inquisitorial trial of Sor Juana:

El 2 de abril de 1693 el provisor eclesiástico del arzobispado, Antonio de Aunzibay y Anaya, inició lo que de hecho fue un proceso episcopal secreto contra Sor Juana acusada de diversas culpas - sospecha de herejía, desacato a la autoridad y actividades incompatibles con su estado monacal - pero cuya finalidad era una sola: reducirla al silencio y que no escribiera ni publicara más, ni escritos teológicos ni poesía mundana. (Trabulse 1998, 146)

[On April 2, 1693 the ecclesiastic provisor of the archbishop, Antonio de Aunzibay y Anaya, began what was a de facto secret episcopal trial against Sor Juana accused of various faults - suspicion of heresy, disrespect of authority and activities incompatible with her monastic state - but whose purpose was just one: to reduce her to silence and that she not write or publish more, neither theological writing nor mundane poetry.]
Sor Juana was condemned for having transgressed the boundaries of a nun. It seems her fears of "noise with the Holy Office" were well founded.

In conclusion, one can see inquisitorial traces in Carta atenagórica. God is jealous and does not permit competition, people are weak and sinful, there are performative aspects in God’s examples, and punishment is a means of saving souls. Also, intentions are more important than acts. Jean Franco tells us, "Sor Juana’s writings show that the Holy Office was a powerful deterrent whose procedures were so well known among the population that they induced a kind of self-censorship." (Franco, 58) The texts examined here, especially Crisis de un sermón, demonstrate not only that Sor Juana thoroughly understood inquisitorial theology, but that she also possessed a clearly articulated fear of that institution. The Inquisition was an important subtext in the works of Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz.
CONCLUSIONS

In this study we have examined the Inquisition as subtext for several theological texts by subaltern writers. The Inquisition interpellated Carvajal and Sor Juana as writing subject, but they were also able to construct a space of resistance in their texts.

A recurring theme in colonial texts was the story of the sacrifice of Isaac, which was put to use to serve diverse ideological ends. The anonymous Franciscan missionary, who had come from an Inquisitorial culture, wished to impress upon the newly colonized subjects of central Mexico the virtue of obedience to the rule of (divine) law. To be worthy of God’s favor, Abraham had to be willing to sacrifice his son, much as the Inquisition expected colonial subjects to turn in their own relatives if suspected of heresy. Lack of mercy towards heretics is further modeled in the play when Agar and Ismael are banished to avoid "contaminating" Isaac.

In the hands of Carvajal, Isaac gains subjectivity and is representative of crypto-Jews. It is he, not Abraham, who is being tested. When crypto-Jews are "sacrificed" by the Inquisition, they, like Carvajal’s Isaac, can expect divine rewards. The myth forms an essential part of Carvajal’s
larger project of resisting Christian hegemony, which he does by reconfiguring discursive field in Memorias, his letters, and Testamento, inverting the value placed by the Inquisition on religious and cultural acts. As Costigan reminds us, Carvajal did not succumb to the "colonization of the imaginary," despite the part he played in colonizing New Spain; instead, he fought to preserve his Jewish heritage and to resist the religious homogenizing project of his society. (Costigan, 304)

For Sor Juana, there was no test involved in the myth of the sacrifice of Isaac, since God already knew that Abraham would do as he was told. Instead, the near-sacrifice was a textual auto-de-fe, meant to educate future generations. Sor Juana sought to carve out a space for herself and her right to study in Crisis de un sermón by appropriating tropes from the dominant ideological institutions of her time in order to legitimate her discursive position. At the same time, this text demonstrates an awareness of the possibility of Inquisitorial intervention, and a need to guard against this.

Both Luis de Carvajal and Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz had to navigate a society in which religion was rigidly defined and hegemony strictly enforced, while constructing a safe space out of the margins of that society for their own religious beliefs. In life, they were both ultimately unable to resist the Inquisition, but in their texts, their voices live on.
NOTES

1. Unless otherwise indicated, all translations are mine.

2. By the mid-sixteenth century, approximately twenty-five per cent of the European population of New Spain were conversos. (Trabuls, E., Los judíos en la Nueva España, in E. Toro, 1982, p. 9-11, cited in Ayllón, 516)

3. Américo Castro, Spanish literary critic who went into exile after the Spanish Civil War. (Cantarino, 354)

4. The New American Desk Encyclopedia defines religion as "a system of belief to which a social group is committed, in which there is a supernatural object of awe, worship and service. It generally provides a system of ethics and a worldview that supply a stable context within which each person can relate himself (sic) to others and to the world, and can understand his own significance." (1053) Using this definition, it is clear to see that crypto-Jews did indeed have a religion.

5. For further explanation, see Michel Foucault’s Surveiller et punir: Naissance de la prison, p. 197 - 229

6. According to Martin Cohen in his book The Martyr: The Story of a Secret Jew and the Mexican Inquisition in the Sixteenth Century, crypto-Jews usually celebrated this by telling their children of their heritage, since it would be dangerous for small children to know the truth. (31-32)

7. Baltasar and Miguel fled to Europe.


9. A more complete review of the literature can be found in Chapter One of this dissertation, "Navigating the World of the Inquisition: Historical Background."

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