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DONNA M. GOODIN

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WRITING AS RECONSTITUTIVE ACT: HEALING AND SELF-EXPRESSION IN EARLY SPANISH WOMEN'S WRITING

By

Donna M. Goodin

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ABSTRACT

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This study focuses on the relation between the experience of trauma and women's writing in the Spanish fifteenth and early sixteenth-centuries, with particular emphasis on three women writers. The first of these is Leonor López de Córdoba, who was born in Calatayud near Aragón (sometime between December 1362 and January 1363) to a noble family in the circle of the court of Pedro I of Castile. I then consider the two essays of Teresa de Cartagena, born to an illustrious literary converso family in Burgos sometime between 1420 and 1435. Lastly, I consider the visionary writings of Madre Juana de la Cruz, born to farmers in 1481 in Azaña, near Toledo. These three writers share a number of common characteristics. Each wrote prose: Leonor wrote an autobiographical memoir, Teresa wrote two essays that combine autobiographical and religious themes and address male/female issues of her time; and Madre Juana was the author of a series of religious sermons and the recipient of mystical visions. Each lived and wrote during the fifteenth and early sixteenth century in Castile, during a time in which the region was still reeling from the social and political upheaval of the previous century. Finally, each experienced some intense form of suffering that would alter the course of her life.

In this study I explore the notion that this suffering, as displayed in the writings of these women, can be read today as the literary representation of trauma. I begin by providing a brief overview of the biographical information available to us. Drawing on psychological and literary scholarship, this study proceeds to analyze these authors' texts as a testament to the dual-nature of trauma, that of having escaped the original, traumatic events, and that of having to rebuild a life amid their aftermath.

To Scott Perlenfein

In Memoriam

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Introduction

In his excellent study *Writing Women In Late Medieval Spain* Ronald Surtz observes the relative dearth of women writers in the Iberian peninsula prior to the writing of the sixteenth-century mystic Teresa de Avila, (ca. 1515-1582) (1995, 4). He points out that Spain, unlike other European nations did not produce a Hildegard of Bingen, a Heloise, or a Marie de France. Alan Deyermond makes a related observation, when he points out that even as recently as the 1970s, little to no attention was given to those women from the Iberian peninsula who did write (1983). However, in the latter decades of the twentieth century the field of early modern women's writing in the Iberian Peninsula has received increasing attention by scholars from disciplines ranging from history to literature to religious studies, Hispanic studies being no exception. Thus, in recent decades contemporary feminist scholarship has been focusing on women writers who have hitherto been given little or no attention in the Spanish literary canon, either because their work was unknown or because it was deemed by the established patriarchal system to be of inherently inferior quality to works produced by their male contemporaries.

In this study I propose to focus on the relation between the experience of trauma and women's writing in the Spanish fifteenth and early sixteenth-centuries, with particular emphasis on three women writers. The earliest of these is Leonor López de Córdoba, who was born in Calatayud near Aragón (sometime between December 1362 and January 1363) to a noble family in the circle of the court of Pedro I of Castile. Second, I will consider the two essays of Teresa de Cartagena, born to an illustrious

literary converso family in Burgos sometime between 1420 and 1435. Lastly, I will consider the later visionary writings of Madre Juana de la Cruz, born to farmers in 1481 in Azaña, near Toledo. These three writers share a number of common characteristics. Each wrote prose: Leonor wrote an autobiographical memoir, Teresa wrote two essays that combine autobiographical and religious themes and address male/female issues of her time; and Madre Juana was the author of a series of religious sermons and the recipient of mystical visions. Each experienced some intense form of suffering that would radically alter the course of her life, and, as I hope to demonstrate in this study, influence her decision to engage in literary production.

Additionally, each of these women, unlike many of her sisters, wrote of her own volition, rather than at the mandate of a confessor. Ronald Surtz recognizes the control imposed on many women's writing by male confessors who first ordered them to write, and then edited the finished product until it conformed either with church doctrine, or in some cases with the confessor's agenda. In the introduction to his book *The Guitar of God: Gender, Power and Authority in the Visionary World of Mother Juana de la Cruz* he writes: "needless to say, writing was for these religious women seldom either a vocation or even an avocation. About a third of the nuns wrote because they were ordered to by their confessors so that the Inquisition could determine the orthodoxy of their religious experiences" (1995, 1). Hence, a nun writing at the behest of her confessor would be required to adopt the structure and viewpoint of male ecclesiastical authorities, who would have their own intended purpose for the woman's writing, and would be trying to promote those ends while insuring that the text could withstand the orthodoxy imposed by the Inquisition.

Richard Kagan and Alison Weber provide us with two examples of this directed writing. In her essay, "The Three Lives of the *Vida*: The Three Uses of Convent Autobiography", Alison Weber amplifies our understanding of this type of writing with her detailed description of the various treatments meted out to the *Vida* of Teresa De Jesús, by her confessors, by the Inquisition, and ultimately by Fray Luis de León. As Weber points out, spiritual autobiographies are frequently characterized as *Vidas por mandato*, or lives written by mandate. She then demonstrates how early versions of Teresa's Vida were ordered by her confessors, so that her visions and mystical experiences could be scrutinized to protect her from accusations of *Alumbradismo* by the Inquisition. Weber describes how much of Teresa's writing is actually the product of dialogue between Teresa, and three different confessors, each with different motivations: Teresa wanting to share her ideas about spiritual reform, and her spiritual directors strategizing to present Teresa's writing in such a way that it would not attract the attention of the Inquisition. Subsequent to this period, there followed a struggle between those who would keep Teresa's manuscript from circulation, and those who were determined to obtain copies, either for personal or convent use. It appears that Teresa may have been exasperated by the radical manipulation her text underwent at the hands of others. Translating the testimony of one of Teresa's prioresses, Ana de Jesús Lobera, Weber writes: "When copies came to her hands, she would say: 'May the Lord forgive my confessors who give out what they order me to write, and those who copy them and change words, because this isn't my wording and this isn't mine,' and then she would erase their words and correct in her own handwriting between the lines what had been changed" (Weber, 114).

Nor did Teresa's death end the process of textual mutation. In his turn, Fray Luis would attempt to restore the text to Teresa's original words and meaning. However, as Webber explains, Fray Luis de León altered the language of the *Vida*, correcting Teresa's coloquial language and spelling, as he deemed such colloquialism to be inappropriate to the elevated subject matter. Thus, we have many different recreations of the Vida, each undertaken to suit a different author/copyist's agenda. One can speculate that of all the voices heard in this document, Teresa's may be among the faintest.

A second example of this type of writing can be found in the dream registers of the young *madrileña* Lucrecia de León (ca. 1568). At the injunction of her confessors, she dictated a series of prophetic dreams of a highly political nature, decrying the decadent state of Spain under Felipe II's rule, and predicting the monarch's death. One of the ambiguities of Lucrecia's case is the extent to which she was merely the pawn of her confessors, as she claims in her trial of 1590, or whether she was using her dreams to gain self-recognition and to achieve her own political ends (Kagan 1995). Lucrecia's case differs from other female writers mentioned here in significant ways. First, as she is not a nun, she would not have been ordered to write as part of her spiritual practice. There are also questions about how the process of recording her dreams was initiated. One explanation posits that Lucrecia and her mother called her visions to the attention of the clergy. We know that Lucrecia was not literate, and therefore would have dictated her dreams to her confessor, who in turn recorded them. As Kagan writes, both Lucrecia and her confessors would have had their reasons for advancing Lucrecia's case as a visionary. For Lucrecia, such fame would mean a "career" and, as such, an escape from her family's poverty. For her confessors, and possibly for her as well, her dreams appear to provide an

opportunity to take a political stand against Spain's decay under Felipe II by invoking God's condemnation of the monarch's reign. Although the extent to which Lucrecia is the author of her dream registers may never be ascertained, Kagan demonstrates clearly that she was encouraged to write by her spiritual directors, and that they, owing to either spiritual or political motives, or both, guided the writing of her text, and the promotion of Lucrecia as visionary.

Though both Teresa of Avila and Lucrecia de León wrote much later than the authors studied here, the conditions of writing "por mandato" and the issues of textual manipulation are equally relevant for them, and make the deliberate choice of authorship by these women all the more remarkable. For some reason, each chose to commit her message to paper, and also desired that it would reach a reading audience. In choosing to write as a deliberate, voluntary act, they maintained creative control and were thus able to make the text conform to their own purpose, a phenomenon highly unusual in a period during which female literacy was virtually nonexistent, and where it did exist, was limited to women of the upper classes. As Beth Miller describes the situation of women in the seventeenth century, "Knowing that as a group women in the seventeenth century fell below unskilled male laborers in their rate of literacy, we marvel at those extraordinary women writers and scholars of whose achievements we have any notice" (4). The level of literacy of the three earlier women writers varied widely, and there are issues, which I will discuss later, concerning differing degrees of authorship. Moreover, it should not be overlooked that they were still writing from the disadvantaged position of the minority voice within the dominant culture. Nonetheless, I believe that their deliberate choice to commit their works to written form, however that task was

accomplished, also clearly establishes them as the primary agents of their literary production. Writing was considered to be of little use outside the demands of the home, and the notion that a woman would take it upon herself to produce her own literary text was thus well outside of conventional norms and expectations. We need ask, therefore, in a society where women's writing was not the norm, what it was that motivated these women to dare take up the pen and attempt to enter the male world of public discourse?

As I have indicated previously, I believe that a very likely answer to this question is to be found in these women's personal histories, and the expression of that history and related themes in the texts they authored. In point of fact, it is worth noting that the circumstances of these writers are not unique to them. For example, it is well-known that the French writer Christine de Pisan (1364-1430), born to an upper-class family and, like Leonor, affiliated with court circles, began to write professionally only upon her husband's death, when she found herself confronted for the first time with the need to support herself, her children, and her mother. Though her husband's death would hardly be considered a trauma, it certainly was for Christine a life-altering event. Thus, Though for reasons of space and time I must limit the scope of this study to the Iberian Peninsula, I believe that it may have implications for other women writers as well. Before proceeding to a discussion of the organization of this study, it will be useful to offer some general considerations regarding the historical and social contexts of women's writing.

The rigid rules of conduct that governed the lives of early modern women have been well-documented by Constance Jordan and Ruth Kelso among other scholars. As Ruth Kelso demonstrates in her book *Doctrine For The Lady of the Renaissance,* these rules of comportment promoted values which restricted women's freedom of expression.

Kelso cites five traits or virtues most valued in women: chastity, humility, temperance, modesty, constancy, the latter four serving to undergird chastity, which was of greatest importance (25). In so doing, they minimized women's role as subject, and emphasized women's relational role to husband and father, as daughter and later as wife. Kelso demonstrates consistently the subjugation of women to the males who had responsibility for them, and also the ferocious cultivation of those traits which perpetuated their submission to male authority and ownership.

We do know, however, that due to the historical and political circumstances of the peninsula during the late Middle Ages, women's role was somewhat less restricted than it was for her European neighbors. Heath Dillard presents a thorough exploration of this difference, which she attributes to the unique demands placed on Spanish society by the reconquest of Moorish territories.[1] These territories represented an unsettled frontier, a situation which distinguished Spain from her already settled European neighbors, and brought it unique challenges which resulted in an expanded role for women. According to Dillard, foremost among these challenges was the essential need to repopulate the newly Christianized lands. It was therefore paramount that women be encouraged to settle in the new territories, to raise families, build towns, and establish infrastructure. And, as her husband would frequently be required to be absent from the home, she could not be afforded the luxuries of the staid domesticity expected of women in the already settled areas of the region, and so had to assume many traditionally masculine roles. When her husband was called upon to go to the war front, it would fall to the woman to assume the management of his domestic and business affairs. In such a situation, it would be

[1] Dillard, Heath. Daughters of the Reconquest. Women in Castilian Town Society, 1100—1300. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1984.

impossible for her to limit her activities to the interior spaces of the home. This situation resulted in a gradual expansion of women's rights in the new territories. She could manage and even own property, work outside the home in a trade or as an artisan, and sell her wares in the market-place (Dillard, 12).

A second issue, that of education and literacy, is closely linked to social conduct. Among critics of female education, the prevailing view is best summed up by the 15th-century Castilian poet Carvajal in his famous lines:

> Amad, amadores, muger que non sabe, a quien toda cosa paresca ser nueva; que quanto más sabe muger, menos vale segund, por exiemplo lo hemos de Eva, que luego comiendo del fructo de la vida, rompiendo el velo de rica inocencia, supo su mal e su gloria perdida. Guardaos de muger que ha plática e sciencia.2

The poet calls all lovers to avoid the learned woman in favor of she who knows nothing, she to whom all things seem new. The learned woman, he tells us, is of lesser value. The implied message here is that a learned woman will be less awed by whatever a man places before her, and thus a man who weds a learned woman will be faced with the challenges of a situation where he is less in control. Offering Eve as an example, he tells how the woman who seeks knowledge, or tastes of the fruit of life, rends the veil of innocence, leaving only her weakness and her lost glory.

Those women who did receive any formal education were only educated according to the level and knowledge that male society deemed necessary or appropriate to her social status. This generally resulted in a curriculum focused almost exclusively on the reading of prayer books and religious texts, and that which would be useful in household management. Education, like many other aspects of a woman's life, was

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[2] Carvajal, *Poesia,* ed. Emma Scoles (Roma: Ateneo, 1967) 128-129.

intended either to be ornamental in the case of upper class women, or to support the patriarchal social structure by teaching women only as much as was necessary so that she could provide aid to her husband by managing the domestic affairs of his household. Thus she might be expected to read well enough to keep records or lists, to record household expenditures, and, if she were upper-class to follow along in a prayer book.

Despite Carvajal's stern remonstrance and the paucity of women writers, there did exist opportunities for female learning. Rocío Quispe-Agnoli adds an important distinction to the discussion of women's education in her article "Teaching, Learning, Reading, Writing: Educational Tools From Women for Women in Fifteenth Century Spain." Here she writes of the difference between formal education, direct transmission of knowledge as through a tutor to a pupil, and informal or infused knowledge which occurs in more private spaces such as the home or the convent. According to Quispe-Agnoli, this second type of knowledge has several means of infusion: mystical revelations, spiritual reflection based on a religious text—which of course presupposes a certain level of literacy—as well as through hearing of sermons, and familiarity with iconography (46). Particularly in convent life the shared group experience of reading texts aloud would have been a central part of daily routines. Ronald Surtz has argued that nuns would have had extensive familiarity with these texts, and that this familiarity could have resulted in activities such as the rewriting of biblical episodes (Surtz, 16).

As we shall see, the women under consideration here were believed to have possessed varying levels of literacy. Teresa de Cartagena is believed to have received a high level of education. She claims, though it has never been verified, to have studied at Salamanca, and she would certainly have had access to her family's extensive library,

regardless of the amount of formal training she received. There are differing views on Leonor's level of literacy. As I shall explain in more detail in Chapter 2, Alan Deyermond and Louise Mirrer have espoused contradictory theories regarding this issue, Deyermond believes her to have been illiterate, which would have made it necessary for her to dictate her text to a scribe or other third party. Mirrer, on the other hand, hypothesizes that she may have in fact learned to read and write during her stay in a convent, thus raising the possibility that she was responsible not merely for dictating, but also for the actual writing of the *Memorias*. As previously stated, Madre Juana de la Cruz is known to have been illiterate, her sermons and visions having been copied by a fellow nun who acted as scribe. Thus, in order to clarify the relationship between these women and their texts, it will be necessary to arrive at a working definition of what constitutes literacy. Roger Wright offers some interesting observations here. Wright echoes Surtz's view that due to the extensive oral transmission of texts, particularly the Bible and the lives of Saints, many who could not actually read the printed word would have a much greater familiarity with written texts than would an illiterate individual of the twenty-first century. Based on this assessment, he suggests a redefinition of the term literate within its early modern context, that would include aural/oral familiarity with literature (Wright, 174-175).

Similarly, A. J. Minnis explores writing as a hierarchical series of practices, beginning at the lowest level with the act of simple copying, and ending with writing with divine authority, or *auctoritas*. As he explains, according to the medieval conceptualization of authorship, there are varying levels of literary authority, dependent

upon the level of involvement with the text's creation and the closeness of the author to Divine understanding or enlightenment. He explains this structure as follows:

> The method of making a book is fourfold. For someone writes the materials of others, adding or changing nothing, and this person is said to be merely the scribe. Someone else writes the materials of others, adding, but nothing of his own, and this person is said to be the compiler. Someone else writes both the materials of other men, and of his own, but the materials of others as the principal materials, and his own annexed for the purpose of clarifying them, and this person is said to be the commentator, not the author. Someone else writes both his own materials and those of others, but his own as the principal materials, and the materials of others annexed for the purpose of confirming his own, and such must be called the author.
>
> *The auctor* contributes most, *the scriptor* contributes nothing, of his own. The scribe is subject to materials composed by other men which he should copy as carefully as possible, *nihil mutando.* The *compilator* adds together or arranges the statements of other men, adding no opinion of his own *(addenda, sed non de suo).* The *commentator* strives to explain the views of others, adding something of his own by way of explanation. Finally and most importantly, *the auctor* writes *de suo,* but draws on the statements of other men to support his own views (Minnis, 94-95).

As we will see, in the writings of Leonor, Teresa, and Juana, multiple levels of writing are present, and the lines between them often seem tenuous. In each case, however, there is a complicating circumstance. In the *Memorias,* it is as yet unknown

whether Leonor is writing or dictating, and consequently whether her text has been altered by the work of a scribe to whom she orally dictated her memoirs. Minnis's theory is of particular importance to the writings of Teresa and Juana, whose texts lay claim to spiritual authority. Both women claim authorship, based on empowerment by or communication with the Divine, thus elevating their authorial status to the highest level, that of *auctor*. Teresa claims to be specially empowered by God to write, drawing on biblical examples such as that of Judith to substantiate her claim. Juana claims to be the vessel of God's visions, each of which she follows with an interpretation that has been given to her directly from God. These ingenious textual maneuverings would lend their works the highest level of *auctoritas*, thus allowing them to assume a higher level of authority than many, if not most, of their male contemporaries. This presents an obviously problematic dynamic which gives rise to questions regarding the intent with which the women make their claims, and to the authenticity of their texts.

When Teresa penned the *Arboleda*, the predominant criticism was that a woman could not have been its author. It is from this criticism that the *Admiración* took its name and to which Teresa responds in that essay. The situation becomes further complicated in Juana's writing, because, while Teresa merely claims to have been empowered by God, Juana claims to be directly relaying his words. Nonetheless, there still exists the problem of filters: the intervention of the nun/scribe to whom she dictated her sermons while in trance, as well as possible intervention on the part of her confessor. So, while God may have endowed Juana with His visions, it was another who set those visions to paper, and therefore would also have exercised some control over their written contents and style.

Let us now proceed to a discussion of the chapters to follow. This study will be divided into five chapters. In Chapter 1, I will present some basic concepts relating to trauma in its modern sense, and considerations that are essential to the application of trauma in an Early Modern context. These include it's semantic origins, an overview of a period understanding of human personality makeup and imbalances, contemporary definition and understanding of trauma, it's symptoms, and how these can be related to literary texts, particularly literature that was produced so long before the work of Freud and the inception of trauma as an area of study.

The three subsequent chapters will be dedicated to exploring themes related to the experience of trauma in the three authors selected for this study. In Chapter 2, I will consider the issue of writing as self-justification, as exemplified in the one extant text of Leonor López de Córdoba, her *Memorias*, estimated to have been written around the year 1412, shortly before her death. In this work, Leonor presents a fragmented narration of events of her early life. As shall be seen, the first part of the text tells of her stay in the Atarazanas prison, the torture she and her relatives experienced there and the deaths of many of her family members, her subsequent release from prison and her husband's disappearance shortly thereafter. The remainder of the text addresses leeonor's attempts to reestablish herself and reclaim her titles and property, in essence, her struggle to rebuild her life. This text presents at least three critical problems: (1) the nature and circumstances of its composition, (2) the content Leonor chose to present in her text, and (3) the possibility of Leonor's re-establishment in her social context.

In addition to the issues of authorship which I have already touched upon, the text raises a number of seminal questions regarding the content of the composition. Why, for

instance, does Leonor choose to write, and why does she limit her narrative to this short fragment of her life story? The narrative ends seemingly *in media res*, when Leonor is forced to leave her aunt's family in Aguilar for Córdoba after bringing the plague to the place where she and her family are staying. The choice, if it was a choice, to end the narrative here, leaves out what was perhaps the most interesting and successful period of Leonor's life, that of her time serving as advisor to Queen Catherine of Lancaster. It is generally believed that the Memorias were written after Leonor's banishment from court, so the absence of these events from the text is noteworthy. I will therefore examine the autobiographical elements of the text, that is, the extent to which it adheres to and differs from the autobiographical genre and other women's autobiographical writing.

Like Leonor, Teresa de Cartagena also strives to redefine herself in relation to her environment, but for her the question proceeds beyond that of mere self-justification to an attempt at internal reconciliation. Chapter 3, then, will be dedicated to a treatment of the two works of Teresa de Cartagena, *Arboleda de los Enfermos* (ca. 1450) and *Admiração Operum Dei* composed some years after the *Arboleda*. Central to this discussion will be several previous analyses of Teresa's writing, in the works of Ronald Surtz, Dayle Seidenspinner Nuñez, and Clara Castro-Ponce. The first of these treatises is Teresa's attempt to write about her experience of deafness, and the changes that her disability imposed upon her. The second, written in response to male critics of the Arboleda, is Spain's first known defense of one woman's ability to write and of her right to enter the public, masculine space of the written word.

The stated, though not altogether convincing purpose of the *Arboleda* is to share her gratitude that God chose to remove her from the "chatter of the world" and force her

to listen to his word. However, her text is not convincing. While on the one hand she praises God for his gift of silence, on the other, she bitterly laments having been forced to enter into what Dayle Seidenspinner has translated as the "exile and shadowy banishment" of a silent, life behind cloister walls (23). Thus, though Teresa's stated objective is to show how the curse of deafness was actually a blessing from God, I propose that her own words betray her, revealing a woman who is still grieving over all that she has lost: participation in a socially prestigious family, social and physical freedom of movement, a probable good marriage, and the chance to be a part, even from the disadvantaged place of the feminine, of events at the center of Spain's political, intellectual and religious life. I will therefore explore how Teresa's own use of language undermines her stated purpose, belying her on-going preoccupation with and grief at her changed fortune.

Though the thematic focus of the *Admiración Operum Dei* turns from the issue of suffering to take up that of Teresa's fitness as a writer, I believe it is here that Teresa actually manages to achieve what she hoped to accomplish in the *Arboleda*. When confronted with the scorn and disbelief of the male literate world that she, a woman, could have been the author of the *Arboleda*, Teresa responds with a subtly sharp, well-crafted defense of her writing and she rebukes those who would discredit her. Her deafness may have limited her ability for verbal exchange, but here she has reclaimed her voice. While in the first treatise her language refuses to support her intended message, here she is able to manipulate language and argumental strategies to achieve a glowing victory not only over her external attackers, but also over her own inner shadow, that part that would keep her silenced and isolated. She herself, in the *Arboleda de los*

enfermos credits God, through her deafness with having forced her to listen. She also states that one reason for penning the *Arboleda* was to combat idleness. It stands to reason, being from the literary family that she was, that it would be essential for Teresa to find a way in which to express the turbulent emotions she experienced as she adjusted to her newly imposed encloisterment, and the unanticipated and unsought confinement of the convent. I suggest here that not only does her deafness force her to listen/read, it also becomes her only mechanism for self-expression, thereby also being the impetus behind adopting the role of author.

As with Teresa de Cartagena, Madre Juana also finds the pen to be a tool for reintegration. However, unlike Leonor and Teresa the pen brings Juana an elevation in status within the public arena. Chapter 4 will be devoted to the sermons of Madre Juana de la Cruz.3 As I have previously stated, Surtz speculates about the possibility that she may have experienced childhood sexual abuse, he also tells us that in order to enter the convent against her uncle's wishes she left home dressed in men's clothing, and how, once Abbess at the convent of Santa María de la Cruz, the role she occupies seems to be a blur of the feminine and the masculine. Due to a benefice granted by Cardinal Cisneros, she not only fulfilled the traditional duties of convent Abbess, but also exercised spiritual jurisdiction over a nearby parish. When the annexation of the parish became a threat, Juana engaged in quintessentially male activity when she took it upon herself to attempt to secure a papal bull in order to ensure this benefice and thus the financial well-being of the convent.

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[3] As there is currently no edition available of the complete sermons, I will rely on Ronald Surtz's two excellent studies of her writing, found in *Writing Women in Late Medieval Spain* (1995), and *The Guitar of God. Gender, Power, and Authority in the Visionary World of Mother Juana de la Cruz* (1990).

In Juana's visions, we find an unlikely amalgam of blurred gender imagery, erotic content, suffering, and struggle for power. I will consider two of her visions that I believe best exemplify these features: "The Creation Sermon" and the "Vision of the Nativity." The first of these is a sermon narrating the creation story in a rendering quite different from the Genesis telling. Unlike the biblical account, Juana's recounting is permeated with sexual tension. Rather than being the virtuous keeper of God's command, Adam is cast as a jilted lover and sexual predator as he chases Eve through the garden in pursuit of sexual favors. By inverting the established order of events, Juana raises several possible new interpretations. Adam becomes seductor rather than Eve, and the fall occurs when Eve refuses to yield to him, rather than as a precipitant to sexual activity.

This same sexually charged atmosphere is also found in the "Vision of the Nativity." In this vision God the Father takes the Virgin Mary into Heaven, where he turns her into a naked little girl, and bids her to dance before him. He then proceeds to engage in what Surtz has termed "Divine foreplay" asking her to give him her breasts so that he can fondle them. Mary does not give in, pleading modesty, and asking favors in return from God. She finally consents, but only on condition that he go with her to a garden where she can give him her breasts in secret, as it would not be fit for her to do so in public, a direct allusion to the forbidden nature of the act (1995, 108-120).

It is here that Surtz directly addresses the possibility of the connection between Juana's visions and earlier sexual abuse when he writes: "Certainly, the episode in which the Father tries to touch Mary's breasts suggests a displaced instance (or several instances) of sexual abuse from Juana's childhood. It is not uncommon for such incidents to be repressed and then revealed much later in the form of dreams or other symbolic

representations. Was the abuser her uncle? Was it her father? Is that the explanation for Juana's removal from the parental home?" (125). These "displaced instances" where trauma is repressed and later revealed, are a hallmark of the condition that we today call Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder. One might well ask, why this would be of any consequence at all in a literary study. If we accept Surtz's speculations for our purposes here as a temporary working theory, then it becomes possible to interpret Madre Juana's visions in a radically different light, that of flash-back, or recurring traumatic experience, rather than mystic experience. This interpretation has dramatic ramifications for our understanding of the production of the *Libro del Conorte*. Established interpretations typically portray Juana either as a mystic, or as a woman in control of a text which she is creating to enhance her own ecclesiastical status. If, however, her text is the result of recurring dreams or flash-backs, Madre Juana would have had little control over the creation and structure of her sermons.

I believe that by exploring the content and imagery employed in her visions and what is known about her life, we will find that this seeming condition, which in modern terms would be regarded as negative, actually empowered Juana. Instead of having to wrestle with the modern label of "disorder" she became a visionary, and her visions, whatever their source, allowed her to accumulate power, status, and authority. I theorize that this in turn enabled her to move back and forth between established gender roles, occupying a space in between where rules and norms could be bent and blurred to suit Juana's purposes. This seems to have brought her many advantages. It got her into the convent, and probably strengthened her powers as abbess. I propose that it also empowered her to engage in literary production. Surtz discusses how she controls the

"reading" of her visions by including in each an interpretation she claims was given directly by God. As we have seen in the theory of A. J. Minnis, the incorporation of this feature in her visions elevates Juana to the highest level of Auctoritas. It is also an attempt to preclude the possibility of anyone challenging or discrediting the content or the message of her visions. This act of establishing herself as being the vessel of auctoritas, and taking control not only of the writing of her text but also of it's reading, is a quintessentially masculine activity which further reflects the fluidity with which Juana seems to move between established gender roles. I propose, therefore, to explore the ways in which the language of Juana's visions/texts reflect, albeit subconsciously, themes related to trauma. I will also consider how Juana controls the reception of her visions which consequently increases her own authority as prioress and as public persona.

In the final section, Conclusions, I will provide a summary of this study and its findings and offer some thoughts about what they may contribute to the area of early modern women's writing. If this study is successful in connecting the experience of trauma with the act of literary production, a number of questions arise. These include consideration of the role of trauma in other literary texts, exploring the issue across geographic borders, as well as across gender.During the final section I will discuss these areas of further study, and also present areas of future investigation in the work of the authors presented here.

Let us now proceed to our discussion of the authors under consideration here, as we begin with an overview of historical and modern conceptualizations of trauma.

Chapter 1

Rewriting the Self: Trauma and Literary Expression

The central question of this study is why, when so many of their sisters did not, did these three women choose to take up the pen and enter the public domain of the written word. There are many questions that follow from this first one, but it is here that this analysis must begin. As I have discussed in the introduction, each of the authors featured here experienced a painful, life-altering event or series of events, that today we would accept as cause for psychological trauma. Leonor López de Córdoba experienced torture, imprisonment, and the death of many family members, Teresa experienced late-onset deafness, and for purposes of this study, I will employ the working theory that Madre Juana de la Cruz experienced childhood sexual abuse. It is my contention that this suffering directly contributed to these women's decision to write, and that their texts, though different from one another in style and genre, can be read as the literary expression of a traumatic past.

In order to explore the causal and effectual relationship of trauma to these authors and their texts, I will employ both early modern and contemporary scholarship. I will begin my consideration by reviewing first the early modern view of trauma and the human physiognomy, and then briefly summarize what contemporary scholarship tells us about the effects of trauma on the individual, particularly in regard to the victim's internal processing of the traumatic event, and what symptoms, or other external expressions of trauma accompany the victim's internal struggle. Following from this discussion I will consider possible functions of writing for these authors, such as the

cathartic, the testimonial, the self-consolatory, and that of tool for increased ecclesiastical authority and personal power.

1.1 Historical Context

Since the field of trauma as we understand it today—that is, as a defined psychological syndrome with a specific array of causes, symptoms, and treatments--did not have its inception until the nineteenth century and the clinical studies of Sigmund Freud and Pierre Janet, it is essential to distinguish between contemporary definitions of that term, and the fifteenth-century understanding of the phenomenon of mental disturbance. The early modern model, rather than being psychologically based, was regarded as a physiological problem. There was nonetheless a prevailing view that mental imbalance did exist, not necessarily in conjunction with a specific external event, but rather as the result of imbalances of fluids within the body itself. Thus, as it was not distinguished in any way from physical ailments, issues of mental imbalance could also be treated by addressing disequilibrium in the physical body.

During the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, understanding of mental and physical health was governed by Galenic, Hippocratic, and Aristotelian models. As this subject has been explored by a myriad of scholars, MacLean (1982), Gottfried (1983), García-Ballester (1972 and 1992), and Garza (2001) among many others, I will limit my discussion to a brief review. Physical and emotional well-being was dependent on the individual's maintenance of a balance of four primary substances known as humors, which were considered to comprise the basic components inherent in the makeup of the cosmos. As Randal Garza points out, according to these theories, the body was regarded

as a kind of microcosm of the external world, in that the body was thought to contain the same elements that comprise the macrocosm of the universe.

Each humor was associated with a specific organ, and a corresponding element, whose attributes and characteristics were said to reside in that humor. Thus, the humor blood, came from the heart, corresponded to the element air, and was considered to be hot and moist. Phlegm, which came from the heart, corresponded to water, and was therefore considered cold and moist. The two dry humors, yellow and black bile, were hot and cold respectively, yellow bile being associated with the liver and the element of fire, and black bile coming from the spleen, was associated with that of earth (Garza, 61. Optimal mental and physical health, a state known as Eukrasia, was attained by maintaining the correct balance of all four, as an excess of any one humor was believed to result in physical illness and/or emotional imbalance. Diagnosis and treatment of either emotional or physical conditions for both men and women was therefore focused on identifying the humor or humors which were either too abundant or too scarce, and then either increasing or decreasing the level of the humor in question, so as to restore the desired humoral balance.

There are of course a number of salient problems that are immediately apparent in the implementation of this treatment modality. First, the ability to maintain humoral balance was primarily regulated by diet. The ability to exert such control over what type of food one ate, was a privilege enjoyed only by the upper classes. Thus, the poor or lower classes, and in all likelihood, those imprisoned, would have had no recourse to treatment. This limitation would have impacted both Leonor during her incarceration, and Juana, who came from a farming family.

Another interesting dimension to this medical model is Garza tells us, physicians were not surprisingly always men, and were typically members of the clergy. This ecclesiastical connection provided a context for healing that had little to do with the clinical studies and "hard" science that it is associated with today, placing it instead in a context of religion, magic and the supernatural. I will return to this point later in this chapter, but for now, suffice it to say that this view of healing as being spiritual or magical is germane for each of the writers under consideration in this study.

In addition to the limitation of class mentioned earlier, as scholars such as Ian MacLean (1980), Bethany Aram (2003), and Constance Jordan (1990) have demonstrated, this understanding of human physiology was also predisposed toward a negative view of women as being innately emotionally unstable. Their natural condition was believed to be one of imbalance, as they were regarded as having an excess of cold and moist humors. It was this identification with the cold and moist humors that was said to account for women's inherent inferiority, her frailty, her tendency toward emotionality, and her propensity for lascivious behavior. Ian MacLean, in an explication of a seventeenth-century treatise, provides an excellent comparative analysis of the virtues of hot versus cold humors. Drawing on current models of embryology, he explains that the male is born from a more perfect strain of semen, a strain which is hotter, thus producing a male, rather than a female child. He further explains the attributes with which the male is imbued, as a consequence of this additional heat: "The male grows faster ***in utero,*** is of darker and harder flesh, more hirsute, more able to sustain extremes of temperature, has larger arteries and veins, a deeper voice, is less prone to disease, more robust, broader, comes to full maturity more slowly and ages less quickly than the colder female. He may

be ambidextrous whereas she rarely is, and has mental characteristics which may also be attributed to body heat : courage, liberality, moral strength, honesty. The female on the other hand, being colder, is characterized by the deprivation or opposite of these features (32).

It would seem logical to conclude from this that the presence of additional hot and/or dry humors in the female would be regarded positively, as it would endow her with more of the qualities so prized in men, and which she is faulted for not possessing. Would one not, after all, hope that one's wife or daughter would be more robust, and less prone to disease? Would one not look for a wife or value a daughter who is honest, courageous, and possessing of moral strength? Certainly given that one of a female's most important features would have been her beauty, it would seem logical that a wife who would age—and thus lose that beauty—more slowly, would be highly desirable. Were this the case, it would follow that some female flaws might be addressed by treatment designed to increase the presence of hot and dry humors in the body. But Bethany Aram, in her article "Representing madness: Text, Gender and Authority in Early Habsburg Spain" indicates that the contrary is in fact the case. As she aptly demonstrates, woman is caught in a medical double-bind. She is considered flawed for her preponderance of the mysterious, cold, moist humors and their corresponding traits. However, should her behavior indicate an elevated presence of dry humors, prescribed medical treatment would aim to restore her to the expected state of imperfection. Aram provides an excellent example of this in the case of Queen Juana of Castille's lady-in-waiting, doña Isabel de Albornoz (d. 1531): "However clear in theory, in practice humoral medicine embodied certain contradictions, especially with respect to women.

Although women were supposed to be colder than men, when Isabel de Albornoz began experiencing attacks of "frenzy" (frenesí), including spasms and numbness, humoral principles suggested the need to extract and counteract the surges of hot humors overpowering her brain. A cleric of the village of Contrasta, Ruy López, recommended shaving Isabel's head and draining blood from her "frenetic" five or six times. ... Such blood-letting, a standard treatment for fury, would at least weaken the patient and enable others to dominate her (79). More over, not only does Aram present inconsistencies in treatment applications, she also shows how the humors themselves produce differing results in men and women. Not only are the same traits not valued across genders, but while a particular humor might elicit a positive response in a male, it may produce negative effects in women: "Of all of the humors, sixteenth-century medical theorist Juan Huarte de San Juan labeled melancholy black bile the coldest and driest. Although dryness could make the understanding sharper and more perceptive, Ruarte found coldness, especially predominant in women, "useless for all of the works of the rational soul." Thus melancholy humors, which the Renaissance linked to Saturn, could produce artistic genius in the case of certain men, or dejection and despair among certain women" (79-80).

To summarize, women's natural state, even given a proper harmony of the humors, was regarded as being lacking, incomplete or inferior. In addition, the medical system which purported to understand and be able to treat her medical needs was biased against her, first in that it emphasized treatment approaches that denied her the more highly valued, hardier, robust character traits, and second in that the interpretations of humoral levels were inconsistently applied so as to enforce the presence of qualities

deemed less desirable, moral and physical weakness, as well as despair, and moodiness. The "positive" masculine humors and their corresponding characteristics were not accorded the same esteem in a woman. Moreover, even if she were able to bring about an increase in dry or hot humors, these humors would likely result in a less desirable behavioral change. She had no hope of receiving the benefits that certain humors instilled in her brothers, but neither was it desirable for her to aspire to the more perfect state enjoyed by her male contemporaries. As Aram suggests, one can't help but wonder as to the role that the need for female domination played in early modern medical practices. Be that as it may, it is clear that such treatment focused on the modification of behavior to produce more socially acceptable results, than on considering the circumstances that may have conspired to produce the behavior in the first place.

Needless to say, the actual word "trauma" never entered into these discussions of humoral imbalance. Nonetheless, it appears that there were tools of language that did address the concept of enduring injury, and encompassed not only physical wounding but emotional damage as well. There is evidence that in Spanish, the physical and social/psychological concept of an enduring injury, did in fact exist during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. The *Diccionario de la Lengua Española* of the Real Academia Española, which offers the word *herida* as a synonym, presents the following two definitions: 1. "Lesión duradera producida por un agente mecánico, generalmente externo" and 2. "Choque emocional que produce un daño duradero en el inconsciente."[4] It would appear that the word *trauma* had not yet made its way into use in Spanish by the fifteenth-century, as it does not appear in sources such as Covarrubias, or Corominas. I

[4] All citations from the *Diccionario de la Lengua Española* are taken from the online dictionary at the the Real Academica's website: http://buscon.rae.es/diccionario/drae.htm

was unable to determine the exact moment at which the word *trauma* did come into use, but one could logically conclude that it would have been sometime during the nineteenth century. Drawing then, on the synonym *herida* or wound, we find the following: in Corominas, "*golpear*" or "dar con algo" (905; in Covarrubias, we find a more ample definition, "herir. Vale golpear, maltratando; Herir de agudo o de punta, dar estocada, golpe propio de español, que de ordinario suele ser mortal, porque siempre encara al rostro o pecho. Herir de agudo, por alusión, ... tocando en la honra" (482). Thus, there is sufficient evidence to suggest that both Covarrubias and the Diccionario de Autoridades define the word wound/*herir*/*herida* as an injury whose nature and effects encompass both the physical and psychological/social, and that the *Diccionario de la Lengua Española* offers it as a synonym for the word *trauma*. Therefore, I believe it can reasonably be concluded that, while the modern term "*trauma*" would have been unknown in the fifteenth century, the concept of an enduring wound/*herida*, that expanded beyond the physical into the emotional realm was not, and thus a consideration of trauma/wound and it's impact on literary production during the fifteenth century is not without merit. It is within that context that I offer this analysis of the relation between psychological trauma and the literary production of these authors.

1.2. **Modern Definitions of Trauma**

In English, the word trauma first appeared in the Oxford English dictionary in the year 1656 (Young, 1995), and referred exclusively to physical bodily wounds. According to Allan Young, it appears to have retain this definition into the nineteenth century, when surgeons such as John Erichsen published On Railway and Other Injuries *of the Nervous*

System (1866) and Edwin Morris followed shortly after with *Practical Treatise on Shock after Surgical Operations and Injuries* (1867), treatises that expanded the term's usage to include physical or emotional damage resulting from a severe blow or injury.

Some three decades later in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries the concept of trauma began to be studied in psychological circles in the work of Sigmund Freud, Jean-Martin Charcot, and Pierre Janet, whose work expanded the concept of trauma from railway injury to the inclusion of psychological causes as well. During the first half of the twentieth century, the study of trauma was closely identified with the treatment of war veterans, when Abram Kardiner further defined and classified the disorder based on his treatment of veterans during the 1920s. In 1980, the concept of Post-traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) became formally legitimized, when it made its debut in the third edition of the American Psychiatric Association's *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual*. According to this source, now in its revised fourth edition, we find the following description of traumatic events and Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, the syndrome resulting from exposure to a traumatic event:

> The essential feature of Posttraumatic Stress Disorder is the development of characteristic symptoms following exposure to an extreme traumatic stressor involving direct personal experience of an event that involves actual or threatened death or serious injury, or other threat to one's physical integrity; or witnessing an event that involves death, injury, or a threat to the physical integrity of another person; (...) Traumatic events that are experienced directly include, but are not limited to, military combat, violent personal assault (sexual assault, physical attack, robbery, mugging), being kidnapped, being taken hostage, terrorist attack,

torture, incarceration as a prisoner of war or in a concentration camp, natural or manmade disasters, severe automobile accidents, or being diagnosed with a life-threatening illness. For children, sexually traumatic events may include developmentally inappropriate sexual experiences without threatened or actual violence or injury. Witnessed events include, but are not limited to, observing the serious injury or unnatural death of another person due to violent assault, accident, war, or disaster. (484-485)

The presence of many of the causes of trauma cited above from the DSM-IV can be seen with only a cursory glance at Leonor's and Teresa's lives. Leonor we know, experienced both incarceration as a prisoner of war, and witnessed the serious injury or unnatural death due to violent assault as a result of war, of her brother, father, and other relatives. Teresa de Cartagena experienced chronic illness, which though not life-threatening, was certainly life-altering. If we accept Madre Juana's text as testimonial, or at least as narration of a flashback resulting from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, one can argue the presence of developmentally inappropriate sexual experiences.

Psychiatrist Judith Lewis Herman takes the reader beyond a mere cataloging of events that can produce Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, by offering an in-depth consideration of the impact that traumatic experiences can have on the life—and I argue by extension the literary production-- of the victim. While literature, even autobiography can at best be regarded as a simulacra of real life, I am also not the first to consider the relationship between trauma and literary production. As we shall see further on, Sigmund Freud was an early champion of the view that there is a connection between trauma and literature. Building on his original considerations, Cathy Caruth expands the idea of

literature as manifestation of what Freud terms the "Repetitive Impulse", i.e. the need to re-enact the trauma over and over again. Literature, Freud and later Caruth argue, is but one manifestation of this phenomenon, others of course being nightmares, flash-backs, and so on. If we accept this approach to the texts of these writers, the question that logically follows is what the impact of trauma would have been, and thus, what would be the content or focus of Freud's repetitive impulse in their writing. Though of course working in a contemporary context, Herman has worked with trauma victims for several decades and has dedicated her career to the study of that field, with a particular emphasis on its effects on women. In her 1992 text, *Trauma and Recovery*, she discusses the manifestations and impact of trauma on victims of captivity and physical abuse. According to Herman, trauma has the ability to disrupt most aspects of the victim's life, her feelings about safety and security, her sense of self, and her relation to the external world. These events rupture the systems in which she had previously functioned, breaking family and social attachments, and cause the victim to question not only her place in those systems and relationships, but also her concept of self. Herman further explains:

> The damage to relational life is not a secondary effect of trauma, as originally thought. Traumatic events have primary effects not only on the psychological structures of the self but also on the systems of attachment and meaning that link individual and community. Mardi Horowitz defines traumatic life events as those that cannot be assimilated with the victim's "inner schemata" of self in relation to the world. Traumatic events destroy the victim's fundamental assumptions about

the safety of the world, the positive value of the self, and the meaningful order of creation. (51)

This notion of a disruption of the schemata of self in relation to the world can be seen as a prominent feature of each of these women's life experiences, and is in turn revealed within their texts. For each, predefined concepts of a "natural or divine order" have been violated, and assumptions about security, status, and family affiliation must be re-evaluated. Male family members who are supposed to protect and provide safety cannot do so. Concepts of self as a daughter at court, or as an articulate member of a highly verbal, highly educated family must be re-evaluated. New relationships must be formed with a community that would have hitherto been considered undesirable: Leonor, first orphaned and then abandoned by her husband, must look to relatives associated with the very same political faction responsible for Leonor and her family's imprisonment and torture. Teresa must make her peace with a new family, that of the infirmed or marginalized. Madre Juana's sense of sex and gender roles is disrupted, seeking new outlets and expression through visions and attempts at ecclesiastical status. It is my contension that this wounding cannot help but be reflected, whether directly or indirectly in the work of these authors, two of whose writings contain intentional autobiography, while the other is comprised of material taken while the author was in a trance state.

Though I have touched on the origins of these authors' trauma, it seems useful to provide a brief history at this juncture. As I have stated, for Leonor López de Córdoba, the traumatic event was that of years of prolonged incarceration and torture, and her ensuing struggle to reclaim her former social and economic position. The fight for the throne between Pedro I and his illegitimate half brother Enrique de Trastamara would

prove to be a major factor in shaping not only Leonor's childhood, but much of her adult life as well. When Enrique murdered Pedro and usurped the throne in 1369, Leonor's father, who had been a supporter of Pedro I, was executed, and his family imprisoned in the Atarazanas prison in Seville. There Leonor would spend the next nine years of her young life, watching as many of her family members were tortured and died. Leonor takes great pains in the opening of her text to establish her connections to the court of Pedro I. Upon her release from the Atarazanas, however, she must face the stark reality that those connections of which she is still so proud are an encumbrance rather than an asset. She enters prison as the daughter of a well-positioned family, and leaves a penniless woman affiliated with a murdered king. Her text clearly demonstrates the tension between her birth status and her circumstances following her incarceration, as evidenced in her description of her petition to her aunt for a private gate into her home, so that she need not be seen entering from the street like a common pauper: "por que no viniésemos por la Calle á comer á su mesa, entre tantos Cavalleros que havia en Córdoba" (22).5 (So that we need not be seen coming in from the street just like any common men of Córdova who come to dine at her table.) Though Leonor may be without means of her own, she clearly views herself as belonging to a higher class, and wishes others to view her in this way as well, and her text reflects the tension between these two realities throughout.

Though not linked to the royal conflict, Teresa was also a product of this era, as the daughter of a converso family that had to contend with the anti-Semitic religious climate

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[5] All citations of the *Memorias* will be taken from the edition of Reinaldo Ayerbe-Chaux (*Journal of Hispanic Philology* 2 (1977-78): 11-33. All English translations will be taken from Amy Katz Kaminsky and Elaine Dorough Johnson, "To Restore Honor and Fortune: "The Autobiography of Leonor López de Córdoba." *The Female Autograph*. Ed. Domna C. Stanton. chicago: U of Chicago P, 1987.

that would eventually lead to the establishment of the Inquisition (1481) and the expulsion of the unconverted Jews from Spain (1492) during the reign of the Catholic kings. Teresa's grandfather, Salomon Halevy, was chief rabbi of Burgos. In 1390 he chose to convert to Christianity, adopted the name Pablo de Santa María, and eventually became bishop of Burgos. Her family produced a number of writers, and ecclesiastical and civic leaders. They rose to great power, enjoying membership in Spain's emerging middle-class, and accruing considerable political, intellectual, and ecclesiastical status. For Teresa, the disruptive element is the onset of deafness during her late teens or early twenties, an event that would render her unmarriageable, and remove her from the intellectual and social circles of her family. She would be sent to a convent, and for many years would struggle with feelings of isolation and familial rejection. As she writes in her Arboleda de los Enfermos, "Los plazeres que en él son del todo nos haborescen: la salut nos desanpara, los amigos nos olvidan, los parientes se enojan, e aun la propia madre se enoja con la hija enferma, y el padre áboresce al hijo que con continuas dolerías le ocupare la posada" (142).6 [7]

With this single event, then, Teresa is transformed from an educated, intelligent, articulate daughter of a highly positioned converso family, into an infirm socially isolated young woman, with no prospects for marriage, or life in the secular intellectual world in which she had been born, and must have expected to live out her days. Her first treatise, *Arboleda de los Enfermos (Grove of the Infirm)*, poignantly reveals her struggle to come

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[6] For the essays of Teresa de Cartagena I will rely on the excellent critical edition of Clara Castro-Ponce, *Edición crítica singular*. Brown University, Ph.D. dissertation, 2001.

[7] Worldly pleasures despise us, health forsakes us, friends forget us, relatives get angry, and even one's own mother gets annoyed with her sickly daughter, and one's father despises the son who with chronic afflictions dwells in his home (46). All English translations of Teresa de Cartagena will be taken from Dayle Seidenspinner-Núñez, *The Cloisters of my Ears: The Writings of Teresa de Cartagena*. Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 1998.

to terms with her removal from her former life and to accept her new circumstances, a silent life behind cloister walls. Though some may question whether deafness constitutes a loss of the ability to speak, Teresa strongly suggests to us that it has, or at least that has taken away her desire to do so. She writes of her frustration at the one-sidedness of not being able to hear her interlocutor in the Arboleda, indicating that the ability to physically move one's lips is only a small part of a conversational exchange. Responding to friends who suggest that she continue to visit former friends she writes:

> E bien conosco que se me dize con buena amistat e sinpleza apartada de toda maliçia, mas ni por esto dexo de me enojar, conosciendo claramente qu'el ablar es prolixo sin el oír, se puede dezir fe sin obras. Ca así como la fe sin las obras es muerta y no aprovecha al que la tiene, antes le obliga a mayor pena, así el fablar sin el oír no vale nada nin faze otro bien sino acrecentar tormento a su dueño (105).[8]

Thus for Teresa, with the option of what she perceives to be a one-sided verbal exchange being of decreased interest, she turns to the communicative venue that has not been diminished for her. Oral communication is replaced with the written word, as she enters into an exchange between the theological texts with which she is familiar, and her reflections on her deafness and entry into the convent.

While Juana differs from Leonor and Teresa in that she was born to a farming family of low socio-economic status, she nonetheless was able to rise to a position of great power as abbess of the convent of Santa María de la Cruz in Cubas, located

[8] And while I understand that this is said in good friendship and innocence without any malice, nevertheless it still annoys me, knowing as I do that speech is pointless without hearing, like faith without works. For just as faith without works is dead and leads to greater pain than profit, so speech without hearing is worth nothing and only increases one's torment (27).

between Madrid and Toledo. During her tenure as Abbess, Madre Juana oversaw the spiritual jurisdiction of the parish of Cubas, even securing a papal bull in order to retain both her leadership of the parish and the financial support it provided to her convent, confronting head-on challenges by other ecclesiastics to the right of a woman to hold such power. Unfortunately, the biographical data on Madre Juana is limited, and that which did survive comes from an account written by her confessor in an attempt to promote Juana's canonization. This makes any speculation about the circumstances of Juana's life difficult at best. Nonetheless, I concur with Ronald Surtz's suggestion that there may be sufficient evidence in her text to support the hypothesis that she may have experienced some form of sexual abuse or trauma earlier in her life (1995). Juana's text, *El Libro del Conorte* consists of a series of sermons dictated to a fellow nun while Juana was in a mystical trance state. In his chapter on her creation sermon, Surtz tells of Juana's mother's death when she was approximately seven years of age (124-25). He states that Juana lived with her father for some time afterward, but was eventually removed from her home to reside with an aunt and uncle. She eventually flees from the uncle's home, dressed in men's attire to join the convent against her relatives' wishes. For Surtz, and for me, this raises a series of questions. Why would she have been removed from her father's home? What was Juana's motivation in fleeing her uncle's home to enter the convent despite family opposition? Obviously, this action could simply have been the result of religious devotion. But as Surtz suggests, there could have been other factors motivating the young Juana: "Perhaps such speculations (of childhood trauma) can be linked to the timing of Juana's acting on her desire to become a nun. At the age of fifteen, in the face of attempts by her relatives to marry her off, Juana escaped from her uncle's house,

dressed in male attire, and sought refuge in the convent. Her relatives would not have attempted to arrange her marriage had Juana not already undergone puberty. Did her own sexual awakening precipitate her decision to become a nun? While Juana had long desired to take the veil, puberty itself may have signaled that it was time to go (126). While there is no documentation to verify Juana's having experienced such abuse, I intend to examine the textual evidence that supports the existence of such experiences, not with the aim of proving definitively the existence of sexual abuse, as that will not be possible without additional biographical information. Rather, I will approach her texts as an observer, considering how and where Juana's writings bear out Surtz's hypothesis, and with an eye to understanding how such experiences may have impacted Juana's literary production and, as I will discuss later, her professional career as well. Unlike Teresa and Leonor, who actively struggle to reconstitute their subjectivity in relation to the other, Juana appears to use her visions as a means to attain dominance over the male ecclesiastical hierarchy. Are Juana's trances/texts, then, merely the presentation of what is today a well—documented symptom of trauma, or are they a bid for power, or perhaps, a bit of both.

It can readily be seen then, that Judith Herman's suggestion that trauma is of a binary or reciprocal nature, that is, that it involves a "disruption of the schemata of self in relation to the world", is critical to each of the authors being studied here. Covarrubias also offers a similarly relational context in his definition of "herida" or wound, as not being limited to the wounded subject, but taking into account the subject's place within his/her community. As has already been stated, the definition he provides describes wounding not only in it's physical dimension of inflicting bodily injury, but also as

potentially having an impact on one's honor, a concept which is implicitly communal. In true Spanish fashion, the individual becomes social. To be wounded is not merely a private, individual experience, but often a social phenomenon as well, not only causing internal distress, but also resulting in a reordering and redefinition of one's relationship to family and community. This concept is abundantly represented in both Medieval and Golden Age Spanish literature, a fact which would seem to support both Covarrubias and Herman. It is therefore worth taking a moment to consider how the communal aspects of injury, and dishonor, are treated in other early modern literary texts.

A cursory glance at canonical literature of the Iberian Peninsula from the twelfth to the seventeenth century reveals the ubiquitous presence of issues pertaining to honor, appearances, and one's relationship to one's community. The differing styles of earlier works—the juglaresque, epic style of the Cantar de Mio Cid, the religious and didactic nature of works such as Alfonso X's *Cantigas de Santa María* and Gonzalo de Berceo's Milagros de Nuestra Señora—necessarily present these themes in a different light than one finds in later works. These themes are still present, however, though often as a secondary rather than a primary focus.

An early example of a work where honor and relationship to community are central features can be found as far back as the twelfth-century Cantar de Mio Cid. Of course it is well-known that this work opens with Ruy Diaz falling into disfavor with King Alfonso, and his departure from the city of Burgos which begins his exile. What follows in the first Cantar is El Cid's earning back the favor of his King, and in so doing, re-establishing and even improving his place within the social structure. Thus issues of justice, reputation and relationship are placed squarely at the work's center. Once this has

been achieved, he faces yet another task, which also deals with injury and honor, that of restoring his daughters' honor after it has been violated by the Infantes de Carrión. Though he is the hero and central figure of the work, he is nearly always seen in a relational context, with his King, with his family, and with his vassals.

In the later *Tragicomedia de Calixto y Melibea*, attributed to Fernando de Rojas (1499) and often considered to be a transitional work between the Middle Ages and the Baroque, Melibea's transition from dutiful daughter, to her rejection of that role in favor of the pursuit of her passion for Calixto takes center stage. Alisa's unfortunately tardy admonition to her daughter warns Melibea not only of her own danger in succumbing to Celestina's wiles, but also of the community suspicion that she risks if she is seen too frequently in Celestina's company:

> Guárdate, hija, della, que es gran traydora, que el sotil ladrón siempre rodea las ricas moradas. Sabe ésta con sus trayciones, con sus falsas mercadurías, mudar los propósitos castos; daña la fama; a tres vezes que entra en una casa, engendra sospecha" "Take care with her, daughter, for she is very treacherous, and the subtle thief always circles the dwellings of the rich. She knows how, with her treachery and her false ways to alter one's chaste intentions, she damages reputations. If she enters a house three times, she evokes suspicion. (X, 247).

At this point in the work, Alisa is still unshaken in her confidence in her "bien guardada hija". Her concern is less about Melibea's actions, than it is about what the neighbors will think should Celestina be seen coming and going from the family home. Much too late will she learn that her real concern should have been her daughter, who has disregarded her honor and that of her family with fatal consequences when Melibea chooses to join

her lover in death rather than live a life that would bring dishonor to both her and her family.

This trend reaches its zenith in the Golden Age, where both theater and prose works are replete with tales of perceived and actual social injury. In the anonymous picaresque novel *Lazarillo de Tormes*, (1554), the reader is introduced to a cast of characters who, though not necessarily dealing with trauma, are preoccupied with either navigating or managing their place within the community. First, we are introduced to the impoverished nobleman, who has no money and nothing to eat but nonetheless, dons his nobleman's attire, so as to conceal the true state of his financial affairs and preserve the appearance of his noble status. Then of course, there is the infamous "caso" which is at the novel's center. Here, ironically, the cure lies not in a cathartic retelling, but rather in a quiet fait accompli. Much as I believe our authors do when they step outside the prescribed female silence, Lazarillo's resolution lies in the violation of established norms. If Lazarrillo will keep silent, and turn a blind eye both to his wife's activities in the bishop's house, and to the wagging tongues of his gossiping neighbors, his wife gains legitimate married status, and in payment, the bishop will provide the couple with a comfortable living.

Lastly, since this study is concerned with women telling their own stories, María de Zayas y Sotomayor's *Desengaños Amorosos* (1647) are worthy of mention as they offer a distinctly feminine view of honor and community. In ten framed tales, Zayas's narrators relate brutal episodes of violence against women, all of which have only two possible forms of resolution, death or the convent. Zayas's position is unequivocal. Unless she removes herself from subjection to male authority, woman's fate is likely to

be a grim one. At the conclusion of the sarao, the occasion for these dark tales, the protagonist Lisis refuses the marriage proposal of don Diego, and, along with her mother and several female friends and relatives, removes herself to a convent in order to live free of male domination. In Lisis's farewell speech, Zayas frames directly the moral that the preceding tales depicted:

> Pues si una triste vidilla tiene tantos enemigos, y el mayor es un marido, pues, ¿quién me ha de obligar a que entre yo en lid de que tantas han salido vencidask, y saldrán mientras durare el mundo, no siendo más valiente ni más dichosa? Vuestros méritos son tantos, que hallaréis esposa más animosa y menos desengañada; que aunque no lo estoy por experiencia, lo estoy por ciencia. Y como en el juego, que mejor juzga quien mira que quien juega, yo viendo, no sólo en estos desengaños, mas en lo que todas las casadas me dan, unas lamentándose de que tienen los maridos jugadores; otras, amancebados, y muchas de que no atienden a su honor, y por excusarse de dar a su mujer una gala, sufren que se la dé otro. Y más que, por esta parte, al cabo de desentenderse, se dan a entender, con quitarles la vida, que fuera más bien empleado quitársela a ellos, pues fueron los que dieron la ocasión, ... estoy tan cobarde, que, como el que ha cometido algún delito, me acojo a sagrado y tomo por amparo el retiro de un convento, desde donde pienso ... ver lo que sucede a los demás. Y así, con mi querida doña Isabel, a quien pienso acompañar mientras viviere, me voy a salvar de los engaños de los hombres. Y vosotras, hermosas damas, si no os desengaña lo escrito, desengáñeos lo que me veis hacer. Y a los caballeros, porc despedida suplico muden de intención y lenguaje con las mujeres, porque si mi defensa por escrito

no basta, será fuerza que todas tomemos las armas para defendernos de sus malas intenciones y defendernos de los enemigos, aunque no sé qué mayores enemigos que ellos, que nos ocasionan a mayors ruinas que los enemigos. (508-509)[9]

As one can readily imagine, a thorough discussion of Zaya's texts goes well beyond the scope of this study. But as we can see, her perspective on community is a uniquely female one. She takes the strident position that for women, living in the larger community is simply not possible. The best option for women is to separate from the larger community, and create a safe and nurturing female microcommunity within the protective walls of the convent.

This is not, of course, to say that trauma, honor, and community membership are inexorably linked. One's status in the community may change simply as the result of marriage, or the death of a spouse, and thus be unrelated to questions of trauma or honor. One's honor can likewise be compromised in situations where trauma is not present. As in the case of Madre Juana, trauma can occur within a private setting, thus having

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[9] "Well, if one weary little life has so many enemies, the worst of whom is a husband, then why should I enter the fray in which so many have been vanquished and will keep on being vanquished as long as the world lasts, when I am no braver or more fortunate? Your merits are such that you will find a wife who's more courageous and less disenchanted. While I may not be disenchanted from personal experience, I am from knowledge. "As in any game, the one who knows who his partners are plays best. I've learned not only from these disenchantments but from the example all married women give. Some lament that their husbands gamble, others that they keep mistresses, many that their husbands don't take care of their honor and, to keep from buying their wife a new dress, they let somebody else do so. Then, after feigning ignorance, suddenly they open their eyes and kill the wife when they'd do better to kill the man for, after all, it was the man who caused the offense in the first place, as I see happening in Madrid. Even since the first day of this soiree, which was the [Sunday] before Lent of this year, 1646, there have been many scandalous affairs. I am such a coward that, like a person who's committed some crime, I shall take refuge in sanctuary. I plan to retire to a convent, from where, as from behind a safety barricade, I intend to observe what happens to everybody else. With my beloved doña Isabel, whom I intend to accompany as long as I live, I'm going to save myself from the deceptions of men. You, beautiful ladies, if you're not disenchanted by what's been written, let my example disenchant you. I beg you men, by way of farewell, to change your thinking and your language with regard to women. If my written defense doesn't suffice, then we'll all have to take up arms to defend ourselves against your evil intentions, to defend ourselves against our enemy. We have no worse enemy than men, for they cause us greater injury than any invading soldier." (María de Zayas y Sotomayor. Disenchantments of Love. Translated by H Patsy boyer, State University of New York, Press, 1997.

potential psychological consequences for the individual, but be unknown to the outside community, thus reducing or removing the risk of any accompanying damage to one's reputation. Moreover, relationship to community may change without there being any concomitant questions of damage to one's reputation or status. Teresa de Cartagena's case offers an excellent example of social displacement without dishonor. The onset of her deafness certainly altered her relationship to her community. Prior to the onset of deafness, it seems likely that her membership in such a prominent family would have made her an attractive candidate for marriage. But marriage would now be removed from her array of options. Though we have little information regarding Teresa's entry into the convent, her writing certainly suggests that convent life would not have been the life of her choosing, and that she was placed there as the result of her deafness. this would place hitherto unknown limitations on her communication with others, causing her to rely more extensively on writing rather than verbal exchange. As was demonstrated earlier, this shift would undoubtedly have an impact on at least some of her former relationships, if for no other reason than Teresa's own frustration with the difficulties her deafness posed in social interactions. but her status as the daughter of an important family would not have been diminished, and her personal reputation was never compromised. However, change in community relations constitutes a key component of each of these authors' experiences, and will be considered in more detail in the following chapters.

The questions that follow from these broader considerations pertain to how this fragmentation, this disruption of the schemata of self and the schemata of the world would manifest itself, both in clinical symptomatology, and then in the representational forms of this clinical picture that one could expect to find in the literary text. Allan

Young addresses the first part of this question in his description of how the trauma victim goes about assimilating the traumatic experience, providing three different mechanisms for coping with trauma, reframing, revision, and emptying. As he tells us, these processes are typically cyclical in nature, often taking many repetitions before the trauma has truly been assimilated. He describes three primary types of responses to the cognitive dissonance occasioned by the traumatic event. Victims may

> reframe their traumatic memories, making the memory content consistent with their preexisting cognitive schemas. They can attempt to revise the cognitive schemas, making them consonant with their memories. Or they can try to empty the memories of their salience and emotional power, by assimilating them (responses one and two) or erecting defenses against them via denial, efforts at avoiding the stimuli that trigger recollections, generalized emotional numbing, and so on.... The psychological process through which dissonant memories are assimilated is believed to consist of phases and cycles: (1) the conscious mind engages the traumatic memory, this encounter generates anxiety (2) the conscious mind disengages from the memory, through denial, self-dosing with alcohol or drugs, et cetera (3) the level of anxiety is reduced, the conscious mind reengages the traumatic memory and attempts to process it (via responses one and two) - anxiety increases, and a new cycle begins. Normally, cycling and processing continue until the memory is metabolized, at which point it becomes part of the individual's inactive memory. That is, it is retrievable but no longer intrusive ... (8-9).

I suggest that we will see each of these responses represented in these authors. The question of revision in the Memorias is an interesting one, and requires exploration on multiple levels. Within the context of Young's description of how victims process traumatic memory, one must of course consider how Leonor may have revised her experiences, and also her schemata of self, both internally and on paper, so as to vindicate herself and her family and to uphold her claims to a higher social position and the accompanying material comforts she desires. Equally significant, however, are any revisions that may have been made by a scribe, as it has not yet been definitively determined whether Leonor wrote or merely dictated her text. The struggle for political power at the core of Leonor's story, opens a plethora of possibilities for revisionist agendas, both by Leonor, opposed to the Trastamara throne, and by her scribe, who may well have supported it.

While Leonor—and arguably Madre Juana--probably would meet modern criteria for Post-Traumatic-Stress Disorder, Teresa de Cartagena in all likelihood would not. She does, however, engage in some activities common to PTSD survivors, such as those associated with Young's response number two, the reframing of cognitive schemas. As will be seen in Chapter Three, Teresa's first essay focuses almost exclusively on arriving at an understanding of the purpose of her deafness, as she attempts to reframe the pain of her hearing loss within a religious and consolatory context, working to place it in a positive framework that will create the smallest possible disruption for her previously held assumptions about her self and her environment.

Madre Juana offers an interesting example of one who may be seen to engage in response number one, reframing of memory content, and also response number three, the

erection of defenses to weaken the memory's potency, the latter strategy of emotional numbing and avoidance of stimuli. She is also arguably the most symptomatic of the three authors. She is the only one who can be said to have experienced so-called "flash-backs", a frequent symptom of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, which the DSM-IV defines as

> "recurrent and intrusive recollections of the event ... or recurrent distressing dreams during which the event can be replayed or otherwise represented ... In rare instances, the person experiences dissociative states that last from a few seconds to several hours, or even days, during which components of the event are relived and the person behaves as though experiencing the event at that moment" (485).

It is these "dissociative episodes" which I argue are seen by Juana and her fellow nuns and her confessors as trances which produce the mystical visions for which she becomes famous. The great irony of Madre Juana's case, is that on the one hand, she presents the most active and severe symptomatology, and it would appear, from the scant information available, that her symptoms persisted through out her life, indicating a failure to reach Young's goal of assimilating the traumatic memory. On the other hand, she is also the most successful, at least if one interprets success to mean an accumulation of status and recognition.

Though each of these authors processed their traumatic experiences in different ways, religion was a key component for all three. Within the trauma context, religion can be seen as serving two primary functions, that of providing the victim with a sense of control over his/her environment, and that of numbing the victim to the pain of the traumatic

events. As Young points out in his discussion of processing trauma, the cycle of engaging and disengaging from the traumatic memory, often involves various strategies for numbing oneself to the trauma memory. These numbing behaviors can range from simply avoiding stimuli related to the trauma, to self-dosing/abuse of alcohol or other drugs. I suggest that for the fifteenth or sixteenth-century individual, devout religious practice served a function not altogether dissimilar to the contemporary numbing practices described by Young. Freud is among the first to explore a related phenomenon known as magical thinking. The contemporary definition, provided in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual is "The erroneous belief that one's thoughts, words, or actions will cause or prevent a specific outcome in some way that defies commonly understood laws of cause and effect" (864). One may engage in this behavior in attempt to replace an undesired reality with an alternate reality, corresponding with a wish or need, the restoration of an ill loved one, or other remedy to a situation that causes pain. For Freud, magical thinking is a central characteristic of religious practice, though it can occur in nonreligious contexts. This is not to cast aspersions on religious devotion. As noted earlier in this chapter, the healing arts were in fact frequently the purview of the church, and thus carried an inherent connotation of the magical or supernatural. This connection would no doubt have been part of the inner schemata of each of these authors, and would therefore have provided them with both a framework for inner healing and for addressing painful aspects of their external lives that they might wish to change. Religion, then allowed these authors a mechanism for explaining her circumstances, and also a tool to try and reshape her situation into one that fit with her desired vision of how the world should be, and of her place within it.

Leonor's employment of prayers, and even charity, provide an excellent example of magically trying to force her reality into conformity with her will. Although she is the only laywoman among the three, religion plays a role in Leonor's text equally important to that in the texts of Teresa and Juana. She begins her text with a formulaic declaration that the events she narrates are all true, and that she writes her story for the honor and praise of Jesus and his mother the Virgin Mary. Though such formulaic statements are quite common in literature of the period, we will see this religious theme reflected throughout Leonor's text, long after any attempt at maintaining formulaic structures is seen to be necessary. When Leonor finds herself desirous of obtaining her own home, she tells us that she undertakes an impressive prayer regimen of saying three hundred Ave Marías for thirty nights in a row. Then, just in case this were insufficient, she also adopts a Jewish orphan whom she then raises as Christian. In return for her devotion, Mary gives her a vision of the house that is to be hers with the help of her maternal aunt. Though Leonor's progress toward restoration is temporary, she sees this short-lived victory as the Virgin taking her part in her struggle to return to the life into which she was born, and she repays the Virgin with yet another litany of prayer:

> entonzes echa esta merced alze los ojos á Dios, y ala Virgen Maria, dándole gracias por ello; y ende llegó á mi un Criado del Maesíre mi Señor é Padre, que vive con Martin Fernandez Alcayde de los Donzeles, que alli estaba oyendo misa, y enbiele á pedir con aquel Criado suyo, para que como Pariente le diese las gracias ala Señora, mi tia déla merced que me havia echo, y á plugiole mucho y asi lo hizo con buena mensura diciendole: que esta merced recevia El por suya; E dadome la Posecion abrí una Puerta en el sitio, y Lugar que havia visto el arco,

que la Virgen María me mostró, é á los Abades les pesó que me entregasen el dicho Solar, por que Yo era de grande Linage, y que mis hijos serian Grandes, y Ellos eran Abades, y que no havian menester Grandes Cavalleros cabe si, y Yo tubelo por buen proberbio, y dijeles esperaba en Dios que asi seria, y concerteme con Ellos, de tal manera, que abrí la Puerta en aquel Lugar donde yo quería, é tengo que por aquella Caridad que hize en criar aquel Huérfano en la fee de Jesu Christo, Dios me ayudo á darme aquel comienzo de Casa, é de antes de estos, yo havia ido treinta dias á Maytines ante Sonta María el Amortecida, que es en la Orden de Son Pablo de Córdoba con aguas y con vientos descalza, é rezábale 63 vezes esta Oración que se sigue con 66 Aves Marías, en reverencia délos 66 años que Ella vivió con amargura en este mundo, por que Ella me diese Casa, é la me dio Casa, y Casas, por su misericordia, mejores que Yo las merecía, y comienza la Oración. Madre Santa María — de Vos gran dolor havia vwesíro fijo bien criado — vístelo atormentado con su gran tribulación, amortecióse vos el Corazón, después de su tribulación, puso vos consolación, ponedle vos á mi Señora, que sabéis mi dolor (21-22).10

[10] This favor done, I raised my eyes to God and to the Virgin Mary, giving her thanks. And then there came a servant of the Grand Master, my lord and father, who lives with Martin Fernandez, Castellan of los Donceles, who was there hearing mass; and I sent him a request with that servant that as a kinsman he give thanks to my lady aunt for the favor she had done for me. And he was very happy to do so, and did it graciously, saying to her that he received this favor as if it had been done for him personally. The title having been given me, I cut open a door on the very site where I had seen the arch the Virgin showed me. And it disturbed the abbots that they should hand the lot over to me because I was of grand lineage and my sons would be great, and they were abbots and had no need of great knights near them. But I took it for a good sign, and told them I hoped in God it would be thus, and I came to an agreement with them so that I placed the door where I wanted it. I believe that for the charitable act I performed in raising that orphan in the faith of Jesus Christ, God helped me in giving me the beginning of a house. Before this time, I had gone barefoot in the wind and rain for thirty days to morning prayer to [the shrine of] Maria el Amortecida, which is in the order of San Pablo de Cordoba, and I prayed to her sixty-three times this prayer which is followed by sixtysix Hail Marys, in homage to the sixty-six years that she lived with bitterness in this world, that she might give me a house; and she gave me a house, and because of her mercy, houses better than I deserved. And the prayer begins: "Holy Mother Mary, great pain did you feel because of your son-

Religion, then, or specifically the Virgin Mary in this case, is the great comforter in time of trial, and also the remedy for righting the situation, granting Leonor that which is her just due.

Teresa too, turns to her faith to fill the void of human silence. In fact, a central theme in the *Árboleda de Los Enfermos* is the idea that she was so immersed in worldly chatter "el tropel de las fablas" that it was necessary for God to silence her so that she would listen to what he wished to say to her. Where Teresa might have been left with an empty silence, she was instead given the pleasure of God's communication to her, and thus was spared the pain of having to confront an insufferable silence.

As I have already mentioned, the religious and ecclesiastical frameworks were, if not the most important, certainly a key factor in allowing Madre Juana to frame the trauma symptoms she experienced in a positive light that gained her spiritual authority and recognition. Her entry into the convent, though undoubtedly motivated at least in part by religious dedication, also served to remove her from men, either relatives or a prospective husband, with whom she would have been expected to engage in sexual relations.

Cathy Caruth has conducted extensive investigation into the literary aspects of representing trauma. As she points out in her book *Unclaimed Experience, Trauma, Narrative and Unclaimed History*, Freud himself was fascinated with the appearance of what he called the repetitive impulse in literature, and she continues the study of representations of trauma in various theoretical and literary texts. As has already been mentioned, a well-documented trauma symptom is that of reexperiencing or reliving the

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you saw him tormented with his great suffering, and your heart came close to death. After his agony he gave you comfort, so intercede with my lady, for you know my pain" (78).

traumatic event, through nightmares, flashbacks, and so on. Caruth regards literature as yet another manifestation of this repetition, with the end goal of resolving a struggle between polar experiences, the known and the unknown, or even life and death., She writes of the relationship between trauma and literature: "If Freud turns to literature to describe traumatic experience, it is because literature, like psychoanalysis, is interested in the complex relation between knowing and not knowing. And it is, indeed at the specific point at which knowing and not knowing intersect that the language of literature and the psychoanalytic theory of traumatic experience precisely meet" (5).

Literature, then, can be seen as having a therapeutic dimension. Just as one does when sitting in a therapist's office, in literature a primary component is the telling of one's story. In therapy, it is considered that through this telling healing can begin, owing either to the therapist's skill at interpreting the story, or due to the client's enhanced awareness of feelings, and general catharsis that is considered to accompany the telling. In fact, in many contemporary therapies, journaling and other written exercises are used for a variety of different outcomes, including helping the client recover his/her story, expression of emotions to move catharsis forward in between sessions, or increasing awareness of situations that elicit specific emotions or reactions. Though in the therapeutic setting these exercises are crafted with specific therapeutic goals in mind, throughout history, journaling, autobiography, and other forms of writing have been used either for specific goals such as instruction or catharsis or for more general, and perhaps less defined purposes such as to combat idleness, to preserve one's story, or to record one's spiritual reflections. Though of course all these types of writing were practiced across genders, as Carolyn Bynum points out, there are distinctive differences between

men and women's writing in the Middle Ages (1991). Men, she tells us, were more prone to making gender distinctions in their writing, with the female representing abnegation of the male world of wealth and power. Female writing, on the other hand, tends not to be so dichotomous in its treatment of gender, but does tend to be more colloquial and internally directed:

> Women writers used imagery more fluidly. Personal and social characteristics were more often shared by the two genders in women's writings. The female was a less marked category; it was more often simply a symbol of' an almost genderless self. When women did give the female content taken from the traditional idea of asymmetrical genders, they saw it as physical and bodily (175) ... part of the reason for the more open, experiential style of women's writings is the fact that women usually wrote not in the formal scholastic Latin taught in universities, but in the vernaculars –that is, in the languages they grew up speaking. The major literary genres available in these languages were various kinds of love poetry and romantic stories: the vocabulary provided by such genres was therefore a vocabulary of feelings (198).

This distinction implies that women may typically have engaged in a more inwardly-directed type of writing, writing that was focused more closely on feelings and day-to-day experience, while men's writing can be seen as tending more toward an external contextualization. If one accepts this hypothesis, one possible consequence of this stylistic difference could be a predisposition of female writing to bear witness through writing to the subjective trauma experience. It would follow logically then, that trauma could serve as an impetus to write. Moreover, in those

cases where there is a connection between writing and trauma, that trauma would be more likely to occupy a prominent place in their texts.

Both Cathy Caruth and Kathryn Robson have written on literary expression of trauma. Both regard the writing of trauma as a kind of writing through rupture. For Caruth, this rupture consists of a series of oppositions that create tension in the text: the hearing and the telling, the known and the unknown, the past in the future. For her, even the location or definition of what constitutes the trauma events is difficult to define, as it shifts between the story of the past, and the story of the present:

> The story of trauma, then, as the narrative of a belated experience, far from telling of an escape from reality—the escape from a death, or from its referential force—rather attests to its endless impact on a life ... The crisis at the core of many traumatic narratives ... often emerges, indeed, as an urgent question: Is the trauma the encounter with death, or the ongoing experience of having survived it? At the core of these stories, I would suggest, is thus a kind of double telling, the oscillation between a crisis of death and the correlative crisis of life: between the story of the unbearable nature of an event and the story of the unbearable nature of its survival. These two stories, both incompatible and absolutely inextricable, ultimately define the complexity of what I refer to as history in the texts that I read (7).

This tension is clearly visible in the writings of Leonor and Teresa. In both cases, both stories are told, that of the traumatic events, and that of living with the consequences of survival, which for both women prove to be nearly as challenging as the survival of the original event. And as Caruth indicates, they are inextricable. Leonor painstakingly

recounts her own suffering and that of her loved ones during her incarceration, and her sorrow and indignation at watching those same family members be tortured and killed. finally, when upon his death Enrique orders that Leonor and her family be released from prison, It would seem that the traumatic event would be over. But in fact, one trauma is ending, and another beginning. Leonor's husband now leaves her, trying without success to reclaim the family's estate, and Leonor is left on her own to try and make her way as best she can. She has some temporary successes, thanks to the benevolence of a maternal aunt, but her struggle not only to reclaim her place in the social order, but to survive, continues throughout much of what we know of the rest of her life. Thus, she must not only recover from the trauma of her imprisonment, but from the ongoing tragedy of the financial and social ruin her imprisonment caused.

Teresa's writing also tells two stories, that of how she came to the convent, and that of her continued struggle to forge a life there. She openly discusses the pain she experienced as a result of her long and frequent illness which ultimately resulted in her deafness, and also of her lengthy adjustment and ultimate acceptance of life in the cloister.

As usual, in the sermons of Madre Juana the task is a more difficult one. Though one must look more carefully, I believe that this oscillation can be seen, but here, it is a tension between what is told, and what is not told. What Juana's texts record are her mystical visions. But her autobiography, and other documentation tell at least a partial story of a woman who may have been fleeing an extremely difficult family environment. in the tension between Juana the dutiful medium of God's message, and Juana who consistently crosses, or at least blurs the gender barrier, in her dress upon entering the

convent, in her "literary" authority, and in her broad rule as prioress, in which capacity she attained a papal bull, and managed property, tasks which, As Surtz (1990) demonstrates, are not typically permitted to a prioress.

> In time, Juana was dismissed from the position of abbess as a result of an incident that demonstrates dramatically the limits imposed on the authority that women were allowed to exercise within the ecclesiastical hierarchy. Two of the few extant documents associated with Mother Juana are orders written by Cardinal Cisneros and dated March 9 and December 28, 1510. In both orders Cisneros answers a petition by the parish priest of the village of Cubas, who, having secured another parish, requests that the one he is leaving be annexed to the convent of Santa María de la Cruz. Cisneros grants the priest's request, for it turns out to be a convenient way to remedy the convent's precarious financial situation and to ensure that cloistered nuns not have to resort to begging for their sustenance.
>
> According to Cisneros's orders, the nuns would acquire not only the profits from the parish's property but also the privilege of appointing a chaplain to oversee the spiritual well-being of the parishioners. This was an almost unheard-of situation, for the privilege of naming a chaplain involved the question of whether a woman could be empowered to exercise spiritual jurisdiction. ... In any case, in time certain ecclesiastics tried to take the benefice of Cubas away from the convent, arguing that women, even if they were nuns, were not suited to exercise spiritual care over lay people. ... the episode of the benefice of Cubas demonstrates the extent to which serious questions were raised by the granting of extraordinary

> powers to a woman, no matter how extraordinary the woman herself may have been. In effect, the episode boiled down to a question of power, ... it is evident that it was considered improper for a woman to exercise a jurisdiction deemed the exclusive prerogative of ecclesiastics, that is, of the male sex (4-5).

However, if trauma narrative were merely a question of oscillation between two competing stories, it would be logical to assume a lack of progression, a narrative pendulum that could simply swing back and forth continuously until forced to stop. If that were the case, such narrative would have little point. It would bring no benefit either to the writer/teller, or to the reader. What then is the role of writing/narration of the trauma story? As we will see presently, one function of this act is that of recreating the story, which is essential to the ultimate goal of departure from the trauma.

Kathryn Robson also sees the trauma narrative as occurring within a rupture, but she bases her analogy on the model of the physical wound. This distinction is significant, because implicit in the physical schema is a progression from unwell, to well. Where Caruth sees a pendulum, Robson sees a scar, pointing in two directions, back to the wound, and forward to recovery. Moreover, unlike Caruth's more fluid dialectic Robson views the trauma narrative as springing out of a suspended moment in time, the opening between injury and healing: "The wound is a visceral image, the mark of violence on the skin, before healing has taken place. It remains after the initial moment of rupture, pointing back to the moment of violence and forward to the possibility of healing. Narratives of trauma, ... emerge from the wound, from a time between injury and healing, a time when the effects of trauma remain as powerful and as insistent as ever (28). She acknowledges, however, that the healing of an emotional wound is not nearly

so straight forward a process as the healing of a physical wound, and Describes a cyclical process of recovery similar to that presented earlier by Allan Young. Eventually, as healing begins, the wound becomes a scar, but a scar that will be continually reopened, causing the subject even greater pain: "To remember and narrate trauma means, then, to attempt to write in and through wounds, through the holes within memory that represent the incursion of the past into the present" (27-28). The wound, then, can be seen not merely as the ugly evidence of injury. Inherent in its broken appearance, is also the evidence of healing that has already begun, and the hope for completion of the healing process.

Finally, as both Young's cycle of assimilation and Robson's wound/scar imagery suggest, the wound is both a symbol of brokenness and of eventual restoration. Thus, I will conclude my consideration of each author with an examination of the issue of departure. According to Allan Young, assimilation is the ultimate goal of reliving and reprocessing of the trauma experience. Cathy Caruth casts the same message in a more narrative context when she writes: " To listen to the crisis of a trauma [...] is not only to listen for the event, but to hear in the testimony the survivor's departure from it: the challenge of the therapeutic listener, in other words, is *how to listen to departure"* (1995, 10). This raises several questions. What constitutes departure? Does departure necessarily mean healing or assimilation of the trauma? If not, what can be inferred from a departure without integration? Where is the departure in these texts, and what does that departure tell us?

Judith Herman provides a point of departure for the first of these questions. She outlines the process of recovery of trauma in three phases: "establishing safety,

reconstructing the trauma story, and restoring the connection between survivors and their community" (10). Each of these phases addresses issues already put forth in this chapter. Before writing, each of these authors—with the possible exception of Leonor López de Córdoba--had already established at least some level of safety. In writing, they had begun to recreate their story. Our task, then, in considering departure, will be to consider the re-creation of the stories, and examine the connection with community at the narrative's close. I believe we can see three very different kinds of departure in these three cases. In the Memorias, Leonor's story simply drops off after she is forced to leave her aunt's home in Aguilar and return to Córdoba, after bringing the plague to the very place to which they had gone to flee it's presence in Toledo. This is a departure without resolution. We know nothing from her writing about what befell her next, all knowledge we have of the last years of her life comes from other document sources. This is all the more curious, given that what follows Leonor's departure from Aguilar is perhaps the most fruitful, happy period of her life, a time when at last she gains many of the things she is seeking throughout the Memorias, her tenure as confidante to Queen Catherine of Lancaster.

In Teresa's case, there are actually two departures, one following the Arboleda, and one following the *Admiración Operum Dey*. The first, in my opinion, is less conclusive. Though Teresa appears to want to convince the reader that she has resolved the issues surrounding her deafness and achieved a spiritual peace with her new circumstances, I do not find her language to be convincing, and would argue that when departing, she leaves the door ajar even as she tries to turn away. It is in the *Admiración*, I would argue, that we have a more conclusive and convincing departure. Here, in place of a woman struggling to accept an unwanted fate foisted upon her by her own body, we

find a woman who sees herself as uniquely empowered by God, one of a line of precursors that include the old testament figures of Judith and Esther. Though her deafness is still present here as the great agent of change, Teresa has moved on to focus on her divinely authorized right to author a religious treatise.

As with all issues related to this study, departure for Madre Juana is more complicated. As her sermons and *Vida* are written as religious texts and as such do not directly address either Juana's wounds or her departure from them, we will again have to try and glean those things from her text and other documentation. We know that Juana achieves a high level of ecclesiastical success, and that following her death, there are two attempts to have her canonized. I suggest that her success in the ecclesiastical arena is in effect a form of departure, though perhaps not in the same sense that it occurs with Teresa and Leonor.

In conclusion, the following chapters will explore the interrelation between trauma and literary production and the expression of its various functions in the texts of these authors. I will begin by looking at the literary expression of the trauma experience itself, and will proceed by considering the issues presented above and their impact on these writers. I will consider both the individual and the social aspects of the traumatic experience, its social context and societal ramifications, and Caruth's notion of the disruption of the schemata of self and the world as reflected in these texts.

On the individual level, some issues that arise include: Attempt at self-justification, the role of religious practice in mitigating trauma, social/verbal isolation, the negation of socially prescribed gender/sex roles and the employment of the literary text as power source. On the social level, I will consider how the trauma impacts the author's

interaction with society, the issue of "honra" raised in the definition of herida cited earlier from Covarrubias, as well as the resulting disintegration or other alteration in each authors interactions with her community. Following from this, I will examine the text from the perspective of Cathy Caruth's "double telling" the tension between the pain of the actual experience, and the pain of having survived it. I will also consider each author's process of assimilating trauma, according to the model set forth by Allan Young, reframing, recycling, or emptying the trauma of it's power. And lastly, I will "listen" for departure, whether or not there is departure, and how departure is achieved.

Each of these writers was able to achieve differing degrees of restoration and reintegration via her text. For Leonor López de Córdoba the psychological outcome of writing is, to some extent, unknown due to the abrupt ending of her text, and to her death which is believed to have occurred within a couple of years of the text's production. But, while long-term personal transformation or goal attainment may be uncertain, she was able to tell her story, to relate her struggle, and to justify the choices that she made, all of which appear to be primary motivations of her memoir. In Teresa's texts, literary expression takes the place of verbal communication of which she has been deprived by her deafness, and I think, finally, in *Admiraçion Operum Dey*, does allow her to find her "voice" and come to terms with her deafness and her new life. In the case of Madre Juana de la Cruz, her visions appear to have been well received, despite their seeming unorthodoxy. They resulted in an increase in her socio/religious status that nearly led to her canonization. This is not to say that Juana's trances and the resulting sermons did not also have a cathartic value, but that is more difficult to substantiate, given the dearth of

available information regarding her psychological makeup when outside of the mystical experience.

I expect that the work of literary critics, scholars of women's writing, and trauma specialists such as Caruth, Robson, Bynum, Freud, and Herman, will provide an ample theoretical framework that will help to contextualize Leonor, Teresa, and Juana's texts, this oscillation between past and future, traumatic event and the life that remains, recycling and departure, and the ways in which I believe these women used the pen to bridge these gaps. Expression in the text provided a tool for reintegration and reconstitution of the self, for realigning the schemata of self with the schemata of the environment. At the core of this effort is, of course, the will to survive, and even to thrive, whether it be via the preservation in writing of a life, the struggle to accept infirmity and find an outlet for communication, or the rise from humble beginnings to a position of power that circumvents the effects of life in a patriarchal society.

I began this chapter by asking the question why did these women write? It is my hope that the content of this chapter, and the more detailed analysis of the ensuing chapters will shed significant light on these questions. Alecta Arenal and Stacey Schlau offer their own general conclusions about why women in the Middle Ages wrote, which summarize eloquently many of the issues that have been presented here:

> They ... observe that their relationships with their Sisters have changed, and that they themselves have a stronger sense of self because they write. They note other benefits of writing, including recovery from ill health, development of telepathic and prophetic gifts, achievement of inner peace, and, often, a respected status among their Sisters. Recognition of these advantages enabled them to overcome

what Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar have termed the "anxiety of authorship". They did this by presenting themselves as mouthpieces for their inner voices, which belonged to God, Christ, Mary, or the saints. They also declared their writing to be an act of obedience to their earthly superiors confessors, other male ecclesiastics, or the Mother Superior (20).

Schlau and Arenal also point out that little of women's writing was written for publication. As we can see from the list of benefits they describe, the primary reward would seem to have been either personal, or intended for a small group of people, family, friends, other nuns in one's convent. Clearly, Teresa and Juana sought and received many of these benefits in their writing. Teresa found a way to grapple with her illness, and achieve inner peace in the process, and she may well have achieved increased status among her sisters, she definitely did capture the attention of a noblewoman—believed to be Juana de Mendoza—to whom she speaks directly in both the *Arboleda de Los Enfermos* and the *Admiración Operum Dei*. Juana's writing most certainly increased her status, not only among her sisters, but among some church authorities as well. Any benefits that Leonor may have incurred remain more elusive due to the incompleteness and fragmentation in her text, and we may never know with certainty why she wrote, or what purpose writing may have served for her. However, as these issues will serve as the focus for the next chapter, let us move on now from these general considerations of trauma and writing to explore its role in the works of these three authors, beginning with Leonor López de Córdoba.

Chapter 2

A Home of One's Own: Writing as Self-Justification in Leonor López de Córdoba

Leonor López de Córdoba is unique among the authors considered here in several respects. She is of the most noble lineage of the three, and thus her life is most directly and dramatically impacted by political power-struggles and intrigues. She is the only one of the three who does not take up a religious profession, and therefore the only one to marry and bear children. She is the only one whose writing does not have a primarily religious context and focus, and similarly, the only one who makes blatant her aspirations to worldly gain and political advancement. While Teresa de Cartagena and Madre Juana's writings have a clearly defined purpose, The reason for Leonor's recording of her *Memorias* continues to perplex scholars, providing one of the many questions surrounding her text. However, before proceeding to textual considerations, it is useful to review the information that we do have of Leonor's life.

2.1. From Palace to Prison and Beyond

Many scholars have already provided a thorough compilation of what is known about the life of this daughter of the court, among them Reinaldo Ayerbe-chaux, Carmen Marimón-Llorca, Alan Deyermond, and Amy Katz Kaminsky and Elaine Dorough Johnson. I rely on their excellent work for the information provided here.

Leonor was born in Calatayud either in December of 1362 or January of 1363. In the *Memorias* she tells us that her father was Don Martin López de Córdoba, nephew to don Juan Manuel, Grand Master of Calatrava and Alcántara. Carmen Marimón-Llorca

adds to this that he was also King Pedro I's highest chamberlain, and that he served as Pedro's Ambassador to England. Her mother, Doña Sancha Carrillo, was also well-connected, as King Pedro's niece, and sister to several of his courtiers. Given her family's strong connections, Leonor would seem to have been destined to lead a comfortable life amid the royal court. Following Leonor's birth, she and her mother went with the royal princesses, Leonor's godmothers, to the Alcázar in Segovia. Leonor tells us that shortly after their arrival, her mother died, "de edad que nunca la conocí" (11).[11] It appears that Leonor remained with the royal princesses, and that it was in this environment that Leonor would spend her all too brief childhood. At the age of seven, an age considered early even for the period, she was married to Ruy Gutiérrez de Henestrosa, son of a court chamberlain. In the Memorias, Leonor attributes her somewhat early wedding to the untimely death of her mother. However, one cannot help but wonder if Leonor's father, who would most certainly have been aware of the conflict between Pedro and his half brother, and the subsequent fragility of Spain's political situation, had an inkling of what might be to come, and arranged the marriage in an attempt to secure his daughter's future.

Upon her marriage, Leonor went to the fortified city of Carmona, again, with the Infantas, as well as several members of her own family, and her new husband's family. Unfortunately, her stay in Carmona would prove to be but a brief calm before the storm. In that same year of 1369 would also bring the fratricidal murder of Pedro I by his half-brother Enrique de Trastamara, an event which would dramatically alter the course of Leonor's life. Don Martín, Leonor's father, defended the city of Carmona until mid 1370, but in time he could hold the city no longer. He posed two conditions as part of the

[11] I was of such an age that I never knew her (77).

surrender. First, that the princesses be allowed to travel to England in safety. The second, was that he, his family, and vassals be pardoned, and considered loyal. The first of these conditions was honored, the princesses did receive safe passage to England. But don Martín and his family did not fare so well. Don Martín was betrayed and beheaded. His family, including his eight-year-old daughter Leonor, were ordered by the King to be apprehended and taken to the Atarazanas prison, thus bringing to a conclusive end the privileged years of Leonor's childhood.

Leonor would remain imprisoned for the next nine years. She would spend what could arguably be considered the most formative period of her life, that period which today would be considered late childhood and adolescence incarcerated. Though her description of those years occupies but a few brief lines of her text, Leonor offers a vivid and moving account of the horrors to which her young eyes were forced to bear witness. She recounts the agony of the male members of the family who were placed in heavy irons, and especially that of her brother Don Lope López, who she says was forced to wear seventy pounds of additional chains. She tells of the torture of her young husband who, because of his relation to the royal princesses, was placed in a hunger tank and starved for six or seven days. When the family is struck by plague, she watches as two siblings, her brother-in-law, and her father's vassals die, and how, upon their deaths they are taken out to the iron-smith to have their irons removed "como moros después de muertos" (just like dead moors) (19).12It is here where Leonor inserts a particularly moving account of her sadness at her family's suffering. The same don Lope López, her

[12] It should be noted that this is not simply a deprecatory comment, but rather, as Alan Deyermond points out, a reflection of the practice of removing chains from a dying Christian prisoner to reflect the freedom of his soul. Moorish prisoners, on the other hand, were forced to die enchained, in symbolism of their eternal condemnation as infidels. Thus, her observation here reflects not only a physical circumstance of death but a spiritual treatment as well.

brother, of whose beauty she has already spoken and of whom she is apparently quite fond, is among those taken by the plague. Before his death, he beseeches the jailer not to shame him by taking him to the iron-smith to remove his irons in public. His request is denied, his soul leaves his body, and he is taken out on a wooden plank, and given the same treatment his kinsmen had received. By the time that she and her husband are finally released from the Atarazanas, they are the only two members of the family left alive.

Leonor and her husband's release from the Atarazanas was secured only on King Enrique's death. He had included in his will that Leonor and her husband should be pardoned, and their estates restored to them. The first of these conditions was met, the second would prove to be considerably more elusive. At this point, her husband sets off to try and recover their property, but meets with no success.

Interestingly, as Amy Katz Kaminsky and Elaine Dorough Johnson point out, it is at this juncture in the work that gender roles make a considerable reversal shift. During the first part of Leonor's text, events are largely shaped by the men in her world. Her father enjoys both personal and professional success. He marries well, and progressively climbs the ranks at Pedro I's court. He arranges an advantageous marriage for Leonor that, were it not for the royal feud, would have guaranteed her her own place at court. After King Pedro's murder, he valiantly defends Carmona, and he arranges the safe escape of the royal princesses. His betrayal and death are noted as pivotal memories for the young Leonor.

Following his death, Leonor's attention shifts to the male members of her household, particularly her husband, her brother, and her father's high chamberlain.

During the family's imprisonment, Leonor provides a detailed description of her brother's nobility and heroism, and of the devotion of the High chamberlain Sancho de Villendra, who vows, "Hijos de mi Señor: Rogad a Dios que os viba yo, que si yo os (vivo) nunca moriréis pobres" (19).13 And of course, on a more public level, the struggle for the throne between Pedro and Enrique could be considered perhaps the single-most important event in determining the course of Leonor's life.

However, following Leonor's imprisonment, when her husband returns home unable to reclaim his family's future, this patrifocal orientation is abandoned. Rui Gutiérrez occupies but a few lines, which tell of his complete failure to recuperate his and Leonor's lost fortunes, and thus, his inability to assume the role of provider for his family. This episode constitutes a rather amazing and ironic material triumph for Leonor. While he is shown to be impotent, she, on the other hand, is able to obtain first food and comfortable shelter, and later even a private home for the family. As Katz Kaminsky and Dorough Johnson suggest, this is in all likelihood demonstrative of the fact that she seems to have inherited her father's political acumen, though Leonor's temper undoubtedly limited her success in this arena. Regardless of the reason, this shift in power and economics pushes her from the passive, private feminine spaces into the public, active role of fighter and provider. Leonor tells us in the Memorias, "Mi marido fue á demandar sus Vienes, y los que lo tenían preciáronlo poco, por que no tenia estado, ni manera para los poder demandar, é los derechos ya sabéis como dependen á los Lugares que han conque se demandar, é asi perdióse mi marido, é andubo siete años por el mundo, como Desbenturado, y nunca halló Pariente, ni Amigo que bien le hiziese, ni

[13] "My lord's children: Pray God that I live, for if I do, you will never die poor"(74).

huviese piedad de El" ... (19-20).14 From this point forward, female agency becomes the norm. Leonor's last remarks concerning her husband tell of how, upon learning that his wife is living quite comfortably, he returns to her in Córdoba to enjoy the beneficence of Leonor's female relatives: "á cabo de siete años, estando Yo en Casa de mi Señora mi tia Doña María Garcia Carrillo, dijeron á mi Marido, ... que yo estaba mui bien andante, que me havian echo mucho bien mis Parientes, Cavalgó encima de su mula, que valia mui pocos dineros, é lo que traía vestido no valia treinta maravedís; y entróse por la puerta de mi señora tia" (20).15 Though this would seem to imply that he does continue to live with her, all subsequent description of Leonor's family life focuses either on her relationship with her aunts and cousins, or on Leonor and her sons, including an adopted Jewish orphan.

In contrast to her husband's impotence, the women in Leonor's life, specifically her aunts, and eventually Queen Catherine of Lancaster, become the primary shapers of events. While Ruy Gutiérrez wanders the world penniless and pitiful, Leonor lives comfortably with her maternal relatives. Upon her husband's departure, she goes to stay with her aunt Doña María García Carrillo in Córdoba. From Leonor's recounting we know that her mother's family had taken the part of King Enrique, with the result that their fortunes had not diminished. Thus, it is the female members of the maternal line, who make a myriad of decisions ranging from disposition of property and the

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[14] "my husband went to reclaim his property and those who held it esteemed him little, because he had no rank nor means to claim it, and you well know how rights depend on the station you have on which to base a claim. And thus was my husband lost, and he wandered seven years through the world, a wretched man, and never did he find a relative or friend who did him a good turn or had pity on him" (76).

[15] "And at the end of seven years, they told my husband, who was in Badajoz with his uncle Lope Fernandez de Padilla in the War of Portugal, that I was doing very well in the house of my lady and aunt Dona Maria Garcia Carrillo, that my relatives had done me much kindness. He rode on his mule, which was worth very little money, and what he wore was not worth thirty maravedis. And he came through the doorway of my lady and aunt" (75).

construction of houses, to arrangements for Leonor's entry into the convent at Guadalajara. It is Leonor's aunt who is initially most instrumental in aiding Leonor, when her niece arrives on her doorstep, impoverished and disenfranchised, fresh from the Atarazanas prison. She provides Leonor with a house "unas casas" on her own property, and later provides the funds for Leonor to build a private entrance to that house, so that she need not suffer the public humiliation of having to go to her aunt's house to eat.

Another way in which Leonor benefits from the female authority of her mother's family is when she seeks entry into the convent. Her husband having been gone for some years, Leonor apparently decides to join the order of Guadalajara, founded by her great-grandparents for female members of her family. To do so, she seeks the aid of another aunt, doña Teresa Fernández Carillo: "traté con mi Señora mi tia hermana de mi Señora mi Madre, que le decian Doña Theresa Fernandez Carrillo (estaba enla Orden de Guadalaxara, que la hicieron mis Bisabuelos, é dotaron precio para quarenta Ricas Hembras de su Linaje que viniesen en aquella Orden) embiele á demandar le plugiese que yo fuese acogida en aquella Orden, pues por mis pecados mi Marido é Yo eramos perdidos, y Ella, y toda la Orden alcanzáronlo en dicha, por que mi Señora Madre se havia criado en aquellos monasterios ..." (20).16 It is at this point that her husband returns from his wanderings, and so it would seem that Leonor's stay in the convent is a short one. But as we shall see later, however brief it may have been, it may play a critical role in determining the authorship of the *Memorias*.

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[16] I consulted with my lady and aunt, sister of my lady and mother, whose name was Dona Teresa Fernandez Carrillo (she was in the Order of Guadalajara, which my great grandparents founded and endowed with the money for forty rich females of their lineage to come into that order). I asked her to request that I please be admitted into that order, since, for my sins, my husband and I were undone. And she and the entire order were happy to do it, because my lady mother had been raised in those monasteries ... (75).

Despite the rumors that she is "bien-andante" Leonor is still living in what must have seemed to her an impoverished condition. As I have mentioned previously, though her aunt provides her a place to live, Leonor must still go to her aunt's house to eat, a condition which causes her great shame. Determined to rectify this problem, she begins saying three-hundred Hail Marys each night on her knees, and asks her aunt to purchase property for her. Perhaps due to conflict with her aunt's servants, who according to Leonor had convinced her not to grant Leonor the private entrance, her aunt refuses. Not to be thwarted, Leonor decides she must accrue more credit with the Virgin, and so adopts a Jewish boy orphaned by the pogroms of 1391, though interestingly, we shall see later that Leonor refers to him as servant rather than as her son. She has him baptized and raises him in the Catholic faith. It is about this time when Leonor learns that the Friars of San Hipólito are selling some stables and farmland, and she appeals to her other aunt, Doña Mencía, asking that they be purchased for her. Her aunt agrees, finally landing for her niece the coveted home of her own. However, as one can imagine, going from "corral" to "casa" is a long journey. Leonor must work to convert the property into fit living space, as she tells us, "... plugiese que el Ayuda de mi Señora mi tía, y de labor demis manos hize en aquel Corral dos Palacios, y una huerta, é Otras dos, ó tres Casas para servicio (22).17 As Carmen Marimón-Llorca points out (88), if we accept Leonor's accounting of time, the year is 1396, making Leonor a thirty-three-year-old woman when the nightmare that began when she was eight years old seems to finally be coming to an end.

17 "... with the help of my lady aunt and of the labor of my hands I built in that courtyard two palaces and a garden and another two or three houses for the servants" (78).

But Leonor's lucky star cannot hold against what would seem to be the conspiratorial forces of a destiny determined to deprive her of her happy ending. Sometime after the construction of Leonor's houses, Córdoba is struck by the deadly plague of 1400-1401. Leonor takes her household to Santa Ella to flea the plague. Santa Ella is home to many of her father's former vassals, and she is warmly welcomed there, and given comfortable accommodations. These are soon taken from her however, when her relations decide to follow her to Santa Ella. And, to worsen matters, the same Jewish orphan whom Leonor took in, hoping to increase her standing with the Virgin, becomes infected with the plague, introducing it for the first time into Leonor's family. Needless to say, this displeases her cousins, with whom Leonor's relationship seems to have already been strained. All three people whom Leonor asks to care for the child die. As difficult as her time in the Atarazanas undoubtedly was, this seems to be an especially bitter moment for Leonor, and she makes a gruesome choice. She prays to God that if one of her children is to die, it should be her eldest son: "si alguno obiese de llevar, llebase el mayor por que era muí doliente; (24).[18] So, the next night when no one will care for the sick child because all the other caregivers have died, Leonor assigns the task to her understandably reluctant son:

> "plugo á Dios que una noche no fallaba quien velase aquel Mozo Doliente, por que havian muerto todos los que hasta entonzes le havian velado, é vino á mi aquel mi fijo, qwe le decían Juan Fernandez de Henestrosa, como su Abuelo, que era de hedad de doze años, y quatro meses é dixome: Señora no ay quien vele á Alonso estanoche? é dijele: Velarlo vos por Amor de Dios; y respondióme: Señora agora que han muerto Otros queréis que me mate? é yo

[18] "if any of them had to be taken away, it should be the older one for he was in great pain (79).

dixele: por la Caridad que yo fago, Dios habrá piedad de mi; é mi hijo por no salir de mi mandamiento lo fue á velar, é por mis pecados aquella noche le dio la pestilencia e otro dia le enterré ... (24).[19]

In her son's dying moments, Leonor's cousin Teresa, angry at Leonor for bringing the plague into the family circle, orders Leonor to take her son from the house, despite his pleas that she let him stay, as he will shortly be dead. Teresa also refuses to have the child buried in the village, forcing Leonor to carry him outside the town for burial. As the funeral procession wends through the town before a crowd of mourners—vassals loyal to Leonor's father—the crowd seems to sum up Leonor's entire life when they cry out: "Salid Señores, y veréis la mas desventurada desamparada, é mas Maldita muger del mundo" (24).[20]

The Jewish orphan of course survives the plague, a fact which only serves to further alienate Leonor from her relatives. At this point, they seem to have had enough of their difficult cousin. The *Memorias* end with Leonor's banishment from her family, and her departure in sadness for the houses in Córdoba, given to her by her aunt.

However, though the text ends here, Leonor's story does not. The aforementioned trend of female dominance reaches its zenith when some time following the period covered in the *Memorias,* Leonor becomes chief counselor to Queen Catherine of Lancaster, who is Pedro I's granddaughter, and regent to her son Juan II. It is unclear

[19] And it was God's will that one night I could not find anyone to watch over that suffering young man, because all those who had watched over him up to then had died. And that son of mine whose name was Juan Fernandez de Henestrosa, after his grandfather, and who was twelve years and four months of age, came to me and said: "My lady, is there no one who will watch over Alonso tonight?" And I said to him: "You watch over him for the love of God." And he answered me: "My lady, now that the others have died, do you want it to kill me?" And I said to him: "For the charitable act I am performing, God will take pity on me." And my son, so as not to disobey me, went to watch over him, and because of my sins, that night he came down with the plague and the next day I buried him (80).

[20] "Come out, good people, and you will see the most unfortunate, forsaken and condemned woman in the world," (80)

how exactly Leonor comes to occupy such an honored position at Catherine's court, but Clara Estow suggests that it may have come about by Rui Gutiérez's distant connection to the Queen. She suggests that following Leonor's expulsion from the family at Santa Ella, she and her husband may have used his connections to petition the Queen's assistance. Whatever the origins may have been, once at court, Leonor swiftly rises in the queen's favor, eventually becoming the "camarera mayor." In her article "Leonor López de Córdoba: Portrait of a Medieval Courtier" Clara Estow tells us of Leonor's stay in Queen Catherine's court:

> If she [Leonor] disagreed, no other thing was done but what she wanted." In addition, we learn, Leonor prevented easy accessibility to the Queen, screening for profit those she selected, placing her relatives and friends in the most lucrative positions, and accumulating great personal wealth. She is credited with encouraging the Queen to resist the implementation of the tutorial clause of Enrique's will, and is considered, even by the distinguished modern historian Juan Torres Fontes, to have been the "real arbiter of Castile's internal policies for some time (35-36).

Unfortunately, as with the rest of Leonor's life, good fortune was once again fleeting. She was disliked by many at the court and criticized for exacerbating problems between the Queen and Fernando, King Enrique's brother, co-regent and future king of Aragón. Fernando would eventually mount a campaign against Leonor. Amid court intrigue and jealousy of Leonor's enormous power, Catherine would eventually be forced to banish Leonor from court. Little is known of Leonor's life following her departure. Clara Estow points out that there is evidence that for a while Leonor and the queen

seemed to have maintained a fondness, which she demonstrates through the existence of letters exchanged between the two women. Additionally, Fernando, despite any earlier antipathy, appeals to Leonor to serve as his intermediary with the queen, when he is in need of funds to continue the siege of Antequera. Leonor, still hoping for a return to court, agrees to aid Fernando, and successfully intervenes with the Queen to obtain the desired funds. However, it seems that somewhere around this time, the Queen's attitude toward Leonor changes. Citing a letter from the archive of Santo Domingo el Real, Clara Estow summarizes Leonor's final fall from favor:

> It is at this point that the Queen's cordiality toward (Leonor) disappears. In the two years that Leonor had been away from court, her dual post of counselor and favorite had been filled by someone else. And while Catalina had no grievance against Leonor, she made it increasingly clear that her physical presence at court would not be tolerated. From the archives of Santo Domingo el Real of Toledo, we have a letter, written by Catalina, circa 1411, wherein she orders one of her trusted officials to send spies to gather information on Leonor's whereabouts and commands him that if he finds her traveling to the court, he should twice warn her to desist. If she ignores these warnings, he must confiscate her possessions and imprison her. Leonor must have been well aware of the Queen's wishes and, giving up hope of personally arranging for her return, she called upon Fernando to repay his debt by intervening with Catalina on her behalf. The Queen's response to this approach was even more adamant than to the first; Catalina threatened Fernando that if Leonor came anywhere near her, she would be burnt (37-38).

And here ends what we know of this turbulent life, so beleaguered by suffering and misfortune. Leonor is estimated to have died between the years of 1412-1414, some few years following her last attempt to return to court. It has been theorized by most scholars that it was during these last years of her life that the *Memorias* were penned. What has never been ascertained is who actually put pen to paper, and to what end Leonor decided to write/dictate her memoirs. It is to these questions that I now turn.

2.2. The Text

It can readily be argued that Leonor's memoir raises more questions than it answers. Who wrote it, when it was written, why it was written, and why certain seemingly important events were omitted, are among the issues that continue to challenge scholars today. Though this study cannot hope to provide any of these answers, consideration of the questions has bearing on our exploration of the Memoirs as a literary representation of trauma, and also on the larger questions surrounding the literary production of Early-Modern women.

The text Leonor has left us is at best unwieldy, challenging the reader to piece together a disorganized, at times stream-of-consciousness collection of fragments and flash-backs. It is a series of meandering thoughts not chronologically organized, and connected only by commas and semicolons. The pronouns often have ambiguous referents, and particularly during the segment of the text following Leonor's imprisonment, she transitions seemingly randomly between events. As Alan Deyermond points out in his article "Spain's First Women Writers", purpose is clearly evident in the *Memorias* but organization is not. In fact, for Deyermond this distinction seems to

separate Leonor's text from the genre of autobiography, "Her narrative method gives some support to Zimmermann's contention that "it is the sense of organization and purpose which distinguishes true autobiography from garrulous recollections" (34). This view runs counter to the designation given the *Memorias* by some scholars as Spain's first true autobiography (Katz Kaminsky and Dorough Johnson, 70).

Before continuing to a discussion of the text, it is necessary to take a moment to provide an overview of how the text came to us in its modern version. Again, in constructing the work, we are forced to confront significant ambiguity, which modern scholars, Reinaldo Ayerbe-Chaux in particular, have had to piece together, in order to arrive at our current understanding of the work's origins. However, as many scholars have already addressed these issues in detail, I will here provide but a brief overview.

The first difficulty present in the analysis of this work is the fact that the original manuscript, which was located in the archives at the convent of San Pablo de Córdoba has disappeared. Reinaldo Ayerbe-Chaux has attempted to locate this manuscript, unfortunately without success. However, he tells us that it is known that the manuscript was intact as late as the eighteenth century, for it was during that century that two copies were produced. The first of these has been preserved, and today is housed in the Biblioteca Colombina. According to Ayerbe-Chaux, it was this copy that served as the basis for the first edition of the *Memorias*, that of José María Montoto (1775). Although Montoto states that his edition was based on a manuscript found in the Archives of the convent of San Pablo de Córdoba, Ayerbe-Chaux's analysis of the work supports its basis in the Colombina manuscript.

A second edition of the *Memorias,* dated at 1733, would appear just eight years later, this one seeming to have resided in the library of one don Teodomiro Ramírez Arellano. This copy would eventually form the basis for the edition produced by the Marqués de Fuensanta del Valle (1883), and ironically for the edition by don Teodomiro Ramírez himself, which is based on Fuensanta's edition, rather than on the original manuscript in his possession. This manuscript however, seems to have disappeared, and has only been verified by Ayerbe-Chaux's comparative analysis of the Fuensanta and the Montoto editions along with the Colombina manuscript. As Ayerbe-Chaux explains, the discrepancies between the two early editions are striking, and point definitively to the existence of two eighteenth-century copies of the original manuscript:

> La comparación del manuscrito de la Colombina con la edición de Fuensanta basada en la copia de 1733, revela tantas variantes y algunas tan significativas que permite suponer la existencia de dos copias distintas del siglo XVIII. Pasando por alto aquellas variantes que son quizás debidas a las preferencias de Fuensanta para regularizar y modernizar el texto, hay correcciones que afectan el significado de la frase y son probablemente debidas a un copista del original no tan experimentado como el de la Colombina" (13).

Though other editions followed these, most notably that of Adolfo Castro (1902), Ayerbe-Chaux has given us the most complete edition, drawing on all the above sources. It is therefore his edition which provides the basis for the current analysis. However, his very comprehensive presentation of the textual discrepancies makes clear that this is not a text that can be read as an accurate preservation of the original document, a condition that makes consideration of many of the questions that follow difficult at best to resolve.

The next question to which we turn pertains to the work's authorship. Though it cannot be answered definitively, it is a question of central importance to this study. If on the one hand, Leonor's text was dictated to a notary, while one might still consider it an autobiography, or at least an autobiographical document, it would have to be treated as a text manipulated by a male hand. It's authenticity as being representational of the female voice would at best be questionable. Conversely, if Leonor is not merely dictating but also writing her memoirs, she is free to exercise control over her text. While she will still have to position her text within male-dominated norms and conventions, as we shall see, she will nonetheless be able to advance the female voice within her document. The predominant view among many scholars, first espoused by Alan Deyermond, is that the *Memorias* were dictated by Leonor to a scribe or notary. Deyermond discusses this problem in his essay "Spain's First Women Writers," where he briefly addresses the issue of the authorship of the *Memorias*. He posits that the scribe, to whom he suggests Leonor dictated her memoirs, may have begun by trying to follow notarial conventions of the period, but quickly became overwhelmed by Leonor's meandering style and gave up, simply writing as the words flowed forth: "I have a clear vision of the unfortunate notary, trying desperately to keep everything on a proper level of legal phraseology, being overwhelmed by Leonor López' flood of words, and realizing with a sigh that he had better reconcile himself to writing the story just as she told it" (31).

Deyermond bases this theory of authorship on the text's opening, which he describes as a statement made on oath. As many scholars have discussed, the text's beginning lines consist of a compilation of notarial formulae common to legal documents of the period. And, the *Memorias* do in fact begin with an oath: "Sepan quantos esta

Esscriptura vieren, como yo Doña Leonor López de Córdoba, fija de mi Señor el Maestre Don Martín López de Córdoba, é Doña Sancha Carrillo, á quien dé Dios gloria y Parayso. Juro por esta significancia de t21 en que Yo adoro, como todo esto que aquí es escrito, es verdad que lo vi, y pasó por mi ... (16).22 The first part of the text would seem to support this view, as it continues to read in the manner of a legal testament, presenting first a geneology of Leonor's noble lineage, and then a detailed accounting of the content of Leonor's and Ruy Gutiérez holdings upon their marriage: á mi Marido quedáronle *muchos* vienes de su Padre y *muchos* Lugares, y alcanzaba trescientos de á Cavallo suyos, é quarenta madejas de Aljófar, tan grueso como garvanzos, é *quinientos* moros, é moras, y dos mil marcos de plata en bajilla, y las Joyas, y preseas de su Casa, no las pudieran escrevir en dos pliegos de papel, ... á mi me dió mi Padre veinte mil doblas en Casamiento" ... (17).23 It is at the conclusion of this listing of Leonor and Ruy's possessions, that the testamentary structure falls away, as Leonor begins to recount the events leading up to the siege of Carmona, a fact not altogether surprising, given that it is here where the emotional content of Leonor's narrative is first encountered.

It is probably safe to say that most scholars concur with Deyermond's theory. However, Louise Mirrer holds a different view, which she discusses in her article "Leonor López de Córdoba and the Poetics of Women's Autobiography." She sets forth

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[21] Alan Deyermond has translated "significancia de t" to mean the sign of the cross, which seems a likely translation. I therefore employ it here as well.

[22] Therefore, know all who see this document, how I, Dona Leonor Lopez de Cordoba, daughter of my Lord Grand Master Don Martin Lopez de Cordoba and Dona Sancha Carrillo, to whom God grant glory and heaven, swear by this sign t which I worship, that all that is written here is true for I saw it and it happened to me,

[23] My husband inherited many goods from his father and many offices. And his men on horseback numbered three hundred, and forty skeins of pearls as fat as chickpeas, and five hundred Moors, men and women, and two thousand marks of silver in tableware, and the jewels and gems of his household you could not write down on two sheets of paper. ... To me, my father gave twenty thousand gold coins upon marriage (74).

several I think convincing, hypotheses that support the possibility that Leonor did in fact pen her own autobiography. She begins by refuting what has traditionally been the basis for Deyermond's position, that the opening lines are comprised of legal formulae utilized by notaries in testamentary documentation of the period, a fact which has already been demonstrated here. Mirrer has compared the opening of the *Memorias* with approximately two-hundred Spanish legal documents, and points out that in none of the other texts she examined was there the dense collection of formulae that is found in the *Memorias*. In fact, she even suggests that Leonor's extensive use of these topoi has a "caricature" effect when compared along side other documents (11).

Mirrer offers what I find to be a highly plausible reason for this over-usage. As a noblewoman and member of the court, Leonor would certainly have been aware that such phrases were the requisite conventions utilized in both historical and literary texts to establish validity. As Mirrer points out, such opening invocations are to be found not only in legal documents, but in many literary works such as the Romancero, thus Leonor would have encountered these statements of oath in a variety of different contexts, both official and literary. Moreover, as a female venturing into the male world of testimonial discourse, she would also undoubtedly have been aware of the importance of producing a text that would have validity for a male audience, and therefore would have been likely to try and imitate other texts with which she was familiar. As Mirrer points out, this fusion of legal verbiage is not unique to Leonor, but can also be found in two of her English contemporaries Margery Kempe (ca. 1373) and Julian of Norwich (ca 1343), and will even be found on the American continent some three-hundred years later in the *Respuesta a Sor Filotea* of Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz (1651-1695). This pattern among early women

writers supports the notion that each felt a need to validate her own work by emulating topoi common to male discourse, and thus makes credible the possibility that Leonor, too, could have deliberately employed this tactic in the writing of her text.

A second issue raised by scholars is the shift from notarial statements to the more free-flowing, rambling style associated with the rest of the work. Mirrer argues, and I concur, that such a shift is not atypical of women's writing. A shift from masculine to feminine modes of discourse is present in each of the female authors mentioned above. And Leonor herself prepares the reader for this in her own text. She clearly states a dual-purpose in writing her memoirs which she presents in the opening lines. The first, is to provide hope to those who suffer, and encourage them to commend themselves to the Virgin for succor, and the second, to provide a testimony to the events which she and her family endured:

> Juro por esta significancia de t en que Yo adoro, como todo esto que aquí es escrito, es verdad que lo vi, y pasó por mi, y escribolo á honrra, y alabanza de mi Señor Jesu Christo, é déla Virgen Santa María su Madre que lo parió, por que todas las Criaturas que estubieren en tribulación sean ciertos, que yo espero en su misericordia, que si se encomiendan de Corazón á la Virgen Santa María, que Ella las consolará, y acorrerá, como consoló á mi; y por que quien lo oyere sepan la relación de todos mis echos é milagros que la Virgen Santa María, me mostró, y es mi intención que quede por memoria ... (16).[24]

[24] I swear by this sign t which I worship, that all that is written here is true for I saw it and it happened to me, and I write it to the honor and glory of my Lord Jesus Christ, and of the Holy Virgin Mary his mother who bore him so that all creatures who suffered might be certain that I believe in her mercy, that if they commend themselves from the heart to the Holy Virgin Mary she will console and succor them as she consoled me. And so that whoever might hear it know the tale of my deeds and miracles that the Holy Virgin Mary showed me, it is my intention that it be left as a record.

This statement clearly speaks to Leonor's cognizance of the comingling of purposes in her text, and even seems to warn the reader to anticipate that a shift will occur. By including in her stated purpose both testimony and consolation, she prepares her reader for the presence of both the male, what Foucault calls the "Juridical Discourse", and the female discourse of religion, consolation, and self-effacement. Given her own textual awareness, and the presence of similar shifts in other early-modern women writers, it seems reasonable to attribute the departure from notarial formulae to some more deliberate cause than the simple exhaustion of an overwhelmed male scribe.

Mirrer also highlights a number of textual characteristics that would seem to indicate Leonor's own awareness of herself as a woman writer. As I have noted above, the early parts of the text demonstrate both the power exercised by the men in Leonor's life, and the premature termination of that power by death. Even her husband, though he does not die physically, withers into a state of invisibility, when he is no longer able to play a role in providing for his family. The remainder of the text is occupied by women, and is set within the female spaces of the convent, Leonor's aunts' homes, and her own private house.

Leonor's text is gynocentric not only in it's physical spaces, but in its invocation to "foremothers" as Mirrer calls them. On the earthly plane, these include her aunts, and one cannot help but wonder if Leonor also thinks of Queen Catalina. On a celestial plane, Leonor's text is dedicated to the Virgin Mary, who also plays a central role in aiding Leonor in her quest for material gain. Again, Leonor's awareness of this is evident. As Mirrer shows, Leonor writes not only in the name of masculine "santos" but makes a point of including the word "Santas" (female saints) as well (16). As Mirrer further

demonstrates, Leonor combines this invocation of both the male and the female once again with a juridical referent, when she writes, *Santos y* Santas déla Corte del Cielo (16). For Mirrer, this is significant, as it represents a designation of spiritual equality for both men and women, "Thus women, in the *Memorias*, are firmly established as bona fide members, along with men, of both heavenly and legal precincts" (15). For Mirrer, it is this location of her text within both the female realm of hagiographical discourse, and the male realm of legal discourse, that most strongly supports the text as being authored by a woman.

One final but important question concerns whether Leonor would actually have been taught to write. As I indicate in the Introduction, it was not uncommon for a woman not to receive formal education, or for her to receive a limited education targeted to her need to manage a household. This circumstance supports other scholars' conjecture that she would have needed a scribe, as she would not have possessed the necessary knowledge of writing to have actually written the work herself. Dictation was not an uncommon practice, even for male writers. As A.J. Minnis demonstrates in his book *Medieval Theory of Authorship*, there were in fact considered to be varying levels of authorship, the lowest of which was that of scribe or copyist, whose role it was to simply take down or copy another's words, whether written or verbally transmitted.

If dictation was a common practice among male authors, it certainly seems likely that women would be even more dependent on this method of writing, given their more limited exposure to formal education. Thus, dictating one's text would not necessarily invalidate one's role as author. It does however change the relation between text and author, as it now involves a filter, a second pair of hands through which the text passes.

This presents unique challenges for women. Whereas a scribe writing on behalf of a male author would not be likely to try and exert control over the finished product, a scribe writing for a woman might be inclined to do so for many reasons. The most innocent of these could simply be an unconscious male bias as to what would be considered appropriate content for a woman. The most egregious, would be a misogynistic attempt to control textual content to conform with his own ecclesiastical or political agenda.

As indicated in the introduction, this exertion of control was common in the texts of nuns ordered to write by their confessors. Both Teresa de Ávila and Lucrecia de León serve as examples of women whose writing was manipulated by men to such an extent that the original intended purpose or meaning is unclear.

Thus, the question of Leonor's authorial role is an important one, as it offers some perspective on how much control she would have been able to exert over her work. Certainly it seems unlikely that she would have learned to write while in prison, and the period preceding her incarceration was too brief for her to become skilled in writing, even if she were being taught. Regardless of what other education she may have received, Mirrer highlights her stay in the convent as being a place where she would most certainly have received formal learning. Unfortunately, Leonor is vague in the *Memorias* about her days in the convent. It is not clear how long she was there prior to the return of her husband. Mirrer is correct in her view that it would be helpful to more firmly establish Leonor's connection to the convent, as it would provide more conclusive proof of her literacy, and thus her physical ability to have put pen to paper, and so to create a text that is an authentic representation of her own voice.

In light of the issues presented above, Deyermond's view that her text was dictated to a male scribe who quickly lost control of his subject, I think does a disservice to both said scribe and to Leonor herself. Though at this time we are unable to conclusively prove Leonor's role as author, Mirrer provides convincing evidence to support her theory that Leonor may have authored her own text. First, if a notary had been responsible for the text's opening oaths, one would expect it to conform more closely to the other texts that Mirrer reviewed, i.e. that it would lack the exaggerated and heavy-handed application found in the *Memorias*, and more closely parody other texts of the period. Additionally, Mirrer presents convincing evidence of Leonor's awareness of herself as female author. Though perhaps clumsily at times, she is able to draw on textual conventions that will give her text credibility within male spheres, while incorporating a distinctly female style and voice. Leonor's success here would seem to be vindicated by the fact that the *Memorias* were initially valued as a historical document, particularly as providing the only eye-witness account of the 1370 siege of Carmona. The following discussion of the role and functions of trauma within the *Memorias* will therefore proceed based on the premise of Leonor as author.

2.3. The *Memorias* and Trauma

To begin our consideration of trauma in the *Memorias* we must first address the question of the location of the traumatic event. Superficially, it would appear that the traumatic event was Leonor's incarceration during her childhood and adolescence, and the events—death and torture—that occurred in the Atarazanas. This however, seems too facile an explanation. Even prior to Leonor's imprisonment, she lived under siege, and

witnessed the betrayal and death of her father, both of which, were in her mind events important enough to be recorded in her memoir. Moreover, the life that awaited her upon her release, though less violent, would prove to be no less arduous. Both Teresa de Cartagena and Madre Juana, though undeniably facing their own challenges, are not forced to strive to meet basic survival needs, and both find a secure place in convent life.

Unlike her sisters, Leonor's life remains tenuous until it's very end, and that tenuousness is evident in her text. Leonor exemplifies the dilemma described by Cathy Caruth between living and surviving trauma, "the oscillation between a crisis of death and the correlative crisis of life: between the story of the unbearable nature of an event and the story of the unbearable nature of its survival (7). Considered within the context of trauma, I think it is plausible to suggest that in many ways, Leonor's world was more undefined following her release from prison.

While her life in prison would be considered difficult, perhaps even unbearable, the conditions of her existence were firmly drawn and clearly established. This predictability of her environment would make life in the Atarazanas in some respects more manageable. Leonor's place, while undesirable, was clear. But once she is released, all predictability vanishes. Upon her release, she must not only face the work of survival, but also find a way to explain the fact that she survived while the rest of her family did not. This point is never addressed directly in her text, but I suggest that her strong desire to vindicate herself and her family is at least in part the result of survivor's guilt, particularly at the time of the writing of the *Memorias*. By this time, Leonor would be well aware that vindication through her own success and recuperation of status and fortune would not come to pass. Thus, her text is her only vehicle of honoring, even in a

small way, those of her family who perished as a result of the conflict between kings Pedro and Enrique.

The fragmentation discussed earlier in Leonor's writing style is thus a textual reflection of Leonor's tumultuous life. And interestingly, it carries over into Leonor's self-representation as protagonist. I have already discussed the intellectual challenges faced by Leonor's readers as they struggle to make sense of this rambling text, breaking apart long run-on sentences, grappling with referential vagaries, and working to reconstruct a disjointed and poorly organized chronology. However, along with sorting through this literary quagmire, the reader is forced to navigate a sometimes confusing jumble of emotional reactions to Leonor's narrative.

As we read of her father's betrayal and death, her imprisonment and the deaths of those she loved, and her husband's misfortunes when he tries to reclaim their estate, we feel a profound sympathy for this innocent victim of Spanish politics. Then, just a few lines later, our schema is abruptly modified when we read of Leonor's treatment of the aunt's ill-fated servant who opposes Leonor's petition for the private house: "fui tan desconsolada, que perdi la paciencia, é la que me hizo mas contradicion con la Señora mi tia se murió en mis manos, comiéndose la lengua ... (21).[25] Leonor's actions seem all the more horrifying because of her subsequent chillingly fluid shift from describing the servant's death to her continued prayers to the Virgin. Though perhaps somewhat more cautiously, we nonetheless continue to feel sympathy for her and her struggle, pulling for her as she tries to regain what she has lost. We're given one final shock before the *Memorias* end, when Leonor sacrifices her son rather than caring for the sick Jewish

[25] I was so disconsolate I lost my patience, and the one who had most set my lady aunt against me died in my hands, swallowing her tongue (76).

orphan herself. One can but imagine the melodrama of the scene within her aunt's home, the grief-stricken Leonor, the angry cousins and sister-in-law, and Leonor's exit in disgrace.

Though Leonor's tenure with Queen Catherine is not recorded in the *Memorias* an observer cannot help but approach that situation with the understanding that Leonor is a complicated woman, in many ways admirable for her spirit and tenacity, yet also someone who could be difficult, perhaps even frightening when faced with opposition. In this way, Leonor's text guides the reader through an emotional journey probably not altogether dissimilar from her own, as she constantly attempts to make sense of ever-changing physical, political, and psychological landscapes.

Alan Deyermond is perhaps among the first to consider Leonor's text as the product of trauma, or as he describes it, "life (that) scarcely conduced to serene reflection (34). He further points out a similar stylistic phenomenon in the writing of a twentieth-century female autobiographer, Nadezhda Mendelstam, whose husband had been one of Stalin's victims. As he tells us, reviews of her memoir, while generally favorable, were critical of the work for being "rambling and disjointed." He clearly sees a connection between the styles of these two writers, which he attributes to both having been survivors of what I am calling trauma: "In both cases, a woman caught up in great events and surveying them from the wreckage of her personal life prefers the vividness and authenticity of recollection to the requirements of formal structure" (34).

Carolyn Walker Bynum (1991 observes a similar phenomenon, but places it in the broader contexts of Early-Modern women's writing, and of Walter Ong's theories of oral expression: "the prose of a female writer such as Julian of Norwich, which tends to

circle around its point, evoking a state of being, displays exactly those traits Walter Ong has seen as characteristic of oral thought and expression (198).

Thus, while this rambling and disjointed style, this lack of formal structure may well be reflective of writings other than those related to trauma, it does coincide with the definitions of trauma and the descriptions of trauma symptoms set forth in Chapter 1. As I have demonstrated, historians, psychologists, and literary scholars such as Cathy Caruth and Catherine Robson concur on the presence of Freud's repetitive impulse, observing the trauma victim's need to revisit the traumatic event, though they do not necessarily do so in a manner that would appear logical or orderly to the outside observer. I suggest that one explanation of this may be found in the phenomenon of the disruption of the victim's inner schemata of self, as described by Judith Lewis Herman. As she tells us, one effect of trauma is that it destroys the victim's previously held beliefs about the world and about their place in it. The result is that the victim is forced to repeat earlier developmental tasks in order to create a new schemata in which the traumatic event can be contextualized. She writes: "Thereafter, a sense of alienation, of disconnection, pervades every relationship, from the most intimate familial bonds to the most abstract affiliations of community and religion ... A secure sense of connection with caring people is the foundation of personality development. When this connection is shattered, the traumatized person loses her basic sense of self. Developmental conflicts of childhood and adolescence, long since resolved, are suddenly reopened. Trauma forces the survivor to relive all her earlier struggles over autonomy, initiative, competence, identity, and intimacy" (53).

Identity, initiative, autonomy and intimacy are, I think, pivotal to Leonor's struggles during her life following her incarceration. Autonomy and initiative will be key if she is to be restored to her former wealth and status. But, much like a child testing the waters in the world around her, Leonor has to forge connections in a landscape radically different from the one that existed prior to her stay in the Atarazanas. The privileged daughter of the court is thrust into a world where the power has shifted. She enters this world much as a child, with the balance of power being completely in the hands of her former enemies, and like a child she has to learn to navigate in her new world. To do this she must re-evaluate who her allies are, and learn about the limits of their support as well as how to deal with those who will stand in her way.

Clara Estow observes that Leonor seems to have possessed the same political acumen possessed by her father, but as she also points out, like her father, Leonor's efforts often seem to end in disaster of one sort or another. Leonor is able to garner the support of her maternal aunts, but not her cousins. Moreover, not only is she not able to establish positive relationships with them, it would seem that she may not be politically astute enough—or, to put it in psychological terms—may not have found constructive ways to exert her autonomy or express her own initiative, without being threatened by the autonomy and initiative of those who oppose her. I think it can safely be argued that this inability on her part constitutes a key factor in Leonor's final expulsion from the family. Perhaps out of love or duty for Leonor's mother, perhaps out of a true fondness, Leonor's aunt supports and aids her, but this support ultimately creates a schism which will force the aunt to choose between her niece and her daughters. As we see at the end of the *Memorias,* Leonor is banished from the family following the death of her son: "Sobrina

Señora no puedo dexar de hazerlo, que á mi Nuera y á mis fijas é prometido por que son echas en uno, y en tanto me han afligido que os parta de mi, que selo ove otorgado, é esto no se que enojo hacéis á mi Nuera Doña Theresa que tan mala intención os tiene" ... (24).[26]

As the above discussion indicates, intimacy also proves to be a struggle for Leonor. As already mentioned, there is no sense of intimacy present between Leonor and her husband. This impression could of course be explainable through a myriad of different circumstances. First, one cannot overlook the fact that theirs, like most, was a marriage arranged not for love, but for political advantage. Against that backdrop, the harshness of the years in the Atarazanas would in all likelihood not have been conducive to the development of what one might consider a healthy marital relationship. Even once out of prison, neither would be afforded the opportunity to resume the role that each would have expected at the time of their marriage, and it would seem that Leonor was more adept in transitioning into her new role than was her husband. Whatever the reason, there is little textual evidence that they ever worked together in the process of restoring their fortunes. Once Rui Gutiérrez's attempts to restore the family's fortune fail, her husband seems to become at best an invisible presence rather than a partner to Leonor. All of her other post-imprisonment relationships seem to be fractious, some vacillating between periods of intense connection and rupture as in the cases of her aunts and later Queen Catherine, while others seem to simply be fraught with tension, as with her cousins, the servant, and even, perhaps, her eldest son.

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[26] "Lady niece, I cannot fail to do so, as I have promised my daughter-in-law and my daughters who are of one mind; since they have pressed me to remove you from my presence, I have granted it to them. I do not know what vexation you have caused my daughter-in-law, Dona Teresa, that she feels such ill will toward you" (80).

At least insofar as one can determine from current documentation, it would seem that Leonor did not have one consistently positive relationship subsequent to her stay in the Atarazanas. To blame this entirely on Leonor would be over-reaching of course. We do not know the basis of Leonor's cousins' opposition to her. In addition, as other scholars have indicated, documentation exists that suggests that Leonor's fall from the queen's favor may be largely due to the intrigues of another of the queen's ladies-in-waiting, Inés de Torres, who aspired to supplant Leonor as the queen's favorite, and who, like Leonor, would eventually fall.27 However, Leonor repeatedly shows a level of ineptness in negotiating these conflicts, which were an inherent part of life, certainly at court, and even within the circle of an upper-class family. Leonor's murder of the servant, her quarrels with her cousins, her communication with Queen Catherine and her failed attempt at mediation through Enrique are the flailing final stands of a desperate woman trying to hang onto what she has lost, not the sophisticated negotiations of a confident family-member and courtier.

A consequence of all these issues is that Leonor's global identity construct seems always to be in a state of flux. Clearly, she never loses sight of the fact that she is of noble stock, and never loses her view that she is entitled to a place in that world. This is evident in the proclamation of her lineage and the account of her marriage settlement that open her text, as well as in her indignation at having to enter her aunt's home to eat from the street, and the vehemence with which she fights to improve her circumstances.

But if we consider Leonor's descriptions of herself in the *Memorias*, we find the

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[27] See Clara Estow, "Leonor López de Córdoba: Portrait of a Medieval Courtier." Fifteenth Century Studies 5 (1982): 23-46. Also Amy Katz Kaminsky and Elaine Dorough Johnson. "To Restore Honor and Fortune: "The Autobiography of Leonor López de Córdoba." The Female Autograph. Ed. Domna C. Stanton. chicago: U of Chicago P, 1987.

following: "yo estaba muy bien andante" (20) "por mis pecados era perdida (20), "porque yo era de grande Linage y que mis hijos serían grandes (22) "e por mis pecados aquella noche le dio la pestilencia e otro dia le enterré"(22), "Salid Señores, y veréis la mas desventurada desamparada, é mas Maldita muger del mundo, (24).28 The extreme oscillation of Leonor's self-concept is evident in these comments. At one moment, she is living comfortably, of grand lineage herself and the mother of great sons, at the next, people are dying because of her sins, and she is "the most unfortunate, forsaken and condemned woman in the world" (80). While it could certainly be argued that the events Leonor endured justify these bleaker reflections, they also reflect a lack of stability, both in Leonor's circumstances and in her self-concept, suggesting Leonor's trauma is ongoing, rather than being limited to her actual imprisonment.

Yet another textual aspect of Leonor's representation of trauma, is that of bearing witness. As stated in Chapter one, according to critics such as Caruth and Robson this is one of the functions of literature in the retelling of trauma. Caruth regards trauma narratives as relating both the story of death and the story of life, and as indicated already, this duality is clearly evident in the *Memorias*.

Writing of a twentieth-century French author born during the bombing of Paris in World War II, Catherine Robson notes, "Her writing does not start at the beginning of her life in the war, but seems rather to begin with her rebirth and thus to offer a different life story and family history, that covers up the horror of her birth and her parents' deaths.

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[28] "that I was doing very well" ... (76) "for my sins, my husband and I were undone ... (76) "I was of grand lineage and my sons would be great" ... (78) "and because of my sins, that night he came down with the plague and the next day I buried him ..." (80) ... "Come out good people and you will see the most unfortunate, forsaken and condemned woman in the world, (80)

She is not bearing witness to forgotten civilian deaths, but to her own survival and to the power of the life drive ..." (123).

Leonor certainly does not "cover up" the deaths of her family, but she does devote considerable space to her "witnessing of the life-drive". In the *Memorias* the question of witness is a fairly straight forward one, due in large part to the invocation at the opening of the text. As indicate in the earlier discussion of authorship, bearing witness to her family's tragedy is one of her stated purposes in writing the *Memorias*. However, the stay in the Atarazanas occupies a comparatively short segment of Leonor's narrative, with the primary focus of the text being dedicated to her "rebirth" i.e. her struggles and her successes after she has been released.

I suggest therefore, that the function of bearing witness is multi-layered. First, she tells us directly of her desire to create a written record "que quede por memoria" (16). Her goal of creating a written record was probably far more successful than she could ever have imagined. As Amy Katz Kaminsky and Elaine Dorough Johnson point out, until the late 1970s and the definitive critical edition of Reinaldo Ayerbe-Chaux, the *Memorias* were regarded as a historical document rather than a literary text. As Carmen Marimón-Llorca further explains: "las *Memorias* fueron punto de atención para los historiadores interesados en la polémica etapa que constituyó el cambio de dinastía en la Castilla de transición al siglo XV. La parcialidad de las *Crónicas* oficiales hacen que cualquier documento haya sido aprovechado para rellenar las lagunas o verificar los datos que en ellos se exhiben. *Las Memorias,* obra de una testigo presencial del cerco de Carmona, fueron por esta razón analizadas en lo que tienen de fuente de información para

la resolución de ciertos aspectos puntuales de la historia peninsular" (94).29 She further tells us, that in addition to the *Memorias*' value as documentation of a political transition, they also offer an account of the conditions for upper-class women of the period. Thus, Leonor's immediate legacy was regarded as a historical rather than a literary contribution.

Second, It is her intent that her audience know that her struggles did not end in the Atarazanas, but continued as she worked to reconstruct her life, an objective plainly stated in her opening lines, "y por que quien lo oyere sepan la relación de todos mis echos é milagros que la Virgen Santa María, me mostró, y es mi intención que quede por memoria, (16).30 Her use of the phrase "mis echos" (my deeds) is telling. The focus here is Leonor herself, not the former King Pedro, not Enrique, and her family mostly insofar as they relate to her. However, to vindicate herself, she must also vindicate her family. Her father's loyalty and honor bring honor to her and confirm her nobility. And likewise, her "echos" restore her honor to her forebears, and hopefully pave the way for her own children's advancement. Therefore, within this larger objective fall two others: to offer testament to her noble lineage, and to record her family's story. In undertaking the latter, she bears witness both to her family's nobility and ensures that the fate of the loyalists to Pedro not be forgotten.

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[29] The *Memorias* were of interest to historians concerned with the polemical period and the change in Castilian Dynasty in the fifteenth-century. The incompleteness of official chronicles have made it necessary to for scholars to avail themselves of any surviving documents in order to fill in the gaps and confirm the dates which the chronicles contain. The *Memorias*, work of an eyewitness to the siege of Carmona, were for this reason analyzed for the information they contain regarding certain debates in Peninsular history (my translation)

[30] "... all that is written here is true for I saw it and it happened to me, and I write it to the honor and glory of my Lord Jesus Christ, and of the Holy Virgin Mary his mother who bore him so that all creatures who suffered might be certain that I believe in her mercy, that if they commend themselves from the heart to the Holy Virgin Mary she will console and succor them as she consoled me. And so that whoever might hear it know the tale of my deeds and miracles that the Holy Virgin Mary showed me, it is my intention that it be left as a record. I ordered it written as you see before you" (73).

Continuing in the vein of Leonor's focus on herself as protagonist, as Louise Mirrer demonstrates, Leonor's use of female-specific language—"santos y santas"--suggests a strong awareness of herself as female, and as a female writer. Thus, I think we can conclude that in addition to writing in a general way about rebuilding her life, she wished to bear testament to her experience as a woman. Carmen Marimón-Llorca's observations on the historicity of Leonor's text, and it's value in documenting women's condition during the fifteenth-century again bear out Leonor's effectiveness here, as do Louise Mirrer's observations on Leonor's language.

I have already highlighted the matrifocal world depicted by Leonor, and the secondary role which male family members seem to occupy. Even in the years prior to her imprisonment, when the males in her life are unquestionably functioning as leaders, Leonor's mother and the Infantas occupy a significant role. Leonor attributes her early marriage to her mother's death, "mi Madre falleció mui temprano, y así me casó mi Padre de siete años" (17).

As she describes in the *Memorias*, the Infantas, her godmothers seem to take the place of Leonor's mother, at least in providing a female presence for the young Leonor, "las Señoras Ynfantas, fijas del Señor Rey Don Pedro, y Parientas tan cercanas de mi Marido, y mias por mi Madre" (17),31 and "naci en Calatayud en Casa del Señor Rey, que fueron las Señoras Ynfantas sus fijas mis Madrinas, y trujeronme con Ellas al Alcázar de Segovia con mi Señora Madre que ay murió" (20).32 As previously discussed, Leonor takes great care to situate her text within the world of male discourse, as is

[31] "Seeing this misfortune he took the road for Carmona where the lady princesses, daughters of Lord King Don Pedro were, and very close relatives of my husband and mine *by my* mother" (73).
[32] "And I was born in Calatayud in the house of the Lord King. His daughters, the lady princesses, were my godmothers, and they brought me with them to the castle in Segovia with my lady mother who died there" (73).

obvious in the notarial formulae invoked at the text's beginning. Nonetheless, throughout her text Leonor manages to create a strong female presence.

Finally, it is also her intent to bear religious witness, that is, to bear witness to the ways in which the Virgin Mary aided—and sometimes did not aid—her in her quest to re-assume her former state. This objective is made clear in the text's opening, but I think is not so well executed. She writes: "escribolo á honrra, y alabanza de mi Señor Jesu Christo, é déla Virgen Santa María su Madre que lo parió, por que todas las Criaturas que estubieren en tribulación sean ciertos, que yo espero ensu misericordia, que si se encomiendan de Corazón á la Virgen Santa María, que Ella las consolará, y acorrerá, como consoló á mi ..." (16).33 The extent of Mary's consolation is extremely debatable, and Leonor's honesty here unfortunately undermines this earlier invocation. Mary's master-work here would be responding to Leonor's prayers—three-hundred Hail Marys on her knees for thirty days and the adoption and baptism of the Jewish orphan—allowing her to open the entryway to her aunt's home, and later granting her the private house.

However, other than this Magnum Opus, Leonor's prayers yielded less favorable results. When Leonor again turns to the Virgin in supplication at the outbreak of the plague, though she does spare the life of the Jewish orphan, Mary does not spare the life of those who attended him in his illness, including Leonor's own eldest son. Thus the text here seems to send a double-message. The acquisition of the private house was no small boon, and it would prove to be an important one, as it gave Leonor a place to return to

[33] "I write it to the honor and glory of my Lord Jesus Christ, and of the Holy Virgin Mary his mother who bore him so that all creatures who suffered might be certain that I believe in her mercy, that if they commend themselves from the heart to the Holy Virgin Mary she will console and succor them as she consoled me"(73).

after she had been expelled from the family in Aguilar. But Leonor also does not withhold those instances in which the Virgin did not console her or come to her aid. One possible reading here would be that Leonor finds consolation despite her misfortune.

Leonor doesn't suggest this at any point other than her opening statement, which as we have already discussed is highly formulaic. But given the text's fragmentary nature, such a reading would not be outside the realm of plausibility. I would argue however, that such a reading does not fit comfortably with Leonor strong-willed, often quarrelsome nature. A second reading would be that much as with the reconstruction of her life and her identity, the construction of her faith is a work-in-progress. This reading requires less extrapolation on the part of the reader, and fits more comfortably with the other information we possess about Leonor's life. It also corresponds to Caruth and Robson's statements about trauma narrative and bearing witness, speaking both to a life-drive which propels one forward, and simultaneously harkening back to the damage remaining from the traumatic experience.

A final question to which I turn is that of departure in the *Memorias*. Is there departure? If so, in what does it consist? As with many aspects of this text, departure is yet another polemical issue. A surface reading could indicate that yes, Leonor does experience departure from her traumatic experience. She is released from prison. Though her estate is not restored, she does receive shelter and assistance from maternal relatives, and even eventually secures the much-coveted home of her own. She is blessed with children for whom she seems to care, and establishes close, albeit turbulent relationships with her maternal aunts. All of these circumstances speak to reintegration, healing and departure. But each also brings it's own wounds, which seem to prevent the closure and

healing of the original wound of trauma. Though Leonor made a would-be advantageous marriage, her husband proves inefficacious, returning to Leonor and her family for protection, rather than serving as protector himself. While Leonor's aunts take her in, there is constant—or at least frequent—tension between Leonor and her cousins. Leonor does attain the private house, but only after great struggle, hard work, and one murder. Looking beyond her text, Leonor attains glowing success at court, only to be brought to an end in an equally colossal failure, when Queen Catherine dismisses her from court and forbids her to ever return.

It is Leonor's children who make the strongest argument for a final, healing departure. It is not known how many children Leonor bore, though she does talk in the *Memorias* of "Hijuelos." We do know that she bore at least two, the son who died in the plague, and a daughter, Leonor de Henestrosa, who would be her sole inheritor (Marimón-Llorca, 96). This fact would seem to indicate that if there were other children, they died at an age too young to inherit. However, Leonor's daughter represents what is perhaps Leonor's most enduring bid for bringing the political rifts responsible for her own difficult life to a close. She arranges the marriage of her daughter to the Conde de Niebla, nephew of Enrique II. With this act, Leonor both unites the two opposing royal factions through marriage, and establishes her own family as part of the Trastamara bloodline, thus ensuring her own family's place in the current monarchy.

As Carmen Marimón-Llorca writes:

> La misma Leonor parece que no escapó a la tentación de asegurar su posición en la corte y borrar su pasado casando a su hija Leonor con un nieto de Enrique II. Gracias a este matrimonio, Leonor emparentaba con la familia reinante y daba por

> finalizada una etapa de su vida. No deja de ser paradójico que esta maniobra coincida con la que previamente habrá realizado Juan I, hijo de Enrique II, al casar a su hijo Enrique III, nieto de Enrique II con Catalina de Lancaster, nieta de Pedro I con lo que unía ambas ramas y hacía cesar las hostilidades referentes a la casa reinante, los Trastamara. (97-98)

Marimón-Llorca draws the parallel between Leonor's marriage of her daughter, and the royal marriage of Enrique and Catalina. One cannot overlook however that Leonor's choice of son-in-law is also an echo of her father's actions some forty years earlier. His aim in selecting Rui Guitiérrez as Leonor's husband had been to secure an alliance for his daughter with the loyalist faction. Leonor, similarly trying to ensure her own daughter's security, makes the reverse choice, deciding to align young Leonor with the Trastámara faction, thus aligning her daughter with the ruling family, bringing together the two bloodlines, closing the rift that began with Pedro and Enrique.

Leonor's own life was like that of the proverbial phoenix, rising from the ashes, only to return to them again and again. Her indomitable nature allowed her to continue repeatedly to try and depart from both her emotional and her material pain. In many cases, it may have been the very strength that kept pushing her forward that also prevented her from truly reaching resolution. Without her strength of character—and her maternal connections—it would have been difficult, if not impossible for Leonor to re-establish herself. However, this same strength of character also seems to have contributed to ongoing conflict with her cousins, and finally, and perhaps most importantly, with Queen Catherine of Lancaster. Leonor's text, is a text that is at times defensive, at times almost melodramatic, and at times amazingly honest. The text of her memoir and what

we know of those parts of her life she did not choose to include in the *Memorias*, is thus a complex amalgam of glowing success, painful failures, but above all a continuous determination to survive.

As I indicated at the beginning of this chapter, Leonor's text is most concerned with affairs of the secular world, and it is therefore amid those concerns that her text is situated. Let us now proceed to Teresa de Cartagena's two texts, where we will consider an example of the textual representation of trauma within the context of religious writing.

Chapter 3

Writing as Reconciliation: Teresa de Cartagena

With the works of Teresa de Cartagena we move into the middle years of Spain's fifteenth century, and also into the world of religious and spiritual writing. In contrast with Leonor López de Córdoba's fragmented, disorganized narrative, the two essays of Teresa de Cartagena are well-organized texts. Particularly in the Admiração Operum Dey we find a tightly-constructed logical argument that draws on an extensive knowledge of scripture and religious writing of the period. Unlike Leonor whose purpose in writing her memoirs continues to be the subject of scholarly speculation, each of Teresa's essays has a clearly identifiable focus. Teresa authored two treatises. In the first, *La Arboleda de los enfermos*, she deals with themes related to her deafness and to her subsequent entry into the convent, in a reflective essay which is generally considered to fall within the tradition of self-consolation. Her second work, Admiração Operum Dey, she tells us is prompted by the entreaties of one doña Juana de Mendoza. This text offers Teresa's response to those who criticized her writing based on the notion that a woman would not have been capable of writing the Arboleda.

In this chapter I will consider the relationship between Teresa's writing and her experience of disability and thus trauma. I use *trauma* here in a broad context. Today it would rarely be argued that the onset of disability would typically be trauma-inducing. Both contemporary attitudes toward disability as well as medical treatments and technological advances have made the modern experience of disability very different from what it would have been even a century ago, much less during the fifteenth century.

Even so, the DSMIV, cited in chapter 1, includes the following experiences as criteria for diagnosing Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder: an experience that is a threat to one's physical integrity and being diagnosed with a life-threatening illness (484). As I stated in Chapter 1, while Teresa's physical existence was clearly not threatened, the day-to-day substance of it certainly was. Like Leonor López de Córdoba, who had to transition from being a daughter of the court to being an impoverished political outsider, Teresa too had to adjust her schemata of self, her concept of herself and how that self fit into the world around her. The option to marry would no longer be a part of her future. Her social interactions would be altered, and she would find herself entering into the religious life, an option which her writing leads us to believe had not been her own choice. Such major changes would inevitably result in the need to revise and rebuild Teresa's understanding of herself and her relation to the world around her. While Leonor had to find new family in her maternal relatives who had been former political enemies, Teresa is placed in a new family, that of her convent, or as she describes it, that of the infirm. The emotional impact of this multifaceted transition is poignantly conveyed in Teresa's first essay, as will be explained later on. So, while there is no denying the vast differences between incarceration, starvation, and torture, versus the loss of one's hearing, I argue that each has a similar psychological impact on the individual, and that the similarities in their experiences make Teresa a viable candidate for inclusion in a study involving trauma and female authorship.

Before beginning a consideration of the essays themselves and their relation to Teresa's trauma or personal suffering, let us first review briefly the limited biographical information in our possession.

3.1. Teresa's Life and her Social Context

Though a great deal is known about her family, considerably less is known about Teresa herself. In fact, her affiliation with the Cartagena family has been established only through the work of multiple generations of scholars, and was not conclusively proven until the work of Francisco Cantera-Burgos in the 1950s, when he was able to link Teresa with the Cartagena family through her uncle Alonso's will. Thanks to his excellent work, we today are able to piece together a general autobiographical sketch of one of the earliest Spanish female religious writers. The biographical information I offer here is a result of his work, as well as that of Alan Deyermond, Carmen Marimón-Llorca, and Dayle Seidenspinner-Núñez.

Though Teresa belonged to a highly-renowned converso family whose male members held high rank in religious, courtly, and literary spheres, her status as a nun and an unmarried woman rendered her all but invisible to posterity. Her life was not recorded as her male relatives' lives were, both by virtue of being deemed less significant, and by virtue of the fact that as a female she would not have held military, political or ecclesiastical office, roles which would have been recorded in other types of documentation. Even Teresa's married sisters left more evidence of their existence, as their marriages into important families were documented. From a literary or historical perspective, Leonor López de Córdoba's text provided critical documentation of key historic events such as the siege at Carmona, a circumstance which made her document of interest to historians. Though this historical context would of course not make Leonor's writing well-known, it would preserve at least a limited place for her in the

literary annals. On the other hand, as Ronald Surtz points out in his book *Writing Women in Late Medieval Spain*, most literary production by women in Spain at the time was written by nuns, writing at the behest of their confessor. At first glance, Teresa's writing would seem to fall into this same category, and thus be deemed as perhaps not worthy of preservation.

The first of the Cartagena family to convert to Christianity was Teresa's grandfather, Salomon Halevy, (ca. 1355-1435). While serving as chief rabbi of Burgos, he held a number of diplomatic roles. In 1390 he converted to Christianity, adopting the new name *Pablo García de Santa María.* While some scholars have speculated that his conversion was motivated by opportunism and ambition following the violence of the pogroms of 1369 and 1391, Pablo and his brother Alvar, who converted with him, nonetheless made the most of their conversion and quickly rose within the ranks of the Christian church. Twelve years later Pablo was named Bishop of Cartagena, from which appointment the name Cartagena would be added, and as we know it is this name that would then come to be associated with his descendants. Pablo de Santa María authored a number of theological treatises, as well as a national history entitled *Seven Ages of the World (Siete Edades del Mundo),* the latter of which would serve as an instructional tool for Juan II. In addition he held various political offices, including Chancellor to Enrique III, tutor to Juan II, and eventually became Bishop of Burgos. He also became friends with Pedro de Luna, who would later hold the Avignon papacy under the name of Benedict XIII. Following his renunciation of the papacy, Pedro de Luna would author his *Libro de Consolaciones de la Vida Humana,* which Teresa would most certainly have had

access to, and is likely to have been an influence in her writing of the *Arboleda (Seidenspinner Nuñez, 5).*

Two of Pablo's sons, Gonzalo and Alonso, followed in their fathers' footsteps, pursuing diplomatic and ecclesiastical careers. Both served as Bishop of Plasencia, and Alonso succeeded his father as Bishop of Burgos as well. Also like his father, Alonso was a prolific writer. He translated works of Boccaccio, Cicero and Seneca, and also has some twenty-seven historical, legal, and philosophical treatises to his own credit.

Teresa's father, Pedro de Cartagena, third son of Pablo de Santa María chose the path of a courtier. He served as bodyguard to Juan II, and also as royal counselor to Enrique IV as well as to the Catholic Kings. He was married twice, first to María de Sarabia, and later to Mencía de Rojas. María de Sarabia bore him five children, of which Teresa is believed to have been the fourth. His second wife, Mencía de Rojas, would add a daughter and a son to this numerous family, and don Pedro would also acknowledge three illegitimate children, bringing the total number of children to ten.

In addition to or as a result of his own accomplishments at court, Pedro's home was also a frequent gathering place for Spain's nobility. Teresa's grandfather's friendship with Pedro de Luna has already been mentioned. It is also well-known that the princess Blanca of Navarra stayed in the Cartagena home on her way to be wed with Enrique IV in 1440. Cantera Burgos also writes that the Condestable Álvaro de Luna was staying in the Cartagena family home at the time of his arrest in 1453 (152). It is within this highly cultured, intellectual environment that Teresa would spend her early years. Though as a woman Teresa would of course not directly participate in the activities of her male relatives, as a daughter of such a family, she would nonetheless have been an active

participant in Spain's upper class, and would most likely have received an education well beyond that of many of her female contemporaries. She would undoubtedly have had access to her family's extensive library, and been exposed to literary, religious and philosophical traditions.

Scholars have differed in their estimations of the year of Teresa's birth. Louis Hutton simply makes the general observation that she lived during the early half of the fifteen century, a notion which one must call into question given what we know about the dates of composition of the *Arboleda* and the *Admiração Operum Dey*. Cantera Burgos proposes the broadest period of time, suggesting that Teresa would have been born sometime between 1420-1435 (538), a time-frame which has been widely accepted by many scholars. Alan Deyermond proposes a slightly narrower time-frame in his article "Spain's First Women Writers" where he suggests the dates 1420-1425 (38). The earliest estimate of Teresa's birth is given by Dayle Seidenspinner-Nuñez, who offers her view that Teresa would have been born between 1415 and 1420 (10). If we accept the *Arboleda* as having been written some time around 1450, given Teresa's statement that she had been deaf for 20 years, "oy son veinte años que este freno ya dicho comencé a costreñir la haz de mis vanidades (Castro-Ponce, 121)", as well as her assertion that she enjoyed a full and active life for some time before the onset of her deafness, it seems likely that her birth would have occurred earlier rather than later in this twenty-year time span.

Past this point we have few details of the author's early life, save those things which she herself chooses to include in the *Arboleda*, the content of the *Admiração Operum Dey* being more of a theological treatise and thus containing less personal

material. However, Teresa's intent in the *Arboleda* was not to create a memoir, thus only those facts of her life which are germane to her purpose find their way into her essay. We are nonetheless able to glean a general picture of what her pre-convent life must have been like. We know for instance that she would have spent her childhood living in the family home located on Calle Cantarranas la Menor in Burgos, and that she in all likelihood resided there until her entry into the convent. Teresa indicates in the *Arboleda* that before becoming deaf she thrived on an active social life and enjoyed worldly pleasures, which she later feels deprived of on account of her deafness, "aunque poblar de veadnos no se puede, porque pocos o ningunos hallares que de su grado en ella quieran morar, ca es estérile de plazeres tenporales e muy seca de glorias vanas, e la fuente de los honores humanos tiene muy lexos en verdat" (97),34 and "me enojan algunas personas quando me ruegan y dizen: "Id a fulanos qu'os quieren ver *e* aunque vos no lo oigades oirán ellos a vos" (105).35 We further know that she pursued some form of study in Salamanca, "pocos años que yo estudié en el estudio de Salamanca" (213), though exactly what this study consisted of is unclear. Dayle Seidenspinner-Nuñez suggests that she may have gone to a convent in Salamanca and received some education there, "In all likelihood, she would have been tutored at home and then sent to Salamanca to study in a convent, for in the late Middle Ages religious houses trained not only their own novitiates but also the sons or daughters of the nobility and the wealthy bourgeoise" (10).36

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[34] All Spanish citations of Teresa's text will be taken from Clara Castro-Ponce. Teresa de Cartagena, Arboleda de los enfermos. *Admiración operum Dey.* Edición Singular. Brown University, Ph.D. dissertation, 2001. All English translations will be taken from Dayle Seidenspinner-Núñez, The Cloisters of my Ears: The Writings of Teresa de Cartagena. Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 1998.

[35] So with reason I am angered when people beg me and say, "Go to so-and-so; for they want to see you and even though you cannot hear them, they will hear you" (27).

[36] Much study has been done on the education of women in the Middle Ages. For additional information see: Kelly, Joan. Women, History and Theory: The Essays of Joan Kelly. Chicago: The U of Chicago P.

However, while Teresa would most certainly have had access to such educational opportunities, Teresa's education would have a different focus than that received by her brothers. Rocío Quispe-Agnoli addresses these issues in her article "Teaching, Learning, Reading and Writing: Educational Tools for Women in Fifteenth-Century Spain" where she writes:

> according to Cicero, *educado* referred to "spiritual formation," and in antiquity, the main goal of *educado* was to prepare the individual for the public life. Therefore, education leads to knowledge, and knowledge to power. This, however, was not the expected path for women to follow in the societies of the Middle Ages. In spite of this disadvantageous situation, European medieval and early modern women did have access to the books. Most of these books were related to spiritual counsel, such as meditation, prayers, psalm-singing and biblical excerpts. The spiritual scope of female education would lead women to their relationship with God and correct the consequences of the first sinful woman, Eve (32).

Teresa would therefore not have received an education that would prepare her for public life, but would presumably have received an education oriented toward spiritual growth and development. Such an education would of course prepare Teresa extremely well for the works she was to write later on.

Though as we have seen Teresa grew up in a large family, her family members occupy only a few lines in her writing. However, her one brief mention of her relations with her parents is enough to let the reader know that discord may have existed, or at

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1984; Kelso, Ruth. Doctrine for the Lady of the Renaissance. Urbana: U of Illinois P, 1956; and Labalme, Patricia. Beyond Their Sex: Learned Women of the European Past. New York: New York UP, 1980.

least that those relationships would seem to have been strained. Her only mention of her parents occurs when she is discussing the difficulties of her illness, which she indicates was present for some time before finally causing her hearing loss. In her only mention of her family she writes: "la salut nos desanpara, los amigos nos olvidan, los parientes se enojan, e aun la propia madre se enoja con la hija enferma, y el padre aboresce al hijo que con continuas dolerías le ocupare la posada" (142). Though only a brief sentence, these statements would support the theory offered by scholars such as Ronald Surtz that Teresa's family may have been impatient with her ill health, and that she was sent to the convent so that her family would no longer have to care for her. In this context the lack of maternal imagery is noteworthy.

When talking about God, her focus is on the saints, or Jesus, but at no point does she pray to, or honor, the Virgin. The one mention of Mary occurs in the *Arboleda*, when she is reciting a litany of plaintive statements produced by her illness. The *Admiración*, whose focus was defending the idea that God could endow a woman with the ability to reason and write, and would therefore seem to offer a perfect context for inclusion of Mary, holds no mention of her. It would of course be stretching the matter to draw any sweeping conclusions from such limited information, but certainly this absence of a mother figure, along with Teresa's albeit brief description of her parents' frustrations raises speculation about Teresa's relationship with her mother.

Regarding her monastic life, we of course also know that following her deafness Teresa entered the convent, seemingly involuntarily, or at least that convent life would not have been of her choosing. Whether deliberately or accidentally, the name of Teresa's convent is never mentioned in either essay. However, it is generally believed that

Teresa's convent was of the Franciscan order, possibly located in Burgos or Salamanca. Carmen Marimón-Llorca further suggests that Teresa may also have entered into the same convent that Leonor López de Córdoba describes having entered in the *Memorias*:

> El convento de Teresa debió ser uno de aquellos para hijas de familias ricas, quizá como el que fundaron las bisabuelas de Leonor López de Córdoba: «estaba en la Orden de Guadalaxara, que la hicieron mis bisabuelas, e dotaron precio para quarenta Ricas Hembras de su linaje que viniesen en aquella Orden» en los que se podía desarrollar una cierta vida social. La misma Teresa nos habla de las visitas que recibían «...como acesce quando alguna persona de grand estado e dinidad nos quiere venir a ver...» (Arboleda... , 97-98) y parece no haber perdido por completo el contacto con el mundo durante su vida conventual a juzgar por la relación que mantuvo con Doña Juana de Mendoza; porque —según ella misma nos cuenta— debía salir con cierta frecuencia del convento ... (111).

As the citation from the *Memorias* suggests, this was a convent founded for "forty wealthy women" where it would have been intended that members could to a large extent continue to enjoy social involvement, and have a fair amount of freedom both to make and receive visits from friends and relatives. Whether or not Teresa entered into the same convent as Leonor, the above-mentioned comments regarding Teresa's maintenance of social relationships as well as her communication with Juana de Mendoza support the notion that the convent she entered was similar in nature. Thus, her "exile" would be at least in part self-imposed, a notion which I will explore in more depth later in this chapter.

3.2. Deafness, Literacy, and Orality

Though briefly discussed at the beginning of this chapter, it will be useful at this juncture to present some considerations regarding the issue of Teresa's deafness. One can readily imagine that the ramifications of deafness would be much more far-reaching than in contemporary society. There was not in the fifteenth-century the disability awareness that exists today, nor did exist the notion that an individual with a disability would even attempt to live the same life as his or her nondisabled peers. Teresa's deafness would therefore have broad implications for her adult life, certainly in her personal life, but also in her experience as reader and as author.

As indicated earlier, Teresa's personal life would become significantly more limited as a result of her deafness. Teresa's status as a woman would of course have meant that she would not enjoy the political, ecclesiastical, and literary options of her high-power male relatives. However, her position as the daughter of a family that was at the heart of nearly every aspect of Spain's political and religious life afforded her many opportunities. As has already been observed, it offered her access to both formal education and to her family's extensive libraries. It would have made her attractive in social circles, and would have positioned her to make a good marriage, as did two of her sisters, Juana and María de Sarabia. Though her social status would not be diminished and would allow her to enter into a convent for noble or bourgeoise women, she would no longer be considered marriageable.

While we have no indication that Teresa truly desired marriage, we are told in the *Arboleda* that she did not desire the convent, that she was forced to enter by God in the form of her deafness:

> Grand tienpo ha, virtuosa señora, que la niebla de tristeza tenporal e humana cubrió los términos de mi bevir e con un espeso torvellino de angustiosas pasiones me llevó a una ínsula ... donde tantos años ha que en ella bivo, si vida llamar se puede; jamás pude yo ver persona que enderezase mis pies por la carrera de paz nin me mostrase camino por donde pudiese llegar a poblado de plazeres. Así que en este exillio e tenebroso destierro, más sepultada que morada me sintiendo plogó a la misericordia del muy Altísimo alunbrarme con la Iuçema de su piadosa gracia, porque pudiese poner mi nonbre en la nómina de aquiellos de quien es escrito: "los que moravan en tiniebras y en sonbra de muerte, luz les es demostrada" (97).37

Although throughout this essay Teresa frames this change in fortune as God's attempt to instruct her—an issue which will be critical to our discussion of trauma—in these opening lines it is clear that Teresa did not wish to enter a convent. Furthermore, it would seem that time has not changed her view. Even at the time of her writing, which she tells us is twenty years after the onset of her deafness and presumably also close in time to her entry into the convent, she is still bitterly unhappy—though perhaps more resigned--with this change in her situation. This supposition is further borne-out by Carmen Marimón-Llorca's observation that Teresa never mentions other convent sisters or discusses the tranquility of convent life:

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[37] Long ago, virtuous lady, the cloud of temporal and human sadness covered the borders of my life and with a thick whirlwind of anguished sufferings carried me off to an island called "Oprobrium hominum et abiecio plebis" where I have lived for so many years — if life this can be called without ever seeing anyone to direct my steps onto the road of peace or show me a path whereby I could arrive to any community of pleasures. Thus in this exile and shadowy banishment, feeling myself more in a sepulcher than a dwelling it pleased the mercy of the Most High to illuminate me with the light of His compassionate grace so that I might place my name in the register of those about whom it is written: "The people that walked in darkness, have seen a great light: to them that dwelt hi the region of the shadow of death, light is risen" [Isaiah 9:2]. (25)

(...) "sobre todo, porque no hay una sola alusión en los dos tratados ni a sus hermanas, ni al sosiego de la vida conventual, lo que nos hace pensar que el convento no era más que el marco donde Teresa soportaba su propio aislamiento del mundo, vivía su profunda vida interior y de comunicación con Dios y se relacionaba ocasionalmente con sus contemporáneos" (112).38

The convent for Teresa therefore seems rather to be nothing more than a holding space where she bore her deafness and isolation. And though as I have indicated it is likely that the convent would have provided her opportunities for continued social interaction with the outside world, as we shall see in our consideration of the *Arboleda* Teresa writes that social interaction simply makes her feel more isolated since she cannot hear the conversation around her.

While the personal redefinition of Teresa's world would have been difficult in and of itself, I concur with Seidenspinner-Nuñez's view that Teresa's deafness would also have had an impact on her literary experience, given the highly oral/aural dimension of literature at the time. Well into the Middle Ages the practice of reading was generally understood to mean reading aloud, often in a group. This practice served multiple functions. First and perhaps most importantly it was used to facilitate instruction, particularly within convents and monasteries. In these settings group reading would be used so that monks and nuns who were unable to read would learn scripture and become familiar with religious writing. Teresa herself refers to this practice in the *Arboleda*, when she writes of her own recollections of being able to listen to sermons before her

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[38] Above all, because there is not a single reference in either work, either to her fellow nuns, or to the tranquility of convent life, we are led to believe that the convent was nothing more than the space where Teresa endured her isolation from the world and lived her profound interior life of reflection and communication with God, and maintained occasional contact with her contemporaries (my translation).

hearing loss: "me acuerdo de un tienpo, el qual era antes que mis orejas cerrasen las puertas a las bozes humanas, aver oído en los sermons" (201).39

In addition to being used in instructional ways, reading out loud was also used as a form of group entertainment. One can speculate that this would almost certainly have occurred in a household such as the Cartagenas, where learning and intellectual accomplishment were so highly valued. Thus, Teresa's deafness would have turned reading from the collective, social experience that it had formerly been, to a silent, solitary activity. Although to the modern reader who is accustomed to reading as a silent practice this may appear to be insignificant, books are the one pleasurable activity left to Teresa following the onset of deafness. We know that her love of books predates her deafness, and so on some level it seems likely or at least possible that the loss of the ability to participate in comunal reading, would only serve to magnify Teresa's other losses.

In her brief discussion of deafness, Seidenspinner Nuñez presents a phenomenon described by Oliver Sacks wherein individuals who experience post-lingual deafness hear phantom noises in situations where they have experienced noise accompanying a visual cue. She further suggests that Teresa's ability to maintain interior dialogue—or I would add, dialogue with God—is in fact a recreation of the phenomenon described by Sacks. I would take this a step further, and suggest that it may actually be reflective of a need within Teresa to place the act of reading within a familiarly social context, a mechanism for lessening the intense solitude of which she writes. In this way she continues to experience reading as a collective or social activity, her companions now, rather than

[39] I remember a time, before my ears closed their doors to human voices, when I had heard the Master of Sentences referred to in sermons ... (76).

being her family members, or fellow auditors, are now her texts and God. The essays are replete with references to God "reading her" or "reading to her": "Él solo me enseñó, e Él solo me leyó" (259).40

Lastly, deafness will also influence Teresa in her role as author. First and most obviously, because it will provide much of the content for her first essay. Second, the intense isolation that her deafness forces upon her lends to her writing a unique perspective, both in terms of the restrictions it places on what would seem to be an extroverted personality and the change it brings in her relationship with the written word, in going from a social, aural activity to one that is silent and solitary. Seidenspinner Nuñez makes the astute observation that "In effect, as a writer, Teresa is thrice marginalized -by her gender, by her deafness, and by her status as a *conversa* (3). However, as with Leonor López de Córdoba, the circumstances that marginalized Teresa may also have been the very thing that made it possible for her to assume the role of author. By the time Leonor began to write her *Memorias*, she essentially had little to lose by incurring any stigma that may have come from female authorship. She had lost her father, siblings, and many relatives to the torture of the Atarazanas, and with that loss came the loss of status and wealth she had enjoyed as one of its members. She had been forced to abandon the home of her maternal relatives, and she had been banished from Queen Catherine's court. Any scorn she might have incurred for attempting to write down the events of her life would seem to be able to have little if any impact on her at that point. Similarly, Teresa's deafness leaves her with no option to resume the active life she had led before as a member of one of Spain's leading families. And unlike many of her sisters, the social interaction of the secular world is not replaced by the communal life

[40] "He alone taught me, he alone read to me/read me" (my translation)

offered by convent living. As we have seen, she seems not to identify with the other sisters in her convent, rather her identification is with the convent of the infirm, "convento de los enfermos" (128), a sisterhood with whom she can not enjoy physical community. Therefore, particularly given her literary background, the transition from verbal interlocutor to author, once she feels that she can no longer partake of verbal exchange, seems inevitable. While her detractors may have annoyed or frustrated her, there was nothing they could do to worsen Teresa's plight. Both Teresa and Leonor are careful to place their writings within accepted paradigms, glorification of God, combating idleness, instructing others to commend themselves to the Virgin, but both also seem to have an awareness of a certain freedom that allows them to cast aside societal disapproval of a woman writing.

3.3 The Texts: Consolation and Reconstitution

As previously stated, Teresa authored two essays. The first was entitled *Arboleda de los Enfermos*, and was written approximately in 1450. Though set within a religious context, it offers a glimpse into Teresa's personal experience of coming to terms with both her deafness and her entry into the convent. The second essay, the *Admiração Operum Dei* --Teresa tells us--is written at the urging of Juana de Mendoza, with whom it is believed Teresa maintained a close friendship. Much less personal in nature, in this second essay Teresa draws on Scripture to frame a defense against the incredulity of male critics who doubted that the *Arboleda* could have been written by a woman. Though written for different purposes, and differing significantly in their content, these two essays together form a single whole that reflects the processes for coping with trauma

described by Catherine Robson, Cathy Caruth, and from a more clinical perspective, Allan Young. We know that several years elapsed between the writing of the plaintive *Arboleda* and the completion of Teresa's process in the *Admiração Operum Dei,* and given the change in tone, it is likely that during the interim years Teresa continued to grapple with the task of accepting her circumstances. This interrupted process is congruent with the process of oscillation described by Cathy Caruth, and also with that of reframing/recycling described by Allan Young. To place this in the context of the literary expression of trauma, I posit that though Teresa tries in the *Arboleda* to convince her reader that the silencing of her lips and ears and her removal from worldly chatter and activity is a blessing from a loving God who cares for her spiritual development, she has not yet managed to convince herself. Her language betrays a woman who still bitterly misses her former life, but is struggling arduously to bring her psyche into the line with the words she is putting to paper. As we have seen, Young describes this process as follows:

> [they can] reframe their traumatic memories, making the memory content consistent with their preexisting cognitive schemas. They can attempt to revise the cognitive schemas, making them consonant with their memories. Or they can try to empty the memories of their salience and emotional power, by assimilating them (responses one and two) or erecting defenses against them via denial, efforts at avoiding the stimuli that trigger recollections, generalized emotional numbing, and so on. ... The psychological process through which dissonant memories are assimilated is believed to consist of phases and cycles... Normally, cycling and processing continue until the memory is metabolized, at which point it becomes

part of the individual's inactive memory. That is, it is retrievable but no longer intrusive (8-9).

As we shall see in more detail in Chapter 4 when we discuss Madre Juana de la Cruz, religion provided each of these women a cognitive schema that would greatly enhance their ability to deal with the traumatic events in their lives. This I believe is Teresa's task in the *Arboleda*, to revise her understanding of her misfortune, and turn it from illness, isolation and pain, into a special grace bestowed upon her by God. Despite her best effort, however, I do not believe that she is successful within the *Arboleda*. Rather, it is in the *Admiración Operum Dey* that she actually achieves what she sets out to do in her earlier essay. In this way, the *Arboleda* serves as a literary example of the earlier stages described in Young's cyclical model of assimilation, the reworking of the traumatic event to bring it in line with Teresa's cognitive schema. Seidenspinner Nuñez has made a similar observation within a literary context, when she says of the *Admiração*:

> Teresa reasserts her authorship and ultimately reclaims her text by completing the autobiographical project suspended halfway through Grove of the Infirm and by tracing her journey toward spiritual understanding ("to know God") and self-knowledge ("to know myself"), a journey that ends in Teresa's final biblical analogue, a daring *imitatio Christi*. In cataloguing the lessons she learned, sandwiched between the exaltation and knowledge of God and the abnegation and shaping of her will is Teresa's recognition of the self-knowledge she achieved in the writing of her autobiographical project ("to know myself"), the site of the

quiet resolve and gentle irony of her defense as she establishes her text -and the self she constructs in her texts--as one of the admirable works of God (137).

Thus, while I will consider each essay separately, the underlying structure in my view is that at least as they relate to trauma, they are two parts of the same text, one whole that constitutes one textual representation of Teresa's restoration or reconstitution of the self.

Moreover, because discussing both essays in their entirety would require its own study, I will limit my discussion to those issues most pertinent to considerations of literary expression of trauma in Teresa's texts.[41] I will begin by considering three aspects of the *Arboleda*, Teresa's statement of purpose in writing the essay, her discussion of the bit and bridle imagery, and her exegesis of the supper of the Lamb in which she describes the diet of the infirm. Though I will briefly treat other aspects of this essay, these three themes are most germane to the discussion here.

Though autobiographical in nature, the *Arboleda* is not a memoir, and is therefore not concerned with narrating the specifics of Teresa's life, focusing instead on emotional and spiritual content. Moreover, in much the same way that Leonor López de Córdoba chose to open her text by implementing testamentary formula typical of court documents, Teresa also chooses to place her text within the context of style and genre popular in the fifteenth century, invoking forms accepted by male authors such as the religious and

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[41] There are already many excellent analyses of Teresa's two essays. For a more general overview of her work, see the following: Cartagena, Teresa de. Ed. Clara Castro-Ponce. Teresa de Cartagena, Arboleda de los enfermos. *Admiración operum* Dey. Edición Singular. Brown University, Ph.D. dissertation, 2001. Seidenspinner-Núñez, Dayle. The Cloisters of my Ears: The Writings of Teresa de Cartagena. Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 1998. Deyermond, A. "El convento de Dolencias: the Works of Teresa de Cartagena» Journal of Hispanic Philology, 1 (1976):19-29, and "Spain's First Women Writers", in Beth Miller, ed., Women in Hispanic Literature: Icons and Fallen Idols. Berkeley: U of California P, 1983. 27-52. Marimón Llorca, Carmen. Mujer y sociedad medieval: Prosistas castellanas medievales. Alicante: Caja de Ahorros Provincial, 1990.

consolatory treatise. As has already been stated, Teresa's grandfather Pablo de Santa María was a friend of Pedro de Luna, and most scholars agree that Teresa would have had access to his *Libro de Consolaciones de la Vida Humana* (*Books of Consolations of Human life*) written in 1604. Alan Deyermond, in his article, "El Convento de Dolencias" notes Teresa's reliance on imagery common to period texts, images of family relationships, landscape, and most notably, the frequent use of the grove or garden image or *locus amoenus* in other period texts such as *Vergel de consolación, Orto do Esposo, Jardín de nobles donzellas, Vergel de príncipes (21).* Deyermond also draws the reader's attention to Teresa's citing of the Bible, as well as many of the church fathers, St. Augustine, St. Bernard, St. Jerome, among others. Unfortunately, a thorough exploration of textual influences and imagery would require more space than we have here, and is not central to the issues under consideration in this study. It is however germane in that Teresa's use of these topoi is I think a deliberate choice on her part. In much the same way that Leonor seeks validation through courtly formulae, Teresa seeks validation by establishing herself as well-read in both sacred and secular literature. In doing so, she is able to write an essay that is personal as well as intellectual and artistic. The opening of *the Arboleda* demonstrates this expertly.

The problem, or traumatic event, is named immediately in the *Arboleda*'s opening: "Este tractado se llama *Arboleda de los enfermos,* el qual conpuso Teresa de Cartagena, seyendo apasionada de graves dolerías especialmente aviendo el sentido del oír perdido del todo (97).[42] However, unlike in Leonor López de Córdoba's *Memorias,* where Caruth's notion of a "double-telling" was pivotal, in the *Arboleda* Teresa's

[42] "This treatise is called *Grove of the Infirm,*' which Teresa de Cartagena composed, being afflicted with grave ailments and, in particular, having lost completely her sense of hearing (24).

concern is not the traumatic event of losing her deafness, but rather the life that is left to her having experienced that event. The reader learns almost immediately that the *Arboleda* was written some time after both the onset of deafness and Teresa's entry into the convent, "Grand tienpo ha, virtuosa señora, que la niebla de tristeza tenporal e humana cubrió los términos de mi bevir e con un espeso torvellino de angustiosas pasiones me llevó a una ínsula ... donde tantos años ha que en ella bivo" (97).[43] Though she makes frequent mention of her "pasiones" (passions) and "graves dolores" (grave pains) she does not at any point either discuss the nature of her illness or attempt to narrate those events. While she does write of her parents' frustration with what would seem to have been a constant or long-term illness continuing to be a source of anguish for her, what she presents to the reader are her feelings about that experience, rather than providing any narration of her family life or description of quarrels with her parents.

As I have suggested earlier, in the *Arboleda* the reader finds a duality of language, a dialectic tension between where Teresa would like to be and where she is. Her statement of her purpose in writing belies this tension:

> E aunque non desenbuelta la lengua y peor dispuesto el sentido solamente me aprovecharé dellos por no dar lugar a estos dos daños, los quales son soledat e ociosidat. E pues la soledat no puedo apartar de mí quiero huir la ociosidat porque non pueda" travar casamiento con la soledat ca sería un peligroso matrimonio. E si puede así arredrar de mi diestro lado la soledat la ociosidat del lado siniestro, non dubdedes que en ello afanar por descanso lo avría mi mano. [...] E donde el oír fallesce, ¿qué tiene que ver el fablar? Quedara la presenta muerta & sola del

[43] Long ago, virtuous lady, the cloud of temporal and human sadness covered the borders of my life and with a thick whirlwind of anguished sufferings carried me off to an island ... where I have lived for so many years ... (24)

todo. Así, que por estas razones e por el espirencia que las faze dignas de fee, se puede creer de mí quando estoy sola; pues así es que esta mi esquiva e durable soledat apartar de mí no puedo, quiero hazer guerra a la ociosidat, ocupándome en esta pequeña obra, la qual bien se puede dezár que no es buena nin comunal mas mala del todo. Pero pues el fin porque se haze es bueno bien se puede seguir otro mayor bien. E por la mi voluntat éste sea que Aquel soberano Señor que más las voluntades que las obras acata quiere hazer apazible e acebto delante de los ojos de su grand clemencia lo que enojoso e digno de reprehensión a las gentes paresce. (100-101)[44]

However, keeping in mind Teresa's opening lines, it can be readily seen that while she offers as a primary purpose to combat idleness and solitude she simultaneously expresses a deep loneliness that cannot be driven away even by the company of her books. Carmen Marimón-Llorca makes a similar observation:

> "Hace veinte años que es sorda, durante ese tiempo, sólo los libros la han acompañado, y sólo ellos han sido su fuente de conocimiento, pero su compañía no ha sido suficiente para aliviarla de la amargura de no poderse comunicar con los

[44] And although my tongue is not eloquent and my sense is ill prepared, [I am writing this treatise] to avoid succumbing to these two dangers, solitude and idleness; and since I cannot rid myself of solitude, I want to drive idleness away so that it cannot join with solitude, for this would be a dangerous marriage. And if my hand could thus drive off solitude from my right side and idleness from my left, do not doubt that it would ever tire from this travail; ... And where hearing fails, what good is speech? One is left dead and completely isolated. Thus, for these reasons, and because my experience lends them credence, you can well believe how very lonely I am; and since I cannot rid myself of this unsparing and lasting loneliness, I want to combat my idleness by busying myself with this little treatise, which one might well say is neither good nor even ordinary, but rather completely bad. However, since it is written for a good purpose, a greater good consequently may ensue. And because of my good intention, may our sovereign Lord, who judges intentions rather than works, find my writing, which seems vexing and reprehensible to some people, pleasing and acceptable to His merciful eyes.
(25).

demás. La *Arboleda* parece un intento de llenar el hueco de sus horas —vacías ante la imposibilidad de escuchar— y de esas frustraciones" ... (117).

Given Teresa's insistence on the pleasure she used to take in "worldly chatter" one can readily deduce that while she may not wish to engage in verbal exchange, she would nonetheless still be driven toward some form of self-expression. The transition from the mouth to the pen, particularly for a well-read woman from a family where learning and literary achievement were highly valued, would thus be a short one. In other words, Teresa has in effect; decided to do what Catherine Robson has called writing her way in and through the wounds of idleness and loneliness that twenty years of reading and reflection have not been able to take away. Without calling into question Teresa's stated purpose, I argue therefore that the *Arboleda* has a dual purpose, first it's stated one to help Teresa pass away the long hours and keep her mind and her hand occupied, and second, to write her way out of her sadness and into conformity with the will of God.

Teresa again reinforces this tension between her natural inclinations and her imposed isolation in her use of the bit and bridle image from Psalm 31. This passage is first cited in her prologue, "With bit and bridle bind fast their jaws, who come not near unto thee" (Psalm 31:9), and is later further developed. As she tells us,

> Para mejor ver cómmo e quánto haze a mi propósito esta autoridat es de considerar que este acatamiento de cabestro e freno es diputado para los animales brutos que carecen de razón, porque con estos artificiales acatamientos son traídos casi por fuerça adonde les cunple e al servicio de su dueño. Conviene así que por el cabestro son guiados e por el freno costreñidos. E ansí cómmo en la boca e cerviz de los ya dichos animales es puesto cabestro e freno por las dichas razones,

> bien ansí paresce por otras dos semejantes causas ser dado a todo animal razonable cabestro y freno. El cabestro es la razón y el freno es la tenpranea y discrición, ca la razón nos guía *e* deve guiar a todo lo que es bueno y conplidero, no sólo a *nuestro* bien tenporal, mas a lo espiritual e pertenesciente al *servicio* de *nuestro* Señor; *e* la tenplança y discrción nos costríñe a refrenar los apetitos desordenados de *nuestra* humana flaqueza (115).45

Thus, the bit and bridle are used for the restraint and guidance of animals incapable of reason. Likewise, God uses these same tools to guide his flock. The bit represents human reason, and the bridle temperance and discretion. Initially the expectation, Teresa tells us, is the voluntary use of these tools in order to live a life that conforms with the will of God, but Teresa also indicates that when one fails to use discretion and reason of one's own volition, God has yet a second bit and bridle, that of *dolencias* (afflictions) to guide those individuals who must be forced to follow his ways:

> Segund desto, bien es y más de bien serle añadido otro freno así commo animal bruto. [...] Digo e afirmo que por mi grand bien y manfiesto provecho el Señor soberano con cabestro y freno de dolencia e pasiones costriñó las mexillas de mis vanidades. [...] La dolencia buena y durable es cabestro para abaxar la cerviz de

[45] To better appreciate how this biblical authority suits my purpose, we must consider that a bit and a bridle are designed for dumb animals who lack reason so that with these bindings they may be brought almost by force to a place that suits them and pleases their master; thus they are guided by their bit and constrained by their bridle. And just as, for the reasons stated above, this bit and bridle are placed in the mouth and on the neck of irrational animals, so for similar reasons another bit and bridle are provided for rational animals. The bit is our reason and the bridle our temperance and discretion. For reason guides us toward all that is good and fitting for our temporal good and our spiritual well-being in the service of our Lord, and temperance and discretion constrain us to curb the disordered appetites of our human weakness.

sobervia es freno para costreñir y evitar los deseos dañosos y enpecibles al ánima (117).46

This notion that God intervenes to force his direction on those who do not employ reason and discretion in good, spiritual living, raises some interesting questions. Though Teresa at no point suggests that she carries a dark secret as does her English predecessor Margery Kempe (ca. 1373), this last passage suggests that she does regard some aspect of her former conduct as being errant enough to warrant being forcibly restrained by God. The most obvious and simple explanation of this would simply be that Teresa at some point did engage in behavior that she feels earned her the punishment of God. However, if in fact we accept that she is grasping to revise cognitive schemas which she had held for her entire life, now some forty years, one also must consider the possibility that Teresa is reframing her understanding of her former life, so as to justify punishment from God as a means of explaining her deafness. As Judith Lewis Herman points out in *Trauma and Recovery*, at some point during the recovery process all victims of trauma must confront the question of why this incident befell them. Herman explains:

> the survivor confronts another, equally incomprehensible question: Why me? The arbitrary, random quality of her fate defies the basic human faith in a just or even predictable world order. In order to develop a full understanding of the trauma story, the survivor must examine the moral questions of guilt and responsibility

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[46] From this it follows that the man who does not know nor wants to know how to use his bit and bridle is an irrational animal since he does not exercise reason, for the proper use of reason is to admonish and constrain us to desire good and avoid evil. Therefore, it seems that whoever abandons good and follows evil has forsaken reason, or reason has forsaken him. Accordingly, it is more than right that, like a dumb animal, he be provided with another bridle. I say and affirm that with bit and bridle my sovereign Lord constrained the jaws of my vanities to benefit my spiritual well-being. A good and lasting ailment is a bridle to humble the proud neck and a bit to constrain desires dangerous and injurious to the soul (34).

and reconstruct a system of belief that makes sense of her undeserved suffering (178).

The fact that Teresa is reconstructing her belief systems is evident throughout this essay. What form that reconstruction has taken is less discernible; is Teresa simply owning up to flaws in her own conduct and accepting the designated punishment? Or is she in fact revising her views of her former life and taking on guilt in order to explain her suffering? Unfortunately neither her text, nor the current body of information about her life allows us to arrive at a definitive answer to this question. However, as with Madre Juana, the religious mantle offers Teresa a kind of special protection that is more difficult to come by in a modern worldview. Whatever the source of her feelings of guilt, her religious framework enables her to turn what could be viewed as God's punishment into what will ultimately be His special grace, as we will see in the *Admiração Operum Dey.*

A second principal theme in the *Arboleda* is the motif of the supper of the Lamb, which Teresa combines with a parable from the Gospel of Luke. Through the use of this parable Teresa initiates a lengthy allegorical discourse which employs the metaphor of food and diet for spiritual fulfillment and well-being. In the parable from Luke, a man prepares a supper, and when none of his guests attend, he bids his servant to go and gather new guests from the hungry and suffering of the street. In a moment of self-awareness and self-acceptance, Teresa equates this with the supper of the Lamb, and is able to see both sides of her struggle, seeing in herself both the guest who refused to attend and the one who would eventually be brought in by special invitation. Teresa initially places herself within the first group of invited guests who do not wish to attend, asking the question, who given a choice would not choose health over sickness. She then

supports her argument with the story of Tobias, who argues that he will find no other pleasures in life if his eyes are unable to see the sky. She writes:

> En esta manera se entiende, o me paresse que se deve entender: qualquier enfermo, por bueno e virtuoso que sea, padesce la dolencia contra su voluntat e aunque sea justo y santo, deseará ser libre de pasiones corporales, y si aquéllas le hizieren conpañía non le plazerá dello. Onde avernos enxenplo en Tobías quondo nuestro Señor premitió que cegase e cómmo el ángel Rafael le saludase diziendo: "Gozo a ti sienpre sea", respondió el santo onbre: "¿Quál gozo será a mí pues la luz del cielo no veo...?" Donde paresce que no le plazía con aquella pasión. ¿E quién es que non desee ser sano más que enfermo? No, ninguno en los humanos yo creo se podría hallar tan perfetto que negase aquello a que naturalmente es inclinado (128).[47]

This is one of only a few brief moments in the *Arboleda* when Teresa seems comfortable with her natural predilection for the world's entertainments. But this moment is fleeting, as Teresa quickly shifts her perspective and resumes her exhortation that all should abandon their own will and conform to the will of God: "Pero entra de grado a la cena ya dicha si conosce serle dada por su bien, y con devota paciencia y acción de gracias

[47] It seems to me this should be understood in this way: any invalid, no matter how good or virtuous, suffers illness against his will; even though he may be just and saintly, he will desire to be free of physical suffering and he takes no pleasure in its company. Of this we have an example in Tobias, when our Lord permitted him to be blinded and when the angel Raphael greeted him, saying, "Joy be to thee always," the saintly man replied, "What manner of joy shall be to me who sit in darkness, and see not the light of heaven?" [Tobias 5:11-12]. From this it appears that his suffering did not please him. And who does not desire to be healthy rather than sick? No human, I believe, is so perfect that he will deny what he naturally prefers, which is to desire health above all things (40).

conforma a su querer con la voluntat de Dios; plaziéndole, no naturalmente, ca esto no podía ser, mas espiritualmente, con todo aquello que al Señor plaze" (129).[48]

Teresa continues to write of the importance of accepting the will of God and his wisdom and mercy in removing her from the world and forcing her to be silent and listen to his word. However, here she is much less strident than she was in her self-criticism in her discussion of the bit and bridle. Here, rather than making the argument that her punishment was merited and necessary she continues to be keenly aware of her own unhappiness. This segment of her text almost has the feel of the reflections of a child who has just been punished, perhaps recognizing that a behavioral adjustment is in order, but nonetheless unhappy at being the recipient of her parents' corrective measures. Teresa's appreciation of God's corrective measures appears at this point to be largely intellectual, as she still recalls the pleasures of her former life.

The explication of Luke's parable is followed by a lengthy discussion of the benefits of "la cena divinal" (God's supper), which in turn leads to an extolling of the virtues of a healthy spiritual diet. Still, she places herself among those who would make different choices had she been able. In her discussion of the diet of the infirm, when she writes of the desire for human pleasure she uses the *nosotros* form: "Trabajamos por traer a nuestras manos los gozos humanos y ellos no quieren venir porque todo el bien deste mundo es manjar de los sanos" (141),[49] clearly placing herself among those still desirous of worldly pleasures. She then proceeds to cajole her fellow sufferers—and herself--to partake of and enjoy the diet befitting the infirm, a diet which is bitter but beneficial:

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[48] he enters gladly if he recognizes that it is given for his own good, and with devout patience and gratitude he conforms his desire to God's will, taking pleasure spiritually -not naturally, for that cannot be-in everything pleasing to the Lord (40).

[49] We strive to bring within our reach human joys and they refuse to come. All the blessings of this world are food reserved for the healthy ... (46)

pues dexemos lo ajeno y úsennos de nuestra dieta, y de tales viandas gustemos que nos hagan buen estómago sofridor de todo trabajo. De seis viandas me paresce que devemos y podemos usar seguramente todos los que dolerías padescemos. Las quales son éstas: tributada tristeza, paciensia durable, contrición amarga, confesión verdadera y freqüentada, oración devota, perseveración en obras virtuosas. E destas seis viandas e de otras sus familiares podemos comer sin temor; y aunque parescan al gusto algún tanto amargas, necesario es que así sea. Ca en la dieta a pocos enfermos sabe bien, pero es provechosa y es fortificativa. Por ende queramos lo amargo, pues lo dulce no nos quiere (141-142).[50]

One can hardly avoid here the image of a child being admonished to eat his vegetables, and Teresa, it would seem, would definitely prefer dessert. Her struggle in adhering to this diet is exposed, as she works to convince both herself and others of the benefits of a diet that has been forced on her. Teresa freely acknowledges that the dishes served on this diet are bitter and unpleasant, but good for one's health. She further recognizes that the more desirable dishes ("lo dulce") are no longer within her grasp: "no nos quiere" (141).

This struggle is at it's core a type of conversion experience. Though Teresa's family had converted to Christianity two generations ago, as has been previously stated, speculation exists that the motivation may have been more one of survival than an actual spiritual change-of-heart. Teresa's conversion is truly one of a spiritual nature, a struggle to accept God's will over her own. This representation of conversion as internal struggle

[50] let us leave what we cannot have and get accustomed to our own diet, and let us partake of those foods that suit our stomach and help us suffer our travail. It seems to me that we who endure suffering should partake of these six dishes: grievous sadness, enduring patience, bitter contrition, frequent and heartfelt confession, devout prayer, perseverance in virtuous works. And we can ingest without fear these six foods and related provisions; and although they may seem quite bitter to our taste, this is necessarily so, for few infirm enjoy their diet, even though it is beneficial and fortifying. Therefore, let us love the bitter since the sweet does not love us, so that what is bitter to our palate (that is, to our human senses) may be converted into sweetness for our soul (46).

is in keeping with Carolyn Bynum's description of the differences between male and female conversion experiences. In her book, *Fragmentation and Redemption: Essays on Gender and the Human Body in Medieval Religion,* Bynum describes the male conversion experience to be characterized by three phases: crisis, breech, and reintegration or triumph. Further, she suggests that the final reintegration often involves voluntary acceptance of some sort of reversal, weakness, poverty, or traits associated with the feminine. She regards this pattern to be a manifestation of the fact that male saints entered their conversion from a position of power, and offers in support of this view, the observation by liberation theologians that the powerful often express imitation of Christ by voluntarily taking on poverty, nudity, or weakness. The disempowered on the other hand, who already suffer these discomforts involuntarily, express their *imitatio Christi* through ongoing struggle (41). Bynum suggests that this same dynamic of struggle is also prevalent in conversion experiences of women, who also enter conversion from a marginalized position. The irony here is striking, and must have been especially difficult for this involuntary nun who was raised in privilege and comfort. Despite her affluent upbringing, in which she would have had her pick of anything the world had to offer—at least of those things it could offer to a woman—she now finds herself among the infirm or disabled and thus the disempowered. She must accept the poverty of silence, of a diminished social life, and of imposed entry into the convent. Though she recognizes, at least intellectually the benefits of spiritual diet/conversion, it is nonetheless a more austere path which she previously would have eschewed.

Clearly these elements are present in Teresa's circumstance, and like those mentioned by Bynum, acceptance is Teresa's primary task. However, there also exists a

nearly complete lack of agency on the part of the subject. The decision to accept the bitter diet of illness is for all intents and purposes perceived by Teresa as not initiating from the subject, but by the world which rejects her and thus imposes isolation from the outside, and by God who forces the subject to submit to His will, again removing all control from the subject:

> Los plazeres que en él (mundo) son del todo nos haborescen: la salut nos desanpara, los amigos nos olvidan, los parientes se enojan, e aun la propia madre se enoja con la hija enferma, y el padre aboresce al hijo que con continuas dolerías le ocupare la posada. [...] Por ende dexemos a quien nos dexa y Aquel sólo queramos que nos quiere y Aquel sólo amemos que nos da las dolerías a este respeto, porque aborescamos al mundo y amemos a Él que nos ama (142-143).[51]

Obviously none would make the deliberate choice to endure a long-term illness. However Teresa herself writes of having received and declined invitations to continue former social relationships. This is seen when the author states: "Id a Fulanos qu'os quieren ver" (105), and later in the *Arboleda* when she writes of her relationship with doña Juana de Mendoza. The reader must therefore consider to what extent Teresa has actually been rejected, and to what extent she is choosing to read rejection in those around her in order to ease her own difficulties in accepting the limitations imposed by her illness. In the above passage her sense of a lack of agency is evident, and perhaps it is her own perception that is most important. But by internalizing a schema of forced

[51] Worldly pleasures despise us, health forsakes us, friends forget us, relatives get angry, and even one's own mother gets annoyed with her sickly daughter, and one's father despises the son who with chronic afflictions dwells in his home. ...Therefore, let us forsake what forsakes us, and let us want only the One who wants us and love only the One who gives us our afflictions, so that we may despise the world and love only Him who loves us (46-47).

obeissance, she also empowers herself to choose not to participate in social interactions that heighten her feelings of isolation.

Following the analysis of the Suppr of the Lamb, Teresa continues by discussing the parable of the Talents, which leads into a discussion of the seven cardinal sins, which in turn lead to the seven Cardinal virtues. The autobiographical project is essentially abandoned here, and the essay becomes more of a standard spiritual treatise. We will therefore conclude our discussion of the *Arboleda* at this point, and consider how self-revelation is resumed in the *Admiración Operum Dey*.

As I have already discussed, Teresa's purpose in writing the *Admiração* had little to do with personal exploration or self-expression. She tells us at the essay's opening that she is writing at the request of her patroness, the noblewoman Juana de Mendoza. The latter has apparently urged her to respond to male critics of the *Arboleda*, who argue against the notion of a woman writing a spiritual treatise: "Muchas vezes me es hecho entender, virtuosa señora, *que* algunos de los prudentes varones *e* así mesmo henbras discretas se maravillan o han maravillado de un tratado, que la graçia divina administrando mi flaco mugeril entendimiento, mi mano escrivió" (225).[52] What follows is a rather spirited defense of Teresa's ability to write the *Arboleda,* in which she draws on various images and conventions in order to silence her critics.

Though the *Admiración* is an interesting and forward-thinking text, considered by some scholars to be one of Spain's earliest feminist writings,[53] what is of primary

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[52] "Many times, virtuous lady, I have been informed that some prudent men and also discreet women have marveled at a treatise that, with divine grace directing my weak womanly understanding, was written by my hand" (87).

[53] For a discussion of feminism in the *Admiração* see Ronald Surtz, "The New Judith" in *Writing Women in Late Medieval Spain* (Philadelphia: Pennsylvania Press, 1995). It should be noted however, that while Surtz's argument is compeling, Teresa's feminism is in fact of a rather sollopsistic nature. Though she does

Concern for this study is that of departure. Whereas the *Arboleda* is a text of loss and of mourning, the *Admiración* is Teresa's written departure from sadness. In terms of what this may have meant for Teresa's actual day-to-day convent life, there is no way of knowing. Just as the information surrounding her early life is scant, so too, there is no information about her life at the time of or after the *Admiración*. These two essays are her only extant works. As was typically the case, there are no records leaving information about the remainder of her days in the convent, and we do not even know the date of her death. So, risky though it may be, anything that can be surmised about Teresa's final coming-to-terms with her deafness must be inferred from her texts.

What is of most interest to our purposes here is the image of herself that Teresa conveys in her writing. Gone are the self-chastisement, the willfulness and the struggle that permeate the *Arboleda*. Though she maintains a level of self-deprecation that would be expected of a woman throughout, she also expresses amazement and scorn at her detractors, an act that indicates a more solidly formed schemata of self. In explanation of her taking up the pen in this second essay she writes::

> creo ciertamente que se ayan maravillado los prudentes varones del tractado que yo hize, y no porque en él se contenga cosa muy buena ni digna de admiración, mas porque mi propio ser e justo merescimiento con la adversa fortuna e

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advance her right to authorship, she does not argue that same right for her sisters. Instead, she argues that she has been endowed with a special grace from God, to engage in what would otherwise be a task It should be noted however, that while Surtz's argument is compeling, Teresa's feminism is in fact of a rather sollopsistic nature. Though she does advance her right to authorship, she does not argue that same right for her sisters. Instead, she argues that she has been endowed with a special grace from God to engage in what would otherwise be a task It should be noted however, that while Surtz's argument is compeling, Teresa's feminism is in fact of a rather sollopsistic nature. Though she does advance her right to authorship, she does not argue that same right for her sisters. Instead, she argues that she has been endowed with a special grace from God, to engage in what would otherwise be a task reserved for males. Many scholars do not accepts Surtz's position, arguing that one cannot apply a twentieth-century ideology to an Early-Modern authorr.

acrecentadas pasiones dan bozes contra mí e llaman a todos que se maravillen diziendo: "¿Cómo en persona que tantos males asientan puede aver algund bien?" [...] E de aquí se ha seguido que la obra mugeril e de poca sustancia que dina es de reprehensión entre los onbres comunes, con mucha razón sería fecha dina de admiração en el acatamiento de los singulares e grandes orantes, ca no sin causa se maravilla el prudente quando ven que el nescio sabe hablar. E diga quien quisiere que esta ya dicha admiración es loor, que a mi denuesto me paresce e por la mi voluntad, antes se me ofrescan injuriosos denuestos me paresce que no vanos loores, ca ni me puede dañar la injuria ni aprovechar el vano loor. Así que yo no quiero usurpar la gloria ajena ni deseo huir del propio denuesto. (227).54

With inescapable irony, Teresa remains self deprecatory,while levying harsh criticism against "los prudentes varones." As Seidenspinner Nuñez points out, the placement of the adjective "prudente" is significant. By placing the adjective before the noun, she alters the meaning. Rather than distinguishing a particular group from among men, she uses prudentes to denote an inherent male characteristic. She then marvels that these men who are so prudent would even take the time to be bothered with such a little work as the *Arboleda:*, "E commo sea una obra pequeña, de poca sustancia, estoy maravillada. *E* no se crea *que* los prudentes varones se inclinasen a quererse maravillar de

[54] But if their wonder is certain, my offense is clear, since apparently their awe does not result from the merits of my text but from the defects of its author; ... prudent men have marveled at the treatise I wrote, not because there was any thing very good or worthy of wonder in it, but because of me and my justly deserved adversities and increased suffering; they cry out against me and call upon everyone to marvel, saying, "How can there be any good in a person afflicted with so many misfortunes?" And from this it follows that if a womanly text of little substance is worthy of reprehension among common men, with greater reason it would inspire consternation in exceptional and great men, for not without cause does the prudent man marvel when he sees that a fool can speak. And although it is said that their wonder is flattering, to me it seems offensive and clear that they offer me scathing insults and not empty praise; yet although insults cannot hurt me or vain praise benefit me, I do not want to usurp another's glory nor ignore my own offense.

tan poca cosa" (225).55 Her disdain is evident. Why, she asks, would such prudent and learned men even be bothered with her little trifle of an essay? The Teresa we met in the *Arboleda* would seem to have been much more likely to blame herself. In fact, in the *Arboleda*'s opening, she suggests that some may find fault with her decision to write, but justifies her actions by virtue of her need to avoid idleness, which she would have known would be favorably accepted as an attempt to avoid one of the seven cardinal sins about which she would later write.

Though Teresa's advocation of women's writing—and the limitations thereof--are not the focus of this study, some words about her argument are necessary here as they are also at the crux of her resolution of her grief over her hearing loss and subsequent isolation. Though Teresa does advocate for the notion that a woman can write, she does not suggest that all women can write. Rather, she argues that though writing may not be a typical activity for a woman, certain women—herself among them—when endowed by God with wisdom can write. In support of this position she puts forth two primary arguments. First, invoking the metaphor of the pith and the bark (meollo ycorteza) she argues that men and women are interdependent and complementary, that the stronger exterior bark is necessary to protect the softer pith, but that without the softer inner material the bark would not receive the necessary nurturance to sustain itself. In this way, while different, both sexes are equally of value if either is to survive. Second, and of most interest to this study, is that on certain occasions God calls upon a woman to perform extraordinary acts.

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[55] And since it is a brief work of little substance, I am amazed, for it is~hard to believe that prudent men would marvel so at such an insignificant thing.

To illustrate this argument Teresa invokes the biblical story of Judith as her spiritual mother and role model. She draws two parallels here, first between herself and Judith, and second between two traditionally male objects, the pen and the sword. As Ronald Surtz points out in *Writing Women in Late Medieval Spain*, there are a number of parallels between Judith and Teresa. First, Judith is a Jew, Teresa is the daughter of a converso family. Second, as a widow, Judith lives in chastity; as a nun, Teresa does as well. Lastly, both women have acted as a man, Judith in wielding the sword, and Teresa in wielding the pen (32). Teresa first describes how, though merely a woman, God imbued Judith with the strength to take up the sword and overcome the great commander Holifernes. If then, despite her weakness and lack of skill and training God could provide Judith with the courage to wield a sword, which after all is much greater than the pen, how much more readily could he give to a woman the grace and understanding to put pen to paper:

> ¿como los negará la graçia suya para que con ella o mediante ella sepan e puedan fazer alguna otra cosa que sea más fácil o ligera de fazer al sexo fimíneo? Que manifiesto es que más a mano viene a la henbra ser eloquente que no ser fuerte, e más onesto le es ser entendida que no osada, e más ligera cosa le será usar de la péñola que del espada. Así que deven notar los prudentes varones que Aquél que dio industria e graçia a Judit para fazer un tan maravilloso e famoso arto, bien puede dar industria o entendimiento e graçia otra qualquier henbra para fazer lo que otras mugeres, o por ventura algunos del estado varonil no sabrían (239).[56]

[56] Well, if God did not deny the female condition the grace and skill to do very difficult things beyond the power of their natural state, how will He deny us His grace to know and be able to do something more readily accessible to the female sex? For clearly it is more within the reach of a woman to be eloquent than strong, and more modest for her to be skilled than daring, and easier for her to use the pen than the sword.

Again one notes the striking change in tone from the *Arboleda.* No longer are we reading about the angry woman forced to accept God's discipline, though she would rather be enjoying the noise and chatter of the secular world. In our discussion of the *Arboleda*, we discussed that essay as an example of Carolyn Bynum's view that the female conversion experience was frequently represented as struggle. Teresa did not need the male conversion model of voluntary sacrifice, as her sacrifice had been taken from her already and against her will, and so she struggled between acceptance and rejection of that over which she had no control. It would seem here that for Teresa the struggle of conversion is a thing of the past. In Judith she finds not only a powerful female role model, but one who accomplished that which no man had been able to accomplish. In her acknowledgement of God's right to choose her as his instrument, Teresa writes as one who feels deserving of being the recipient of God's grace, and as such, entitled to wield her pen. Teresa's argument here is essentially the same one she employs in the *Arboleda*, that God chooses to bestow that which it wishes on whomever he wishes according to His estimation of what will bring the most spiritual fruit. In writing of her suffering, Teresa argued that God chose to force her from the pleasures of the world because if He hadn't, she would never have turned her attention from worldly pleasures. Writing, then, is her reward. It first served to help her come to an acceptance of her losses, and now God's understanding continues to pour through her pen for the enlightenment of those who would question her and in questioning her, question Him. God may have taken away her voice, but in return for her struggle, he has given her the pen.

Thus prudent men should note that He who gave the skill and grace to Judith to accomplish such a marvelous and famous act can well give ingenuity or understanding and grace to any woman to do what other women and perchance some of the male condition might not know how to do (93).

She is careful however to clarify that this is not due to any special merit of hers. In yet another magnificent double-entendre, she removes herself from any risk of appearing boastful, while simultaneously insulting her critics when she writes that God does not bestow His virtues according to human merit, because if that were the case, all His virtues would simply return to heaven:

> respondo que verdad es: Judit era muger santa e muy solícita en guardar la ley de Dios e grande amiga de oraciones e de ayuno e de todo exercicio santo; pero sabemos que Dios no faze beneficios ni graçias a los onbres por respetto de los méritos de cada uno, mas solamente a respetto de sí mesmo e de su inestimable bondad; que en verdad, si por sola santidad e justicia e méritos buenos de las criaturas humanas dispensase el celestial Padre e repartiese los sus beneficios, piénseme que todos los bienes que avernos en la tierra se sobirian al cielo (239-240).57

Teresa has thus been transformed from the stubborn, irrational animal who had to be forced with the bit and bridle of affliction to conform to God's will, to a female vessel endowed with the special grace to wield the male pen to share His wisdom.

Finally, let us consider one last segment of the *Admiración*, Teresa's treatment of the parable of the blind man on the road to Jericho found in the Gospel of Luke. Again, we find a strong personal identification between Teresa and her biblical model, the obvious connection being that the two share a physical disability. Teresa equates his lack

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[57] I respond that this is true: although Judith was a holy woman and very solicitous in keeping God's law and very given to prayers and fasts and all spiritual exercises, we know that God does not confer blessings or grace according to our individual merit but only according to His own inestimable goodness; for, indeed, were our heavenly Father to dispense and distribute His blessings according to the sanctity and justice and merits of human beings, I believe that all the blessings we have here on earth would return to heaven (93-94.

of sight with her deafness, his wandering with her physical and social isolation. As Surtz tells us, the identification here is so strong that Teresa begins her recounting of this tale in the third-person, but ends up interjecting herself into the narrative in the first-person:

> ciego qu'estava en el camino quando nuestro Redentor pasava cerca de Gericó. E así como aquel ciego, non viendo luz alguna, sintió que Aquél por quien, es hecha la luz pasava acerca d'él, e que le podía librar de la tiniebla en que eslava» bien así mi entendimiento, estando ciego e lleno de tinieblas de pecados, sintió las pisadas del Salvador, las quales son las buenas ispiraciones que Él enbía en nuestras ánimas antes que venga, porque desque sea venido le amoscamos e sepamos pedir lo que: de razón pedir devemos.
>
> E como mi ciego entendimiento sintió por las señales ya dichas que'l Salvador venía, luego començó a dar secretas bozes diziendo: "Ave merçed de mí, Fijo de David" [...] ca como yo estava en el camino cerca de Jericó, que se entiende puesto todo mi cuidado en la calle deste mundo (260).[58]

Teresa continues with her narrative, telling how Christ, whom she equates with divine grace, guided the blind man to him, and restored his sight, thus bringing Teresa's understanding into line with his will. This is the one point in the *Admiraçión* where Teresa allows the reader to see that her struggle is still not completely put to rest when she writes, "E sea verdad que mis naturales e humanos deseos me conbidavan e

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[58] And certainly I believe that my understanding at that moment was like the blind man on the road near Jericho when our Redeemer passed by.[28] And just as that blind man, without seeing any light at all, felt that He who made light was passing near by him and that He could free him from his darkness,[29] so my understanding, blind and full of the darkness of my sins, felt the footsteps of my Savior, which are the good inspirations He sends to our souls before His coming so that once He has arrived we recognize Him and know to ask what we should rightfully request. And when, because of these signs, my blind understanding felt my Savior coming, it immediately began to shout with secret voices, saying, "Jesus, son of David, have mercy on me" ... since I was on the road near Jericho -by which it is understood that all my thoughts were placed on the road of this world and my desires were closer to human attachments than to spiritual ones ... (104).

inclinavan a pedir cosas algund tanto contrarias a la salud espiritual, pero desque ya conosçí que aquel Señor que así me interrogava era mi Salvador e que si yo le pidiese alguna cosa contraría a mi salvación, que no me la daría" (262).59 In this very genuine moment, Teresa admits that she has not lost her desire for all those things that held sway over her in the *Arboleda*, hearing, social interaction and worldly pleasures, but rather that she has learned to dominate those desires accepting and even embracing the spiritual path to which she has been called. As she tells us in the *Arboleda* that anyone given the choice would choose to be healthy, it would seem disengenuous were she to suddenly find herself free of her desire to be healthy and have her hearing once again. So now, while she may not find the menu to be of her choosing, she opts to embrace the supper of the Lamb which she only forcibly attended in the *Arboleda*.

Much like Catherine Robson's image of the scar that leads both back to the wound and forward toward healing, this fusion of light and sound imagery lends a spiral element to Teresa's two essays, bringing them together, as I suggested at the beginning, as one text. At the opening of the *Arboleda*, Teresa writes of her shadowy banishment and her silent isolation, invoking the passage from the book of Isaiah that promises God's light to those who dwell in darkness, "a los que moravan en tinieblas Luz les es dada". Throughout the *Arboleda* Teresa struggles between accepting her fate or her conversion, and longing to return to the life that she once knew. At last, in the *Admiraçión* she seems to have found in her new life her own meaning and value in being chosen by God to bring his words to other sufferers.

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[59] "And while my natural human desires invited and inclined me to request things contrary to my spiritual health, I realized that the Lord that asked me that question was my Savior and that if I were to ask for something contrary to my salvation, He would not give it to me" (104).

So, here, nearing the close of the *Admiração Operum Dei,* God has finally responded to the cries of the blind man, providing guidance and restoring sight. The silence has been filled by Teresa's own voice crying out for the healing hand of Christ, and God's restoration of light to the blind man/Teresa. At the *Arboleda*'s opening, Teresa seeks divine light, but she cannot receive it because she has not finished mourning the loss of all that held meaning for her in her former life. In the *Admiração*, she is ready to receive God's light, and it is thus given to her, "luego se ronpió el velo de las tinieblas que tenía ciegos los ojos de mi entendimiento e vio e siguió al Salvador manificando a Dios" (264).[60]

To conclude, unlike Leonor López de Córdoba, who experiences several false departures only to return to her starting point, Teresa has accomplished true departure. That which was lost has not been and cannot be restored, but she has found meaning in that loss which has made it endurable, and perhaps she is even able to find some pleasure in her spiritual walk. She offers an excellent example of Young's description of assimilation of trauma, the memory of her loss has become integrated into who she is, it is retrievable as in the moment in the *Admiração* when she must decide what to ask for, but it is no longer intrusive. Thus as Seidenspinner Nuñez points out, Teresa finally attains self-knowledge and spiritual understanding, and is thus able to reassert her authorship, reclaim her text, and embrace the life that remains.

[60] "the veil of darkness that blinded the eyes of my understanding was rent, and it saw and followed its Savior, extolling God" (105).

Chapter 4

The Unspeakable: Vision As Traumatic Memory in the Sermons of Madre Juana de la Cruz

As we turn our consideration to the sermons of Madre Juana de la Cruz, we move from the fifteenth into the early sixteenth century. We also move even further outside the genre of autobiographical writing, and into the landscape of mystical religious writing, though as I hope to demonstrate, Juana's texts are not devoid of personal content.

Madre Juana is the author of the *Libro del Conorte,* a series of religious sermons organized around the liturgical year of 1508. Being of peasant stock Juana never received formal education, and her sermons were therefore dictated, often while in a trance state, to a fellow nun. These sermons have a dual-purpose: to illuminate scriptural episodes, and to provide a divine message for the salvation of the faithful. Such texts would obviously not be intended as vehicles of personal disclosure, but I will attempt to argue that Madre Juana's sermons in fact present thematic content that suggests the possibility that she may have been exposed to some sort of sexual experiences during her childhood. If read from the perspective that these texts contain material from her subconscious, they d probably reveal more than she realized. In the two sermons that will be examined in this chapter, I suggest we will find both language and imagery that are sexualized beyond the norm even for medieval iconography. We will see two instances in which a male is pursuing sexual contact with a female against her will. We will see the employment of breast imagery not in a context of nourishment or motherhood, but as the instrument of sensual pleasure. The implications of the sexual experiences are evident in her text in

two ways: first, in Juana's use of sexually explicit imagery which she invokes to describe her relationship with God, and second in the high level of textual androgyneity which she applies both to herself and to the protagonists of her visions. Before proceeding to her texts however, I will review the biographical information available to us.

4.1. From Orphan to Abbess

Juana was born in 1481 to farming parents Catalina Gutiérrez and Juan Vásquez, in the town of Azaña near Toledo. We do know that she had a brother, as he figures in the episode of the benefice of Cubas which will be discussed later, but do not know if there were any other siblings. According to Juana's *Vida* her mother died when Juana was seven years old. It is not known how long Juana remained in her father's home following her mother's death, but at some point she did go to live in the home of a somewhat wealthier aunt and uncle. The reason for Juana's move is unknown. It could have been as simple as a desire on the part of the father for Juana to have a female figure involved in her upbringing, or, it may have been to remove Juana from problems within the father's home.

It appears that, having found a suitable marriage prospect for their niece, Juana's relatives' intention was to enter her into marriage. However, Juana had no interest in marriage plans. The *Vida* tells us that at the age of fifteen, Juana dressed in male attire and fled in secret from her relatives' home, seeking entry into the convent of Franciscan Tertiaries of Santa María de la Cruz in Cubas. As Carolyn Walker Bynum points out in *Fragmentation and Redemption: Essays on Gender and the Human Body in Medieval Religion*, the phenomenon of women cross-dressing was not as uncommon as one might think:

> Cross-dressing by laywomen, even by women who gave it some religious significance, was fairly common. Joan of Arc was unusual in donning male clothes to lead an army, but a number of cases are recorded of women who put on male clothing to travel — especially on pilgrimage — or to run away from home. Their cross-dressing was a mechanism to aid in role change or a real disguise to gain the physical protection offered by superior status. In short, cross-dressing and role reversal were more common among women than men and less disturbing to them. Such inversions (both women masquerading as men and men cross-dressing or reversing gender) were far more disturbing possibilities, and thus more heightened and powerful symbols, to men. It does not seem surprising, therefore, that religious men spoke of their renunciation of the world as adopting another gender, as the cross-dressing they seldom in fact did. On the other hand, women, who more commonly put on male dress in the world in order to accomplish certain goals (occasionally even, religious goals), did not in the safety of the cloister or anchor-hold use "acquiring maleness" as a symbol or metaphor with spiritual content. (170-171)

This conceptualization of cross-dressing provides the reader with much to consider. Would Juana have been aware of other women who had engaged in cross-dressing? If so, what was the context for the behavior? As Bynum suggests, it could simply have been an artifice employed to facilitate safe travel and allow Juana to escape from a life she did not desire. On the other hand, we know that in her role as abbess, Juana would assume a level of leadership not generally permitted to females. Was her donning of men's attire simply an announcement of an early decision to adopt a

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masculine persona? While cross-dressing may not have been uncommon for women, for Juana it may nonetheless have been an early sign of a very fluid gender identity construct.

When Juana's relatives eventually located her and arrived at the convent, they were persuaded to allow her to remain there. Her dowry for entry into the convent was arranged, and thus began her distinguished ecclesiastical career.

Juana quickly rose within the convent hierarchy, and in 1509 became Abbess. Though the *Vida* reports that Juana had begun having mystical visions while still in the cradle, we are told that she again began having these experiences in the year 1505, and that they continued throughout thirteen years of her convent life. In addition to her mystical visions Juana's religious practice was characterized by a harsh asceticism pervasive among female mystics of the period including Catherine of Siena, Angela da Foligno and others. Juana's renown eventually became so wide-spread that many famous people, among them Cardinal Cisneros, came to hear the sermons she delivered while in mystical trance.

However, the attentions brought on by Juana's fame as visionary were not all desirable. In 1512, a fellow Franciscan, who had become convinced that he was to be the father of a second Messiah, wrote to her and ask that she graciously agree to be the mother of his divine child. Naturally wanting nothing to do with either the man or the endeavor, she reports him to church fathers, and he is duly arrested. This episode is important in that it demonstrates the duality of Madre Juana's persona. It stands out as one example among many counter examples, of Juana's more conservative side. While Juana frequently blurs gender roles, and seems to have no qualms assuming leadership roles atypical for a female, she nonetheless wanted no part in such blatant heresy. So,

here she is the obedient daughter, not only declining this dubious honor, but turning the would-be father into the Church authorities to prevent him from engaging in any further misconduct. As we shall see in our discussion of Juana's sermons, she is hardly unwilling to assume a position of divinely inspired authority, but prefers to do so via more subtle manipulations of ecclesiastical convention.

It was during this same time that Juana had also become involved in the incident of the benefice of Cubas. Apparently the financial situation of the convent had become precarious. In an attempt to secure the financial stability of the convent, Cardinal Cisneros, Archbishop of Toledo, sent two orders, one in March and the other in December of 1410, allowing the parish church at Cubas to be annexed to the convent. This was an extraordinary move, in that it granted power to a female abbess that was typically reserved for male ecclesiastics. Governance of the parish at Cubas meant not only that the convent would enjoy the benefit of all income from the church, but also that the abbess, Madre Juana, would be allowed to select the parish chaplain, which Juana did in the person of her brother. As one might expect, such an unusual arrangement was unlikely to go unchallenged. After Cisneros's death in 1517, other ecclesiastics argued that it was improper for a woman to exercise jurisdiction over a perish, and attempted to take away the benefice. In response, after consulting with supporters, Juana attempted to secure a papal bull in order to retain the benefice for the convent. She was successful in this, but was denounced by a fellow nun, the convent's vicaress, to the order's superiors for having spent too much money in obtaining the papal bull as well as for acting without the permission of the order's superiors. As a result of the vicaress's denunciation, Juana was removed from her post as abbess in approximately 1527. However, her removal

would prove to be only temporary. When the vicaress became ill, she admitted to having falsely accused Juana. Juana was subsequently reinstated, and would remain in the post of abbess until her death in 1534.

4.2. Some Textual Considerations

For many reasons Madre Juana's writing presents the greatest difficulty in terms of a conceptualization within the framework of trauma. First, there is less biographical information available about her than about either Teresa de Cartagena or Leonor López de Córdoba. Though she is the only one of the three to have had actual biographies of her life written, the biographies in question were hagiographic in nature, and thus concerned with her status as a mystic, not with the factual dimensions of her childhood and family background. Both Leonor's and Teresa's lives were in some way connected to the national life of Spain, Leonor because of her family's political involvement, and Teresa because of the literary, courtly, and ecclesiastical activities of her male relatives. Being of a lower social and economic class, Juana would naturally have held no interest to scholars were it not for her career as a mystic. Because she was not affiliated either with the court or with Spain's upper class but was born to a farming family, she thus could easily have lived out her entire life below the radar of any mechanisms for documentation that existed, as did most women of her social status. So though much of Juana's adult life would be documented by virtue of her ecclesiastical activities, little is known with certainty about her childhood.

A second problem we encounter in discussing themes of trauma in these texts lies in the nature of the trauma in question. *Child abuse*, whether of a sexual or nonsexual

nature, is carefully concealed, both by the perpetrator and the victim. The reasons for this concealment are many. First, the victim must grapple with a sense of shame. Second, the perpetrator may force the child into secrecy, by coercion or threats of further violence. Third, when the perpetrator of the abuse is a primary caregiver, the child also struggles with his or her conflicted understanding of why this person who is supposed to be benevolent and loving, is engaging in this behavior in the first place, a circumstance which frequently results in the child assuming responsibility for the abuse in order to preserve a positive image of the abuser. As Catherine Robson writes, citing Judith Herman:

> Child sexual abuse is often referred to as an untold secret: a secret trauma (Russell 1986), even, in Florence Rush's words, the best kept secret (Rush 1980). Psychiatrists have noted that in cases where children are abused by a parent or primary caretaker, they are forced to collude in the abuser's secrecy not only out of fear but also, crucially, in order to retain belief in their parents: "All of the abused child's psychological adaptations serve the fundamental purpose of preserving her primary attachment to her parents" (Herman [1992] 1994, 102). Child sexual abuse is, then, often concealed by the perpetrator and the victim alike, as well as by society, in order to protect the family unit. (84)

These words are based on Herman's studies which of course are concerned with twentieth-century abuse survivors. One can only imagine how much stronger this taboo might have been during a time period in which, as Ruth Kelso points out, "The quality most highly valued in a woman is chastity. Enough could not be said of it as the foundation of womanly worth, let a woman have chastity, she has all. Let her lack

chastity and she has nothing" (1978, 24). Though lack of chastity would not have prevented Juana's entry into the convent, it would have rendered her unmarriageable, which given her relatives intentions that she marry, would have been more than adequate cause to conceal any improprieties that may have occurred. Moreover, Juana herself appears to have an awareness of the need for concealment of certain types of physical contact as we shall see in our consideration of the Vision of the Nativity.

Thus, it is highly improbable, even if Juana's relatives were aware of any such circumstance, that they would have disclosed the information. Juana as victim, certainly would not have done so. We are therefore left with the task of trying to decipher her text, and find in it clues to her past. To do this, we must not only pay attention to Juana's words, but also to her silences. As I intend to demonstrate, Juana's texts reflect well-documented psychological mechanisms for reconstructing one's identity within the context of trauma. While this cannot of course be considered concrete proof, it will I hope provide additional perspective on both the text and the person of this sixteenth-century mystic.

To date, very little scholarly research has been conducted on Madre Juana. Of those women generally associated with Early-Modern writing in the Peninsula, she is among the least known and the least studied. She is not mentioned by critics such as Alan Deyermond, or others who have studied the earliest writings of women in the Iberian Peninsula. According to traditional wisdom, one of Juana's fellow nuns, María Evangelista, who also served as scribe for Juana's sermons, was the author of the original biography of Madre Juana's life, though it is unknown when the task was undertaken. However, as Ronald Surtz tells us in *The Guitar of God*, "The biography is as sparing in

historical facts as it is generous in recording the supernatural happenings of Juana's intense spiritual life" (3). According to Surtz, the biography focuses primarily on Juana's asceticism, and on narrating her mysticism and her miraculous powers, providing little to no factual information about her life. The seventeenth century saw a renewed interest in Juana's beatification and canonization, and this would result in various literary works, among them the unofficial biography written by Antonio Daza, *Historia, vida y milagros, éxtasis y revelaciones de la bienaventurada virgen santa Juana de la Cruz* (1610-1613), and Tirso de Molina's theatrical work *La Santa Juana* (1613-1614). However, these biographies, Daza's being no exception, were written for the purpose of promoting Juana's canonization. Their intent was not therefore to provide an accurate accounting of the nun's life, but rather to promote her candidacy for sainthood, and would therefore not have shown any aspects of Juana's life or personality that might have hindered their cause. Moreover, Daza's biography was not only subject to his own authorial objectives, but also underwent the scrutiny of the Inquisition, and was altered to bring it into conformity with ecclesiastical doctrine. So, while Daza's biography does provide us with some information about Juana's life, it can hardly be read as a factual account.[61]

The work which will be of primary concern to this study is Juana's only extant text, *El Libro del Conorte*. Ronald Surtz (1995) tells us that while Juana purports to have had visions throughout her childhood; the visions Juana experienced during her tenure in the convent began in 1505, and continued for thirteen years. During these visions Juana would go into a trance state, which generally lasted approximately six hours. We are not

[61] Unfortunately, I was unable to obtain a copy of Daza's text for this study, and the Libro del Conorte is only available in manuscript form. Therefore, all biographical information, as well as all textual citations will be taken from the work of Ronald Surtz, The Guitar of God: Gender, Power, and Authority in the Visionary World of Mother Juana de la Cruz *(1481-1534)*. Translations of the vision of the Nativity will be taken from Surtz, *Writing Women in Late Medieval Spain.*

told what caused the beginning or ending of the visions. The visions that comprise the collection are organized according to the liturgical year of 1508-1509.

The *Libro del Conorte* also underwent a series of revisions. As stated above, the sermons were originally recorded by fellow nuns while Juana was in a trance state. For years following Madre Juana's death, the manuscript would be at the mercy of the editing hand of various supporters and detractors. As Surtz relates, the first set of notations was added by one Ortiz, whom Surtz speculates may have been the Franciscan Francisco Ortiz (1496-1547). His notations were largely favorable, and supported the orthodoxy of madre Juana's mystical experiences. However, the next round of revisions would not be so kind. Some time later, an Inquisitorial censor whom Surtz suggests was a close relative to Madre Juana, radically modified the content of both Madre Juana's visions and the marginal glosses supplied by Ortiz, to the extent that much of the Trinity Sermon was simply erased, destroyed with pieces of cotton that had been soaked in ink. Lastly, in 1567-1568, a Father Francisco de Torres edited the Escorial manuscript, adding his own notations and glosses with the intent of defending the religious validity of Madre Juana's text, and her status as a female visionary. One can well imagine that after so many revisions, each with such disparate purposes, that the existing manuscripts may have little in common with the material that was originally recorded by Juana's friend and scribe Sister María Evangelista. For purposes of this analysis, though I will incorporate information from the *Vida* I will rely primarily on the language and content of Juana's text, as presented by Surtz, to reconstruct her experience of loss, and discuss her text as a potential response to trauma.

Finally, before moving into a discussion of the sermons themselves, it is useful to consider the reading of Juana's text. As I believe has been amply demonstrated, the traditional reading has been to treat the sermons as the written record of the mystic visions received by a sixteenth-century Franciscan nun. I propose an alternative reading, that of trance as flashback.

As we have seen described in the *DSM-IV*, the flashback is a pervasive symptom of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder. Though this phenomenon would of course not have been documented in the sixteenth century, it would be logical to surmise that sixteenth-century trauma survivors would in all likelihood have experienced this same symptom. During a flashback, the individual can lose all sense of his/her current situation, believing that he/she is in fact still living the traumatic event. Thus someone experiencing a flashback can believe themselves to be younger, in another location, and with other people. These experiences can last anywhere from a few minutes to several days.

As Judith Lewis Herman points out, fixation on the trauma and the resultant experiencing of flashbacks has been observed by scholars of trauma dating back to Janet, Kardiner and Freud. She further points out that the onset of flashbacks is not necessarily predictable,

> The traumatic moment becomes encoded in an abnormal form of memory, which breaks spontaneously into consciousness, both as flashbacks during waking states and as traumatic nightmares during sleep. Small, seemingly insignificant reminders can also evoke these memories, which often return with all the vividness and emotional force of the original event. Thus, even normally safe

environments may come to feel dangerous, for the survivor can never be assured that she will not encounter some reminder of the trauma (37).

How then would such symptoms have been regarded at the time of Madre Juana's writing? On the negative end of the spectrum one can imagine alternatives such as demonic possession, on the more positive end, trance or vision. As was discussed in Chapter 1, medical treatment of the period was the purview of the ecclesiastical world, and therefore already existed within a spiritual/magical context. We know from Surtz and from the *Vida* that Juana began experiencing these visions as a very young child. It is conceivable then, that the mystical vision may have provided her with the only socially acceptable mechanism she could find for endowing the traumatic experience and its subsequent trance/flashback with meaning. Such a conceptualization of her situation would have a dual effect. It would provide Juana with a positive interpretation of otherwise negative events, i.e. she is chosen by God to bear His message to the World, and to do so she must also willingly take on suffering. It also however, provides a lasting connection with the traumatic event, a reason as it were, to continue to re-experience the trauma in the form of visions. As Herman tells us, this is in keeping with many trauma survivors' experiences:

> Unless the relational aspect of the trauma is also addressed, even the limited goal of relieving intrusive symptoms may remain out of reach. The patient may be reluctant to give up symptoms such as nightmares or flashbacks, because they have acquired important meaning. The symptoms may be a symbolic means of keeping faith with a lost person, a substitute for mourning, or an expression of

unresolved guilt. In the absence of a socially meaningful form of testimony, many traumatized people choose to keep their symptoms. (183-184)

Juana would certainly fall among those with incentive for "keeping her symptoms", for it is precisely these "symptoms" that have gained her such wide renown as a visionary and thus have elevated her ecclesiastical status. She not only maintains a link with a troubled past, but is able to put that past to work for her own advantage. This is not of course to say that this choice is the result of a consciously thought-out decision. As much of the literature on trauma demonstrates, the trauma survivor's awareness of his or her assimilation process can vary widely, depending on the individuals coping skills prior to the event, as well as on the nature and duration of the event itself.

As we shall see in Juana's visions, we find an unlikely amalgam of blurred gender imagery, erotic content, and bids for power, which I propose form a gestalt that strongly suggests thematic content that reflects familiarity with the experience of illicit childhood sexual activity. I will consider two of her visions that I believe best exemplify these characteristics: *The Creation Sermon* and the *Vision of the Nativity*. In the first, Juana provides her own revision of the creation story of Genesis. In the second, Juana offers a description of Mary's birth and childhood, and also describes a pageant performed in honor of these events. In both sermons a traditional story is eroticized, and classic images of Eve and Mary are inverted. I will discuss Juana's treatment of these episodes, and how her own traumatic memories may have influenced her revisions.

4.3. The Creation Sermon

Our point of departure for the discussion of Madre Juana's sermons will be her *Creation Sermon*. In many respects this sermon is not typical of the other sermons in the

Libro del Conorte. First, *The Creation Sermon* focuses on explication of an Old Testament story rather than on an episode of the lives of Christ, Mary, or the saints as do the others. Similarly, this sermon lacks the references to the Gospels that is also typical of the other sermons. Finally, it is here that Juana constructs the strongest defense of her spiritual authority. This is not to say that issues of Juana's authority are not addressed in other sermons: it is in fact a theme throughout her text. However, here her defense of her authorship becomes most direct. It is also, along with the *Vision of the Nativity*, one of two sermons containing the most concrete references to the theme of childhood sexual encounter. For all of these reasons, it is therefore an ideal place to begin our discussion.

The Creation Sermon consists of three parts. It begins, as its title suggests, with a narration of the Creation's story. The second part of the sermon is devoted to a description of an allegorical pageant also dealing with the creation theme, and then concludes with Juana's defense of the divine inspiration of her work.

At the creation narrative's beginning, it appears to be yet another recounting of the well-known story of creation found in the book of Genesis. Briefly Juana recounts how God created the heaven and the stars and the angels. Eventually man is created, and woman is created from man to fill the places formerly occupied by fallen angels. As in the Genesis account, God is initially pleased to find Adam and Eve living in a state of purity and innocence, and so takes them to Paradise. However, here Juana's version begins to diverge in significant ways from the traditional account as found in the book of Genesis.

While the Genesis account attributes the Fall to Adam and Eve's loss of innocence, it was generally held that it was this loss of innocence that led to sexual

activity and the Fall, and therefore that sexual activity didn't occur until after the Fall. In Juana's version the sexual dalliances between Adam and Eve precede the Fall. Juana tells us that while still in paradise, Adam and Eve begin to play: "E que estando ellos en esta inocencia, enpecaron entramos a jugar, (1990, 15).62 As Surtz points out, it is unlikely that Juana refers here to innocent games (20). The word "jugar" held sexual connotations in the romances of chivalry, so it would be unlikely that Juana employs that term in a nonsexual context. This playfulness then leads to a perpetual game of cat-and-mouse, with Adam constantly pursuing Eve as she tries to flee from him. The dynamic suddenly changes, "e luego enpeçó a reinar en ellos la malicia y el desamor" (1990, 15).

Adam, as Juana relates, becomes obsessed with possessing Eve. He chases Eve relentlessly, sometimes taking her by flattery, and other times by force. Eve wants none of this, and responds to Adam's advances by beating him (ferirle). Adam complains repeatedly to God, who first tells him to hit her back, then to simply leave her alone, which Adam refuses to do. Finally, God tells Adam to go away, promising that he will solve the problem for Adam: ""Pues, no te quieres apartar d'ella, déxame e no me digas esas cosas. Anda, ve, échate a dormir, que yo te faré de manera que te tema e aya miedo de llegar a ti e que tú seas señor sobre ella e no ella sobre ti" (16).63

To accomplish this God adorns Adam with a beard, but the effect was not the one for which Adam had hoped. Upon seeing the beard, Eve is terrified and wants nothing to do with Adam. At this point Juana inverts the Genesis narrative, casting aside one of the basic assumptions upon which the Eve/Mary dichotomy rests, that it was Eve who

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[62] "And when they were in this innocent state, the two of them began to play" (15)

[63] "Since you refuse to stay away from her, leave me, and don't tell me these things. Get going, leave, go to sleep, for I will transform you in such a way that she will fear you and be afraid to come near you and you will be master over her and not vice versa" (1990, 16).

offered Adam the forbidden fruit and thus led him into sin. Adam continues to chase after her, offering flowers, and of course, the apple, ""E cogía de las mançanas e flores e de las otras frutas que tenían los árboles e iva corriendo, conbidándola e diziendo: "No fuigas de mí, hermana, que ningún mal te faré. Toma estas flores e frutas que traigo para ti" (144).[64] Eve will not be persuaded by Adam's proffered gifts. Thus not only is she not the first to offer the apple, but she also does not take it when Adam offers it to her.

The implications of this shift are enormous, calling into question one of the pillars upon which the Early Modern understanding of gender rests. Gone is Eve the temptress, who through her engagement with the serpent is single-handedly responsible for bringing sin into the world and separating Man from God and Paradise. She is replaced by what would today be called a victim of stalking. Of course, this is not to superimpose a twentieth-century understanding, as it is well-known that relentless pursuit by a man of a female love object is one of the tenets of the courtly love paradigm. Nonetheless, Surtz suggests a similar dynamic, "Eve either refused to submit sexually to Adam or did so with great reluctance. Moreover, when the Creation sermon says that Adam made Eve come to him, sometimes through cajolery and other times by force, there is room for speculation that he may have tried to rape her" (20). Juana has thus turned Eve from being the mother of man's downfall, to a frightened woman fleeing unwanted amorous advances. Moreover, Adam is aligned here with the serpent that is responsible for offering Eve the apple, an apple which Eve wants no part of. In this light then, it is not Eve who is responsible for the fall, but Adam.

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[64] And he gathered apples, flowers and other fruits that were growing on the trees and ran after her calling to her and saying, "Don't run from me my sister, I will do you no harm. Take these flowers and fruits that I have brought for you" (translation mine)

Moreover, as the *Vida* relates, the apple as symbol holds special significance for Juana. As Surtz explains, according to the *Vida*, God had originally intended for Juana to be born a male. For reasons not disclosed, the Virgin Mary requested that God transform her instead into a female. God Acquiesced, but refused to take away a very prominent Adam's apple, which Juana in fact bore throughout her life: "Y la bienabenturada Juana de la Cruz estava entonces en el vientre de su madre enpezada a façer varón. Tornóla muger como pudo y puede hacer como todopoderoso. Y no quiso su divina magestad deshazerle una nuez que tenía en la garganta por que fuese testigo del milagro" (Surtz, 1990, 6).65

It is easy to imagine the great impact that the awareness of such a circumstance could produce. As Surtz points out, it would undoubtedly have the effect of making gender assignment seem rather arbitrary. It also seems to have given Juana a sense of fluidity or freedom to move between prescribed gender roles. We see this in her own career as abbess when she pursues the papal bull, and in her sermon as both Adam and Eve move in and out of roles prescribed for his or her gender, Eve's association with Christ through suffering, and Adam's offering of the apple.

As with her own ecclesiastical career, Juana takes care to maintain the duality between subversive and dutiful daughter. On the one hand, her narrative relieves Eve/woman of the stigma of having been responsible for the fall, and places that responsibility on Adam's shoulders. But much like her behavior with the Franciscan who sought to parent the next Messiah with her, Juana also takes good care not to openly stray

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[65] "And blessed Juana de la Cruz was at that moment in the belly of her mother in the process of becoming a male. He [God] turned her into a woman as He could and can do since He is all-powerful. And His Divine Majesty refused to take away an Adam's apple that she had in her throat so that it might bear witness to the miracle" (Surtz, 1990, 6-7).

too far outside of established doctrine. As Surtz demonstrates, Juana uses the creation of the beard to reestablish the submissiveness of women, and in doing so, returns her narrative to the conventions of divine or natural order. Adam eventually tires of Eve's fear of him. He returns to God and asks him to remove the beard, saying that he would rather endure Eve's cruelty than live apart from her. But God refuses to acquiesce to Adam's request: "Calla, Adán, que bien estás assí, que mi voluntad es que todos los varones tengan lo mesmo e sean señores sobre las mugeres" (1990, 116).66 Implicit here are both a statement of male dominance, and an acknowledgement of the notion that part of this domination will involve the traditional social convention that allows men to pursue sexual contact with women, whether or not the woman is desirous of his attentions. In a rather ironic moment, reminiscent of Juana's turning in of the priest who asked if she would conceive a child with him, the duality of Juana's ecclesiastical persona appears yet again. After recounting this radically subversive narrative that inverts many of the gender concepts found in the Genesis account, Juana suddenly reverts to established gender order when she puts in God's mouth the pronouncement that men are to dominate and women to be dominated.

Upon closer scrutiny however, Juana's endorsement of the status quo is rather tepid. Adam's reward for gaining dominance is not Eve's love as he desires, but rather her fear. For all intents and purposes little has actually changed. Eve still runs from Adam, but now it is out of fear rather than the disdain she showed after their creation. Moreover, Adam is a ridiculous and comical figure throughout the episode. He does not wear his dominance comfortably, in fact he lacks even the vaguest semblance of dignity.

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[66] "Be silent, Adam, for you are just fine like that, for it is my will that all men should have a beard and be lord over women" (Surtz, 1990, 16).

Consumed from the beginning with his love/lust for Eve, he follows her, whining and desperate, begging and pleading for her attentions, taking them when he can. Unable to master her on his own, he must rely on divine intervention to attain the level of dominance he finally possesses.

The form taken by God's intervention is also telling. In Chapter 1 of this study I briefly discussed the view upheld by the medical establishment of the period that based on their humoral balance men were innately imbued with traits such as robustness, moral strength, courage, liberality, and so on. God does not intervene by helping Adam to acquire those qualities, but rather by providing him with a symbol of authority, the beard. Thus, Adam's dominance rests not in his personal character traits, but rather in the superficial sign of the beard, and specifically in the meaning that Eve attributes to it. It is therefore a dominance that rests outside of Adam, and as such, cannot be controlled by him. Like the beard, Juana's approbation of the traditional gender order appears more symbolic than genuine. The words she places in God's mouth appear to convey obeisance, but a closer reading suggests an element of superficiality in the assignation of that order. God gives Adam the symbol though never the substance of dominance, so too does Juana include the obligatory acknowledgement that God intended men to dominate women. But every other aspect of her text suggests a very different view, one in which it is woman who is exhonerated, woman who is more closely connected to Christ, and woman who is forced to live with man's inefficacy.

The relation between Juana and her portrayal of Eve is also telling. In accordance with prescribed gender norms, Eve occupies a largely passive role throughout the text. As stated previously, it is not Eve, at least initially, who offers Adam the apple, but Eve who

refuses Adam's offers of fruit and flowers. Whether from disdain or fear, Eve's main activity is to constantly evade Adam's advances. The episode with the serpent is absent here, and in fact, Eve never speaks at all during the narrative. Surtz suggests a reading that reverses the relation between activity and passiveness, and ultimately shifts the responsibility for the fall from Eve to Adam:

> Mother Juana implicitly relates the question of responsibility for the Fall to the question of activity as opposed to passivity. In Genesis Adam is relatively passive. It is God who finds a suitable mate for him, and Adam has no active role in the creation of Eve, which occurs while he is sleeping. Eve, on the other hand, has a relatively active role. It is she who plays out the temptation scene with the serpent, and it is she who offers the forbidden fruit to Adam. Thus, in Genesis action is associated with guilt, while passivity is associated with absolution from responsibility. In the beard legend there is a reversal of roles, for it is Eve who is relatively passive. Thus, if passivity is to be equated with innocence, then Eve is exonerated, while the more active Adam is implicated as primarily responsible for the Fall. (1990, 21-22)

To restate, if passivity is associated with innocence and activity with guilt, Juana is also making a broader commentary on the dichotomy between the active public male spheres of activity and the private, passive feminine sphere While traditionally the female is considered to be too easily led astray to assume a role outside the home, the male is considered to be of stronger character and thus capable both of managing the women in his life, and of interacting with the larger world. In the same way that Juana's association

of passivity with innocence exhonerates Eve, so too does it suggest that the men who continue to dominate women are the bearers of guilt for the fall.

Surtz further points out that while God has ordained that Eve be submissive, Juana never shows Eve actually demonstrating her submissiveness. Though her initial aloofness and disdain for Adam have been replaced with fear, she never grants Adam that which he covets, the reciprocation of his love, and she does not draw near to him of her own volition. So, though theoretically cast in the submissive role, it is a role that she acquiesces to in a symbolic way. Much as Adam does not internalize the authority God has bestowed upon him, neither does Eve internalize submission. Further, by placing Eve in the submissive/passive role, Juana also draws a clear parallel between her humility and that of Christ on the cross:

> E la muger es figurada e significa a la persona del Fijo, porque así como la muger es más humillde e obediente e piadosa e mansa que el honbre, assí la persona del Fijo fue tan humillde e obediente al Padre que fasta la muerte de la cruz le obedeçió. E tan grande fue su piedad e mansedumbre que nunca respondió palabra a cuantas injurias le dixeron, mas antes estando en la cruz, rogava al Padre por los que le crucificaron. E que así como las mugeres, si son discretas, son naturalmente mansas e piadosas e perdonan las injurias antes que los honbres, así Nuestro Señor Jesuchristo perdona muy presto las injurias que le son fechas y es contino perdonador e abogado de todo el humanal linage (144).67

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[67] "And woman is like the person of the Son, because just as the woman is more humble, obedient, docile, and pious than man, so the person of the Son is humble and obedient to the Father, even unto death on the cross he obeyed him. So great was His humility and meekness that he never uttered so much as a word against those who injured him, but instead, while suffering on the cross pleaded to the Father on behalf of those who crucified him. Just so are women, if they are discrete, they are naturally meek and merciful, and forgive injry more readily than men, so Christ is quick to forgive injuries against him, and is a constant pardons and advocate of all the human race" (my translation).

Thus, if Eve is the first of all women, by linking her to the crucified Christ, Juana diverts the traditional association of women from the Virgin Mary, and associates her instead, in the person of Eve with the crucified Christ in his humility and his ability to constantly be an advocate for humankind, even in the face of ill-treatment and injury.

Finally, before turning our consideration to the sermon of the Nativity, let us return to the issue of the apple. As I have shown, contrary to the Genesis account, Juana shows Adam using the apple to entreat Eve, not to fear him. In yet another textual ambiguity, she does revise this account toward the end of her narrative when she writes: "no se enojava El con ellos mas antes le plazía que se amasen entramos. E dixo su divina magestad que quando Adán comió la mançana que le dio Eva, que lo fizo por el desamor que Eva le tenía e por que no se apartase d'él e se fuesse fiando como otras vezes solía fazer. De manera que la discordia e poca paz e desamor que entre entramos avía fue causa e raíz e principio del pecado tan grande en que cayeron (145).[68] Again, she aligns her story with the Genesis account, but does so almost as an aside. Moreover, she quickly follows this correction of her narrative with an interpretive correction: that it was not in fact the offering of the apple that was the cause of the Fall, but rather the discord that arose between Adam and Eve. She thus accomplishes two objectives, she both gives adherence to the traditional genesis narrative, while still relieving Eve of responsibility for the Fall, and in so doing, suggesting an alternative schema for the understanding and prescription of gender roles.

[68] "And He (God) was not angry with them, but rather it pleased him that they loved each other. And God said that when Adam ate the apple Eve gave him, that he did it because of Eve's coldness toward him, and so that she would not run from him as she had done before. Thus, the discord, lack of peace, and lack of love was the cause of the great sin into which they fell" (my translation).

In conclusion, the vision of Eve presented in Madre Juana's version of the Genesis story is a provocative one. Rather than being the biblical temptress who serves as the basis for much of the negative conceptualization of the feminine, she is here the victim. For having made the simple choice to reject Adam's advances, she is forced to endure Adam's relentless pursuit; she is what today would be considered harassed, and perhaps even raped. When she becomes frightened of Adam, God defends Adam's authority, saying instead that that is the proper order of things. Many of the saints lives are replete with similar sorts of tales, so it is certainly possible that Juana could have taken this image from hagiographic accounts or iconographic representations. Even so, the reader nonetheless questions Juana's use of this imagery, and the extent to which Eve is a representation of Juana herself, particularly within the context of trance as Flash-back discussed above. If Juana's trances are in fact a reliving of sexual encounters she experienced as a child, she would naturally process and reprocess the content of those experiences during her trances. While it is true that stories of the saints' lives contained accounts of both sexual and nonsexual violence, the Genesis account of the story of Adam and Eve does not.

Though Juana's manipulation of the story is masterful on many levels, the principle variation she inserts is the predatory relationship between Adam and Eve. Moreover, as we shall see, this is not the only sermon containing an account of a male seeking sexual engagement with a woman against her will. Interestingly however, Juana does not make the expected reversal and align Eve with Mary, but rather aligns her in her suffering, humility, and mercy with Christ. Precisely through this shift, she is able to take from Eve the responsibility for the fall and for leading man into a state of sin. She is also

able to elevate Eve to the highest possible state, that of the crucified Christ, who takes man's suffering upon himself. An episode from the *Vida*, which Surtz calls The Mother Hen, shows how this role of taking on the suffering of souls as a vehicle of their salvation, is a role that Juana sees not only for Eve, but also for herself. In this episode, Juana becomes convinced that the souls of those in purgatory are housed in stones. After seeing in a vision the punishments suffered by those in purgatory, she asks God's permission to take their suffering onto herself. She accomplishes this by asking her fellow nuns to bring stones to her. She can discern which stones contain souls and which do not, and she takes those stones containing human souls and places them on her joints and limbs, so that the pain will leave the entrapped souls and be absorbed by her own bones. Thus, it seems likely that at least subconsciously if not consciously, Eve is here a reflection of Juana's own self-concept. As Eve becomes redemptress, so with Juana when she takes on the pain of souls suffering in purgatory. It follows logically that if Eve is a parallel image of Juana in her desire to save souls, so too might she be in her role as victim of Adam's constant sexual advances.

4.4. *The Vision of the Nativity*

Another of Madre Juana's sermons, written for the Nativity of the Virgin, treats similar themes. Like most of the sermons, it consists of two parts. The first part consists of a representation of the birth and childhood of the Virgin Mary. This is followed by a description of a pageant performed in Heaven in honor of Mary's birth. Each section has accompanying glosses wherein Christ, speaking through Juana, provides instruction for the interpretation of the sermon.

As the narrative of Mary's birth opens, Juana tells us that the angels are so amazed at Mary's purity that her soul is removed from her body and taken up to heaven, so that they and the Father can play with it. St. Anne and Mary's relatives thought the child had died, and began to mourn her. Finally, after three days, Mary's soul was at last returned to her body and began to suckle at her mother's breasts., Episodes such as these would become common-place, as it seems the angels never tired of bringing the baby Mary, now body and soul, up into Heaven. Interestingly, Mary's visits to Heaven also involved the removal of her earthly clothes, as God and the angels desired that Mary always be naked. Her naked body would be given to the Father who would play with it. Mary's nudity in her visits to heaven eventually seems to have transferred to Mary's behavior while on the earthly plane. Though originally it was the angels who undressed her, she eventually acquired the habit of undressing herself. As Ronald Surtz writes, despite St. Anne's efforts to try and keep her baby daughter dressed, Mary was constantly removing her clothes and going naked. The angels encouraged this behavior, telling her: "Descúbrete, niña, e no estés cubierta, que no tienes en todo tu cuerpo cosa que ayas menester cubrir, mas toda eres linpia e pura e fermosa e perfeta e acabada de ver e de mirar" (1995, 106).[69]

St. Anne continues to express her disapproval but Mary's propensity for disrobing continues. At one point, Mary actually removes her clothes in the temple. St. Anne, horrified, covers her daughter with her own cloak, and takes her home and spanks her. But even this does not stop Mary from undressing in public. It is when Mary reaches puberty that things change. Though there are discrepancies in estimates of Mary's age at

[69] "Show yourself, child, and don't be all covered up, for nowhere on your body do you have anything you need to cover; rather, you are all spotless and pure and lovely and perfect and consummate to see and to contemplate" (Surtz, 1995, 106).

the time of her presentation at Temple, according to the *Vida*, she was a young woman at the time. Whatever her age, it is at this time that the angel Gabriel tells Mary that it is no longer God's will that she go about naked. When Mary explains that she had only done so because the angels had told her to, Gabriel states that it was good for her to be naked while a child. But that now that she is a woman she should no longer go without clothing.

At this point, the narrative of Mary's birth and childhood comes to a close and the scene shifts to the heavenly pageant performed in honor of the Nativity. In this pageant, God summons several groups of young girls, and also summons the twelve tribes of Israel. As Surtz points out, what follows is sort of a heavenly beauty pageant. All of the girls, including Mary are suddenly transformed into children. Each of the groups of girls is asked to sing and dance, and representatives of each tribe are sent to decide who is the most beautiful of all the girls. Mary is kept apart from these groups, and is brought out only at the end. Of course the outcome is that none of the girls can compare with the beauty and perfection of Mary. Once the pageant is over the other girls continue to sing and dance, until the Father asks them to give him their crowns. He comments on the sweet scent and beauty of the crowns. Then he tells the Son that he wants Mary to dance. The Son and Holy Spirit agree and bid her not only to dance, but to dance naked. In a rather striking contrast with Mary's earlier habit of disrobing, she expresses hesitation at the order to undress, saying,

> Señor Padre mío e Dios mío todopoderoso, a mí me plaze de salir no solamente desnuda a bailar delante todos los çelestiales mas aun estoy aparejada a obedesçer si me mandare vuestra magestad ir agora al mundo e andar entre todas las gentes así desnuda como nasçí. Aunque según mi ençerramiento e onestidad e vergüença

se me faría algo de pena, pero, Señor Dios mío, heme aquí a mí, vuestra sierva. Cúnplase e sea fecha en mí vuestra santa voluntad (107).[70]

However, like an obedient daughter she submits to God's will and begins to dance. Though she is still a child, as she dances her breasts begin to grow. The Father marvels at the beauty of Mary's breasts. He extends his little finger drawing her up to him. Once in his arms, she is fully clothed. At this point Juana inserts a gloss, explaining that Mary's nakedness is a symbol of her purity and sinlessness, and that her breasts signifies that from the time she was born she had "breasts of good desires and great love for her God and Creator" (108).

When Juana resumes the narrative, Mary is still in the Father's arms. Again he bids her dance, and asks that she offer him a special gift. As Mary dances, he eyes her, praising in detail the physical beauty of her body. Again God asks her to offer him some special gift, but she says she has nothing to offer him. God persists, so she picks up a palm frond, laden with golden leaves and flowers and apples. In each flower is a consecrated host. God asks Mary why she offers him only consecrated hosts, while the other girls all offered jewels and crowns. Mary responds that there is no more perfect gift than God's son. She says that she offers God the hosts in memory of Christ's crucifixion, so that he will not forget about the souls who suffer. God comments that though still a child, Mary shows great concern for sinners. However, He is apparently more concerned with other things. He tells Mary to forget about the sinners for now, and to come to him

[70] My Lord Father and my almighty God, it pleases me to dance naked not only before all the inhabitants of heaven, but I am even disposed to obey if your majesty ordered me to go now to the earth and to walk among all people as naked as I was born. Although in accordance with my reclusion and honor and modesty it would somewhat pain me, nonetheless, my Lord God, behold me, your servant. So be it and may your holy will be accomplished and done to me (Surtz, 1995, 107).

so that he can fondle her breasts. Mary demurs, saying that it is sinners she wants, for she is always concerned about them. She asks God to receive her gift of the hosts as a sacrifice offered for the entire church, and then she will give him her breasts.

But God will not be dissuaded; he insists that he wants her breasts right away. Again, Mary expresses hesitation, this time telling him that it is not good for him to fondle her in public. Instead, she suggests that they retire to a secret garden, and their in private she will let him do as he pleases. God then takes the hosts in his hand, and they become one host. He then holds them up to himself and the hosts become one with him, symbolizing that the Trinity is one, and that there is one Divine essence. Then, the trinity and all in Heaven take Mary in their arms and place her on the throne. Finally, Juana inserts another gloss. Here God explains Mary's giving consent to let God play with her breasts only in private. According to God through Juana, Mary's insistence on only giving the Father her breasts in private is intended to serve as a metaphor for how one should show one's love for God. While Mary often performed good works in public, her love for God was a private matter, and thus should be expressed in private, in the secret garden of her heart and soul.

The pageant closes with Mary being told to go and enjoy herself with all her relatives in Heaven so that she may know how much the Creator loves her. God then clothes Mary with his mantle, which is heavy and laden with jewels. Mary still being a little girl and the mantle therefore quite large, the seraphim offer to carry her, but Mary refuses, saying she is unworthy. Again, there is another gloss explaining that this is to show Mary's humility. In the final scene of the pageant, some thieves arrive on the scene and attempt to steal the mantle. Others defend Mary against her would-be assailants, and

again God speaks to explain that the thieves represent heretics, who try to take from her her virginity and her purity. Then circling around to the sermon's opening, God recalls the scene in which the angels took away Mary's clothes because she was innocent and had nothing to hide, and how they continued to do so even when Mary's mother tried to clothe her.

One of the first things one notices about this sermon is the prominent role occupied by either the presence or absence of clothing. God seems never to tire of playing with Mary while she is naked, whether as a baby, or as a little girl with burgeoning breasts. Moreover, even in trance state Juana seems incredibly cognizant of the taboo surrounding her subject matter. The distinction between the male and female voices in Mary's life is striking. While Mary is a child, it is the mother figure St. Anne who reprimands her and tries to keep her clothed, while God the father is constantly inducing her to go naked. The one limitation to this condition seems to be once a little girl reaches puberty, nakedness is no longer permitted, even by God. The parallel suggested between Juana's narrative and her own life is evident, for it is at puberty when Juana herself eschews marriage by running away from home to take the veil. While this could of course be nothing more than a coincidence, given that the content of flash-backs and other trance states is known to come from traumatic memories and other matter from the subconscious, that seems unlikely. Moreover, in the second part of the sermon, Mary seems to have embraced the notion that it is inappropriate for her to be naked. During the first part of the sermon, the child Mary seems happy to be naked, and attempts to disrobe in both public and private situations. However, once in Heaven at the pageant, she is reluctant to comply with God's request, saying that it would give her "algo de pena."

Though the pageant is not intended to be a continuation of the narrative of Mary's birth and childhood, it seems apparent that this Mary is a rather more modest and subdued creature than the child in the first part of the sermon.

Secondly, God's intent fascination with Mary's breasts is significant in many respects. First, God here seems much more reminiscent of a father engaging in inappropriate physical contact with his child, or perhaps of the serpent in the Genesis creation story than of the Divine creator. When Mary is a baby, he wishes to play with her naked. When the little girl Mary's breast grow as she dances, he becomes insistent upon touching and fondling them. And his desire does not take Mary by surprise. She shows no alarm, but instead simply says that if God will go with her to a private garden, she will let him do as he pleases. Again, returning to the notion that trances represent the subconscious or traumatic memory, this would seem also to be a familiar scene for Juana. We know that Juana's mother died when she was approximately seven years of age. Juana resided with her father for some time after that, but was eventually removed from her father's home. We do not know the reason for this removal, and it certainly could have simply been an attempt to place Juana in a home where there was a female care-taker. However, it does raise a series of questions. Why was she removed from her father's home? Why did she then flee her uncle's home to enter the convent despite family opposition? Obviously, this action could simply have been the result of religious devotion, but as Surtz suggests, there could have been other factors motivating the young Juana:

> Perhaps such speculations (of childhood trauma) can be linked to the timing of Juana's acting on her desire to become a nun. At the age of fifteen, in the face of

> attempts by her relatives to marry her off, Juana escaped from her uncle's house, dressed in male attire, and sought refuge in the convent. Her relatives would not have attempted to arrange her marriage had Juana not already undergone puberty. Did her own sexual awakening precipitate her decision to become a nun? While Juana had long desired to take the veil, puberty itself may have signaled that it was time to go. (126)

Surtz observation is astute. It is in fact puberty that often causes difficulty for survivors of childhood sexual abuse, because it is at this time that their own sexuality awakens. Such children have usually received a discordant array of messages regarding their sexuality, on the one hand they are often over sexualized, and condition to comply with another's wishes on demand. Simultaneously, they are often told that what they are doing is shameful or secretive, and is thus to be concealed. So, when they begin to experience the changes of puberty they often experience difficulties appropriately handling their own sexuality.

In Juana's case this could have induced her to avoid marriage, and/or to remove herself to a safe environment, the convent, where she need not confront these internal conflicts. Moreover, one does not preclude the other. Juana's religious devotion may simply have come together with her desire for a sexually safe environment, making the convent the ideal choice. Of course one can only speculate about Juana's motives here, but Mary seems rather adept at managing the secrecy of sexual encounter, and given Juana's trance state, it would be natural that such adeptness may be a reflection of Juana's own experience with such situations.

Some comments regarding medieval iconography and scripture are necessary here. As the reader is no doubt aware, iconography of the period is not lacking in its inclusion of the female breasts in its imagery. The use of the breast as symbol of motherhood and nurturance was widespread. Moreover, as Ronald Surtz points out, the image of the double-intercession involved the display of the breast and was a prevalent one during the period. The double-intercession refers to the notion that Mary prays to her son to aid those who seek her help, and in turn Christ, moved by his mother's requests, intercedes with the Father on behalf of Mary and the petitioner. This image was typically represented by the showing of Mary's breast, and Christ's wounds. Within this context the employment of the breast image would not seem so strange. However, as Surtz points out, when the breast was displayed in representation of the nursing mother, typically only one breast would be displayed.

The displaying of two breasts, on the other hand, conveys something rather different. Exposure of two breasts carried the connotation of the prostitute, or at the very least, of a woman or girl exposing more of her body than was deemed proper. As Surtz explains, "Indeed, severe moralists railed against fashions that left the female breasts exposed. For example, in one of his sermons, Saint Vincent Ferrer (d. 1419) states that women have breasts so that they can function as a cellar ("wine cellar" or "pantry") for their suckling infants, and he goes on to condemn girls who expose their "lungs" to the birds of the air as if they were prostitutes"(116). As we have seen, Juana's imagery involves the latter, the exposing of two breasts. Moreover, she combines this imagery with that of the little girl—presumably invoking a state of innocence—and the sensuous dancing that would be associated with a prostitute. Thus, while the inclusion of breasts is

not in and of itself atypical, the manner in which Juana displays them is. Rather than simply showing the single breast, she shows both, and in so doing, alters the image she presents from that of the nurturing mother to that of the sexually provocative female.

The points at which glosses are interpolated in the sermon is also noteworthy. As I have stated above, the glosses represent God speaking directly through Juana and provide specific instruction on the interpretation of the content of her visions. By placing the interpretation in God's mouth, Juana side-steps any questions of her own authority, for to question the interpretation would be to question God's own word as delivered through her. Herbert Bell in his book *Holy Anorexia,* sees this as being a pattern among certain female mystics:

> Just as critical as the course of this war against bodily urges, wherein the quest for autonomy is purely internal, is the contest for freedom from the patriarchy that attempts to impose itself between the holy anorexic and her God. The authority figure may in fact be female, as for a time it was during Catherine of Siena's battle against her mother or when Veronica Giuliani fought her abbess, but always in the official church it is a male priest who dispenses the saving body of Christ. The holy anorexic rebels against passive, vicarious, dependent Christianity; her piety centers intensely and personally upon Jesus and his crucifixion, and she actively seeks an intimate, physical union with God. Once she convinces herself that her spiritual bridegroom communicates directly with her and she thereby achieves true autonomy, the commands of earthly men become trivial. Her total dependence upon God's will, ultimately hailed as heroically virtuous by the very patriarchy she is rebelling against, legitimizes her defiance and places her in a

position of enormous strength. For in her actions on earth the "will of God" to which she yields is a force she alone interprets and arbitrates (116).

Though the first part of the sermon contains no glosses, it does contain the passage spoken by the angels encouraging Mary to show her naked body; "descúbrete". The glosses in the second part nearly all occur in relation to the donning or taking off of clothing, in response to God's desire for Mary's breasts, or in praise of Mary's physical beauty. The first gloss occurs when the twelve messengers are examining the troops of young girls, and tells us that the episode of the messengers is to tell all that Mary is "the most lovely and perfect of all the virgins" (Surtz 1995, 107). The second gloss occurs following the growth of Mary's breasts while she is dancing naked before the Trinity and the angels, and explains the symbolism of Mary's nudity and her perfect breasts. Yet another gloss is inserted at the point when Mary is in the arms of the Father and is suddenly dressed in rich garments. This gloss informs us that Mary's newly-donned clothing is to demonstrate that just as she is without sin, so she is also elegantly adorned with special graces.

The following gloss explains Mary's gift of the palm frond, which as we have seen, does not seem to be the gift that God had hoped for. As we have seen, God insists after Mary's presentation of the frond that he instead wants her breasts and he wants them right away. The subsequent gloss seeks to explain Mary's offering of her breasts to him only in a private place. As we have seen above, the gloss suggests that this is a reflection of Mary's discretion in insisting that her love and devotion for God be a private rather than a public matter. Finally, the three remaining glosses are all concerned with the image of Mary's mantle. The first explains that Mary was the mantle of Heaven when she bore

Christ inside her. The second explains that Mary will not accept help from the seraphim in bearing God's mantle because of her great humility. And the last explains the significance of the thieves who had come to steal God's mantle from her.

Nonetheless, it hardly seems likely that the placement of the glosses is mere coincidence. We know from Juana's dealings in the Benefice of Cubas and the incident of the priest who wished to conceive a new Messiah with her that Juana is both astute and politically sophisticated. She would have been well-aware that the image that she was projecting of Mary ran counter to established imagery, even within the sometimes graphic representations permitted in medieval iconography. While her subconscious mind may have brought forth these images of a naked little girl secretly giving her breasts to God, Juana the astute Abbess would certainly have realized that this image would be considered highly subversive, and would have recognized the need for interpretation. By having the Gloss come from God the Father or Christ, she side-steps all the intermediate levels of auctoritas described by Minnis, and goes straight to the highest level, that of divine auctor. Thus, anyone who wishes to criticize either her or the content of her sermons is also criticizing God's own word as given to her.

We can say then, that Juana's imagery invokes a highly sexualized little girl, who accepts the sexual advances made to her, but also recognizes the need for them to be carried out in private. Further, it can be seen from Juana's placement of the glosses and their content, that on some level, Juana the politician and Abbess recognizes that she must find a way to avoid the public scrutiny of these images.

The inversion of traditional representations of Mary is similar to that which we saw in the Creations Sermon, where Eve is transformed from temptress into the hapless

victim of Adam's undying love. In the same way, Mary is transformed from the pure and virtuous handmaid of the Lord. First she is a little girl disobedient to her parents and disregarding of social norms that dictate that her body should be covered, and later, when dancing naked before the Father, she comes dangerously close to the projecting image of a prostitute. Either one of these inversions would be interesting enough on its own, but together I believe they essentially reinvent the medieval paradigm that governs social views of women. As scholars such as Marina Warner (1976) point out, it was Eve, the first woman, who through her lasciviousness, frailty and deceit cost man the opportunity to live in Paradise in harmony with the Creator. Mary, the second Eve was to rectify Eve's error. And as Marina Warner points out, Mary's virginity was key:

> The inauguration of the new era of Christ found in virginity a most satisfying image: a new, incorrupt, untainted world had been created by the Incarnation and the Redemption; just as God molded Adam from new clay, so he had fashioned his son anew. Because Jesus did not descend to earth but was born of a woman, it was crucial that her clay too should be pristine and unspotted. This symbolism of a new world also influenced the ideas of early Christian theologians far more than the equivocal stories of Jesus' birth in the Gospels. The fundamental idea that the Incarnation of the godhead had overturned the Old Covenant of sin and death found one of its loveliest images in the concept of the Virgin who gives birth to the redeemer. She is the second Eve, mother of all the living in a new, spiritual sense (59).

Just as Juana blurs the gender roles occupied by Adam and Eve, so too, does she blur the images of the two first women, Eve and Mary. In Juana's sermons, Eve is the woman

who shrinks from Adam's advances, while Mary dances naked before God and agrees to go to a garden where God can fondle her breasts. Thus both women are prey to the sexual desires of the male; one flees from them, while the other consents, but only in private. Nonetheless, neither woman's status is diminished or tainted due to these encounters.

At the conclusion of the Genesis narrative in the Creation Sermon Juana elevates Eve through her share in Christ's suffering, placing her as advocate for sinners. At the close of the *Vision of the Nativity*, Mary is quite fully clothed, wearing God's ornate mantle which is nearly too heavy for her to carry. In fact, Juana is careful to tie both women to the salvation of sinners, Eve through her suffering, and Mary through her constant preoccupation for their salvation. One wonders whether this could be an attempt at coming to terms with experiences in Juana's own life. As we have seen, the role of Eve as bearing the suffering of others to gain their salvation is one which Juana also sees for herself when she places the rocks containing the souls from purgatory on her limbs. If after all, the Virgin consents to a private encounter with the Father, would it not follow that Juana would likewise have to suffer such an indignity for the redemption of sinners?

Lastly, as with Leonor and Teresa, let us consider the issue of departure, or assimilation of the traumatic memory. As with much of Juana's life and work, it is difficult to make a definitive statement as to whether Juana actually completed the healing process described by Alan Young. However, it is possible to make some general observations.

As we know from the *Vida*, Juana had had visions/trances since her earliest childhood. Though again we lack specific details, it would seem that these visions ceased, and then for some reason began again in the year 1505 and continued for thirteen years.

This period corresponds to the four years prior to Juana's being made Abbess, and about ten years after that event. It would of course be helpful to have some understanding of why her childhood visions ceased, and why they began again, only lasting for thirteen years. However, the fact that she did experience these trances suggests that at that time the traumatic memories were still intrusive, and thus that she had not been able fully to assimilate them. A subject for further study would be what caused them to stop in 1518. A more thorough understanding of why her flashbacks did not continue would help a great deal in addressing the question of departure.

However, while it may appear on the surface that traumatic memory plagued Juana throughout much of her adult life, as I indicate earlier in this chapter, the visionary path afforded Juana outlets for contextualizing these memories that would not have existed at many other points in history, including our own century. Juana would of course lacked the contemporary psychological framework to have understood her trance experiences as flashbacks. The explanation of these events that would have been available to her would have been to understand them as supernatural communications from God, which would also enhance her ecclesiastical career. Though in the more pragmatic aspects of her rule as abbess she extended her power well-beyond that generally permitted to women, in the mystical realm, she had the good fortune of living in a climate where female visionaries were endorsed and even promoted. Scholars such as Rocío Quispe-Agnoli points out in her article "Teaching, Learning, Reading, Writing: Educational Tools from Women for Women in Fifteenth-century Spain", the period of Cardinal Cisneros leadership was a time of great support for female mystics. She tells us

that during this time, such experiences by women were not only encouraged, but also promoted by being made available in writing:

> During Cisnero's spiritual governance in Spain (1436-1517), revelations, and especially female revelations, were encouraged. Among the spiritual works published at Cisneros's expense were both the Latin text (1505) and a Castilian translation (1510) of the book of Angela de Foligno.21 The prologue to the Castilian version probably reflects Cisnero's own ideas about female spirituality. According to this prologue, there are two types of knowledge, that acquired through formal studies by the educated (males), and the infused science closely associated with women (45-46).

In the years following Cisneros's death this trend would undergo an almost total reversal. But for Juana it meant that her trances need not subject her either to medical or inquisitorial scrutiny. Instead, they occurred within a political climate which allowed her to flourish, elevating her to a position of power and status. As I suggested earlier, this may have had some negative effects. On the one hand, her trances allowed her to achieve a level of renown and success she would not otherwise have achieved. On the other hand, her very success may also have kept her linked to her trauma longer than may otherwise have been the case. Juana would therefore be simultaneously moving away from the trauma, while still being unable to integrate it sufficiently to bring the intrusive memories to an end. In Chapter One we considered Catherine Robson's model of the scar of trauma pointing in two directions, toward healing and yet still back to the moment of injury. Juana seems to exemplify this model perhaps more than any of the other writers considered in this study. Though we do not know what happened after 1518, the fact that

her trances disappeared suggests that finally there was movement away from the traumatic memory and toward healing.

As the reader is no doubt aware, there is much room for further study here. Though Juana's visions were in fact the impetus for this study, they also leave us with the greatest number of unanswered questions. Why did Juana leave her father's home? Why did her trances resume in 1505, and why did they cease in 1518? What was the original language that Juana used during her trances, and what the language employed in Sister María Evangelista's original transcription? Though it is improbable that information regarding any sexual abuse ever existed, more information regarding Juana's childhood and family history could fill out the picture of her pre-convent life. Unfortunately, at the time of this writing, it was not possible to work with complete versions of either the *Vida* or the *Libro del Conorte*. It is my hope that at some point, full access to these texts may provide answers to some of the gaps that remain in this study. In the meantime, Juana has left us, perhaps unwittingly, if not with concrete biographical information, at least with a small glimpse into some of the issues that seemed to form part of her psychological makeup.

Conclusions

In the preceding chapters I have considered three women authors' attempts at committing to paper themes related to having --at some point in their lives-- experienced a traumatic event or series of events. Though with differing outcomes, for each, the act of writing provided a cathartic release, and played a role in her process of assimilating the trauma. I have entitled this study *Writing as Reconstitutive Act*, because my first goal was to explore the presence of themes related to trauma within the works, and second to consider the ways in which reconstitution of the subject was at the core of each author's purpose in writing, though this was not always explicitly stated.

I began in chapter 1 to lay the groundwork for these explorations by presenting a brief history and overview of trauma. These considerations began with a discussion of how the question of trauma and the subsequent psychological syndrome, Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, might have been regarded within the Early-Modern medical framework. Authors such as MacLean and Garza, among others, have demonstrated that mental or emotional imbalances were viewed within a humoral context, as were conditions related to physical health. Therefore, behaviors related to exposure to trauma such as depression, numbing, flash-backs would have been treated by attempting to bring the patient's humors back into balance. As the beginnings of modern medicine took root, this conceptualization eventually evolved from this quasi-spiritual understanding to something more akin to contemporary definitions. Through the early work of pioneers such as John Ericson, and then later in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries in the work of Sigmund Freud, Pierre Janet, and Abram Kardiner scholars began to speak specifically

of certain incidents as causing psychological trauma and resulting in a distinctive body of symptoms. Scholars and practitioners continued to work in the arena with patients, particularly war veterans, and later also with victims of sexual assault. In the 1970s the Diagnosis of Post-traumatic Stress Disorder was added to the American Psychiatric Association's *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual,* creating an official diagnostic category for this disorder. Allan Young and Judith Lewis Herman have contributed significantly to the considerations undertaken here with their discussions of what constitutes Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder and its treatment.

Finally literary scholars such as Cathy Caruth and Catherine Robson laid the groundwork for a study such as this by applying psychological theory to discussions of trauma within the literary text. Their work focused on the notion of trauma as wound, and the act of writing as the survivor's attempt to "write in and through the wounds"(27-28). Implicit in this model are both the telling of the story of the actual traumatic event, and the story of its recovery, what Caruth has called a "double telling (7). This double telling served as a framework for the consideration of these three authors, as I examined the ways in which the texts treat and avoid the narration of the original trauma, and then how the act of writing may have served these women in their cathartic or reconstitutive process.

In the work of Leonor López de Córdoba we encountered a woman who had survived lengthy incarceration during her adolescent years, and spent the remainder of her days attempting to regain the social and economic status that she had lost. In her *Memorias*, she recounts her early life in the court of Pedro I, her imprisonment following Pedro's murder and the taking of the throne by Enrique de Trastamara. The bulk of her

narrative is dedicated to her post-imprisonment life, as she works through prayer and cajoling to acquire her lost fortune, her own home, and a secure place for herself and her children. She recounts the acquisition of the private house, the adoption of the Jewish orphan which she undertakes as a way to gain additional favor with God, and later her and her relatives' flight from the plague, which ultimately results in the death of her eldest son and her own expulsion from her aunt's family. As I stated in Chapter 1, she interestingly omits from her narrative the time she spent at court as the chief consultant to Queen Catherine of Lancaster, despite the fact that this was the pinnacle in her struggle to ascend Spain's social ladder. However, as we know from historical sources, this too would come to an unhappy end when one of Leonor's competitor's for the queen's attention manages to turn Queen Catherine against Leonor and take her place as the queen's favorite.

Leonor's is a story of ongoing struggle. Though she seems a woman of infinite tenacity, she never recaptures the security, status and power that her family enjoyed under Pedro's rule. Though little is known of Leonor's life after her days at Catherine's court, all indications are that her life ended in relative obscurity and perhaps poverty. It is during this time that most scholars believe that her memoir was written, and this sense of struggle and disillusionment permeates her text. Although written at the end of her life, Leonor still writes almost worshipfully of her father's heroism and betrayal. Likewise, her narration of her early memories of the Atarazanas prison, the ill-treatment that she and her family received there, and the resulting death of many of her relatives--particularly her brother Lope--are clearly still poignant for her. Unlike the other authors considered here, Leonor seems to have fossilized in the position of role of victim. This is

of course hardly surprising, given that life is not much kinder to her in the years after her imprisonment. Though she does garner the support of her aunts, their support is frequently compromised by Leonor's cousins' dislike of her. These tumultuous family relationships finally break apart when the Jewish orphan Leonor adopted brings the plague to the family home, and at the end of her narrative, we find her a broken woman, cast out by her relatives and grieving the death of her eldest son. Thus, despite her efforts, there is no evidence that Leonor has yet moved past the earliest stages of assimilation of trauma described by Alan Young, of recycling and reprocessing traumatic memory until one finds a way to reconcile it with one's internal schema. One can hope that the writing of her memoir may have provided some level of catharsis, though since we know nothing of her life at the time of their writing, this cannot be said conclusively. Leonor does in fact reconstitute herself, over and over again. This is after all, her task upon leaving the prison and it is a task to which she will devote much of her life, first through the acquisition of her houses, and later as a member of Catherine's court. In fact her power to continually reinvent and recreate herself is one of her most amazing personal qualities. That said, her various reconstitutions are never successful in the long-term. As Amy Katz Kaminsky and Elaine Dorough Johnson point out (1984), she seems to have inherited her father's political acumen, but in the end, like her father, she was unable to save herself from a bad end. Thus, while themes of trauma occupy a central role in her text, there is little evidence of successful reconstitution or even of assimilation of the traumatic event.

In Teresa de Cartagena's writing we find a similar struggle, but with a much more successful conclusion. Teresa's two theological treatises are not autobiographical in nature, but do treat themes of late-onset deafness and the subsequent adjustments this

necessitated in Teresa's life. While Leonor openly states that in part she wrote the *Memorias* as a testament to the events she witnessed, Teresa's purpose is rather one of helping her cope with the long hours and isolation of the cloistered life, which she admits she would not have chosen. As with the rest of her essays' content she frames this in a biblical context, that of combating idleness, one of the seven deadly sins. We must therefore piece together those autobiographical elements which Teresa provides as a by-product of her theological reflections.

In her first essay the *Arboleda de los Enfermos* we find Teresa struggling to accept her deafness and its consequences—her removal from her family's highly public and social life, and her need to accept having to enter into the convent. In this essay she treats the theme of being forced to listen to the word of God, which she would otherwise have been too immersed in worldly pleasures to do. She provides no description of her illness, nor does she talk specifically about her process of becoming deaf. The few references we find to her family relationships occur when she refers to their frustration at her illness. Though her intent is to recount in a positive way that this is a blessing from God, she is still struggling to overcome her bitterness at this unwanted intrusion. She does not speak of spiritual or domestic contentment as a member of a convent community, rather she talks of her isolation, and the bitterness of the supper that God set before her. By invoking images such as the bit and bridle metaphor, she talks of God's forcible restraint of her ears and tongue so that she would listen to his words. The tone throughout the essay is one of trying to recognize that what has happened to her is actually in her benefit, but at the essay's close she still seems unreconciled to her new life.

In the *Admiraçión Operum Dei* however, her tone changes. This essay was written several years after the *Arboleda* purportedly at the behest of one Juana de Mendoza. Again in this essay Teresa does not directly address personal themes. Here she writes in response to critics—presumably male—who have argued that a woman could not have written a work like the *Arboleda*. Hence the focus of her second work is the defense of what she describes as God's choice to use her as his vessel. One could speculate that perhaps it was the very necessity of having to defend her work that finally enabled her to complete the Reconstitutive act she began in her first essay. Whatever the cause, it is here where Teresa completes her psychological task of reintegration. Three pivotal segments in this essay are Teresa's implementation of the pith and bark metaphor, her exegesis of the story of Judith, and later that of the blind man on the road to Jericho.

Her use of the pith and bark metaphor occurs near the beginning of the essay, and in many ways sets the stage for the rest of her defense. In many respects, I believe that it is here also that Teresa comes closest to adopting a truly feminist position. Her argument begins by acknowledging women's comparative softness. She continues by comparing this softness to the relation between the pith and the bark of a tree, the outer bark being strong and hard, while the inner pith is soft and malleable. Both, she tells us, are necessary in order for a tree to remain alive and healthy. Just so do the qualities of men and women complement each other. Both are necessary for the well-being of the other, and God uses both to His ends and purposes. Though this is not a direct embracing of Teresa's illness, it is a graceful acknowledgement of the fact that all aspects of life are part of a greater whole, and all are necessary. Gone are references to the spurning of illness or forced acceptance that God is acting in her best interest. In their place there

appears a calm, if not perhaps indignant author who both acknowledges and accepts her frailties.

In her treatment of both biblical episodes, this seeming acceptance continues. Her language reveals a woman who has at last made peace with a life that was neither of her choosing nor her liking. In the former example, the story of Judith, she talks of God's ability to aid the widow Judith in wielding the sword in order to kill the commander Holifernes. Just as Judith may have been an unlikely opponent for Holifernes, so too was Teresa an unlikely candidate to become an author. However, Teresa argues that God can use any instrument of his choosing to whatever purpose he wills, and he therefore could endow both Judith and Teresa with the necessary qualities and skills to perform the task he has assigned for them. Again, Teresa argues her point not from the perspective of one disenfranchised, but rather as one who has found the silver lining after the clouds. God forced her to be silent that she would listen to Him, and then imbued her with the words to write his message.

She gives a similar treatment to the episode of the blind man on the road to Jericho. The parallels here are fairly obvious, a man also with a physical disability is wandering along the road crying out to meet Jesus. So too did Teresa cry out in her first essay, reaching for peace with and acceptance of her situation. One unique feature of this episode is Teresa's actual insertion of herself into the narrative. As I explain in Chapter 3, though she begins her treatment of the parable in a traditional fashion, she gradually seems to become so identified with her subject that the distinction between her and the blind man becomes blurred. The two characters then fuse into one, making it difficult for the reader to know for certain when she is talking about herself and when the blind man.

This is in vivid contrast to the Teresa of the *Arboleda* who rather than actively seeking is restrained by the bit and bridle so that she may be forced to listen to God's word. Of course the parable concludes with the blind man/Teresa being made well. Obviously this conclusion does not refer to the restoration of Teresa's hearing, but rather to the healing of her spirit. Thus the task that she embarked on in the *Arboleda* actually comes to fruition in her second work.

Though as I have stated the details of Teresa's illness are sparse, the reader can nonetheless find a clear recounting of Allan Young's model of recycling and reprocessing trauma until it is finally incorporated in a healthy way into the individual's internal and external schemata. The depressed, angry woman who penned the first lines of the *Arboleda* has finally found the spiritual center and purpose which she tired unsuccessfully to reach in her early writing.

In the writings of Madre Juana de la Cruz, trauma is represented in a very different way. While Teresa's texts were also theological, her psychological process was visible throughout. In Juana's text the reader must trace the presence of specific themes to unearth content related to the possible textual representation of trauma and reconstitution. As I explain in Chapter 4, though our biographical information about Juana's childhood is scant, there is enough evidence to cause speculation about the possibility that she may have experienced sexual abuse. We know from her *Vida* that her mother died when she was seven. Following her mother's death we know she remained for a time in her father's home, but that eventually, for an unknown reason, she went to live with an aunt and uncle. Finally, we know that at the age of 15, roughly the age of

puberty, she fled her relatives' home in order to escape their marriage plans for her and enter the convent.

Juana is reported to have had visions throughout her childhood. It is these same visions that begin again during her years in the convent and for the basis for the sermons that comprise her one extant text, the *Libro del Conorte*. I propose a possible reading of these sermons from the perspective that the mystical visions or trances were in fact flash-backs, a common symptom of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder wherein the victim loses all contact with their immediate environment and relives the traumatic events. Read in this way, Juana's texts certainly provide ample evidence that gender and sexuality occupied a prominent space in the nun's subconscious. The earliest manifestation of this comes not from the sermons but from the Vida, where we learn that Juana believes that God had originally intended for her to be male, but at the behest of the Virgin Mary changed her into a female. The result of the last-minute gender switch was that Juana would be left with a prominent adam's apple as reminder of what God had intended her gender to be.

This fluidity in Juana's gender identity seems to have been reflected in her career as abbess. During that time, she would assume the male role of having jurisdiction over a local parish in order to obtain the financial revenue from the parish to support her convent. When this benefice was later called into question, she would take the extraordinary step of securing a papal bull to insure her continued leadership and financial stability. We also have evidence from the *Vida* that Juana strongly identifies with the Male Christ figure as being responsible for the saving of souls. this was seen in the description of her placing hot stones on her joints so that she could bear the pain of

souls from purgatory, so that she could bear their pain and shorten their penance, thus speeding them on their journey to Heaven. She makes the highly unusual maneuver of placing God's own words in her mouth, thus bolstering her sermons from merely being the ramblings of a mystic, to containing Divine authority. If God speaks through her, she becomes elevated to the highest level of literary authority and to a large extent places herself beyond male criticism. As scholars such as Ronald Surtz have demonstrated this subject in and of itself provides much material for exploration, which unfortunately is beyond the scope of this study. What is significant to our purposes here, however, is Juana's identification with the male godhead, both in her own ascetic practices, and the authority she infuses into her sermons.

The content of her texts is similarly androgynous. In the first of the two sermons treated in this study, the Creation Sermon, Juana reverses the traditional roles occupied by Adam and Eve in the Genesis creation account. In Juana's rendition, it is not Eve who brings about man's fall, but Adam. As Juana tells us, Adam engages in relentless sexual pursuit of Eve, despite her continuous rejection of his advances. The beard, Juana writes was God's way of instilling fear into Eve so that Adam could have domination over her. However, when Adam is displeased by Eve's fear, he offers her fruits and flowers, and of course, the infamous apple, to try and cajole her into coming near him. If we interpret this material as being the content of the subconscious as presented in flashbacks, these blatant references to sexual pursuit of an unwilling or frightened female offer the reader much to consider. Moreover, in reversing their respective roles in the fall, Juana is able to identify Eve with the suffering Christ. Eve then violates the traditional creation narrative in two

ways, first by being the victim of Adam's ill-treatment rather than the sinister female temptress, and second, by identifying through her suffering with the male Christ figure.

When considered in conjunction with the other sermon treated here, that of the Nativity, this cross-identification creates a sort of gender triangle between Eve, Mary, and Christ. As we have seen, the sermon of the Nativity treats themes related to Mary's birth and childhood. However, once again, Juana's narrative hardly complies with tradition. In the section dealing with Mary's birth and childhood, Juana relates how Mary is encouraged by God and the angels to remove her clothes and go about naked. She is frequently taken to heaven, and is always naked while there. This continues until the onset of puberty, at which time the angel Gabriel appears to Mary and tells her that now that she is a woman, it is no longer appropriate for her to be without clothes.

However, God's desire to see Mary naked does not abate. In the second segment of this sermon, Mary is a participant in a heavenly beauty pageant. Here God insists that she remove her clothing because he wants to see her dance naked before him. Thus, Juana also inverts Mary's own image, taking her out of the role of stainless sinless mother, and casting her in a role very similar to that occupied by Eve the temptress in the traditional Genesis narrative. Juana of course does not imply here that Mary was responsible for the fall, but she does bring together the paradigm of the two first women into one amalgam of victim of male sexual desire and suffering Christ figure. We know that Juana does herself Identify with the later role, it therefore seems plausible that she also identifies with having been the victim of male sexual desire.

As Mary dances, although she is still a little girl, her breasts begin to grow. God then bids her to come to him so that he can fondle her breasts. While in the first segment

Mary seemed quite content to be naked, here she proceeds with more caution, suggesting that they retire to a secret garden and there she will let him do as he pleases. Again, if we regard Juana's trance content as coming from her subconscious, the link to Juana's having experienced such and encounter herself seems quite strong.

The implications of these thematic issues for consideration of trauma in Juana's texts are complex. On the one hand, the fact that she is continuing to have trances/flashbacks, is indicative of one still experiencing Post-traumatic Stress Disorder. On the other, she is artfully able, whether consciously or not, to turn these incidents to her advantage, and use them to build a solid ecclesiastical career, and to develop a national reputation as a visionary, that will eventually result in several attempts at canonization. We are also led to believe that Juana's visions stop in the year 1518. Of course, the theological explanation for the visions' ceasing would simply be that God at that point chose not to continue to endow her with his visions. A psychological explanation on the other hand would suggest that for whatever reason, at that time Juana was able to assimilate the trauma, and therefore no longer needed the recourse of flashbacks.

As I state in Chapter 4, this analysis in many ways leaves us with more questions than it answers. Though I do think further study might yield a further understanding of these issues, the great likelihood is that we will never have conclusive answers for many of these questions. But we do have texts whose thematic content may shed some light on the early life of a sixteenth-century nun, and events that may have led to her career as a mystic and visionary.

In the texts of these three authors then, we have encountered representations of trauma varying in content, style, and purpose. Leonor openly writes of her difficult life with the purpose of leaving a testimonial legacy. Teresa writes of her illness only insofar as its discussion is necessary to support the thematic content of her texts. In all likelihood, the inclusion of themes related to trauma in Madre Juana's texts was entirely outside of her conscious awareness. We can hypothesize that for both Teresa and Juana writing may have played a role in their catharsis, and certainly did so in their post-traumatic reconstitution of the self. Teresa's writing seems to have given her an outlet to express her feelings of grief and loss, so that she could eventually become reconciled with her new situation. Juana's visions, and the writing of them, brought to Juana a renown and status that she would not have been otherwise likely to enjoy simply as the abbess of a convent.

While this study has proved a good beginning for the exploration of these issues, it has also led to a number of areas that merit further exploration. The first and most obvious of these pertains to Madre Juana. As I state in Chapter 4, I believe that thorough study of the manuscript is in order. Some areas of exploration would include, an examination of the *Libro del Conorte* as text, a closer examination of the actual language employed by Juana, and study of those sermons not yet analyzed by other scholars.

In addition, it would be useful to consider if and how considerations of trauma might apply to other women writers of the Iberian Peninsula, the late fifteenth-century love poet Florencia Pinar being one of the first to come to mind. We have even less biographical information about Florencia than we have about Madre Juana. However, many critics, Alan Deyermond (1983) and Joseph Snow (1984) among others, have

written of the tone of complaint in the three poems currently attributed to her. As with Madre Juana, proof of the existence of trauma may be difficult if not impossible, particularly without additional biographical data. But like Juana, an exploration of thematic content could be a beginning for such an exploration.

Teresa de Cartagena is of course not the only woman to be sent to a convent against her will. As many scholars point out, convents were often used as depositories for female family members who for whatever reason were deemed unmarriageable. It is likely then that many women struggled with the isolation and boredom of convent life. One fact frequently pointed out by scholars such as Ronald Surtz (1995) is the number of women in convents who wrote during this same period. Though often these women wrote at the behest of their confessors, a study that examined their writings might also yield more information about the daily lives and struggles of other nuns who simply never acquired even that small bit of recognition that Teresa did.

A consideration of these issues across geographical regions could also be of interest. One point of departure could be an exploration of the *Memorias* in the context of other personal narratives of the period, such as the *Avision* of Christine de Pisan, written approximately seven years before the *Memorias* in 1405. As I have mentioned previously, Christine de Pisan is another example of a woman who wrote as the result of a life-altering event. These two works have much in common: proximity in time, autobiographical structure, and both deal with themes of suffering and personal loss. A comparative study of these two works would certainly be a fruitful and fascinating area of investigation, and could be expanded to include other personal narratives of the period as well.

Stemming from our considerations of women's literary expressions of trauma, a study of gender difference and literary expression of trauma or suffering would also be of interest. Within the early modern historical context, did the same events produce a traumatic reaction in both men and women? Were men who experienced trauma more likely to write than those who did not? Carolyn bynum addresses some of these issues within the context of religious practice and conversion experience in her book *Fragmentation and Redemption.* She observes a number of differences in how men and women identify God with gender, and the models they employ to their experiences of conversion:

> Medieval men and women looked at and used gender-related notions very differently. Male writers saw the genders as dichotomous. They stressed male as power, judgment, discipline and reason, female as weakness, mercy, lust and unreason. They applied female images to themselves to express world denial, and the world they renounced was predominantly the world of wealth and power. Women writers used imagery more fluidly. Personal and social characteristics were more often shared by the two genders in women's writings. The female was a less marked category; it was more often simply a symbol of' an almost genderless self. When women did give the female content taken from the traditional idea of asymmetrical genders, they saw it as physical and bodily (175).

Herbert Bell makes similar observations regarding asceticism and it's relation to concepts of God and the Devil among female mystics in his book Holy Anorexia when he writes: "In a recent work, Saints and Society, Donald Weinstein and I set forth a major

distinction between male and female saints, especially with regard to their ascetic practices, based on their differing perceptions of the locus of sin. For women evil was internal and the Devil a domestic parasitic force, whereas for men sin was an impure response to an external stimulus, one that left the body inviolate (17). Though both these scholars are speaking within the context of the religious life, an exploration of possible implications for the lay-person could shed light on differences between male and female processing of traumatic events during the late Medieval and Early-Modern periods.

There is also a significant body of literature in psychology and women's studies suggesting that women's psychosocial development differs from that of men. Some scholars, such as Carol Gilligan (1982), have theorized that women's development is marked by a tendency toward connection with others and a need to nurture and be nurtured by her peers. Male development on the other hand, is viewed as being characterized by the drive toward differentiation and individual success, i.e. distinction from the group. Gilligan has further suggested that these developmental differences are reflected in the ways men and women respond to conflict and moral dilemma, with women favoring more flexible solutions that take into account a sense of the "greater good", while men frequently favor resolution that upholds social order over individual need. Gilligan is of the opinion that these distinctions span both time and culture. If we employ Gilligan's model alongside those presented by Bell and Bynum, what ramifications might there be for a gender analysis of trauma and literature in early-modern Spain? What differences exist in the ways that male and female authors discuss- or refrain from discussing—trauma in the written text?

These are just a few of the questions that come to mind as avenues for possible further study in the area of trauma and literary production. Though this is but a beginning, it is my hope that an exploration of the issues presented here will open new alternatives for the study of the writing of Early Modern women, and also lead to new avenues of study within the area of early Modern narrative across gender and geographical borders.

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