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La Monja Azul: The Political and Cultural Ramifications of a 17th-century Mystical Transatlantic Journey

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La Monja Azul: The Political and Cultural Ramifications of a 17th-century Mystical Transatlantic Journey

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Dedication

I dedicate this dissertation to my family, especially to my late father Nicholas Nogar, mother Marcella, brother Joshua and sister Carmella. I could not have done this without you.

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La Monja Azul: The Political and Cultural Ramifications of a 17th-century Mystical Transatlantic Journey

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This project sets forth a Mexican American cultural studies treatment of a US Southwestern legend known as the Lady in Blue (La monja azul). The legend is derived from17th-century religious *memoriales* (accounts) that narrate the miraculous apparition of a living cloistered Spanish nun, Sor María de Agreda, to the Jumano tribe of western New Mexico between the years 1620-1630. However, the Lady in Blue's conversion of the Jumanos was only the first of many recurring appearances she would make in the Americas and Europe over the next three hundred and seventy years. In the American Southwest, northern Mexico and Spain, stories about the apparating nun resurface and are reshaped in response to the demands of their contexts. Her narrative is transatlantic both in terms of what it recounts, and in terms of where it is recounted. She is not only

represented on both sides of the ocean, but her portrayal almost always has to do with her *being* on both side of the ocean. The Lady in Blue narrative brings together dialogues on conquest, both secular and religious, dialogues on the significance of the female body and the feminine written word, and dialogues on the negotiation of space, proximity and identity.

Extant research on Lady in Blue focuses on the components of her story as discrete entities, inadvertently divorcing related histories and legends from one another. 20th-century historians have read the account as a medieval holdover in Franciscan mission writing; folklorists as isolated Indo-Hispano accounts; and literary critics as individual anecdotes in twentieth-century literature. In contrast, this dissertation focuses on is the continuity of the narrative- the way a series of historical figures and documents capture the Lady in Blue as she moves from New Mexico, to Spain, and back to the Franciscan missions of the Southwest, where she is viewed as a proto- or co-missionary. From the missions, the traditions, legends, and folklore about her grew and were contended, resulting in the contemporary dramatic works, novels, short stories and poems about the Lady in Blue.

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> If one considers the beliefs and practices described in the text, which are clearly quite startling, to be too startling 'to be true' […] one might as well abandon one's research right then and there. If, on the other hand, one thinks that there may be a meaning to it all, and that the document ought to be taken seriously, then that clearly provides a tremendous opportunity for a new approach to medieval history.
>
> - Jean-Claude Schmitt
> *The Holy Greyhound*, 7-8

Introduction

This dissertation offers a cultural studies treatment of a US Southwestern legend known as the Lady in Blue. The fascinating history, folklore and literature generated by this legend have their roots in 17th-century religious colonial accounts originating in New Mexico that later found audiences throughout Europe and the New World. The best-known representation of the account is simple; it consists of a series of spiritual visitations ("bilocations") that a female figure later identified as the Spanish nun Sor María de Agreda allegedly made from Spain to various groups of indigenous peoples in what are now eastern New Mexico and west Texas. The result of these spiritual visits, according to the *Memoriales* of Spanish Franciscan Fray Alonso de Benavides, was that the Jumano Indians- one of the tribes visited by the Lady in Blue- traveled to the mission at Isleta pueblo and requested baptism from the friars stationed there. The two friars sent

to evangelize the Jumanos later testified that the tribe displayed signs of Catholic catechesis, such as making the sign of the cross, a fact which struck them as miraculous since the tribe had not previously received instruction from the Spanish friars. This particular version of the contact between the Monja Azul and the nomadic tribes of New Mexico is the starting point of my interest in the bilocation narrative.

Yet the Blue Nun's visit to the Jumanos of New Mexico was just the first of many recurring appearances she would make in the Americas over the next three hundred and seventy years. I will deal with materials concerning Sor María's bilocation to obscure corners of the colonial Spanish world dating not only from the colonial period, but from the 19th-, 20th- and 21st-centuries. One conclusion about the Lady in Blue/ Sor María seems certain. Her narrative is fascinating for its resilience, its suppleness; for the strange and surprising occasions when it appears; and for the range of meanings the protagonist at its center has assumed. My dissertation will examine the origins and development of this story over this span of time.

Perhaps if the account of the Lady in Blue were limited to a particular historical moment, or if it could be analytically dismantled using the methodology and mechanisms pertaining to a single field of study, her tale could be more discretely defined. If the bilocating nun had appeared only in the early 17th-century writings of Fray Alonso de Benavides, an analysis of those texts and their historical context alone might have been sufficient to elucidate the narrative. But news of the nun surfaces both in colonial-era documents that predate Benavides' works and much thereafter. The Lady in Blue narrative plays a prominent role in Sor María's life as well, factoring into in her

examinations by the Spanish Inquisition; in the *vita* or saint's life written about her after her death; and in subsequent religious documentation promoting her canonization process. She materializes throughout the 17th-, 18th- and 19th centuries in the northern regions of New Spain, her renown radiating out from Querétaro and Zacatecas, Mexico, to the regions inhabited by the nomadic tribes of Texas, and to the missions of Fray Junípero Serra in California and Fray Eusebio Kino in Arizona. From the nineteenth century until the twenty-first, Indo-Hispano folklore and religious observances in Texas, New Mexico and Arizona evoke her image.

The Lady in Blue narrative materializes in the 20th and 21st centuries, taking form both in a historical-religious context, and in the fiction and artistic works of a surprisingly broad array of authors. In the 1930s, Mexican-American historian and folklorist Jovita González summons Sor María onto the pages of a Texas newspaper and names her one of the "Catholic Heroines of Texas." From novels by Ana Castillo and Luis Alberto Urrea (both Mexican-American), Francisco Goldman (Guatemala), and Javier Sierra (Spain), to the short stories of Costa Rican author Rima de Valbona and Americans Marilyn Westfall and Lisa Sandlin, a modern literary interest in the narrative continues the legacy of its retelling. The bilocating Blue Nun has persistently surfaced and been re-imagined in a range of contexts, and to diverse ends over the centuries.

This story of the Blue Nun (or "La monja azul" or "Lady in Blue") has fascinated me for almost a decade, my interest in her sparked during a New Mexican history course at the University of New Mexico where I first made her acquaintance. Since then, I have researched and written about her in my Master's thesis, numerous conference

presentations and, now, a doctoral dissertation. By now, my relationship with the Lady in Blue has matured, as I have become ever more aware of her multifaceted manifestations. In this dissertation, I examine the Blue Nun's appearances and their relationship to their individual contexts; in doing so, I hypothesize as to how the bilocation narrative functions politically or socially in those contexts. For all her remarkable mobility, why does Sor María appear when she does and what ends does her narrative serve? For example, as in the case of Jovita González, why does the Mexican-American historian link a legendary Spanish nun to the history of Tejana women and to a broader concept of Tejano identity? How does this folklore function in González' subtly politicized writing? Given that the Lady in Blue is not an especially prominent historical or legendary figure, what motivated González to invoke her?

Critical Background

Given the continuity of Sor María's narrative, there are surprisingly few critical studies on the nature of her bilocation to the Americas, and even fewer that discuss its representation in contemporary texts. Many studies of the Lady in Blue account have examined its presentation in Fray Benavides' two *Memoriales*, or the construction of the *Memoriales* as a whole. Other projects have considered the corpus of Sor María's writings, including: her correspondence with Felipe IV, her spiritual work *The Mystical City of God*, and her guidelines for religious practice. A small group of studies examine the presentation of her bilocation in specific texts. In this section, I offer a review of the literature that treats Sor María's bilocation narrative as a critical context for my own case.

Three texts have traditionally been considered central to the bilocation narrative's foundation: Fray Alonso de Benavides' 1630 and 1634 *Memoriales*, respectively, and the 1631 letter he and Sor María sent to the friars stationed in New Mexico, the *Tanto que se sacó de vna carta, que el r. padre fr. Alonso de Benavides, custodio que fué del Nuevo México, embió a los religiosos de la Santa custodia de la conversión de San Pablo de dicho reyno, desde Madrid, el año de 1631* (which I will hereafter abbreviate as the *Tanto*). In the course of this dissertation, I will introduce two additional texts that also contributed to the foundational narrative of the Lady in Blue. The earliest of these three documents has been published in translation three times (1916, 1954 and 1996), and all versions offer some critical commentary about the bilocation episode. While the first of these translations offers the most extensive criticism, the latter two also provide interpretations of the episode and its function within the 1630 *Memorial*.

The notes Charles Fletcher Lummis and Frederick Webb Hodge appended to the 1916 printing of the 1630 *Memorial* (the "Ayer edition") are often cited in more recent studies on colonial New Mexico and its inhabitants because they are extensive, detailed and often accurate. Judging by their commentary on the text, Lummis and Hodge read Fray Benavides' work is search of the "facts," generally treating the text as an accurate historical chronicle, and supplementing Benavides' writing with additional anthropological and historical information to contextualize the friar's account. Their interpretive approach includes the occasional comment on more fantastic episodes in the text, such as the curing of a blind boy at the Moqui (Hopi) pueblo. But in other instances, such as that of the revival of a dead Acoman child (in the "Peñol de Acoma" section),

Lummis and Hodge refrain from remarking altogether on the veracity of the episode. In these two cases, it seems that the historians are willing to either suspend their incredulousness, or to avoid assigning Fray Benavides authorial responsibility for them.

However, in contrast to their critical response to other supernatural episodes in the text, Lummis and Hodge fundamentally question the historical validity of Benavides' section "Conversión milagrosa de la Nación Jumana," in which the Lady in Blue visits the Jumano tribe. Finding the Lady in Blue episode markedly irreconcilable with the rest of the *Memorial*, Lummis and Hodge impute motive and agency for the creation of the bilocation account with Sor María- oddly divorcing author (Benavides) from text. In their notes on the episode, they surprisingly focus on Sor María's "so-called mystical manifestations" (Hodge and Lummis 276), comment explicitly on the "preposterous things" (Hodge and Lummis 176) Sor María wrote in *La mística ciudad de dios* and note the Sorbonne's condemnation of that text. Rather than examining Fray Benavides' role in the chronicling and dissemination of the Lady in Blue narrative, Lummis and Hodge focus on Sor María instead, undercutting her credibility through her biography, which they assure "no doubt will prove sufficient to indicate the mental character of this nun" (Hodge and Lummis 278). In mentioning the 1631 encounter between Sor María and Fray Benavides, Lummis and Hodge comment that during their meeting Benavides "had every opportunity of hearing from the lady's own lips, of her marvelous 'flights' to New Mexico" (Hodge and Lummis 276), of the miracles "marvelous in the extreme" (Hodge and Lummis 189) that Sor María claimed to have executed. The two historians resolve the difficulty of applying empirical historical analysis to the mystical account by

paradoxically first assigning agency to Sor María, and then discounting her credibility. Unable to construct a straightforward resolution to the enigma of the bilocation narrative, Sor María and her unusual life are held accountable.

But Lummis and Hodge's conclusion is problematic. First, they incorrectly assert that Benavides mentions "Madre María de Jesús somewhat at length in the *Memorial* in connection with his description of the conversion of the Jumano Indians" (Hodge and Lummis 189). Benavides does not explicitly refer to Sor María in his 1630 *Memorial*; in fact, he does not state that the Sor María and the Lady in Blue of the 1630 *Memorial* are the same individual until he and Sor María write the *Tanto* in 1631 (and later restates as much in the 1634 *Memorial*). Second, Lummis and Hodge claim that Fray Benavides became convinced that Sor María had converted the Jumano tribe when he visited her convent and she named the tribes who lived in the Jumano's region. Lummis and Hodge note that though perhaps Sor María simply made up the names of the tribes, "some of the names mentioned […] were derived from the *Memorial* published the year before" (Hodge and Lummis 190). This statement confounds their previous (incorrect) statement that Sor María was already featured in the 1630 *Memorial*. How could Sor María both be depicted as the Lady in Blue in the 1630 *Memorial*, and yet later need to use material from that text prove that the she was the Lady in Blue? Lummis and Hodge's argument for Sor María's agency in the bilocation narrative is confounded by their rationale; though they present Sor María as responsible for the bilocation narrative, the logic does not hold in the face of the fact that Benavides did not write about Sor María until after he met her in 1631. By anachronistically linking Sor María to the1630 *Memorial*, Lummis

and Hodge's criticism mistakenly assigns Sor María agency early in the narrative's appearance and also utterly discredits her role.

Further in their notes, Lummis and Hodge cite Fray Damian Manzanet's 1689 letter to Don Carlos de Sigüenza y Góngora concerning his encounter with indigenous Texans, and their folkloric tradition associated with the Lady in Blue. Although Lummis and Hodge would use this account to prove the Blue Nun narrative false, it in fact has the opposite effect. Obliged to acknowledge that accounts other than Benavides' mention the Lady in Blue, Lummis and Hodge nonetheless cast doubt on Manzanet's letter by noting the differences in the way she is described in the *Tanto* and Manzanet's text ("Regarding the color of baize so particularly specified by the Indian, Benavides just as explicitly states that nun's habit was gray" (Hodge and Lummis 277)). Further, they preface Manzanet's description of the Hasinai folk practices with a citation establishing that the friar knew about Sor María de Agreda, implying that his report was the direct result of this prior knowledge. By distancing Benavides' letter from Manzanet's text in their notes, Lummis and Hodge continue to portray the Lady in Blue episode as a fantastical aberration in Benavides' otherwise matter-of-fact *Memorial*. But, in fact, the very minor differences they find between the two narratives only serve to bring them into dialogue, in effect dispelling the sense that the Lady in Blue episode in Benavides' text was an exception, and taking the first steps towards establishing her historical continuity and connection to the folk tradition.

Cyprian Lynch's commentary, in Peter Forrestal's translation of the 1630 Memorial, conflates the "Miraculous Conversion of the Jumano Indians" episode in the

1630 Memorial with Sor María's bilocation, referring to the 1634 *Memorial* as his source for the association of the nun with the "Woman in Blue" figure. Lynch contextualizes the bilocation incident by setting it against the backdrop of Sor María's life, writing and post-mortem hagiography, and ultimately removes the question of bilocation from the domain of historical analysis. Lynch states that questions regarding Sor Maria's sanctity, revelations and bilocation are "primarily theological problems whose definitive solution lies beyond the competence of the historian" (Lynch 59). Sor María's credibility is affirmed by Lynch, who stresses that the censure of her writing was based on "historical improbabilities rather than for [*La mística ciudad de dios*'s] doctrinal impertinences" (Lynch 58). He does not consider the function of the bilocation text in a wider cultural or historical context, but rather is concerned with the exoneration of Sor María (and Fray Benavides) from the implicit censure levied against them in the Lummis/Hodge 1630 *Memorial* commentary. By responding in this way, Fr. Lynch's criticism of the bilocation rejects the binary of historical fact versus fiction that Lummis/Hodge offer by relocating the debate over the Lady in Blue narrative to a theological framework. In doing so, Lynch shifts the line of critical questioning away from "truth versus fiction" regarding bilocation, and greatly widens the possibilities of interpretation.

By comparison, Baker Morrow's introduction and textual notes offer little to the interpretation of the Lady in Blue narrative that is new. Morrow also conflates Sor María de Agreda with the Blue Lady of the Jumano conversion episode by referring to the *1634 Memorial*, but Morrow focuses on the reception of the Blue Nun episode by Benavides' 17th-century contemporaries. He determines that the positive reception of the Lady in

Blue narrative in Spain was indicative of the "lingering influence of the Middle Ages in the seventeenth-century world" (Benavides, *Harvest* xx). He describes the individuals in Benavides' works as "characters primed for miracles in a medieval morality play" (Morrow xx), interpreting the bilocation episode as one example of many in the *Memorial* that were tailored to an Spanish audience conditioned to accept and decode that particular type of narration. Morrow does not examine why such a narrative would have worked to Benavides' (or others') advantage, nor does he look beyond Spain to understand the appeal of Benavides' text. The fact that the 1630 *Memorial* was translated into four languages (Dutch, French, Latin and German) and republished throughout Europe, indicates a more widespread medieval mindset than that which was Morrow proposes was held by the Spanish. While Morrow's reading generally addresses issues of reception and epistemology, it does not answer questions about the acceptance and promulgation of the Lady in Blue narrative, nor does it speculate as to the ends promulgation of the narrative could have served.

Anthropologist Daniel Reff's article on the Benavides *Memoriales*, "Contextualizing Missionary Discourse: the Benavides *Memorials* of 1630 and 1634," proposes reading the *Memoriales* more connotatively than denotatively. In doing so, Reff does service to the analysis of both Benavides' texts and the Lady in Blue narrative by leaving the issue of mystical travel's verifiability aside completely, and instead focusing on how the text as whole functioned in its historical context. Reff suggests that the more extraordinary elements of the *Memoriales*, including incidents like the appearance of the Blue Nun to the Jumanos, be read connotatively, as constitutive of the friar's reality,

rather than denotatively, in which case they would "call into question Benavides' credulity and powers of observation" (Reff 52). Reff emphasizes that Benavides' texts function in a religious and political milieu in which the Franciscan friars perceived themselves in competition with other missionary orders for the Indians they were converting (Reff 53). In the *Memoriales*, Benavides offers as proof of the Franciscans' effectiveness in the region 1) the expulsion of demonic influences, and 2) the establishment of Christian practices among the tribes. Benavides' rhetorical techniques are thus meant to suggest the successful religious work on the part of the Franciscans, both generally on behalf of the Catholic Church, and also in contrast to the mission work of the Jesuit and Dominican orders.

Reff states that Benavides' composite medieval and Counter-Reformation epistemology allowed him to effectively present the Lady in Blue narrative in the context of the colonizing (understood as order-creating) work the Franciscans undertook in New Mexico. Of course, for an expository example such as that of the Lady in Blue to be comprehended, Benavides' audience must have shared his epistemology, a suggestion which Reff asserts was the case, given the popularity of the Benavides 1630 *Memorial* in Spain. Reff indicates that Benavides must have "anticipated his audience quite well, affirming their shared paradigm" (Reff 59).

Clark Colahan is currently the foremost scholar on Sor María, having published the most widely read study on Sor María de Agreda's life and writing, *The Visions of Sor María de Agreda: Writing Knowledge and Power*. He has also authored an article on the New Mexican *alabado* dedicated to Sor María, and another on the nun's success in twice

avoiding reprimand by the Spanish Inquisition . In *The Visions of Sor María*, Colahan gathers an impressive array of materials about and written by Sor María, including one of her earlier pieces, *Face of the Earth and Map of the Spheres*, which predates *La mística ciudad de dios*. In regards to the bilocation account, Colahan offers the most-extensive and best-contextualized explanation, and the only investigation that seriously examines how Sor María interpreted and responded to the bilocation. Colahan juxtaposes the bilocations to the mystical journeys Sor María reports in *Face of the Earth*, and explains that such mystical trips to New Mexico were in keeping with others she had already allegedly taken. He notes that such mystical travels were in no way unique among Catholic religious figures, and cites the cases of St. Anthony of Padua, St. Phillip of Neri and St. Catherine Ricci to whom bilocative experiences were attributed. Colahan likewise comments on the similarity of Sor María's explanation for her travels with the Spanish medieval devotional stories of the Virgin Mary, the *Cántigas de Santa María*.

Colahan notes that the writing and popularization of the bilocation narrative were largely out of Sor María's control, and under that of Benavides and other male church officials, who would have had the ultimate say in how the account, and particularly her role, were couched. She would later testify to this fact in front of the Inquisition, and indeed criticize Benavides and her confessor for exaggerating her version of the bilocations (Colahan, *María de Jesús*). Colahan focuses his observations on how Sor María as a living historical figure functioned in and related to the bilocation. Citing Jean Franco, Colahan comments that for Sor María, and indeed for Spanish women of her epoch limited by social and religious constraints, her mystical journeys of conversion

among the remote Jumanos "reflect the symbols of heroism in her culture but defy their gender limitations because Sor María appropriates them for a woman- herself" (Colahan, *Visions* 98). Colahan's interpretation of Sor María's bilocations positions the experiences in relation to her life and the manner in which she might have understood them or anticipated they might have functioned in her time.

Anna Heron Moore's Harvard honors thesis "La mesa puesta, A Table Set By God : Document, text, and Historical Narrative in Sor María de Ágreda's Mystical Visions of New Mexico, 1619-1648" presents an interpretation of Sor María's bilocation that emphasizes the constructed nature of her narrative, and underscores the Blue Nun phenomenon as "an ideological narrative whose import and historical effects few others have superceded" (Herron Moore 3). Moore examines how the writings of Sor María, and the reports of missionaries Fray Gerónimo Zarate Salmerón and Fray Benavides functioned in concert to bring the bilocation account to prominence and widespread acceptance. According to Moore's argument, Fray Zarate Salmerón presents a concrete representation of missions in the Americas, providing a backdrop against which Fray Benavides' narrative of the Lady in Blue functioned as an intermediary between Spain and the colonies. More characterizes Sor María's early writing of dream-like travel, *Mapa de los Orbes Celestiales y Elementales* by the external influences of science and mysticism that gave rise to its composition. More contextualizes the Lady in Blue narrative within 17th-century European epistemology, suggesting that the Lady in Blue figure gained currency because she represented "an extraordinary example of God's Apocalyptic plan as a manifestation of simultaneous events at the antipodal extremes of

the earth" (Herron Moore 4). The Lady in Blue narrative thus "unified Spanish ideology and the lived experience on the North American missionary frontier" (Herron Moore 85) by uniting the pre-Apocalyptic European view of the mission in the 17th century with documented experiences on the northern frontier.

Maribel Larraga's 1999 dissertation *La mística de la feminidad en la obra de Juan Villagutierre Sotomayor* contextualizes the prominence of the account in Juan Villagutierre Sotomayor's 1698 document *Historia de la conquista, pérdida, y restauración del reyno y provincia de la Nueva México en la América septentrional*. Larraga further develops the hypothesis proposed by Colahan in regards to Sor María's travels as a cloistered woman. She defines Sor María's mystical travels as means by which the nun is able to escape, at least discursively, from the strictures of a male-dominated ecclesiastical environment and participate in the conversion process in New Mexico.

Katie MacLean's 2002 dissertation, *Transatlantic Mysticism: Women, Religion and Colonization*, briefly examines the historical background for the bilocation narrative, and notes its persistence throughout a lengthy historical period. MacLean is concerned with the relationship between Spanish mysticism, gender and imperial intent during the 16th and 17th-centuries and she uses Sor María's mystical travels as an example of a transcontinental, mystical and uniquely female conquest. She acknowledges the wide variety of sources that have cited or incorporated the legend of the Blue Nun in the southwest and beyond. MacLean additionally includes an analysis of the role the account plays in Ana Castillo's novel *So Far From God*, citing Gloria Anzaldúa's concept of the

Borderlands and José Rabasa's debunking of the "peaceful conquest" of New Mexico. She ultimately concludes that the account functions as a neutralizing symbol of cultural hybridity that both downplays the actual violence of conquest in the southwestern United States and meets the political ends of radical Chicana feminists by standing in as an element of female agency.

Jane Tar's 1998 dissertation, *Literature of Franciscan Nuns in Early Modern Spain*, submits Sor María's *La mística ciudad de Dios* to a feminist interpretation, placing her work in the context of that of contemporaneous female Franciscan writers. Tar privileges the work of Sor María over the mystical writings of her contemporaries; she argues that most woman-written mystical writing in early Modern Spain, with the exception of Santa Teresa de Avila, was disregarded and proposes Sor María's works as a legitimate and powerful counterpart to Santa Teresa's recognized works of female mystical reflection. She thus re-positions Sor María and her writing more prominently in the canon of women Franciscans, and implies a closer reading of her life and its various exceptional elements, including the bilocation.

Several other texts, *El papel de Sor María de Jesús de Agreda en el Barroco Español*, *Agredistas y antiagredistas*, *La Madre Agreda: Una Mujer del Siglo XXI, La Madre Ágreda y la Mariología del siglo XVII, Otras obras de la Venerable Madre Sor María de Jesús de Ágreda*, *Celtiberia: Numero Conmemorativo del III Centenario de la Muerte de Sor María de Jesús de Agreda* and "Obras inéditas de Sor María de Jesús de Agreda: El jardín espiritual" examine Sor María's life and writing from the point of view of the Spanish peninsula. Two are especially relevant to this project. *El papel de Sor*

María de Jesús de Agreda en el Barroco Español is a collection of essays from a 2001 conference held at the Universidad Internacional Alfonso VIII celebrating the four hundredth anniversary of Sor María's birth. This collection explores how Sor María functioned in her historical context, as person and as symbol, in the art, politics, architecture and writing (especially mariological texts) of baroque Spain. *Agredistas y antiagredistas*, by Zótico Royo Campos, is a study of the individuals throughout history who have supported or opposed Sor María's case for sainthood, and the acceptance of her religious text, the *La mística ciudad de dios*, by the Catholic Church. These two texts in particular are relevant to this dissertation, as they deal in a direct way with the mechanisms for dissemination of the Blue Nun narrative (*Agredistas y antiagredistas*) or detail the specific ways Sor María's environment in Spain interacted with her and she through it (*El papel de Sor María de Jesús de Agreda en el Barroco Español*).

In addition to the texts above cited, there is a large body of both scholarly and activist work that treats specific elements of Sor María's life as a mystic abbess, writings (particularly her correspondence with Felipe IV, authorship of *La mística ciudad de Dios*) and three-hundred year process for sainthood. Interest in Sor María's writing and beatification frequently are intimately related to the mystical travel also attributed to her, a facet that will be explored more extensively in Chapter 3. Studies pertaining to these aspects of the Blue Nun narrative will be referenced as necessary throughout this dissertation.

Continuity of the Lady in Blue Narrative and Critical Rationale

Individually, these studies commit to a tight reading of a particular discrete topic relating to the Lady in Blue and thoroughly explore it. Taken together, however, this body of scholarly work on her is fragmented. While my own analysis references and re-considers these previous studies as part of the narrative's larger course, in the end, I follow her trajectory to where it leads. The result is an examination that takes a transatlantic cultural studies approach to the material.

Why follow the Blue Nun's path in this way, scrutinizing where she appears over changing time and space? When she does materialize, it is not by accident. The narrative of the Blue Nun is sufficiently marginal that for it to re-appear in a text or legend, an act of recovery, of will, must be made. Her presence at any given time inherently indicates a deliberateness in election of her narrative, as the Lady in Blue is notoriously hard to find. This election indicates that there is something about the narrative that draws people to it. Thus, although material on the Blue Nun may not be as abundant as that pertaining to other folk figures, existing artifacts are important because they suggest intentionality, an invocation. The most logical means to study these instances, then, is to examine where the Lady in Blue might appear, and why or how she was summoned there.

Finally, the continuity the Lady in Blue's story embodies is as much geographical as it is temporal. One of the more remarkable elements of the Blue Nun narrative is that it links Spain in such a defined, concrete, verifiable way to her remote colonies. She is not only represented on both sides of the ocean and but her portrayal almost always has to do with her *being* on both side of the ocean. Her narrative is transatlantic both in terms

of what it recounts, and in terms of where it is recounted. It would be tempting to say that the Lady in Blue straddles the distance between Spain and her colonies, but it's more accurate to say that she simultaneously occupies both. She is the link between Spain and Greater Mexico, bringing the center and the periphery (from Texas to California), into intimate contact. The intrinsic transatlantic, geographic connection the Lady in Blue narrative signifies and reproduces is in itself reason enough to bring texts from all varied geographies and varied time periods into conversation with one another.

Mexican-American Cultural Studies

Because the narrative develops outward from that point of contact between colonizer and colonized, it naturally pertains to the Spanish colonial experience, but also more specifically to the Mexican American Spanish colonial experience. Though infrequently treated in the field, Mexican American cultural studies are linked to their Spanish colonial roots, which extend not only into colonial Mexico, but into the Iberian Peninsula as well. One work that places Mexican American studies in dialogue with its Spanish colonial roots is Ramón Gutiérrez' *When Jesus Came, the Corn Mothers Went Away*. Gutiérrez uses the institution of marriage during the 16th, 17th and 18th centuries in New Mexico as a means for explaining the changing religious, social and ethnic dynamic between the Pueblo Indians and the Spanish settlers during that time period. Gutiérrrez assumes that a basic condition of inequality underlies this dynamic, and seeks to explain how the symbol of marriage reflects the way this condition is played out among the various inhabitants of New Mexico during the Spanish colonial period.

Similarly, since this dissertation seeks to provide insight into the tension of contact, distance, and identity suggested by the symbol of Lady in Blue in Spanish colonial society, her history logically lends itself to a study of this nature. Her story is one in Mexican-American cultural history in which Spanish colonial influence is paramount and requires contextualization within the field. By addressing this element of the Spanish colonial legacy inherent to Mexican-American cultural studies, one may come to understand better the complex and early interactions that conditioned the modern Mexican American experience.

Because the bulk of the material concerning the Lady in Blue originates in the American Southwest, Greater Mexico and Mexico, this dissertation is also more generally oriented towards the field of Mexican-American cultural studies. Issues of nationality, gender, religion, otherness and colonization are the significant factors that have determined how the Blue Nun narrative was born and developed, and how it has come to be understood and utilized in the Southwest. Since she has left her clearest trail in the history, literature and folklore of the Southwest, and since her transatlantic, colonial narrative primarily deals with and reflects on the populations that occupy Greater Mexico, Mexican American cultural studies offers a natural theoretical framework on which to hang her story. As this dissertation is invested in tracing the series of changes in the narrative's evolution and in deciphering what those changes signify, the mechanisms of analysis offered by Mexican American cultural studies are most aptly applied.

In this sense, this dissertation is influenced by the fundamental structure of studies by modern critics including Américo Paredes, José Limón, Richard Flores, and Domino

Pérez. Américo Paredes' 1958 study on the Greater Mexican *corrido*, *With His Pistol In His Hand*, is the foundation from which many later studies have derived their critical structures. As Paredes states in his introduction, though his initial objective was to examine just the *corrido*, the book is in fact the study of its protagonist, Gregorio Cortés, as well as his legend. It is "an account of the life of a man, of the way that song and legend grew up around his name, and of the people who produced the songs, the legends and the man" (Paredes xi). Paredes' study of the life and context of the historical figure, as well as of the communities and tensions that created his legend, is a seminal work. *With His Pistol In His Hand* provides a model for the study of the historical-mythical figure, and a means of understanding the interplay of the legend with its environment.

José Limón's *Dancing With the Devil* is by the author's designation an ethnographic essay on the Mexican American community of South Texas, that draws on "a range of expressive culture concerning this sector in relation to its socially dominated condition" (Limón 7). Limón creates a type of ethnographic text that he sees is in short supply, an "integrated [work] addressing popular folkloric forms, scholarly discursive practices, mass media, and written literary forms in one interpretive universe always with a close attention to political economy" (Limón 12). Limón examines a diverse body of artifacts, from late 19th century Texan ethnographies (by both Anglos and Mexican Americans), to the cultural practices (a carne asada, a South Texas baile) of the working-class Tejano community. In each of these artifacts, Limón searches out a metaphorical Devil, that is, the element that represents the "ideological response of a people […] to a history of race and class domination" (Limón 14). He thus seeks to identify what

Frederic Jameson termed the "political unconscious" (Limón 14) of the Texan Mexicano community, ultimately discovering a dynamic much more complex than a binary of resistance or domination. By analyzing discourses diverse in terms of genre, intent, and mode, Limón reveals what is consistent among these texts- though it is never static nor is it simple.

Anthropologist Richard Flores' *Remembering the Alamo* focuses on the specific question of how an iconic historical representation was influenced by political, social and racial factors. In studying the development of Texas' "Battle of the Alamo" trope, Flores examines the factors that shaped this story into the foundational fiction it has become. Flores considers the battle's historical origins, comparing it to the Alamo trope to distinguish which historical facts carry over into the modern narrative, and which were omitted, glorified or downplayed. From this basis, Flores then examines how both specific organizations, and more widespread social pressures conditioned the construction of the Alamo's "history." By deconstructing the modern Alamo trope, Flores unearths the motives that precipitated its creation, and in highlighting the differences between history and trope, he exposes those parts of the Alamo's history that have been suppressed through its reconstructions and retellings.

Flores is primarily concerned with how the retelling of the Alamo trope has affected the concept of the self, particularly within the Mexican-American community in Texas. He writes that, whether stories told and retold are true, they "inscribe our present and shape our future; stories of the past are linked to the formation of selves and others in a complex tapestry of textured narratives" (Flores x). For Flores, the impact recounting

"stories of the past" makes may be the only quantifiable quality about such stories. To whatever degree the narrative is manipulated, its final result is that it "provides narrative representations and public imaginaries that help us to make out way through the world" (Flores x). It is to this end that he studies the Alamo trope, to understand how its reception has shaped its audiences' perception of themselves and their worlds.

Domino Perez's *There Was a Woman: La Llorona From Folklore to Popular Culture* treats the Greater Mexican folk figure La Llorona (the "Wailing Woman"), examining her origins and her evolution in the folkloric, literary and pop culture artifacts that depict her. Perez traces the La Llorona legend to Fray Bernadino de Sahagún's 1587 translation of Aztec mythology, the Florentine Codex, examining revisions to the indigenous account precipitated by the changes in racial, religious and cultural dynamic caused by the Spanish conquest of Mexico. Perez establishes the normative elements of the Greater Mexican folkloric tradition concerning La Llorona, and then comments on the variations of the legend which reference or play off of that normative tradition. Perez distinguishes among the representations of La Llorona in folklore and modern popular representation based on how these representations deviate from the normative narrative, and who creates these representations and to what ends. These groupings reveal that the cultural identities of the self and the other are closely wrapped up in this manner in which La Llorona is used, by whom and for whom. Perez's analysis connects the legend's historical sources to its subsequent development within the Mexican American community, and then to its pop culture, literary and artistic renditions. In doing so, Pérez

makes a case for the changing significances, underlying motives, and inscribed readings the figure of La Llorona has assumed over nearly five hundred years.

Dissertation Trajectory

As this dissertation will trace the trajectory of the story of the bilocating Blue Nun, it is fitting and in keeping with the studies above cited, to begin with the historical sources for the story and to move forward chronologically. The historical investigation tracks the early 17th-century paper trail that housed and cultivated the *historia* about a mystical female presence in New Mexico, and through this dissertation I will develop that facet of the Lady in Blue narrative. As noted earlier, 20th-century historians of New Mexico grappled with the question of the Blue Nun's empirical authenticity in her 17th-century context, obliging the narrative to conform to that system of analysis. But no matter how I've urged the narrative into a historical colonial discourse, attempting to corner the story at that moment by defining the motives surrounding its emergence, the Lady's subsequent reincarnations do not allow her to be so easily confined. Though the legend arises from a set of colonial historical documents intended to serve informational and political ends directed from the New World to Spain, the account's earliest meaning is modified as the locus and context of transmission shift. Her narrative functions in distinct capacities depending on the historical and political moment in which her story is revived, recast, or omitted.

Given the mobility, mutability, and relative marginality her narrative, a study of the movement of the Lady in Blue lends itself to a multi-disciplinary, transatlantic analysis. As the time period and genre of the various sources of the account vary, so, too,

do the ways in which the material surrounding the Lady in Blue narrative must be treated. It seems inconsistent, for example, to read the fictional works of Ana Castillo and Luis Alberto Urrea with the same analytical objectives as one would the historical writings of Fray Benavides or Sor María herself. This study maintains that it is more productive to interpret collectivities of accounts (i.e. early colonial, peninsular religious, folklore, etc) discretely, analyzing those works using critical frameworks pertaining to those genres. In this way, the narrative's function in a given context can be elucidated in a manner consistent with that context. Final analysis of these examples will hopefully chart the trajectory the Lady in Blue has traveled.

Dissertation Organization

This dissertation includes six chapter, four of which pertain to the colonial era, examining the historical development of the Blue Nun narrative from the 17th century to the early 19th century. The last two chapters are more contemporary, treating folklore and modern creative production involving the Lady in Blue narrative, seeking to decode her sociopolitical meaning in these works.

In Chapter 1, I outline the historical context out of which the Blue Nun narrative evolved. Because the Lady in Blue spans two continents, this chapter describes the political, religious and social situations in both the European and New World environments where her account was born, developed and circulated. Spain under the rule of Felipe IV was on the brink of economic crisis, experiencing the Counter-Reformation response to the growth of Protestantism in Europe. Our interest will principally be in how these factors were manifested in New Mexico and how the arrival

of Fray Benavides in Spain figures into them. In the New World, the New Mexico territory was clinging to existence by a very fine thread, one that existed nearly exclusively for reasons of evangelization at the hands of the Franciscan friars. Underlying the region's precarious survival was Spain's legacy of conquest (both political and religious), incipient conflicts between church and secular leaders in the region, and the autonomous nature of both settlers and indigenous tribes. Finally, the opinions and influence of the institutional Catholic Church, whose own dealings with the evangelization process in the New World were fraught with tensions among the orders, Pope Urban VIII's questions about New World sanctity and sainthood, and the roles that women could undertake in the colonizing project, are considered. Given these varied elements, this chapter provides a backdrop that contextualizes the Lady in Blue's unfolding narrative.

Chapter 2 examines the narrative's originary accounts. It delves into the historical documents that present the Lady in Blue in print to readers throughout Europe and the Americas in the 17th and 18th centuries. In analyzing works of the primary authors of the bilocating nun's account, Fray Gerónimo de Zarate Salmerón, Fray Alonso de Benavides, Sor María de Agreda and Fray Joseph Ximénez Samaniego, this chapter creates a coherent picture of how her narrative grew through their writing. The way these texts interface with one another, barrowing elements from and referring to each other both directly and indirectly, reveals the complex interplay of ordinal interests, theological objectives and colonizing desires that gave rise to the narrative's normalized rendering. Additionally, the question of order of publication bears on this dissertation, as the

documents which spread her renown are not those that were first composed, a fact which affects assumptions about the pubic reception of the Lady in Blue narrative. The timeline by which protagonists interact with the texts, and the texts interact with their audiences, determines the first steps the legend of the Lady in Blue takes towards recognition and collective remembering.

Chapter 3 details Sor María's life, in particular her renown as an author in New Spain. The widespread reading of her controversial Marian treatise *La mística ciudad de dios* is inextricably intertwined with the path the Blue Nun takes in the Americas. Sor Maria's writing achieved an unusually wide distribution in New Spain in the 17th, 18th, and 19th centuries, appearing unexpectedly in collections in the most remote corners of the Spanish mission frontier. In New Spain, writers such as Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz and painters such as Juan de Correa feature her writing, incorporating her into their own context. This chapter examines how this re-contextualization of Sor Maria as a writer and mystic in New Spain underpins and develops her identity as the Lady in Blue.

Chapter 4 treats the dissemination of and interest in the Sor María/ Lady in Blue figure in 17th, 18th and 19th century Mexico and what is now the American Southwest. This chapter examines the inscription of the Lady in Blue narrative into the history of northern Mexico, Texas, New Mexico, California and Arizona. It also details the particular interest the Franciscan order had in the perpetuation of both Sor María's spiritual writings and of the bilocation account, thus offering a suggestion for the agency by which the Lady in Blue's renown spread in the Americas. The perception of Sor

María a proto-, pre- or co-missionary among various mission groups is presented and discussed.

In Chapter 5, the focus turns to legends and folk traditions regarding the Lady in Blue. This chapter illustrates how the Blue Nun narrative, has adjusted in the folkloric tradition in response to particular social, racial and political pressures. This chapter compares differences in regional retellings of the narrative, discusses the folkloric nature of a narrative that is rooted in writing, and examines the invocation of the Lady in Blue folk narratives within turn-of-the century Mexican American communities in Texas. The existence of and innovation on the narrative embodied by these folk texts is indicative of the degree to which the narrative became embedded in regional history and collective recollection.

Chapter 6 considers contemporary works in which the Blue Nun appears and how she functions in them. These works originate not only in the American Southwest, but also Spain and in Latin America, a wide dispersal that highlights the unusually mobile nature of the indefatigable Lady in Blue narrative. As she materializes in a variety of genres, written by authors of significantly different backgrounds, her very presence in these works begs the question "why here?" What is the appeal of her narrative and how does it function in specific environments? If in the past, the Lady in Blue has served as a link between the colonizer and the colonized, as a miraculous archetype for regional identity, and as a focus for political and racial definition, how does she function in her modern context?

This dissertation is, in the end, about a narrative that emerges in multiple places at unpredictable times, that is transformed as it relocates, and that has retained a fundamentally engaging character over the years. It is in order to understand, contextualize and assign meaning to this attraction that this dissertation now advances.

Nuns in the [colonial New World]
chronicles certainly travel on real as well as
spiritual journeys, but they effectively go
nowhere, for it is precisely by
acknowledging no change in the matter of
place that the New World's difference is
neutralized and its religious (and political,
racial and social) orthodoxy asserted in
terms of its asymmetry to the Old World.

- Elisa Sampson Vera Tudela,
Colonial Angels, 5

Chapter 1

In 1629, upon returning to Mexico City from his post in New Mexico, the Franciscan *custos* (religious administrator) to the New Mexican territory prepared to sail back to his native Spain after meeting with his superiors. Prior to his departure from New Spain, Fray Alonso de Benavides presented a document to the Franciscan prelates in Mexico City, another version of which would be made for the King of Spain, Felipe IV, and later for Pope Urban VIII. On arriving in Spain, and reporting to Felipe IV regarding his charges in the new northern frontier, Fray Benavides would make the acquaintance of the leaders of the Franciscan order in Spain, Minister General Bernardino Siena and Commissary General Juan de Santander, but also that of Sor María de Agreda. The trip Fray Benavides undertook in 1629, the individuals he met, and the series of events to be carried out had effects that resonated directly back across the Atlantic to the place from which he had departed. The document reviewed and recommended by the viceroy of New Spain, Don Rodrigo Pacheco y Osorio, and Commissary General of the region Fray

Francisco de Apodaca, in Mexico City would become celebrated at Spanish court and, eventually, the cloistered nun's alleged activities in New Mexico would become known not only in Spain and in Rome, but also back in the new northern colonies.

But from where, precisely, does Fray Benavides report in his *1630 Memorial*? What is New Mexico at this time? And what kind of Spain is he sailing to in 1629? What worlds does Sor María cross connect? The nature not only of the colony Benavides describes in his two *Memorials*, but also of the places where he presented these works, all contribute to the subsequent events pertaining to the *custos*' texts. The early history of the Mexican colonial project affected the settlement and evangelization of New Mexico, underlying the relationship of colony to colonized Benavides' writing represents. What dynamics of church and state governed the region? The *1630 Memorial* was drawn from the context of the New Mexico territory, but what was it like while Benavides was there? Using secondary sources, I will discuss the role of the Church and colonial government in New Spain, specifically in New Mexico, at the beginning of the 17th century, in order to understand the connections and dependencies that are played out in Benavides' work.

As for the European atmosphere in which the friar's texts were read, I am principally concerned with the religious and political dynamics that determined how settlement and evangelization in New Mexico proceeded or that conditioned interests in the region. Regarding the court of Felipe IV, I am principally interested in the way the Spanish government weighed further investment in the New Mexico colony, as well as the general condition of the monarchy and the Spanish state. What about that particular environment stimulated intense interest in the story of the Lady in Blue? The bilocation

narrative pertains to these facts because they relate to how and why such an account might have been interpreted by figures of secular authority and acted upon in a colonizing context.

Next, I consider issues regarding the centralized Catholic Church hierarchy, both in the sense of how the Church influenced the politics of Spanish colonization, and related to the issues of normalization of the actions of the colonial church. Though the Vatican's Counter Reformation response to the rest of Europe certainly influenced the degree of attention that was devoted to the colonies, we will try to determine how the centralized Church was directly invested in colonial evangelization at the time Benavides' work gained renown. In terms of the official recognition of the miraculous, how did Urban VIII receive reports of the miraculous made from colonial outposts, where recorded events frequently tended towards magic-realistic narrative?

Finally, an understanding of women and their potential influence in the remote colonies of northern New Spain colony is significant in understanding the meaning that would have been attached to a female mystical figure undertaking masculinizing tasks of conversion. To what degree were women involved in the efforts of colonization and evangelization in New Mexico? How did peninsular women relate to the colonizing project? Was there a greater acceptance for the participation of women in religious labor than secular labor? Under what conditions? How did popular opinions of sanctity and mysticism as they pertained to women affect the roles they could potentially undertake in colonial evangelization? We will return to further discuss these topics in Chapter 3.

If we view the narrative of bilocation that Sor María, Fray Benavides, and subsequent authors recount as a New World shaping event undertaken by a peninsular woman, this chapter then seeks to understand both the world from which Sor María traveled and the world into which she appeared. Although in subsequent chapters I use primary historical materials, because this chapter is more general in nature and describes broad tendencies and beliefs rather than specific details of the Lady in Blue narrative, I draw on secondary sources.

Spanish Colonization in the Americas

I begin with the religious life that is at the center of this dissertation, although the relationship between not only religion and politics, but also gender is complicated. The Spanish conquest of Latin America that began in 1492 significantly paralleled the forced religious homogenization of the Iberian Peninsula concurrently underway in Spain when Cristóbal Colón ran into the New World. The Reconquista of Spain from Moorish control, completed by the Reyes Católicos Fernando and Isabel in 1492, signified an end to Spain's long-standing religious plurality. The Reconquista was followed by more than 300 years of Spanish Inquisition, an enterprise intended to root out and punish false converts to Catholicism. In 1610, yet another step in the religious homogenization of Spain was taken when the *moriscos* (Spanish Muslim converts to Catholicism) were expelled from the country. Simultaneous to this ongoing project within Spain, the country began to invest in the exploration and colonization of the area soon to be known as New Spain. Beginning with the encounter between Cristóbal Colón's expedition and the island inhabitants of San Salvador, Cuba and Hispaniola in 1492, Spain's interest and

expenditure in the unknown regions to the west increased. Under the efforts of the Reyes Católicos, for whom the motto "tanto monta, monta tanto, Isabel como Fernando" extended to the country's explorations and conquest (and whose meaning is echoed by the Lady in Blue's actions), Spain stretched its reach towards the Indies while employing religion as a means of attaining homogeneity on the peninsula and abroad.

In Colón's arrival to the Americas, real and mystical travel intersect in a truly remarkable fashion. Colón's voyage across the Atlantic ends when he lands in the New World on October 12, 1492, the feast day of La Virgen del Pilar. La Virgen de Pilar was the first person in the religious history of the Catholic Church to bilocate, alleged to have miraculously traveled from the Middle East to Spain in the first century AD. The Virgin Mary's mission was to help Saint James the Greater (Santiago) convert the inhabitants of the Iberian Peninsula to Catholicism. She is considered the patroness of Spain, as Santiago is its patron. The profound interplay between physical and spiritual travel, between the masculine and the feminine, and between conversion and conquest begins with this first European explorer's arrival to the New World. Even as Colón takes the literal first steps in the colonization of the Americas, disembarking from his boat onto the sand of a Bahaman island, he does so under the protection of Spain's bilocating, evangelizing patroness.

Several years later, in 1521 and under the reign of Emperor Carlos V, Hernán Cortés conquered the capital of the Aztec empire, Tenochtitlán while on an illegal expedition into the Mexican mainland. In Cortés' pithy, political accounts written for the Emperor, he describes the wealth and hierarchical organization of the Aztec Empire,

making the abundance of resources to be found among the native people of the Indies more than evident (Cortés 59). Cortés' second letter (1520) suggests- by reference to the riches that Moctezuma enjoys- that Carlos V, as the ruler who will supercede him, will equally benefit from a continued investment in Mexico (Cortés 60). Cortés additionally takes pains to depict his interaction with the priests at the Aztec temple, in which, perhaps in parallel to the Biblical narrative of Christ smashing the booths as the temple, he destroys the idols in the chapels of sacrifice. Cortés states unequivocally that that the Aztec religious leaders in Tenochtitlán, as well as the leader of the Aztec empire himself, acknowledged the error of their worship practices and willingness to adapt the Catholic beliefs of the Spanish empire:

> Yo les hice entender con las lenguas cuán engañados estaban en tener su esperanza en aquellos ídolos […] que habían de saber que había un solo Dios […] y que a Él había de adorar de creer y no a otra criatura ni cosa alguna[…] Y todos, en especial el dicho Mutezuma, me respondieron que ya me habían dichos que ellos no eran naturales de esta tierra, y que había muchos tiempos que sus predecesores habían venido a ella, y que bien creían que podían estar errados en algo de aquello que tenían por haber tanto tiempo que salieron de su naturaleza, y que yo, como más nuevamente venido, sabría las cosas que debían tener y creer mejor que no ellos […] Y el dicho Mutezuma y muchos de los principales de la ciudad dicha, estuvieron conmigo hasta quitar los ídolos y limpiar las capillas y poner las imágenes [of the Virgin Mary and other saints] (Cortés 64-65)

These two early episodes of Spanish colonial conquest convey an eagerness on the part of the indigenous populations for catechization into Catholicism. Along with the confirmation of financial benefit to the crown, either actual or projected, and almost of greater importance than their willingness to acknowledge the authority of Spanish secular authorities, Cortés and Colón are consistent in emphasizing the potential for complete

conversion among the nations they encounter, as in the following quotation from Colón's letter to Luis Santangel:

> dava yo graciosas mil cosas buenas, que yo levava, porque tomen amor, y allende d'esto se fazen cristianos, y se inclinen al amor é servicio de Sus Altezas […] y no conocían ninguna seta nin idolatría salvo que todos creen que la fuerças y el bien es en el cielo (Columbus 9-11)

Because of the intimate relationship between Church and State in late 15th and early 16th-century Spain, any indication of willingness or ability for catechization could be understood or encoded as a positive sign of alignment with the secular Spanish state, more so even than the very recognition of Spanish secular authority, as Colón's account rather directly states. If the concept of a distant European authority seemed too abstract or too foreign or too irrelevant, a set of concrete religious practices certainly was not. And while the recognition of a distant, formless head of state might not induce great allegiance to that head of state, religious practices had meaning, presence, and physical representation in the form of friars and Spanish soldiers. As the Church was the institution under which Spain consolidated and defined its national identity, the explicit willingness on the part of indigenous communities to accept Catholic beliefs, so effectively depicted in Cortés' account, is the most crucial evidence of the tribes' imminent incorporation into the Spanish Empire.

Serge Gruzinski elegantly draws this same parallel between the respective missions of the Church and Spanish state in 16th-century colonial Mexico. In his critical history *Images at War*, Gruzinksi articulates the related processes of secular conquest and religious conversion :

> From the sixteenth century on, the Church sent forth its evangelizing missionaries; they carved out churches and dioceses everywhere. The Spanish Crown cut out vice-kingdoms, set up tribunals, installed a continentally scaled bureaucracy […] The Crown brought forth new cities; the Church built convents, churches, cathedrals, palaces. (Gruzinski 5)

For Gruzinksi, the efforts of colonization and conversion are intimately, inextricably intertwined, and the power of the image functions in equally potent ways in both contexts. In constructing this argument, Gruzinski also references Cortés' dramatic actions in the temple at Tenochtitlán, underscoring the fact that the military leader, and not the priests accompanying him, engaged in the symbolic act of destroying the statues in the temple (Gruzinski 31). He notes that, in the case of Cortés, the conquistador's "political motives were perfectly indissociable from the religious project" (Gruzinski 32). Gruzinski reinforces his argument for the power of the image in these overlapping objectives by selecting the particularly potent symbol of Cortés' standard, which read "'Let us follow the sign of the cross… with it we shall conquer'" (Gruzinski 32). Gruzinski concludes that this combination of image, secular conquest and religious conversion leave little doubt as to the efficaciousness of Cortés' action on a variety of levels. We will return to Gruzinski in Chapters 2 and 5, in discussing the value and impact of the image of the Lady in Blue in colonial northern Spain, and in latter-day collective folkloric memory.

In 1568, Bernal Díaz del Castillo wrote his eyewitness account of the exploits of the conquest of Mexico. In Díaz' *Historia de la conquista de la Nueva España*, the former soldier of Cortés' expedition responds both to other accounts of the fall of the Aztec empire (principally that of Francisco López de Gómara), and to reports of the

Spanish soldiers' treatment of the indigenous people. Of principal importance to Díaz is the fact that he himself was witness to the events he describes, unlike Gómara, who did not participate in the events he describe in his *historias* of Mexico. For Díaz and for his audience, the weight his personal witness to the conquest in Mexico carried was considerable; in many historical texts following his, the author's assertion of his credibility as eyewitness is one of defining elements of the piece.

Unlike Cortés, Bernal Díaz' *historia* goes into great detail about the campaigns undertaken by the troops in the course of their exploration and conquest, and about the political maneuvers Cortés employed against the Aztec empire. For reasons mainly having to do with Díaz' later claims to land and fortune as a conquistador, Díaz emphasizes the importance of the common foot soldier's role in the success of the conquest. In doing so, he draws attention to other overlooked, but important agents in the conquest of Mexico, among them Cortés' translator and companion, Doña Marina.

While Cortés' second letter mentions only peripherally the importance of any individual other than himself (and Montezuma), Bernal Díaz goes into some detail about Doña Marina, one of the twenty female captives given to Cortés by the caciques of Tabasco as a bribe to keep Cortés from further pursuing his explorations in the direction of Tenochtitlán. As is now well known, Doña Marina became Cortés' translator. She and Gerónimo de Aguilar, a priest left on the Yucatán peninsula by the 1511 Pedro de Valdivia exploration, formed a chain of translation that began with Doña Marina, who spoke Náhuatl and Mayan, and continued with Aguilar, who spoke Spanish and Mayan. Through their coordinated efforts, Cortés was able to communicate with many of

Mexico's inhabitants. In addition, Doña Marina's astute intervention helped him avoid many disastrous pitfalls, diplomatic and military. Because Doña Marina was one of the very few women who feature prominently in colonial narratives, her role in the conquest of Mexico and as a representational figure have been extensively studied among more modern critics, including Octavio Paz, Norma Alarcón and Cherríe Moraga, to name only a few.

Bernal Díaz, precisely in the chapters in which he describes Doña Marina, in her function as intermediary and agent in the process of conquest in Mexico, also depicts several instances of religious symbolism enmeshed with the goals of conquest. Shortly after Doña Marina and the other women are handed over to Cortés, Fray Aguilar baptizes them, making them "las primeras cristianas que hubo en la Nueva España" (Díaz Del Castillo 59). In the case of Doña Marina, this formal incorporation into the Catholic Church is the crossing point in her functions as an interpretive mediator of empire. While she herself does not originate from the center of the empire, she is confirmed a member of it by her baptism and represents, if in a complex, indeterminate way, its interests.

In addition, Díaz depicts Cortés interaction with the Tabasacan leaders as one in which the conquistador wishes to solidify their alliance, and the primacy of the Spanish crown, while demonstrating elements of the Catholic faith. When Cortés asks that the Tabascans repopulate the village that the Spanish have just claimed, he also asks (with the help of Fray Aguilar) "que dejasen sus ídolos y sacrificios" (Díaz Del Castillo 59) and explains to them the rudimentary elements of the Catholic faith. In response to Cortés' description of the Virgin Mary, the caciques respond that "les parecía muy bien aquella

gran *tececiguata*" (Díaz Del Castillo 59), and term which Díaz interprets as the name given to "las grandes señoras en aquellas tierras" (Díaz Del Castillo 59). Cortés reacts to their apparent syncretic credence by having an altar built in the middle of the pueblo, naming the town Santa María de la Victoria, and ensuring that the caciques and their families worship with the Spanish the morning before Cortés' party sailed away. In this way, although Cortés does explain to the leaders the primacy the King of Spain exerts over them (as they are his vassals), the mechanisms by which this incorporation is ensured is through the establishment and practice of Catholic traditions, in this case, through a female figure. Again, as in Cortés' letter, the modes of conquest and Catholicism overlay and reinforce one another, the institution of Catholicism perhaps standing in for or representing participation in Spanish colonization. In the cases of Doña Marina and the Tabascans' acceptance of a new *tececiguata*, however, the role of the woman in this complex negotiation comes into play.

As the wealth of Mexico was explored and exploited, the Spanish *conquista* spread throughout what are now Mexico, and Central and South America. Zacatecas' mines were revealed in 1546 by Juan de Oñate's father Cristóbal (among others); this find secured interest in exploration north of Mexico City. Explorations also turned southward, as Francisco Pizarro fought first against the extensive, sophisticated, wealthy Incan empire, and later against his own compatriot Diego de Almáragro for control of the riches and people of Peru. In Chile, battles against the Mapuche for control over that region continued for tens of years, as that indomitable tribe used all means of defense against the Spanish. The death of the Spaniard Pedro de Valdivia is particularly

exemplary in highlighting the dynamic between covetous conquistador and the native populations during this period of expansive exploration. According to legend, his unappeasable thirst for wealth was quenched by the slug of molten gold poured down his throat by the Mapuche who captured him. Despite violent encounters between Spanish and native populations, peninsular incursion continued into remote regions throughout Latin America, from Florida in the northeast, to Argentina in the far south, with varying degrees of military and economic success on the part of the Crown in these regions.

An evangelization echoing the processes of religious homogenization on the Iberian Peninsula accompanied Spain's northward and southward exploration in Latin America. The venture on the western side of the Atlantic, in terms of its aspiration for political and (to an extent) cultural conformity, resembled its parent project to the east. In Spain, however, debates over the theological and financial ends of this conversion process arose. The conflicts and contradictions inherent to the simultaneous implementation of Catholic conversion and the *encomienda* system precipitated an intense, rancorous discussion. The profit-making aspirations of most *encomendados* were generally in conflict with the evangelization of the natives by the religious communities; thus, the *encomendero*'s abuses of the native population frustrated the friar's goals of conversion. Although the mission labor exacted from indigenous populations was carried out by the friars, it was more often the case that *encomenderos* would abuse the native population to such an extent that the population would be greatly reduced, or would be unwilling to endure conversion at the hands of the friars. In either case, the loss of potential converts set the friars against the *encomenderos*.

The conflict between the financial ends of colonization and the spiritual (and cultural) goals of evangelization came to a head with the debate at Valladolid between Dominican friar Bartolomé de las Casas and Juan Ginés de Sepúlveda. During the debate, the treatment of the indigenous people was the central issue based on the theological meaning and justification for converting the indigenous populations. Las Casas steadfastly defended the humanity of the indigenous populations, and rejected the idea that the Spanish had cause to wage just war on them. In response to the proceedings at Valladolid, Charles V revoked the *encomienda* system in 1542 under the New Laws, intending to prohibit the mistreatment of the indigenous people. In spite of the Charles V's declarations regarding the contradictions of conversion and economic yield, the *encomienda* was gradually reinstated, though with the addition of specific restrictions on the treatment of the indigenous people in the Americas.

Prior to the debates at Valladolid, however, and to the passage of laws protecting the indigenous populations by her grandson, Queen Isabela established the first governing bodies charged with regulating the treatment of the indigenous communities of the New World. In 1503, the Secretario de las Indias placed jurisdiction over the treatment of the indigenous populations in the hands of the central government, technically removing it from the control of individual conquistadores. In its early stages, the Secretario did not wield an extraordinary amount of administrative power over the new colonies, though once it developed into the Consejo de las Indias, it was Spain's primary governing body in the New World. And it was through Isabela's direct intercession that the council came into existence, mediating the complex relationship between Crown, Church and New

World. The creation of the Consejo de las Indias by Queen Isabela is thus a primary example of a peninsular woman undertaking colonizing work at a distance in the Americas; her insistence on a consideration of the nature of the Indians, and of their treatment in the face of colonizing interests indicate her participation in processes to which she was not an eyewitness. The complex question of gender in relation to indigenous people remains before us.

Religious unification was of fundamental importance to the political projects both in Spain and abroad in the colonies. Keeping in mind the schema of conversion and conquest that were being played out early in the colonization of the Americas in general, let's turn our attention to colonizing affairs in the north of New Spain. The frontiers of exploration, evangelization and colonization were pushed ever further from known regions, into what would come to be called the "New Mexico." How, then, did these processes transpire?

Exploration Into New Mexico

Fueled by a curiosity for what existed beyond the boundaries of the known settlements, the desire to capitalize on any possible lucrative opportunities, anxiety about encroachment by other European interests, motives of conversion and on occasion, arbitrary mishap, exploration northward began shortly after the conquest of Mexico City. However, this view towards the north existed long before the Spanish extended their empire in that direction. As Cortés notes in his second his letter to Carlos V, the Aztecs did not consider themselves native to the central region of Mexico; their ancestors had immigrated to central Mexico from some other location. Gaspar Pérez de Villagrá's

Historia de la Nueva México further develops the origin account of the Mexica in the second canto of his epic poem. According to Villagrá, the Mexica migrated south to Tenochtitlán, looking nostalgically back "Toward that sweet fatherland they'd left/ In the regions of the hardy North" (Villagrá 14), ending their travels once they encounter a cactus upon which, "a beautiful red-tailed eagle sits, quite enormous/ And it be eating greedily/ On a great snake" (Villagrá 12). By the third decade of the 16th century, the Spanish were headed back in the direction of the Mexican ancestral homeland. Though they were not in search of an eagle, the Spanish explorers who headed northward sought chimera of their own: prosperity and conversion.

In 1527, Alvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca set sail with an expedition that began with approximately six hundred men, with royal permission to explore the region of Florida. Under the command of Pánfilo de Narváez, the maritime expedition encountered trouble shortly after putting out from Cuba, shipwrecking on the Florida coast. Of the four hundred men, four ships and a larger brigantine that set sail to Florida, only four, Alvar Núñez, Andrés Dorantes, Alonso de Castillo Maldonado, and Estevan, survived to journey from Florida to Mexico. Near the Río Sinaloa in northern Mexico, they famously encountered a Spanish slaving party sent out by Nuño de Guzmán, and discovered to what degree to which they no longer seemed Spanish. The members of the Guzmán party were at first unable to believe that Cabeza de Vaca was Spanish, "staring at [him] for a long space of time, so astonished that they could neither speak to [him] nor manage to ask [him] anything" (Cabeza de Vaca 110).

During their nine-year trek, the group inadvertently explored the southern region of what is now the United States, including what is now Texas and New Mexico, though the precise path of that route is a matter of debate. Enrique Pupo-Walker suggests that the cohort had contact with the Jumano and Conchos tribes of eastern New Mexico, and with the Pimas, Opatas and Cohuilatecans of northern Mexico. Cabeza de Vaca's carefully constructed narrative of the journey, his *Relación*, with its repeated usage of the term "cristianos" is a very strong example of how motives of colonization and conversion overlapped. Cabeza de Vaca is careful to detail the extent to which he maintains and attempts to spread his Catholic beliefs, even while under extreme duress and learning assimilative techniques as he encounters various native groups. Of the *Relación* in general, Rolena Adorno states "Cabeza de Vaca's narrative was timely in the 1550s because it could have been seen as a treatise and even a case study on Christian colonization" (Adorno 85). In Adorno's estimation, the totality of Cabeza de Vaca's experiences represented "a glimpse of what might be considered an ideal conquest" (Adorno 84), asserting that treating the indigenous people kindly was the only way "to attract the natives to Christianity and to obedience to his Imperial Majesty" (Adorno 84). For Adorno, then, the objectives of colonization, of a peaceful colonization, are carried out under the paradigms of Christianization or of Christianity.

Critic Silvia Molloy reads a different type of identity and colonization politic into Cabeza de Vaca's usage of the term "cristiano," noting towards the end of the Relación, "el texto repite insistentemente […] la palabra *cristianos*" (Molloy 446). Molloy maintains that throughout the text Cabeza de Vaca is careful to differentiate himself from

the indigenous people he encounters, writing a narrative that describes processes of "diferenciación, despojamiento y traslado" (Molloy 428). However, once Cabeza de Vaca begins his career as a healer, his use of Christianizing acts in his cures signifies, for Molloy, the re-establishment of Cabeza de Vaca's "ascendiente sobre [el indio]" (Molloy 444), and the "institutionalization" of his text (bringing it more in line with other "crónicas gloriosas") for its incorporation of "la conquista espiritual." The outward expression of Christian beliefs, used to in some way "convert" the Indians to Catholicism, is tantamount to conquest. Though Cabeza de Vaca and his travel mates are only three men, the type of Christianizing practices they undertake would be understood, Molloy seems to suggest, as constitutive of a genre of conquest chronicle. For Cabeza de Vaca, the difficulty at the end of the narrative, during which the term "cristiano" has stood in for "Spaniard," is reconciling that identity with the fact that the Nuño de Guzmán's Spanish slaving expedition consisted of "cristianos." The terrible presence of these "otros cristianos" highlights the differences between the conquest by force and the conquest by conversion. In the case of Cabeza de Vaca's *Relación*, the latter is understood as the preferred means of "conquest," the way by which indigenous people could be incorporated into the Spanish project of colonization.

Upon Alvar Núñez's return to Spain in 1537, and the publication of his *Relación*, interest in the exploration of northern Mexico region increased; in fact, "as of 1536 the north country was a target" (Bannon 14). Though it appears that Alvar Núñez was originally slated by the viceroy of Mexico, Antonio de Mendoza, to head a formal expedition to the north of Mexico, the appointment eventually went to the governor of

Nueva Galicia, Francisco de Coronado. However, prior to Coronado's February 1540 *entrada* into the region, the first official exploration of the southwest borderland frontier occurred in March of 1539.

On this date, a retinue led by Fray Marcos de Niza and guided by Alvar Núñez' companion Estevan, made its way north on what Bannon deems a private exploratory mission on behalf of Viceroy Mendoza. According to Fray Niza's dubious account, Estevan went ahead of the main group, sending messages back to Fray Marcos in the form of a series of crosses, the size of the cross representing the wealth of the areas he encountered. As Fray Marcos' expedition was in search not only of Indians to convert, but also of the mythical Seven Cities of Cíbola, the fact that the crosses Estevan sent back increased in size as he progressed further and further north was quite heartening for the friar's company. Abruptly, however the crosses stopped, and it was presumed that Estevan and his company were killed, most likely near the Hopi province of Hawikuh. Fray Marcos and his party continued exploring until he found what he believed to be the first of the seven cities of Cíbola, a site "larger than the city of Mexico" (Terrell 43), which he claimed on behalf of Viceroy Mendoza. Fray Marcos then returned to Compostela, where he shared the findings of his exploration with Coronado and later with the viceroy in September of 1539 in his report *Descubrimiento de las siete ciudades de Cíbola*. In addition to the potential for economic success Fray Marcos' report assures its readers they would find in Cíbola, the Franciscan also commented on the vast number of new conversions to Christianity the party had successfully achieved, setting a

precedent for later reports by Franciscans who would also reassure the crown of the widespread efficaciousness of their evangelizing.

As a result of Fray Marcos' enthusiastic - and it has been suggested, liberally fabricated- account, the expedition of Francisco Vázquez de Coronado was given the viceregal go-ahead. Near the end of February1540, Coronado and a huge entourage of settlers, livestock, soldiers and priests, including Fray Marcos himself, left from Compostela. and began their deliberate journey up the Río Grande corridor. The party eventually split into a slower-moving group of settlers and animals, and several exploratory parties who searched for the Seven Cities under the guidance of Fray Marcos. These parties traveled further into what is presumed were the regions of Kansas and the Texas Panhandle, under the lead of El Turco, an Indian the party met near Pecos. El Turco led the group in search not of the Seven Cities of Cíbola, but of a new site called Quivira, whose riches allegedly exceeded those of Cíbola. The search for Quivira proved fruitless, costly and dangerous. Once Coronado's expeditionary party witnessed for themselves the utter lack of resources, the absence of an empire comparable to that of Mexico in the north, El Turco was hanged, and the expedition returned to Mexico.

Though the soldiers did not find the wealth they had expected from Quivira and Cíbola, the friars on the Coronado expedition continued their work of baptism among the indigenous peoples, finding abundant outlet for their vocation there. In fact, three of the friars chose to remain in the north once the rest of the expedition had left, to continue in their mission of conversion. According to historian John Terrell, friars Luis de Escalona, Juan de la Cruz, and Juan de Padilla believed they had been presented with a great

opportunity, "for they had been permitted by God to go to a country containing innumerable souls to be saved, where the banners of Christianity had never flown" (Terrell 130). Coronado permitted the friars to continue their work in the region; as Terrell notes, this made them the first missionaries in the north (Terrell 130). Two of these, Fray de la Cruz and Fray Padilla, were killed, and nothing was heard from Fray Escalona after Coronado's departure. This first attempt at permanent missionization in New Mexico was short-lived, and came to an unhappy end; however, it set the course for the establishment of the territory. Though the secular explorers were unsuccessful in their search for fortune among the adobe pueblos of the south and west, and the "shaggy cows" (Bannon 20) and rolling plains of the east, the friars felt that the possibility for conversions was reason enough to remain in an otherwise fruitless territory.

Upon returning to Culiacán in the early summer of 1542, Coronado filed his report on the expedition. Understandably, after two years of near-constant conflict with nearby tribes and a demonstrated lack of material resources in the area, the explorer was less than enthusiastic in his description of the region to Viceroy Mendoza. Coronado's report offered virtually no encouragement for secular investment in New Mexico, as the conquistador testified that the region offered, as summarized by historian John Francis Bannon, "only cantankerous Indians, whom only the most devoted and saintly missionaries might love, buffalo, prairie dogs, rattlesnakes, burning summers and freezing winters" (Bannon 21). As a result of the findings of the Coronado expedition, official interest in the New Mexico region cooled considerably and for a period of over forty years.

However, Coronado's account had sparked interest in some of the inhabitants of New Spain. In the years between authorized expeditions into the New Mexico territory, there were several smaller entries northward by parties wishing to further missionary labor, undertake rescue missions, establish a foothold in the region, develop trade, or continue exploration. Coronado's captain Pedro de Tobar guided the 1564 entry of Francisco Ibarra, then governor of Nueva Vizcaya, along an indeterminate northward route, possibly arriving at the llano outside of Las Vegas, N.M. In 1581, Francisco Sánchez Chamuscado and Father Augustín Rodríguez led a small group up the Río Grande to the Pueblo settlements deep in northern New Mexico, the plains to the east and the Zuñi and Acomans to the west. Fray Rodríguez formed the party with the explicit intention of stationing himself and two other friars, Fray Francisco López and Fray Juan de Santa María, among the tribes there, thought the soldiers that accompanied him clearly had their own economic objective in mind. Fray Juan de Santa María was killed attempting a solo return to Mexico, and shortly after his death, the most of the Sánchez Chamuscado party left. Two exceptions, friars Rodríguez and López, remained behind at Puaray pueblo, as had been arranged prior to the expedition's departure for New Mexico.

Upon reading the Chamuscado expedition report (apparently written by Hernán Gallegos, a veteran of the expedition), the viceroy Conde de Coruña approved a rescue party to return to the area and find Rodríguez and López. One year later, in November 1582, Fray Bernardo Beltrán and Antonio de Espejo took a company northward for that purpose. Although they soon found that the two friars had been killed, Espejo pushed the group's exploration into central Arizona, headed back northeast, returning through the

Jumano province in southeastern New Mexico, near the Río Pecos. Although the ostensible mission of the group was to recover the missing friars, Espejo was a keenly interested in the economic opportunities that might there await him, as his very positive report to the king attests.

Interest in the north was again piqued by the Espejo expedition, and while various groups sought permission to explore the region legally, two parties entered illegally, apparently tantalized by rumors of the lucrative opportunities that there lay. When the viceroy Marqués de Villamanrique found out about the clandestine1589 Gaspar Castaño de Sosa settlement party, he summarily sent out troops to find the group and escort it back to Nueva Galicia. In 1593, a second illegal incursion led by Antonio Gutiérrez de Humaña and Francisco Leyva de Bonilla self-destructed even though the company reached the beginnings of the Great Plains, as Humaña killed Bonilla and the remainder of the group died on the western Plains.

Oñate's Expedition

By 1595, and after many other candidates including Espejo had been considered and rejected for the job, an official *adelantado* for the settlement of New Mexico was named. Viceroy Luis de Velasco chose Juan de Oñate, a former governor of Nueva Galicia and native of the northern frontier of Mexico. Due to his father Cristóbal de Oñate's success at the Zacatecas silver mines, Juan de Oñate was exceptionally well-positioned, well-funded and well-married, to a natural granddaughter of Hernán Cortés. Of his own merits, Oñate had spent many years fighting the Chichimecos and Guachichiles in the northern borderlands. Additionally, since that one goal of the

settlement of New Mexico was the exploitation of the mineral wealth, suggested most recently by the Espejo expedition report, Oñate's personal contact with the mining industry might have made him an even more attractive candidate. These factors served to promote Oñate's case, even as a change in viceroys slowed the official approval of his expedition.

In 1598, Oñate's party was finally permitted to enter into New Mexico. Although Oñate's original contract requested autonomy from the viceroy's jurisdiction, the final contract, granted by the new Viceroy Gaspar de Zúñiga y Acevedo, specified that the party would be answerable to the viceroy, and not directly to the Consejo de las Indias. After this slow start, the Oñate party traveled northward, establishing a settlement at San Juan de los Caballeros, near present-day Española. The settlement was beset with difficulties from the beginning, ranging from shortages in supplies, to conflict with neighboring tribes, to desertion from colonists and soldiers alike. Villagrá's *Historia* recounts Oñate's swift and often brutal response to the many problems that presented themselves, from punishing a band of deserting soldiers, to laying siege to and eventually slaughtering Acoma pueblo. Oñate explored eastward into Kansas, again in search of Coronado and Fray Marcos' Quivira, and far westward, leaving his signature at El Morro in the Malpaís of western New Mexico.

Women figure into the narrative about the Oñate expedition, in Villagrá's *Historia de la Nueva México*. In fact, in contrast to some of the men portrayed by Villagrá (particular those whose treasonous actions would seem to later exonerate Oñate) the women in Villagrá's poem, both Spanish and indigenous, are nothing if not stalwart

examples of the best characteristics of both cultures. The women portrayed in Villagrá's work take on a special significance as symbolically representative, at least from the point of view of Villagrá, of the women of colonial New Mexico. Of particular interest to this study is the way the Spanish settler Doña Eufemia is depicted.

In Canto VIII, Doña Eufemia, wife of the royal ensign Peñalosa, upbraids the discouraged men of the expedition party, enjoining them to be brave and continue to struggle against the hardships they encountered during settlement and exploration (Simmons 81). She later exhorts the women of the settlement party to take up arms against the San Juan Indians when the new settlement at San Juan de los Caballeros is threatened (Simmons 144). These two episodes interestingly depict Doña Eufemia not only in a position of leadership and empowerment, they represent her in such a way in front of both the men and the women of expeditionary party (women were as contractually obligated as men to see through the terms of their settlement contract). In the tradition of Greek heroines such as Aristophanes' Lysistrata, Doña Eufemia is a leader to be reckoned with by both men and women. She is valiant, powerful, and respected and, as a character in the epic poem, is a powerful dramatic addition to the text, as compelling as any of her male counterparts in the text.

While Oñate undertook expeditions in the region, the colonists became restless, anxious to abandon the settlement; as Hammond and Rey assert, "Oñate's control over the colonists had […] been in jeopardy nearly all the time" (Hammond and Rey 29). While Oñate explored the region of Quivira in 1601, a large group of colonists simply defected from the settlement. In 1604, Oñate headed south in search of South Sea port in

Arizona, hoping to improve the impression his leadership and settlement were making on the Spanish administration by finding a valuable resource; this was to no avail. A few years after his 1607 resignation, Oñate, his nephew Vicente de Saldívar and captain Villagrá were charged for the atrocities committed against soldiers and native people in New Mexico. A trial in Spain that lasted from 1612 to 1614 sentenced the three men: Oñate and Saldívar were fined and banished from New Mexico forever, and Villagrá was banned from New Mexico for a period of six years. Literary critic Miguel López (López 44) suggests that perhaps the Spanish courts would have overlooked Oñate's offenses altogether if his expedition had found mineral wealth the crown anticipated it would find in the New Mexico territory.

What remains certain about the Oñate expedition to New Mexico is that, despite the appointment of a new governor, the settlement retained the taint of failure and scandal associated with Oñate's *entrada*. Oñate's efforts had done little to secure Spain's foothold in the region north of New Mexico, and certainly discouraged further investment in the region.

A Permanent New Mexican Territory

These political problems were reflected in the decisions regarding the New Mexico territory Viceroy Velasco and the Spanish Crown made following Oñate's departure from the region. In 1603, then-Viceroy Zuñiga y Acevedo decided to delay Oñate's *residencia*, or formal accounting of the *adelantado*, anticipating that such an investigation could lead to the end of the New Mexico venture. As the viceroy was not completely certain that the Spanish should "scuttle the venture" (Bannon 39), he

postponed the inquiry in the hopes that perhaps something positive would come of Oñate's further explorations. As his expedition in search of the South Sea proved as fruitless as previous ones, and with Oñate himself under scrutiny, by 1607 Oñate's friend Viceroy Velasco was inclined to end the settlement venture in New Mexico. He advised the removal of settlers and Christianized Indians from the region to avoid ever-increasing costs of maintaining the region (Simmons 183). The viceregal leadership had not positively lobbied for sustaining the New Mexico territory in the past; in fact, the previous Viceroy, the Marquis of Montesclaros, had written to Felipe III in 1605 that "I cannot help but inform your majesty that this conquest [of New Mexico] is becoming a fairytale" (Hammond and Rey 30). It seemed as though the colonial leadership viewed the settlement of New Mexico as neither financially feasible, nor a worthwhile endeavor.

The Franciscan leadership in Mexico City did not share this viewpoint. When Franciscan colonial leaders realized that there was a good chance the Spanish government would abandon the region, and thus that the missions in New Mexico would be lost, the potential loss of their missionary foothold galvanized them. A report composed by Fray Lázaro Jiménez, a friar who had been stationed in New Mexico, was sent to King Felipe III in 1608. In it, Jiménez details the missionary work completed among the indigenous people of the region, namely the near-doubling of conversions in a period of a few months, from four thousand to around seven thousand by the time Jiménez' report was submitted. Jiménez also suggested that thousands more native inhabitants desired to be baptized.

Jimenez' report is politically significant for the Franciscan order in the southwest because it demonstrates the extent to which they desired to sustain their presence in the region. The Mexican Franciscans did not want to see their conversions of the people of New Mexico lost, nor did they wish to lose their ordinal domination over the region. Given their argument that such a quantity of new converts to Catholicism could not be left without catechesis and sacramental support (Bannon 39), King Felipe III decided to keep the New Mexico region open and part of the colonial empire. Thus, primarily due to the Franciscans' effective lobby for retention of New Mexico, the territory survived and its purpose became largely religious.

Although Viceroy Velasco's predecessor Montesclaros considered any further investment in the region "wasted, or at best […] a gamble" (Terrell 236), Velasco worked to maintain a Spanish presence, however minimal, in New Mexico, in spite of his own personal misgivings about the long-term feasibility of the colony. Perhaps the viceroy realized that if New Mexico's legitimacy could be secured by means of its establishment as a royal colony, it would be nearly impossible to legally abandon the region in the future. Velasco and his advisors hoped to guarantee that the burden for the financial support of this settlement would rest with the Spanish crown, rather than with the colonial government of Mexico. Thus, though New Mexico's principal raison d'être, thanks to the Franciscan intervention, was missionary work, at the suggestion of Viceroy Velasco, it became a royal colony, but never without a profound religious character, a most appropriate context for religious/miraculous occurrences.

The New Mexico Colony

By the early 17th century, then, New Mexico was recognized as the northernmost outpost of the Spanish empire, but it clung to existence only precariously. Although the Spanish crown found in favor of retaining the settlements there, the terms under which New Mexico would be governed and maintained were extremely limiting, and reflective of a disinclination to invest in the region. New Mexico did not seem to merit the degree of financial and military support awarded other colonial sites because it had proven to be more a financial burden than boon, and would continue in this manner for the foreseeable future. The territory had been "written off by the Spanish Crown as a profit-making colony" (Riley 90). As nearly all explorations of New Mexico seemed to indicate that there were few resources worth exploiting there, expeditions to out from New Mexico were permitted only with the direct consent from the King (Terrell 239). The San Gabriel stronghold was defended by fifty married soldiers, and the pueblos served by twelve priests sent among them to continue their Catholic formation (Terrell 239). Though some early Spanish settlers clustered near the garrison and soldiers in Santa Fe (where the main settlement had been relocated from San Gabriel by Governor Peralta), Riley notes that the New Mexico colonists were unique in that they were reluctant to "cluster in defensible towns" (Riley 145), instead spreading out over the landscape. In keeping with the objectives of evangelization, friars could continue to convert the indigenous people of the region, but not forcibly. The colony would receive tri-annual grants directly from the Crown to financially support its efforts (Scholes 59). As Hammond and Rey comment,

with King Felipe III's decision to retain New Mexico for purposes of conversion and evangelization, the course the colony would take was "securely set for the next three hundred years" (Hammond and Rey 34).

The New Mexican colonists that remained to settle were few and, and they found their already difficult job of eking out a living on the land exacerbated by a scarcity of supplies and the difficulty of trade. As Benjamin Read notes, "the Spanish colonies were in lack of artificers, farming implements and many other things necessary for their development" (Read 252). Mostly engaged in subsistence agriculture, the New Mexican colonists in the early 17th century traded wool and wool products, salt, pine nuts, candles and various animal skins (Bannon 79), which were exchanged for commodities that could only be acquired from the population centers farther south. Trade caravans moving north to south along the Camino Real faced a slow and perilous journey, making trade, and thus contact, between the colony and northern Mexican cities infrequent, occurring every two to four years by Riley's estimation (Riley 135). News of what was happening either in the colony, or in Mexico and beyond, traveled as slowly as the goods that inched along the route.

The New Mexican settlers remained wary about remaining in the remote, underfunded colony. Though the opportunity to possess an *encomienda* and possibly profit from it was attractive to the settlers, their investment in the region was not ultimately well rewarded. These settlers to the north, unlike those located in cities like Zacatecas, were poor, for as Bannon points out, "no one of these items [traded by the New Mexican settlers] was likely to turn the New Mexicans into millionaires" (Bannon

79). Most of the colonists who had come with the Oñate expedition had desperately wanted to leave the settlement once they realized the that the environment they were to settle in was harsh and their recourses nonexistent (Simmons 159, 65-66); in that case, many of the friars on the expedition agreed. When Fray Isisdro Ordóñez arrived Santa Fe in 1612 bearing papers he claimed released the settlers of their obligation to remain in the territory, all but forty-seven Spaniards who were not friars left the colony, in the face of protests by then-Governor Pedro de Peralta (Terrell 252). Over the course of the seventeenth century, beginning with Benavides' tenure as *custos*, the small territory continued to grow, but only very gradually, a "slow but steady progress, in a relative sort of way […] The number of Spaniards increased from a few hundred to a few thousand" (Bannon 41). The number of colonists in the region remained low and reports of their activities there, scanty.

In addition to their role as settlers and, in the case of the priests, evangelizers of the Indian tribes, the settlers of the royal colony served an important symbolic purpose. The occupants of the colony, by their very presence, assumed representational value as markers of the Iberian presence in the northernmost region of the Spanish empire. Though the soldiers stationed in New Mexico offered an undeniable degree of physical protection from the neighboring tribes, the existence of the garrison and its occupants was more effective symbolically than defensively. Given the small number of soldiers and their limited arsenal, the soldiers and settlers could not truly defend the region from serious attack, either by Indians or by explorers from other countries. However, the fact that Spain maintained a colony in the northern frontier was sufficient for it to lay claim to

vast tracts of territory in what was then northern New Spain. The Spanish, by proof of the settlement in New Mexico, were the first European claimants, in a previously unclaimed area. The presence of these settlers had a particular legal meaning, as the Spain's claim on the undefined northern regions was dependent on their remaining there. The enlargement of empire had as its justification the northern settlement.

Franciscans in New Mexico

Thus, by the time the author and priest with whom we began this chapter, Fray Alonso de Benavides, arrived as *custos* to the New Mexico territory in 1625, he had his work well cut out for him. If the secular situation in New Mexico was precarious, the relationship between church and state in the colony was even more fraught. Benavides' predecessors had left him a legacy of troubled relationships both within the New Mexican missionary hierarchy, and between the secular and religious administrations, beginning with Fray Isidro Ordóñez's 1612 excommunication and imprisonment of the colony's first governor (Terrell 253) Pedro de Peralta. Though Ordóñez has been generally discredited as a being "very much a loose cannon" (Riley 95), the tone for the relationship between church and state in New Mexico was set for the seventeenth century. The first *custos* to the region, Fray Perea, who arrived in 1616 was also at cross-purposes for most of his administration with Governor Juan de Eulate (Riley 95), who was eventually excommunicated as well by Fray Ascencio de Zarate (Riley 96).

As historian Lloyd Mecham comments, "conflict between church and state in the Indies was one of the most common features of colonial history," whether in Chile, Colombia, Mexico or New Mexico (Mecham 230). However, Riley notes that perhaps

this conflict was acted out to an extraordinary degree in New Mexico, as he asserts that "even a casual reading of the fate of New Mexico's seventeenth-century governors gives the feeling that something was very wrong in that province" (Riley 90), citing their imprisonment, and murder as an indication of the intensity of this conflict. The source of this rancor was the conflict of interest arising from the friars' objectives of conversion, and the governor's desire to maintain order (and try to turn a profit) in the colony. The governor's duties included that of the collection of tribute extracted from indigenous labor under the rules of *repartimiento*. As Indians stationed at the friars' missions were exempt from contributing to the *repartimiento*, keeping them "isolated from all contaminating influences of the Spaniards" (Mecham 221) (except, of course, the friars themselves), their sequestration meant that the friars alone and not the colonial government profited from their labor. In addition, some governors took advantage of their position to engage in illegal Indian slave trade for profit, a crime which Eulate engaged in and was eventually reprimanded for (Riley 96).

In spite of this precedent, Benavides personally got along with the colonial governor, Felipe Zoytlo, along with whom he administered the *custodia* while Zoytlo was governor from 1621 to 1629. Under their dual administration the "most complete harmony reigned with marked benefit for the Indians and Spaniards who dedicated themselves with energy to the prosecution of the industries which their limited means allowed them to develop" (Read 252). This brief harmony between the two branches of colonial administration was by no means common in colonial New Mexico, nor did it last long beyond Benavides' custodianship, though the remarkable nature of the cooperation

between church and state may have conditioned Benavides' *Memorials*. As neither church nor state leadership could be immediately answerable to any authority due to the region's isolation, greater localized leadership for the Franciscans might have brought about a more permanent peace between Church and State.

In fact, the hierarchy of the Franciscan order in the New World had its head across the ocean, in Spain. The leader of the entire Franciscan order, the Minister General, was elected by the Franciscan community and a second leader, the Commissary General, was elected from the family not represented by the Minister General (the order was divided into two families, the Ultramontane and the Cismontane). A third post, the Commissary General of the Indies, was charged with the management of colonial interests, administering from Madrid, with two under-Commissaries assigned to administer the mission in Peru and New Spain. Benavides would direct his *Memoriales* first to these leaders of the Franciscan order, and then to the Spanish King and the Pope.

As historian Frances Scholes notes: "The discovery of the new world and the founding of new Franciscan establishments both in America and in the Orient greatly extended the business and organization of the order" (Scholes 35). From the Franciscan's headquarters in Spain, the order subdivided into subordinate units for mission administration. The next smallest was the Province, which consisted of groupings of convents or parishes that had their own administrative leadership. Under the Provinces lay the *custodias*, which were smaller religious communities that did not have administrative authority; thus, they were generally subject to the governance of the

province under which they fell. The head of any given *custodia* was called a *custos* (Scholes 35-6).

In the early 17th century, the missions of Mexico were organized under the Provincia del Santo Evangelio (centered in Mexico City), which was established as a *custodia* in 1524, and was elevated to province in 1535 (Scholes 39). Santo Evangelio was therefore the local religious authority, directing the appointment of religious leaders to the missions under the province's bailiwick, and making decisions that affected parishes and convents. Custodiae were established as missions that lay far away from the provincial center grew and direct administration of these missions by the Santo Evangelio had become nearly impossible due to the physical distance. A degree of local leadership was required to effectively administer the local church and its missionary endeavors (Scholes 40). Custodiae were therefore established in Michoacán, Yucatán, Guatemala, and Tampico (Riley 109); New Mexico was established as a Franciscan *custodia* shortly after the region was declared a royal colony, in 1616 or 1617 (Scholes 61), called the Custodia de la Conversión de San Pablo.

Though custodiae were viewed as a provisional state within Franciscan organization, a step towards gaining greater administrative independence as a province (Scholes 41), the Custodia of New Mexico remained such until the end of Spanish reign over the region (Scholes 42). Like the *custodia* of Tampico, the Conversión de San Pablo remained under hierarchical control of its superior province, and to a more extensive degree than other custodiae. Though a custodia normally would elect its own leadership from among the friars in their ranks, the *custos* of the Custodia of New Mexico were

chosen by the Santo Evangelio until 1755. In spite of the control the Mexico City Franciscans seemed to exert over the New Mexico custodia, its *custos* by necessity was quite independent in his administration over the territory, as it was difficult and slow for the Mexico City hierarchy to actively monitor his activities. The *custos* was in fact "prelate of the entire community, civil and ecclesiastical" (Scholes 43), in the absence of a bishop over the region until the early 18th century. He was in a position of de facto leadership, exerting more influence over the region's operation than any secular leader, but did not have the recognition, financial autonomy and local selection that the leader of a province enjoyed.

With *custos* Fray Alonso de Benavides' arrival at the Conversión de San Pablo of New Mexico in December of 1625, the there were 32 friars administering to the 47 male soldiers and settlers and their families (Read 251), though Benavides (Benavides, *Harvest* 26) and Read (Read 254) both claim that there were 250 Spaniards in Santa Fe while Benavides was there. In addition, fourteen thousand native converts (Read 251), and approximately 50,000 indigenous occupants of the custodial region (Bannon 41). Benavides brought with him sixteen additional friars, and by the time his tenure in New Mexico had ended, twenty-five missions were established in New Mexico.

Thus the stage was set in New Spain for the presentation of Fray Alonso de Benavides' account of the Blue Nun in the court of King Felipe IV: the remote northern colony; a legacy of conquest assured by conversion to Catholicism with women precipitating turning points in colonization; years of fruitless exploration into the north; and, finally, the tenuous establishment of a northern province whose main purposes were

conversion and representation. What was the atmosphere on the other side of the ocean? What were conditions in Felipe IV's court relative to the colonies? What was the Holy See's attitude towards motives of colonial missionization and the fruits of that project?

The Reign of Felipe IV in Spain

The reign of Felipe IV over Spain is viewed by many historians as the definitive turning point in Spain's imperial dominance, and the beginnings of its decline as a European power. That the Spanish crown continued to support the northern frontiers of its colonies during this period is at once both surprising and consistent with Spain's domestic policies at the time. Because Spain was overextended and financially ill-equipped to support an economically poor region, the decision to directly maintain a colony that produced very little profit was surprising. However, maintaining the northern colonies was reflective of the Crown's domestic and European spiritual and political interests, as Spain fought other European countries in religious wars with political motives. From the monarch to his advisors, concerns of religion, politics and dominance that were being played out in Europe were reflected in the maintenance of the northern Spanish frontier colonies (Elliott 287).

As historian Jose Delieto y Piñuela notes, "bajo Felipe IV desvanecíase la *leyenda dorada*, que hizo de España el país predilecto del cielo, designado por Dios para una misión providencial" (Deleito y Piñuela 248). Though Felipe IV's reign was defined by the clear decline of the Spanish empire, and though the monarch did little to reverse this trend, his rule had the misfortune to reap the whirlwind of decisions made by his predecessors (Deleito y Piñuela 42). Under Felipe III and his *válido* (political favorite)

the Duke of Lerma, the economic depression that had begun with the imperial endeavors of Felipe II (Elliott 287) had worsened precipitously. These economic difficulties, compounded by Spain's famine, conflicts with other European countries, and internal political strife, produced an environment that was tipping in the direction of disaster. As historian J.H. Elliott comments about Spain's condition at the beginning of Felipe IV's reign, "unless really effective measures could be introduced to relive Castile, the Monarchy as a whole would be confronted with disaster" (Elliott 329). Spain seemed headed towards disaster at the beginning of the 17th century, a situation that would have presented a considerable challenge to any monarch; Felipe IV's maturity and disposition did little to help him stave off disaster.

Felipe IV was sixteen years old when he became the King of Spain upon his father's death on 31 March 1621. Two years after Felipe IV was made king, the artist Diego Velázquez was appointed court painter and furnished with the exclusive right to paint the King's portrait, depicted Felipe IV throughout his reign. Through Velázquez' depictions of Felipe IV, it is possible to understand to a degree the King's personal characteristics:

> El maravilloso realismo de su [Diego Velázquez's] pincel, sobreponiéndose a toda adulación cortesana de pintor de cámara, nos muestra siempre a Felipe IV con expresión de linfática indolencia […] no logró que el exangüe Soberano disimulase la endeblez de su naturaleza (Deleito y Piñuela 48)

Felipe IV was clearly not cut of the same monarchical cloth as his forebears, Isabella and Fernando. In fact, Felipe IV is historically something of a cipher, ironically revealing the most important facets of his personality ("una serie de huellas tan finas y precisas de su

alma, como casi no haya otro ejemplo en la psicología retrospectiva" (Deleito y Piñuela 250)) in his correspondence with Sor María de Agreda. This is a good thing, as most political and economic histories of early 17th-century Spain ignore the monarch almost entirely in favor of discussing his válido Gaspar de Guzmán, the Count of Olivares.

Olivares was, in fact, the politician of the regime, the actor behind Spain's domestic and foreign actions. As Elliott suggest, because the relationship between king and válido began when the king was so young (Olivares had been Felipe IV's advisor for nearly all his life), it was less the case that Felipe IV adopted Olivares as válido than that Olivares adopted him (Elliott 319). The fact that Olivares so quickly and agilely maneuvered to a position of power was not surprising. Elliott characterizes him as "less one personality than a whole succession of personalities […] somehow he always seemed larger than life size, bestriding the Court like a colossus" (Elliott 320). Deleito y Piñuela considers his selection by Felipe IV a means by which the monarch could "dar a sus súbitos el estadista aplomado, entero y fuerte que habían menester" (Deleito y Piñuela 52), providing them the political leadership he could not. Olivares was also appointed by Felipe IV as Canciller Mayor y Registrador de las Indias, a position that had been vacant for quite some time but which furnished Olivares with a position on the Council of the Indies, enabling him to "share in Spain's overseas empire" (Lynch 91). Though Olivares was involved in nearly every aspect of Spain's governance, and though he undoubtedly was the political agent of action during much of Felipe IV's reign, it was to the monarch that Benavides' 1630 *Memorial* was directed, and with the monarch that Sor María corresponded.

The Spain that Felipe IV and Olivares ruled had experienced more or less continuously the organized religious homogenization that began with Isabella and Fernando 120 years prior. Under Felipe III, Spain's religious heterogeneity was further reduced with the expulsion of the *moriscos*. Although Spanish Muslims (*mudéjars)* were initially permitted to retain their religious practices under Christian rule, in 1502 the Spanish government compelled them to either convert to Christianity (becoming *moriscos*), or leave the Iberian Peninsula. This forced conversion naturally brought with it considerably political and social unrest. After two uprisings of the *morisco* community in Alpajurras (1499-1500 and 1568-1570) indicated to the monarchy that the Muslim converts to Catholicism were not excited about being subject to the jurisdiction of the Catholic Church, Felipe III ordered the expulsion of the *moriscos* in 1610. Most of the *morisco* population relocated to North Africa. By asserting their diversity via their religious practices, the *moriscos* were too threatening to the unity of the country to remain.

The motives for the expulsion of the Jews and Muslims from the Iberian Peninsula was at least partially in concert with those of the Spanish Inquisition. Officially established in 1478 by Isabela and Fernando, and sanctioned by Pope Sixtus IV, the stated objective of the Spanish Inquisition was uncover false converts to Catholicism. Although the Spanish Inquisition did not officially end until 1820, and although the activities of the Inquisitors naturally diminished over the course of the years, the Inquisition still exercised a great deal of authority during the reign of Felipe IV. (Sor María's two encounters with the Inquisitorial tribunals in the mid-seventeenth century

attest to this fact.) As Inquisition historian Henry Kamen points out (Kamen 43), the political and ideological motivations behind the Inquisition were far more complex than a simple binary of Christian/non-Christian. However, the fact that the institution continued for so many centuries, and indeed crossed the Atlantic to the New World, demonstrates the degree to which religion and religious homogeneity were central preoccupations within Imperial Spain. Whether the its actions were always clear and consistent, the Spanish Inquisition's enduring presence evinced the religious zeitgeist of 17th-century Spain.

As Elliott comments, the late 16th century was marked by an "extraordinary intensity in Castile's spiritual life- an intensity which was apparent at many levels, and extended to many different spheres" (Elliott 239). Spanish Catholicism at this time was marked by a move towards mysticism, as the writings of Santa Teresa of Avila and San Juan de la Cruz were widely read. Yet this variety of mystical spiritual enlightenment carried with it the risk of being accused of false illumination (*alumbradismo*), particularly for women mystics.

The European conflicts that drained Spain's economic resources in the late 16th and early 17th, though clearly political in nature, were deeply infused with religious concerns as well. As William La Due notes, "at the conclusion of Trent in December 1563, the religious landscape of Europe had changed considerably since the 1520s" (La due 201). After the Protestant Reformation, Europe was divided in creed, from the Lutherans in Germany and Scandinavia, to the Calvinists in France, Switzerland and Holland, to the Anglicans in England. The formerly Catholic empire of the Hapsburg

was no longer unified by the Church (Cheetham 219), as it was divided into the Catholic League and the Protestant Union. Thus although under Felipe III, Spain had generally eschewed active military engagement with other European countries, Felipe III aligned himself with his uncle Emperor Ferdinand II in 1619 and "abandonaba la política pacifista de la última década para apoyar militar y económicamente la impresa de los Hapsburgos y por tanto la defensa del ideal católico" (Martín Acosta 265).

Spain's subsequent involvement in the Thirty Years' War and in other European conflicts was detrimental to the already fragile national economy. Clashes with England, France, and the Netherlands, based both in Spain's imperialist desire to protect its interests in the Americans and in Europe, and in the religious tensions between Catholic and Protestant already mentioned drained money and manpower from Spain's reserves. In spite of a brief peace with France from 1628-1635 (Elliott 331), Spain found itself again at military odds with the Protestant factions of that country, the expenses from which resulted in "un flujo constante de plata hacia el exterior" (Martín Acosta 287).

Spain's domestic situation was in no shape to both participate in expensive European conflicts, and effectively administrate their New World holdings. The country was experiencing a combination of severe problems that further separated socio-economic classes, and drove the economy downward. John Lynch comments that the years 1629-1631 were particularly dire, marked by an "agrarian crisis, brought on by a classic combination of drought, famine and malnutrition, [that] pushed up mortality rates" (Lynch 119). Already difficult financial conditions domestically were made worse by terrific inflation, as the government tried to regulate the currency and failed. In 1640,

the domestic turmoil turned political, as first Cataluña (in May) and then Portugal (in September) rebelled against the monarchy. These conflicts led directly to Olivares' 1643 dismissal by Felipe IV, and the country continued to struggle with internal and external conflicts.

As Elliott notes, the nature of Spain's relationships with Spanish America changed as a "direct result of Spain's war with the Protestant powers of the north" (Elliott 287), and due to Spain's own interior problems. 16th- and 17th-century trade between Spain and the Americas rose and fell, with two periods of expansion, from 1504 to 1550, and from 1562 to 1592, and a period of depression from 1623 to 1650 (Lynch 267). Within these more generalized trade trends, New Spain's contribution to Spain's economy dropped in the 17th century from previous years, "from 40 per cent in 1636-1640 to 22 percent in 1646-1650" (Lynch 276-7), making it, as historian John Lynch terms it the "sick man of the transatlantic economy from the 1620s to the 1650s" (Lynch 273-4). As historian Emelina Martín Acosta notes, the financial support from the Americas continued to diminish throughout Felipe IV's reign, principally because of a reduction of the production from the mines that had previously been so profitable (Martín Acosta 282). This loss in profit was due to the decimation of the indigenous population that had been forced to work the mines (Lynch 273-4), as well as the high price of establishing such mines, as they tended to be in northern frontier regions and therefore required the support of troops (Lynch 303). In spite of the considerable financial boon Spain received from the American colonies, exports to Spain during the reign of Felipe IV, particularly those from New Spain, were lower than in past years.

In short, Spain under Felipe IV was encumbered with difficulties domestic, European, and American. Under ineffective leadership and suffering from continually worsening economic conditions, Spain was overextended due to its religious-political engagements in Europe, an artifact of the country's continued negotiation of questions of religion, identity and nationality. Martín Acosta offers the following pithy summary of the state of Spain under Felipe IV:

> hemos de decir que la política exterior de Felipe IV, con sus absorbentes necesidades de numerario, deterioró el tradicional sistema de armadas y flotas, arruinó el comercio y hizo que disminuyera el registro de la plata. Y en paralelo, la decadencia del comercio indiano y de las remesas americanas repercutió, en gran medida, en la creciente debilidad militar de una España que se acercaba a finales del siglo XVII en plena crisis político-económica. (Martín Acosta 293)

Urban VIII and the Papacy

The final European institution which directly influences the transatlantic dialogue of the early 17th century is that of the Catholic Papacy, specifically the institutions and policies enacted that pertained to the religious administration of the New World. Pope Urban VIII, Maffeo Barberini, occupied the Chair of Saint Peter for most the period that during which the Lady in Blue narrative arises, from 1623 to 1644. Indeed, Fray Benavides directs his second *Memorial* in 1634 to Urban VIII, explaining to the Pontiff the travels of Sor María de Agreda to the Jumanos of New Mexico.

In 1623, Urban VIII was elected to the papacy from a prominent Florentine family. He was in a position of religious and political power at a time when, as has already been commented, Europe was highly divided and continuously battling the boundaries of those divides. In this regard, Urban VIII found an insuperable adversary in

France's Cardinal Richelieu, whose political and religious machinations for the advancement of the French Crown prompted Urban VIII to comment, "'If there is a God, Cardinal Richelieu will have much to answer for. If there is not, he has done very well'" (Maxwell-Stuart 194). Historians have commented on Urban VIII's inefficacy in responding to the threat French Protestants presented, and unsuccessful intervention in the Thirty Year's War (Maxwell-Stuart 194), as the conflict resulted in losses to the Catholic Church through the Treaty of Westphalia in 1643 (La Due 210).

Urban VIII was engaged in Roman politics, particularly involved in inter-familial conflicts within Italy. These entanglements, combined with his patronage of the arts and architecture did not make him popular in Rome (Maxwell-Stuart 195). In addition, to Urban VIII fell the task of condemning the astronomical theories of Galileo Galilei. However, even though Galileo had to recant before an Inquisitorial tribunal his theory about the Earth revolving around the sun, Urban VIII made sure his friend was treated gently and well for the rest of his life (Cheetham 223).

In terms of how Rome interacted or reacted to the events in the religious colonization of the Americas, several key points are worth remarking on. Prior to Urban VIII's papacy, in 1622, Pope Gregory XV established the Congregation of Propaganda Fide, the body entrusted with the administration of the missionary efforts of the Catholic Church throughout the world (Maxwell-Stuart 191). This was a major step in the normalization of the Church's work in the Americas, in Asia and in India, and it indicates that the numbers of missionaries, missions and converted were so great that they required a higher organization than previously. And, of course, after its establishment,

Propaganda Fide played a major role in the administration of the New World religious institutions.

Urban VIII contributed to the development of the missionary effort, and its centralization in Europe, by establishing the Collegium Urbanum within Propaganda Fide in 1627. The Collegium Urbanum was a college for the training of missionaries, the establishment of which addressed the need for the priests sent to foreign countries to receive instruction particular to the missionary field. In a 1639 Bull, Urban also prohibited all slavery in Paraguay, Brazil and the West Indies, a positive step in regions dominated by indigenous and African inhabitants (Ott). By most measures, Urban VIII supported the missionary endeavor, as well as the mendicant orders that supplied the manpower to carry out catechesis in those regions.

A final, and most vital, point of interest as regards Urban VIII pertains the policies he set forth on the processes of sainthood, and on the representation of non-canonized individuals. Urban VIII seems to have been shifting canonization and determination of sanctity more securely under the Papal purview, perhaps lessening the influence of local officials and individuals in establishing saints. As the New Advent Catholic Encyclopedia notes, Urban VIII explicitly reserved the power of beatification (that is, the ability to declare an individual "blessed" and place them on the first steps towards sainthood),for the Pope, reducing regional jurisdiction on the matter (Ott). In addition, in an October 30, 1625, Bull, Urban VIII prohibited the "representation with the halo of sanctity of persons not beatified or canonized […] and the printing of their alleged miracles or revelations" (Ott); this Bull seems to have the objective of reducing

the veneration of local, "unofficial" saints. Both of these actions concentrate the power for determining who and what is holy in Rome, very far away from the remote sites where the worship of folk saints could occur.

Urban VIII himself canonized many saints during his papacy, reflecting a desire to standardize or adjudicate the types of religious imagery and worship that were emerging in unknowable places. By ensuring that the images and individuals venerated abroad received approbation from the center, the normalized beliefs of that center could be more directly and effectively transmitted.

Women and mystical missionization

"In the stories retold, we can see how attempts were made to hold all these contradictions together, at least at the level of narrative, and how such narratives did not necessarily define themselves through their opposition to or rejection of empire and cultural hegemony." (Sampson Vera Tudela 99)

How might Sor María's account have been understood during her lifetime, given the contexts detailed above? The tradition of mystics and mystical travels to which the Lady in Blue narrative belongs serves to shed some light on the subject. Conceptually at least, the changes her actions cause on the perception of place distinguish her transatlantic narrative. Her travel could be considered a claiming for the Church or for the Crown of a space on the cusp of being (it was thought) more firmly maintained by both. Benavides himself admits that neither he nor his friars had been to the region of the Jumanos, and nor did the Spanish understand the tribe's language when the Jumanos came to Isleta to petition for baptism. Yet, Sor María not only visited the isolated region

where the Jumanos lived, she communicated with and converted the tribes she encountered. In visiting New Mexico, Sor María confirms the region's presence, and changes it from a remote unknown into a knowable, knowable and contacted place.

However, the enterprise of claiming space or of carrying out colonizing activities was usually reserved for men. Even as a mystic, Sor María's case is unusual, for though women mystics were not uncommon in the 17th century, historian Ellen Gunnarsdóttir comments that "women's narratives turned inward, eschewing details of earthly life" (Gunnarsdóttir 10). The feminine mystical was less concerned with real-life events, in contrast to male religious biography of the period, which tended to focus on men's worldly work as founders and reformers. How might this feminine mysticism function in Sor María's case?

As Jean Franco maintains, mystical separations of body and soul were temporary breaks in the general atmosphere of control to which cloistered women (women in general) were subject. And as Gunnarsdóttir points out in *Mexican Karismata*, by the 16th and 17th centuries, the Carmelites had adopted the tradition of Santa Teresa's mystical experiences. According to this thought, woman would use her weaknesses (a condition of her "naturally" more unsophisticated state as compared to men (Gunnarsdóttir 7) as the means by which she became closer to God; mystical experiences thus are the apex of such behaviors in which assumed inherent weakness is channeled. Sor María's mystical experience, by absolving her of her feminine frailty, promotes her to the level of what Gunnarsdóttir terms a spiritual "varón" (Gunnarsdóttir 7). She, in effect, becomes more masculine by transcending gender limitations via mystical

experience. In fact, Sor María's actions during her travels are those a male missionary would have enacted. Colahan asserts that while visiting the Jumanos, Sor María "actively preaches, converts Indians, and repeatedly accepts death" (Colahan, *Visions* 98), acting in a manner similar to that narrated in the chronicles of Spanish conquistadores, and missionary priests and brothers. In presenting her role in parallel to that of these men, displaying her active, masculine, evangelizing functions, Sor María's account is given weight. Her mysticism, to the extent 17th-century real-life limitations permit, allows her to become something like a contemporaneous missionary friar, the engaged presence of the peninsular in the New World.

Finally, because Sor María's physical, female body remained behind at her convent in Soria, the Lady in Blue could be read as a direct link between the peninsula and the periphery on a literal as well as symbolic level. As Elisa Sampson Vera Tudela comments, "in the didactic literature of [Sor María's day], there is a clear attempt to resolve and contain the contradiction between the nun's enclosure and her role as holy voyager" (Sampson Vera Tudela 3). In the case of Sor María, her body was at all times enclosed in the convent, even as she experienced mystical travel; outwardly, at least, this could have signified that she continued to be in conformation with the expectations of women in that context to follow a male hegemonic lead. Thus, in spite of her masculine actions, carried out in a masculinizing mystical state, the physical Sor María remained in Spain and under the jurisdiction of her superiors.

The Lady in Blue narrative emerges out of this fraught political, religious, colonizing social context, in dialogue with these varied elements. But what shape did her

narrative take? Who wrote the first draft of the Lady in Blue narrative and what did it look like?

Images became vital as soon as Christopher Columbus set foot on the beaches of the New World […] the image was used as a marker, then became a tool for acculturation and domination. Colonization ensnared the continent in an ever-growing net of images that was cast out over and over again, and that shaped itself according to the rhythm of the styles, politics, reactions, and oppositions it met.

- Serge Gruzinski,
Images at War, 2-3

Chapter 2

To map the trajectory taken by the Lady in Blue it is necessary to first understand the foundation of the narrative, examining the documents from which it initially arose. In doing so, I will answer some fundamental questions pertaining to how the narrative took shape, who participated in its creation, and what specific characteristics they contributed to the narrative as a whole. Through the four texts I present in this chapter, the narrative of the Lady in Blue evolved and became identified with Sor María de Agreda, a cloistered Spanish nun. These documents are: Fray Alonso de Benavides' 1630 *Memorial*; a set of letters that Fray Benavides and Sor María directed to the friars in New Mexico; Fray Benavides' 1634 *Memorial*; and the vita (or saint's life) of Sor María written by Fray Joseph Ximénez Samaniego.

Although these fours works recount and develop the Lady in Blue narrative, they may not be the narrative's primary source. In fact, three of the texts refer to materials and correspondences pertaining to the Lady in Blue that predate the texts themselves. These references suggest that a notable transatlantic dialogue occurred between

Franciscan superiors in Spain and Mexico prior to 1630, indicating an institutional interest in the Lady in Blue narrative prior to that represented by the works I present. Clearly, locating and analyzing these earlier records (if they exist) would offer further insight into the origins of Lady in Blue narrative. However, this type of archival work lies beyond the current research scope of this project (thought not, of course, beyond its range of interest).

That said, the four documents I examine in this chapter are significant in terms of their accessibility to audiences, and the degree to which they develop other (internal) facets of the narrative. Three have been fundamental in influencing the popular development of the narrative because, unlike the predating materials, they were widely published and read. The 1630 *Memorial* was published in six different languages throughout Europe, the *Tanto* had at least two printings in Mexico, and the vita appeared on both continents wherever Sor María's writing was. As such, what is contained in these texts can be considered the "public knowledge" of the narrative. This public knowledge is what becomes integrated into popular imagination and forms the basis for the latter-day histories and folkloric representations- not the predating materials themselves.

Above, I emphasized the importance of public accessibility of these documents; therefore, the inclusion of Benavides' 1634 *Memorial* in this chapter might seem inconsistent. In contrast to the three other texts, the 1634 *Memorial* appears to have never been published, aside from in form of a 1945 annotated English translation. In fact, the Spanish text I cite is taken from my own transcription of a photostat of the original,

loaned by the Notre Dame archives. As such, it would seem to have had a lesser influence on the public development of the narrative than the other documents. However, I present it in this chapter it because 1) it completes the suite of materials pertaining to the Lady in Blue written by Benavides, 2) it suggests a great deal about how the Lady in Blue relates to similar colonial miracle narratives, and 3) it offers direct commentary and a chronology for the predating materials I mentioned previously. In addition, it offers a glimpse into the one of the modes in which the narrative was presented, namely, as a religious testimony for a Church audience.

In the interest of maintaining narrative chronology, I present the fours texts in the order in which they were written (not published): the 1630 Memorial, the *Tanto*, the 1634 *Memorial*, and Ximénez Samaniego's vita. My intent in doing so is not to insinuate any sort of retrofitting of the narrative, nor is it to illustrate the means by which the pieces of the narrative were combined to synthesize a more generalized whole. It is to show where parts of the narrative, which later enter into regional and religious history, and collective remembrance, are derived. In doing so, I hope to understand better how the Lady in Blue narrative was known in its many retellings, either as components extracted from one document or another, or as the combination of several different versions.

1630 *Memorial*

Let us begin with Fray Alonso de Benavides' 1630 *Memorial*, examining how the narrative about the Lady in Blue and the "Milagrosa conversión de la nación Xumana" fits into it. Whether or not one agrees with the critical opinion that the 1630 *Memorial* functions primarily as a piece of Franciscan missionary propaganda, the work is one few

pre-Pueblo Revolt works that describes the Custodia de San Pablo, and that offers some ethnographic information about the tribes in New Mexico. As Daniel Reff points out, however, the document is best to be read as a work whose meaning is more connotative than denotative. To apply this interpretive perspective, it is necessary to examine the overall structure of the 1630 *Memorial*, and to understand how the "Milagrosa conversión de la nación Xumana" is positioned within the context of the rest of the document.

To this end, the analysis of this particular text is more comprehensive than that of the other three. I am looking at the structure and function of the 1630 *Memorial* as a whole (rather than, as in the cases of the 1634 *Memorial* and the vita, just the Lady in Blue narrative alone). Thus, I hope to understand the weight the Lady in Blue narrative was given within the text; the degree to which it was consistent with similar elements; and how it functioned in relationship to the text's other objectives. I will also, of course, outline the major features of the Lady in Blue narrative that the 1630 *Memorial* presents- the details, places, individuals and presentation of the narrative. The analysis of the 1630 *Memorial* as a whole is more to ascertain how this first of the three widely-read documents presenting the narrative framed and presented it.

Critics have tended to view Benavides' authorship of the *Memorial* as a means for the friar to address personal objectives, namely, the establishment of a bishopric in New Mexico with Benavides at its head. As that interpretation does not fully explain the case of the Lady in Blue narrative, I would like to shift interpretive focus from the influence of Benavides' ambitions on the document to a recollection of the conditions in New Mexico at the time Benavides wrote (or at least presented) the text. As detailed in Chapter 1, the

region was kept just alive as a royal colony, supported directly by monies from the Spanish crown, and granted the continuation of its existence for reasons of conversion and evangelization. Reff notes that the *1630 Memorial* as a whole presents a varied, intermeshed set of information, that speaks to secular and religious concerns regarding the newly-established territory. Fray Juan de Santander, Comisario General de las Indias, roughly outlines what the reader will find within the *Memorial*, in his introduction, asserting that friars in the New Mexico territory experienced "descubrimientos de riquezas, así espirituales, como temporales" (Benavides, *Memorial of Fray Alonso* 83). The region's "riquezas temporales" are of significant importance to the memorial, mixed in as they are with the "maravillas y milagros" of a more mystical-spiritual nature, that Santander also alludes to.

Since, as Steven Greenblatt suggested in *Marvelous Possessions*, "the rhetorical task of Christian imperialism […] is to bring together commodity conversion and spiritual conversion" (Greenblatt 71) it is not surprising that the explicit overlap of these two objectives occasionally surfaces in the *Memorial*. The chapter "Nación Mansa del río del Norte," for example, proposes that meeting objectives of trade and evangelization could be mutually beneficial. By converting the Mansos and incorporating them into the Spanish crown, north-south trade routes along the Rio Grande corridor could be secured, facilitating trade movement and thus making the southward transit of profitable materials from farther north (which Benavides later discusses) possible. Benavides also links the Manso conversion to the need for greater Franciscan support; with more friars, the

Mansos would be easily converted, securing the Crown's trade aims. Benavides thus aligns the needs of his order with those of the Crown.

In contrast to the conversion of purposes portrayed in the Manso chapter, the "Minas del Socorro" directly address the material expectations for the far northern settlement. It seems refer to the pervasive expectation that New Mexico, like Zacatecas and other northern colonies, might have rich silver mines that could partially compensate the Crown for its expenditures in the region. Indeed, Benavides assures that he has already found parties interested in extracting and refining the rich silver of the mines, and that the viceroy had been assiduous in pursing the mining opportunities there "con zelo del servicio de V. Majestad, para aumentar por aquí sus Reales quintos" (Benavides, *Memorial of Fray Alonso* 99). And although by Benavides' estimation in "Nación Hemes" nearly half of the Jemez nation had died, the Felipe IV could still look forward to the profits from the "más de tres mil tributarios" there. In other chapters, Benavides discusses the fertility of the land, its potential productivity, and the various specific types of assets the crown could expect the *custodia* to produce.

Benavides also reports on the friars' difficult labor in the territory, and on their success in conversion of the tribes, with a focus that is, ostensibly, solely spiritual. However, as discussed in Chapter 1, the understanding of "conversion" as "colonization" can be very aptly read into the cases Benavides presents. In "Provincia y nación de los Piros, Senecú, Socorro y Sevilleta" Benavides credits himself with the successful conversion of these pueblos (Benavides, *Memorial of Fray Alonso* 95). In "Nación Picuries" and "Nación Taos," Benavides makes clear that even thought the these tribes

fought against the friars' intents, the Franciscans are still to be credited for their efforts, and for their long-term suffering. And in "Quan bien acuden a las cosas de la Christiandad," Benavides displays the breadth of the work the Franciscans effected among the tribes of New Mexico, giving evidence as to the completeness of their conversions: "causa admiración el ver, que en menos de veinte años que ha que se comenzó el bautismo […] parecen Christianos de cien años" (Benavides, *Memorial of Fray Alonso* 122).

As we have seen thus far, the 1630 *Memorial* addresses secular and religious concerns regarding the New Mexico territory, and it also explicitly displays how the two can serve one another to shared ends. The 1630 *Memorial* presents a paradigm of commodity conversion and religious conversion, a fact readily accepted by the critics who read this text as fairly typical of other colonial texts. But the numerous miracles Benavides features throughout the text have proven to be more difficult to explain, and have spurred debate as to the reasons for their inclusion. For historians such as Lummis and Hodge**,** their presence signifies the friar's inability to distinguish between fact and fiction- a characteristic representative of a supposed "medieval mindset" prevalent in Spain, particularly among Franciscans. Reff responds to this criticism by suggesting that Benavides' writing about miracles demonstrates that his viewpoint is actually a hybrid of medieval and Counter-Reformation approaches. I take a different approach, again focusing less on Benavides and the schools of thought that conditioned his writing, and more on the text itself. In anticipation of the Lady in Blue, I am looking to explore how

miracles in general are presented in the text, how they are arranged, and how the "Milagrosa Conversión de la nación Xumana" relates to those other, perplexing miracles.

The miracles of varying range and effect are woven consistently throughout the text, and the Franciscan friars are usually assigned as the agents of the their action. This aspect is highlighted in "Nacíon Mansa del río del Norte," in which Benavides specifies that although he did not witness that a miracle actually occurred among the unbaptized, uncatechized tribe, he is sure one would have come to pass, as miracles could be worked "también allí" (Benavides, *Memorial of Fray Alonso* 93). He confirms no miracles, however, because there have been no Franciscans among the Mansos to bring them about.

In places where processes of conversion are contested, as among the "gente más indómita y traidora" of the "Nación Picuries," the work of Franciscan conversion is supported by miraculous events. The tribe members who had not already been converted found their attempts to kill the friar stationed there flummoxed by miraculous intervention: once, the priest became invisible, and another time, his attackers became too nervous to lay hands on him. This miracle is echoed at Taos pueblo, where a woman of the pueblo who tries to convince other women to return to their tradition of polygamy is struck down by lightning in their presence. According to Benavides, the rest of the pueblo immediately chooses to be married in the Catholic manner. These might be considered "miracles of consolidation," in which uncertain conversions are secured by extra, miraculous help.

In other cases, the miracles serve as confirmation of the truth of the friars' teachings. At Acoma, an infant at the point of dying immediately regains her senses and "embistió con los pechos de la madre y se volvía muy risueña" (Benavides, *Memorial of Fray Alonso* 112) upon being baptized by the priest. While at the Hopi (Moqui) pueblo, the local "hechizeros" challenge the words of the friars, bringing them a boy blind from birth, and commanding the priests to heal his blindness as proof of the validity of the beliefs they proselytized. Upon placing a cross blessed by Madre Luisa de Carrión (a Spanish nun whose reliquary was highly valued in early 17th century missions) on the boy's eyes, he was able to see. This miraculous recovery encouraged his tribe to side with the friars instead of with the "hechiceros."

Benavides next turns his attention next to the tribes his considers "Apaches" with "Principio de la conversión de los Apaches," and describes the processes of conversion of the Xila, Navajo and Vaquero "Apache" tribes. Benavides explains how conversion has been attempted among these "warlike" nations that proved to be the "el crisol del esfuerzo de los españoles" (Benavides, *Memorial of Fray Alonso* 54). Here, the focus is less on miracles that are strictly divine in nature, and more on how extremely effective the preaching and actions of Benavides and the other friars are in bringing about full- or extremely promising conversions. These changes among the Apache tribes are that much more remarkable for the fact that those tribes are nomadic, have had little contact with the friars and are, according to Benavides, bellicose.

With the Xila Apaches, a tribal leader is convinced of the truth of Catholic teachings as a result of Benavides' sermons and, indeed, Benavides depicts this Captain

Sanaba as perfectly able to comprehend the relationship of his own previous religious practices to those of Christianity. The captain interprets the former as an incomplete understanding of the latter, and Benavides remarks of this deep understanding that he doesn't believe "mejores razones pudieran dar los filosofos naturales antiguos" (Benavides, *Memorial of Fray Alonso* 136). Benavides demonstrates the almost miraculous effects of the Franciscan's preaching through this episode.

The personal efforts of Benavides are as successful among the Navajo Apaches, who he depicts as reluctant to turn themselves over to the friars, as they sought to engage Christianized tribes in warfare. Benavides goes to great lengths to discuss the special, well-planned approach he personally took in trying to convert the Navajo cacique. Much as in the case of the Xila Apache leader, the Navajo cacique eloquently declares his respect for the figure (a crucifix) on which Benavides and the other were swearing their peace with his tribe. He ends this declaration with a dramatic acceptance of Benavides' offer of catechesis for this entire tribe, and, ultimately, with an agreement to peace between the Navajos and Christianized Indians. Although Benavides does not explicitly say that the Navajos were later converted (it seems that he might have left New Mexico by the time they were), he does note that peace was maintained in that region which "más pena y cuidado ha dado" (Benavides, *Memorial of Fray Alonso* 150) to the Spanish and Christianized Indians. In describing the Vaquero Apaches, Benavides makes explicit the role he views the Franciscans have consistently played in mediating the relationship between regional government and the indigenous communities that were being exploited. Although on the threshold of converting this tribe, their catechization is impeded by the

greed of the governor, described as the devil's instrument, who sends out a slaving expedition that killed the Vaquero Apache leader who had agreed to convert. The Franciscans intervene and prevent major disaster, but although "las diligencias posibles para su conversión se hacen, Dios sabe cuado llegará su hora" (Ayer 157)- these tribes are as yet still unbaptized. As such, though they display a desire to accept the Catholic faith, and thus incorporation into the Spanish crown, the proactive and thoughtful efforts of the Franciscans are waylaid by the secular leadership. Among the Apache tribes, although conversion (and thus incorporation into the Spanish crown) is not complete (it is a work-in-progress), it is through the personal, charismatic intervention of the Franciscans that significant advances are made in that direction.

The chapter following those about the Apaches is "Milagrosa conversión de la nación Xumana." In keeping with the previous three chapters, it tells of the conversion of another semi-nomadic tribe, though their conversion is more complete than that of the Apache tribes. Geographically, the text leads the reader rather naturally from the Rio Grande (where the converted Pueblos are located), eastward through the area of the Vaquero Apaches, and into the region just west of Quivira.

"Milagrosa conversión de la nación Xumana"

Benavides leads the reader to the most elaborate miracle narrative in the text, that of the Lady in Blue. Within the chapter, Benavides explains that the Jumano tribe, who had been briefly administered to by Fray Juan de Salas around 1622, had persistently asked that Fray Salas to return to their tribe and continue catechizing them. Once the new custos, Fray Estevan Perea arrived in 1629 with thirty new friars to help administer

the region, Benavides sent Fray Salas and a new friar, Diego López, to the tribe to catechize them. Before the friars are sent, however, the Jumanos are asked why they were so emphatic in their desire to be catechized. To the friars' amazement, the Jumano respond by saying that a lady who looked like a younger, more beautiful version of Mother Luisa Carrión (whose portrait was hung at the Isleta mission they visited), had been instructing them, admonishing them to seek baptism. In the intervening time since they first requested that the friars come to their tribe they had been deterred from contacting the friars due to changes in the grazing patterns of the buffalo they hunted and were in fact preparing to move along when the Lady told them to go back to the mission at Isleta and ask again.

When the friars sent to baptize the Jumanos report back, they testify that the Jumanos brought out decorated crosses to greet them, wore crosses and venerated a statue of Jesus, and happily requested baptism. The friars were able to cure many of the maladies affecting the members of the tribe before they left, and there was another moment of great religious understanding on the part of the tribes. Benavides closes the chapter with an expression of great joy and pride on the part of the Franciscans: "O bondad infinita! Bendigante los ángeles, que así quieres honrar a esta sagrada religión, y a sus hijos, confirmando por su mano, con tantos milagros su Divina Palabra" (Benavides, *Memorial of Fray Alonso* 163).

This section combines particular elements, regarding miracles and conversions, of the preceding sections. As in the miracles at the pueblos, the appearance of the Lady in Blue is clearly a miracle in and of itself, as the title of the section makes clear. Although

the principal miracle of the chapter is the conversion of the Jumano tribe, Fray Juan de Salas and Fray Diego Lopez are able to cure a variety of ailments that members of the Jumano tribe suffered, resonating with the smaller miracles effected by the Franciscans at the pueblos in previous chapters. And, there is a significant repetition of motif, as the same Mother Luisa de Carrión whose cross cured the blind boy at the Moqui tribe serves as the reference point for the Jumanos' description of the Lady in Blue.

As in the episodes treating the conversion of the Apache tribes, the Jumanos request catechesis from the friars only after they have been rudimentarily instructed by a "member" of the church. The apparition, it is suggested, is another special means by which the Franciscan order is blessed in their normal, but especially productive, missionary labors. The Lady in Blue completes her evangelizing work in a perfectly conventional way, by preaching to and exhorting the Jumanos, just as Benavides did among the Apaches. And, through these recognized means of catechesis, she is very successful in converting them. Though her presence is miraculous in the sense that the earlier events were miraculous, the means by which she achieves their conversion is the quintessence of missionary work- most notably, there is no violence nor coercion enacted by her on the Jumanos.

This chapter is followed by twelve more, placing it somewhere near the end of the 1630 *Memorial,* but not in an especially powerful structural position for a chapter that seems to be the climax of the several miracles and conversions that precede it. In fact, following "Reyno de Quivia Aixaos" and "Ocupación santa, en que los religiosos se entretienen" are ten more that are extremely short and uncharacteristic of Benavides'

writing. As Wagner points out (Wagner 229), Benavides here often contradicts or repeats himself, and there is scant discussion of missionary labor, miracles, or anything having to do with the conversions themselves. This has led many scholars of Benavides' work to conclude that these chapters are not, in fact, of his writing. Though Wagner simply comments on inconsistency of these chapters with the rest of the *Memorial*, Baker Morrow suggests (Morrow 92) that these chapters were taken from Pedro de Castañeda's account of the Francisco Coronado expedition of 1540. Cyprian Lynch (Lynch 67) concurs that the material could have come from a version of the Coronado account, though he suggests a more modern edition. In his essay "Las Casas and the Benavides Memorial of 1630," Carroll Riley suggests that Benavides either selectively borrows from an original manuscript of Fray Bartolomé de las Casas' *Apologética Historia Sumaria* and another unnamed source, or that both authors borrow the same material from a common source, which Riley does not definitively identify. Whether or not the actual source material for these last few chapters can be definitively identified, most critics agree that the 1630 *Memorial* as Benavides wrote it ends with the "Ocupación santa, en que los religiosos se entretienen."

Taking this structural change into account, how does the chapter on the Lady in Blue now figure into the document as a whole? Most significantly, rather than lying somewhere in the middle of the *Memorial*, the section becomes the climax of the piece's discourse on religion, followed by two more climaxes, one economic, and one exhortative. The Jumano episode is the last in a series of startling smaller miracles, and of a series that portray the personal interactions between the friars and Indians as

fundamental to the success of the conversions. It is in this section that the Benavides steps out of his narrative persona, utters a shout of joy to the heavens, and directly links the other miracles the Franciscans have experienced to this final miracle. It reinforces and elevates the Franciscan labor portrayed in earlier chapters, while at the same time surpassing the preceding miracles detailed.

The narrative of the Lady in Blue acts as link between the climactic Jumano conversion and "Reyno de Quivira Aixoas" chapters: "llegó también esta voz al Reyno de Quivira, y al Aixaos […] y enviaron sus embajadores a los padres, para que fuessen allá también a enseñarlos y bautizarlos; diciendo, como la misma Santa los andaba allá, que viniessen a llamarlos " (Benavides, *Memorial of Fray Alonso* 165). As the friars were already with the Jumanos, other friars were sent to Quivira in response the call of the Lady in Blue. Benavides transitions, however, very soon after discussing the conversions resulting from the Lady in Blue, to focus on the interrelationship between the friars' work and the economic potential of Quivira: "No puedo dejar de decir en esta ocasión el particular servicio que mi religión haze a V. majestad, en la pacificación y conversión de este Reino de Quivira, y Aixaos, pues es conocida su grandeza y riqueza" (Benavides, *Memorial of Fray Alonso* 166). The rest of this section describes geography and trade possibilities, as Benavides offers a great deal of detail about the geographical relationship between Quivira, the bay of Espíritu Santo, and various coastal cities and locales, presumably those with which trade from Quivira could be cultivated. Benavides points out that the missionaries at Quivira could be better supplied by a trading port at Espíritu Santo, and that the Crown would also be protecting the region by blocking the "enemigos

olandeses" (Benavides, *Memorial of Fray Alonso* 169). Benavides in fact uses the supporting eyewitness documentation from the explorer Vicente González to substantiate his claims of the great wealth in Quivira. Here, as in the Manso nation episode, Benavides emphasizes the benefits of trade with the region that is on the cusp of being secured through Franciscan intervention and conversion- if only the friars were to have a little more support from the Crown. As in the Jumano conversion, the stakes are raised, as there is greater, confirmed promise of wealth in that region. It is the most dramatic, climactic financial argument for the *custodia*, arguing on many levels of rationale.

Finally, Benavides closes with the exhortative coda of the 1630 *Memorial* "Ocupación santa, en que los religiosos se entretienen," in which Benavides presents the work of the friars in New Mexico as a great service to the King of Spain. Benavides prompts the monarch to recognize that the ultimate responsibility for the welfare of the Franciscan missions and for the newly converted Indians lies fully on his shoulders, and that this responsibility is as much spiritual as it is secular. After extolling the "civilizing," conversion practices of the friars, Benavides rather brusquely admonishes Felipe IV, obliging him to recall that "V. Magestad debe acudir con todo favor y auxilio; así por la obligación en que la Iglesia puso a V Magestad en la Bula de Alexandro Sexto, quando le dio en nombre de Dios estos Reynos" (Benavides, *Memorial of Fray Alonso* 172). Felipe IV is also reminded of the potential for wealth in the region that he has presented throughout the *Memorial*, and Benavides advises that such possibilities must be cultivated, with the support of the Crown. The last chapter brings this trio of episodes to a close with a comprehensive summary of the friars' labors, and the admonishment to

Felipe IV by virtue of his obligations as a Catholic monarch. In terms of tone and content, it reaches a similar fevered pitch as the two previous spiritual and economic climaxes of the work. Benavides' rebuke of the king is intended to drive home the obligations associated with the spiritual and secular gifts the *custodia* has to offer, particularly those of the last two chapters.

What do we know about the 1630 *Memorial* as a document? First, it addresses both religious and economic issues pertaining to the land and Franciscan missions of the *custos* in New Mexico. Second, miracle events, including that of the conversion of the Jumano tribe by the Lady in Blue, are consistent with those present in the rest of the text. Third, the 1630 *Memorial* is likely a composite document that borrows sections from earlier or contemporaneous works. And fourth, that the Lady in Blue narrative is positioned in a rhetorically powerful section of the 1630 *Memorial*, employing elements that are present in other textual episodes and offering a sweeping crescendo in its recounting of the Jumano conversions.

The 1630 *Memorial* is frequently cited as the source for the Lady in Blue narrative, but what essential elements of the Lady in Blue narrative emerge in the 1630 *Memorial*? To begin with, the friars at Isleta are stunned both by the request of the Jumanos for priests to serve them, and for their assertion that a woman had been visiting them to catechize them. That anyone would have been in the region, much less catechizing- much less a woman catechizing- seems to stun the friars. The friars in New Mexico had never heard of Sor Maria de Agreda; there is absolutely no mention of her in the text. The Lady in Blue (or "la Santa" or "la Voz" as Benavides refers to her) has no

fixed identity; she might have traveled from somewhere but there is no declaration of mystical travel. Indeed, Madre Carrión is mentioned only as a point of reference for defining who the European-seeming woman was- like Madre Carrión, but "younger and more beautiful." The woman who visits the Jumanos speaks to them in their language and leaves the Indians fully instructed in the basic teachings of the church. As proof of this, the Jumanos bring out crosses when the friars come to their encampment, understand the friars' ability to perform miracles, and request as an entire pueblo that they be baptized. Additionally, Lady in Blue did not leave any physical gifts (such as rosaries) with the Jumanos. The friars that accompanied the new *custos* Fray Perea in 1628 are mentioned only insofar as they provided staffing for the Jumano pueblo; they bear no particular news from Mexico or from Spain. There is no particular context for the "Milagrosa conversion de la nación Xumana" external to that of the document in which it appears, Benavides' 1630 *Memorial*; the conversion is presented as a singular event occurring in New Mexico, without any stated relationship to the outside world.

"**Tanto que se sacó de una carta…"**

In the *Tanto*, consisting of the letters Benavides and Sor María wrote back to the friars in New Mexico, the historical narrative continues to evolve, writing new elements into the Lady in Blue narrative. The *Tanto* shifts the narrative considerably from that presented in the 1630 *Memorial*, and provides many of the defining elements of its modern and folkloric retellings. The most fundamental of these elements is the identification of the Lady in Blue as Sor María de Agreda, a Spanish abbess, writer and

mystic, and contemporary of Fray Benavides. Through the *Tanto* narrative, "La voz" presented in the 1630 *Memorial* gains, *un cuerpo* that apparently confirms Sor María's role in the Jumano conversion. Ironically, it is Sor María's own "voicing" of her travels that becomes an issue of debate later in the nun's life, and afterward.

The document that I analyze in this section is a 1730 Mexican printing of the *Tanto*, prefaced with a plate illustrating "La V.M. María de Jesús de Agreda Predicando a los Chichimecos del Nuebo México," and with an introduction by the printer. This printing carries with it some important information about the *Tanto* itself. First, the original letters from Fray Benavides and Sor María to the friars in New Mexico, written in 1631, are probably a different text. Ximénez Samaniego claims in the vita that the original letter had been stored at the Archive of the Custodia of San Pablo, "para que fuesse en los siguientes siglos memoria y testimonio a aquellas partes" (Ximénez Samaniego 137). He goes on to assert that "un tanto de ella" (Ximénez Samaniego 137), an excerpt of the original text, was sent by the Comisario General of New Spain to the Procurador of New Mexico at the court of the King in 1668, "en testimonio de lo que la Religión de San Francisco continuamente obra en aquel Nuevo Mundo" (Ximénez Samaniego 137). The introduction to the 1730 printing also asserts that the original is stored at the archives of the Custodia, all of which suggest that a different, probably longer, version of the *Tanto* existed and may still exist. However, as printings of the *Tanto* that were publicly circulated and read were similar to the one I here analyze, I am only focusing the Lady in Blue narrative as it is presented in this *Tanto*.

Although José Toribio Medina's bibliography catalogues a publishing of the *Tanto* in Mexico in 1631, I tend to agree with Wagner that it is unlikely that the letter was published immediately after it was written. More likely, it was kept by the Custodia until the process for Sor María's sainthood was opened in the later 17th-century; Ximénez Samaniego mentions that he did not become aware of the existence of the letter until the version sent from Mexico to Spain by the Comisario General "inopinadamente legó a [sus] manos" (Ximénez Samaniego 137) in 1668. The next printing of the *Tanto* Medina catalogues (1730) is examined in this chapter.

As will be further discussed in Chapter 4, by the time the 1730 printing of the *Tanto* was made, the foci of the narrative were New Mexico, the Franciscans, and Sor María, as the introduction to the letter indicates. The 1730 printing is dedicated to individuals who supported the missionary efforts of the Franciscan friars in the New Mexico *custodia*, as the letter's latter-day editor characterizes the *Tanto* a gift to them of an "obra que de aquellas partes sale," in spite of the fact that the documents were written and sent from Spain. This reading of the *Tanto* places it squarely in the Americas, and it seems likely its purpose was to popularize the Franciscan's mission work. The editor also privileges the contribution of Sor María over that of Benavides, as he terms the document a "Carta que al Venerable Maria de Jesús de Agreda escribió a los Religiosos misioneros de el Nuevo México," without a mention of Benavides' contribution.

The *Tanto* is a bicoastal dialogue about a transatlantic voyage that is brought about by Fray Benavides' visit to Spain from Mexico. Rather than reporting from one side of the ocean to the other, as in the case of the 1630 *Memorial*, it represents and

initiates an exchange from the center of Spain back to the outpost in New Mexico drawing those two places together through the act of sending letters. The body is divided into three parts: an opening letter by Benavides addressed to the friars in New Mexico; a letter from Sor María to the friars in New Mexico; and, closing comments by Benavides. All three sections pertain to Sor María's travels to the Indians and missions of New Mexico. Through the *Tanto*, the Lady in Blue's narrative gains a living protagonist, and changes its directionality to accommodate a peninsular compliment.

In the letter, Benavides gets right to the point. His second sentence introduces Sor María to the New Mexican friars, confirming that she is the person who "allí anda predicando nuestra santa fe en la forma que Vuestros Padres saben." He affirms that Sor María had been taken ("personal, verdadera y realmente") to New Mexico, "a que nos ayude con su presencia y predicación en todas ellas Provincias." This statement is significant, for it demonstrates a shift in identification (the holy woman who converted the Jumanos is now Sor María de Agreda) that is based on the friar's collective acknowledgment of the events of the Jumano conversion.

He goes on to explain how he came to know about her while presenting the 1630 *Memorial* at the court of Felipe IV, adding that numerous printings of the *Memorial* were made, several copies of which were sent to Pope Urban VIII. Due to the *Memorial*'s wild popularity, Benavides attracts the attention of Fray Bernardino Sena, the Commissary General, whose interest was piqued by the woman described in the "Milagrosa conversión de la nación Xumana" episode. Eight years previous, Sena had heard of a nun

in Spain, Sor María de Agreda, who had been mystically traveling to the native people in the region of New Mexico. Sena asserts that "lo mismo que [Benavides] dixe, se lo había dicho la misma M. María de Jesús." Sena's words offer the peninsular side of the story, adding to the Lady in Blue narrative the collective knowledge in Spain of Sor María's travels.

Benavides notes that Sena was also made aware of the connection between New Mexico and Spain by a letter from the Archbishop of Mexico, Francisco Manzo y Zuñiga, a document "que nos allá avia enviado." It appears that Benavides and Sena received this letter while in Spain. Though Benavides here offers no details, the letter clearly linked Benavides' 1630 *Memorial* to Sor María, and suggests an identification of Sor María among Mexican religious authorities. This letter is more extensively discussed in the 1634 *Memorial*, and it is an example of the predating correspondence that was discussed previously.

Benavides connects the 1630 *Memorial*'s Lady in Blue narrative and the friars' experiences in New Mexico, to the historical Sor María that he meets, corroborating what he has discovered since arriving in Spain with known entities in New Spain. Benavides provides an extensive physical description of Sor María, matching her with the oft-repeated statement in the 1630 *Memorial* that the woman who appeared to the Jumanos was like Luisa de Carrión, but young and beautiful. Description of her habit, veil, age and features, impress her physical being upon the friars, even as it rhetorically echoes the earlier narrative. He recounts Sor María's eyewitness testimony of the tribes,

conversions and people in the New Mexico *custodia*, remarking on the quantity and detail of her experiences there: "son tantas las particularidades que de esta tierra me dixo, que ni aun yo me acordaba, y ella me las traxo a la memoria" (Benavides and María de Jesús de Agreda, 1730)

According to Benavides, Sor María also asserts she had most frequently visited the region Titlás, east of Quivira, since she began such travels in 1620. The kingdoms of "Chillescas, Cambujos and Jumanas" living there would be converted at the sight of the Franciscan friars. Benavides also asserts that she took with her objects such as rosaries and crosses that she distributed among the tribes, and that she had been martyred several times by the tribes she converted. These additional details fill out and confirm Sor María's relationship to the region and extend the areas of her influence.

The letter written by Sor Maria functions as a confirming document (a written address to the people she had met spiritually), even as it is a piece of highly mediated women's writing, as Sor María later comments in her own defense. Fray Sena gives him "la autoridad, para obligar a la Bendita M. por obediencia, que me manifestasse todo lo que sabía a cerca del nuevo México" (Benavides and María de Jesús de Agreda, 1730). Benavides later asserts that Sor María's confessor, Fray Sebastian Marcilla, also invoked her obedience in the matter. Although Benavides no doubt broaches this topic to highlight the nun's modesty (in not desiring to reveal her mystical experiences), it also heightens the tension of the narrative, showing the difficulty with which the story of the Lady in Blue is brought into dialogue with the mystical experiences of Sor María de

Agreda. Such obedience implied that the testimony was legitimate, since it was requested by and filtered through male authority figures.

Sor María directly addresses the mediation of her voice. She begins her letter with the heading "Obedeciendo," -followed by a list of all the male superiors who compel her to write her narrative to the friars in New Mexico. Although she apparently conforms with the desires of her superiors, she criticizes the friars' intervention and intrusion into her mystical travels. That she speaks under duress is again suggested when she discusses the tribes the friars will find in the region east of Quivira: the Titlas, Chillescas and Caburcos, echoing both what Benavides writes in the *Tanto* and what the letter from Archbishop Manzo y Zuñiga state, as we shall see in the 1634 *Memorial*. She exhorts the friars at the end of the letter to keep the things she has written to themselves, after stating that she signed the document in obedience to her superiors. This signature, or acceptance of responsibility (however it was provoked) for what is written may be the most significant aspect of her testimony vis-à-vis the Lady in Blue narrative.

Regardless of the friars' mediation, Sor María's letter signifies direct communication with the friars. It is a report to the missionaries of the area she visited, confirming the vitality and divinity of their labor, and encouraging their efforts. She expresses her desire to continue her work in the *custodia*, as well as her extreme unworthiness to travel there. She begs the fathers that "me hagan participante de alguna obra de las menores obras, y trabajos, que Vuestros Padres hazen en essas conversiones"

(Benavides and María de Jesús de Agreda, 1730), suggesting that she hopes her missionary labors in New Mexico will continue.

Both the content and the nature of Sor María's letter serve to reinforce the relationship between the nun herself, cloistered in Spain and constrained both by her gender and by the males who mediate her life and her voice, and the free-acting Lady in Blue, who conducted her conversions of the Jumanos under no jurisdiction. While she signs her letter from within the walls of her convent in Agreda, never to physically exit the walls of that building, the Lady in Blue who converts the tribes of Titlás is subject only to the authority of God.

Benavides closes the *Tanto* with the suggestion that there is more proof of Sor María's visits to New Mexico, but these are "más para guardarlas en el corazón, que para escribirlas" " (Benavides and María de Jesús de Agreda, 1730). He repeats Sor María's assurances that the friars were proceeding correctly in their building of churches and evangelizing. The repetition of this last point throughout the *Tanto* may be in response to the criticism brought against the Franciscans by other orders regarding their conversionary practices, as they were often accused of incomplete catechization of the Indians.

Benavides states that Sor María prays for unity in the Catholic faith among all the inhabitants of the area, "para que Religiosos, Gobernadores, Españoles e Indios, unánimes, y conformes adoren y alaben al Señor" (Benavides and María de Jesús de Agreda, 1730), perhaps alluding to the conflicts among theses groups contemporaneous

to the *Tanto*. Benavides expresses his desire to return to the friars of New Mexico, hopes that Sor María's words will bring the friars consolation, and reinforces that her assurances and presence in New Mexico confirm that the friars are doing good work in New Mexico. He admonishes the friars that, regardless of how much money the Conversión de San Pablo will receive (and Benavides has every confidence that they will be well-funded), the friars "deben tener por dichosos de ser patrocinados de la Bendita Alma de María de Jesús" (Benavides and María de Jesús de Agreda, 1730). The blessing extended to the fathers is offered to the Indians as well because "merecen su principal amor" (Benavides and María de Jesús de Agreda, 1730). The New Mexican Indians and their land, administered by the Franciscans, are thus blessed: "bendita sea tal tierra, y dichosos los habitadores, pues merecen tantos favores del cielo" (Benavides and María de Jesús de Agreda, 1730).

From Benavides' 1630 *Memorial* to the *Tanto*, the Lady in Blue narrative expands, changes and acquires a more definitive tone and directionality. In the *Tanto*, the unidentified "Santa" of the 1630 *Memorial* is identified as a cloistered Spanish nun who traveled spiritually to the missions of New Mexico. That this woman is Sor María de Agreda, herself a mystical author and charismatic advisor to be reckoned, will be discussed in the next chapter. Far more than a character in a missionary communiqué, her life and writings bear heavily on how the Lady in Blue narrative is subsequently recollected and represented. In the *Tanto*, however, as she writes back to the friars of New Mexico, she offers the most important confirmation of mystical travels to New Mexico. Without her voice (or at least the mediated representation of her voice) the

linkage between the female figure who converted the Jumanos and Sor María would not be as compelling. The voice of this woman makes the narrative real, and charges it with accountability.

Sor María's participation in the epistolary exchange gives the Lady in Blue narrative integrity, as she provides the link between Spain and the New Mexico missions. Via the *Tanto*, the narrative acquires layers of transatlanticism that are not present in the 1630 *Memorial*. The letters from Benavides and Sor Maria are a transatlantic discourse confirming a mystical voyage; they are sent from Spain to confirm something that happened in New Mexico. These letters, and what they narrate, are about crossing over, being in two places at once, and connecting the placement of people through words. The only way the narrative makes sense is if both sides of it are defined.

Exemplifying this transatlantic dynamic, the *Tanto* fundamentally shifts the origin of the narrative, from New Mexico to Spain. The 1630 *Memorial*, presents an account of miraculous conversion that pertains only to the world of the missions in New Mexico. In Benavides' travel from New Mexico to Spain, this account is installed in the Peninsular world. As Fray Sena asserts that the Sor María's mystical travels were well known in Spain years before Benavides came, and as it is suggested that the Archbishop of Mexico also knew about Sor María, the narrative is no longer limited to the boundaries of the far northern province. Through the *Tanto*, the Lady in Blue narrative is integrated into a wider context that lies at the heart of empire. Center and periphery are thus drawn into an intimate, mystical proximity.

1634 *Memorial*

The Lady in Blue narrative takes on a more subtle change in directionality and chronology in Fray Benavides'1634 *Memorial*. Although the 1634 *Memorial* does borrow much from the 1630 *Memorial* (and was in fact published in English as *Fray Alonso de Benavides' Revised Memorial of 1634* in 1945 by the Quivira Society), its recounting of the Jumano conversion significantly modifies the Lady in Blue narrative. In the 1634 *Memorial*, more predating material is brought to light, shifting the premise, point of origin, and dissemination of the narrative. Finally, with the incorporation of Madre Luisa de Carrión into the schema of mystical voyages, the entire concept of mystical transatlantic travel takes on a new dimension.

From the beginning, the account of the Jumano conversion in the 1634 *Memorial* is quite different from that of the 1630 *Memorial*. The friars arriving in 1629 with Fray Estevan de Perea, already know about a Sor María de Agreda, "como en España corría voz de que una Religiosa llamada María de Jesús de Agreda […] era llevada milagrosamente al Nuevo México a predicar nuestra Santa Fe católica a aquellos indios bárbaros" (Nogar [transcription] 109). These friars were also charged with a specific purpose by the Archbishop of Mexico, Francisco Manzo y Zuñiga: "les encargó el Arzobispo a los dichos religiosos la inquisición de este caso" (Nogar [transcription] 109). The reason given for the Archbishop's interest in the case was an account he had brought from Spain two years prior, given to him by a "persona de crédito que le aseguró ser así en esta forma" (Nogar [transcription] 110), and informing him of various tribes in a region called "Tidán." According to the Benavides, the friars brought with them this

brief account, and the Archbishop's orders for the friars to see if this information was true when they arrived at the Isleta mission.

These predating documents- the account sent to the Archbishop, the letter from him, the friars' awareness of Sor María- all indicate a Spanish source for the Lady in Blue narrative, again strengthening its peninsular side. The 1634 *Memorial* sets forth a higher-level awareness of the mystical travels and conversion in New Mexico and a more widespread recognition of the Lady in Blue narrative than in the 1630 *Memorial* and in the *Tanto*. In the 1634 *Memorial*, the account of the friars among the Jumanos is brought together with a transatlantic dialogue originating in Spain that travels through Mexico City. The 1634 *Memorial* defines the Lady in Blue narrative within a deeper context, a conversation between continents that travels westward, acknowledged by church authorities.

Before the arrival of Perea's group, the friars in New Mexico had never heard of Sor María: "muy ignorantes estábamos de ella ni jamás habíamos tenido noticia de la María de Jesús" (Nogar [transcription] 111). With the news brought by the reinforcements, the friars realize that Sor María could be the woman converting the Jumanos. This assumption is reinforced when the Lady in Blue is compared by the Jumanos to Madre Carrión's portrait. After Fray Diego López and Juan de Salas return from their mission to the Jumanos (during which the Quivira and Xapie tribes also request baptism), the friars collectively conclude that "aquella religiosa era la Madre María de Jesús contenida en aquella relación del Arzobispo que merecía ser apóstol de dios milagrosamente" (Nogar [transcription] 113). This is another significant element

that the 1634 *Memorial* adds to the Lady in Blue narrative. In the 1630 *Memorial*, the friars have never heard of Sor María; in fact, the premise of the *Tanto*, it would seem, is to introduce Sor María to the friars in New Mexico after Benavides met her in Spain. Thus, the friars' reading of the Lady in Blue as Sor María de Agreda while in New Mexico is added to the text.

Near the end of the "Conversión Milagrosa de la Nación Xumana" account, Benavides adds a completely different element to the Lady in Blue narrative. He writes that Fray Juan de Santander, Comisario General de las Indias in 1630, knew about Archbishop Manzo y Zuiñiga's letter, and also had read Benavides' 1630 *Memorial*. Upon reading about the cure Madre Luisa Carrión's cross effected for the blind Hopi child, Fray Santander became "persuadido a que [Luisa de Carrión] era la contenida en aquella memoria del Arzobispo de México" (Nogar [transcription] 113-4). Fray Santander (like Fray Benavides) looked further into the case, and read what appears to be the vita of Madre Carrión, written by her confessor. Fray Santander showed Benavides that the vita described Madre Carrión's spiritual travels New Mexico around 1628, and testified that he believed Madre Luisa was the Lady in Blue. From this new information, Benavides concludes that Madre Carrión must have been taken to the tribes in the west of the *custodia*, and Sor María to the tribes in the east.

This portion of the narrative, in which the Lady in Blue is identified as both Sor María de Agreda and Madre Luisa de Carrión does not appear in any later sources regarding the mystical conversions of Indians in northern Mexico. Though it is possible that those reports recounting a generic Spanish nun who traveled to convert the Indians

could be interpreted as referring to Luisa de Carrión, most folkloric and historical accounts attribute apparitions of the Lady in Blue specifically to Sor María de Agreda. As will be discussed in Chapter 3, the desire to locate Spanish women in the colonizing enterprise is conditioned by significant, gendered motives, on the part of both men and women, as this episode displays. In regards to the Lady in Blue narrative, however, the 1634 *Memorial*'s inclusion of Luisa de Carrión is a suggestive, but not enduring contribution.

Gerónimo Zarate Salmerón

I'd like to return briefly, however, to the exchange between the Archbishop of Mexico and the "persona de crédito" that Benavides discusses at the opening of the Jumano conversion episode. In the exchanges regarding the nun between Spain and Mexico City, Benavides cites a paragraph related, but not directly attributed to Sor María, and an order from the Archbishop to Perea's friars that they see if what the paragraph recounted was true. As I stated earlier, these predating documents (and suggestions of documents) reframe the directionality of the Lady in Blue narrative. Because these two paragraphs can be found in their entirety in a document that predates Benavides' 1630 *Memorial* by two years, Frey Gerónimo Zarate Salmerón's *Relaciones*, they may also change the original authorship of the narrative.

Zarate Salmerón was one of the early missionary friars sent to New Mexico shortly after it was established as a *custodia*. Though there is debate as to whether he entered New Mexico in 1618 or 1621, it is agreed that he was a linguist who lived at Jemez pueblo, wrote a *Doctrina* in their language, and returned to Mexico City in 1626.

As Zarate Salmerón addesses the *Relaciones* to Arzobispo Francisco García Apodaca, historians have concluded that the document was probably written before 1627 and 1629 since Manzo y Zuñiga became archbishop in the latter year. In the document, Zarate Salmerón presents a more or less comprehensive summary of the history (and missions) of New Mexico "desde el año de 1538 hasta el de 1626" (Zarate Salmerón, *Relaciones de todas las cosas*). He starts with the exploration of Coronado to the region, continues through the conquest and settlement of Oñate, follows with sections focusing on nearby regions (Florida, the South Sea, Anian), and closes with the section "Relación de la Santa Madre María de Jesús, abadesa del convento de Santa Clara de Agreda."

This section on Sor María consists only of the exact two paragraphs that appear in the 1634 *Memorial*, without any sort of introduction to the narrative, or explanation of why it's there. Zarate Salmerón does not cite where the text about Quivira came from, nor how he came into its possession, nor who made it available it to him. And, the letter charging the friars with investigating the findings in Quivira is exactly the same as that in the 1634 *Memorial*, only it is signed by "Licenciado Francisco Manzo y Zuñiga" (Zarate Salmerón, *Relaciones de todas las cosas*), instead of Arzobispo Manzo y Zuñiga. How is it that these paragraphs, from approximately1628, appear in the 1634 *Memorial*?

Certainly, that Benavides borrows text from other sources is evident in the1630 *Memorial*, and there is no reason to think otherwise in the case of his 1634 *Memorial*. I do find it surprising, however, that historians such as Wagner, and Anna Heron More did not note this similarity in their respective commentary on the texts. Again, access to archival sources could clarify this question, if only to ensure that the section on Sor María

was consistent with the rest of Zarate Salmerón's *Relaciones*. In the 1856 reprinting of the *Relaciones* in the *Documentos para la historia de México*, Series Three, the segment on Sor María was included at the end of the document. From the resources I've examined, it seems that Zarate Salmerón's 1626 *Relaciones* is the earliest instance of the Lady in Blue narrative, though it is certainly not the best known.

This finding adds new facets to the development of the Lady in Blue narrative. Why is Zarate Salmerón's not viewed as the originary source for her narrative? Though historians including Carlos Castañeda mention Zarate Salmerón's account, there is little discussion of the friar's contribution to the Lady in Blue's narrative establishment. The date of Zarate Salmerón's work shows an early interest in Sor María specifically, separate from an interest in the Lady in Blue (as she appears to the Jumanos) and the account Benavides presents in 1630. It would support the friars' claim in the 1634 *Memorial* as to her renown in Mexico (and possibly Spain), at least in religious circles. Zarate Salmerón's text also leads to some interesting questions regarding communications within the Franciscan order in Spain and in Mexico, and the types of narratives that were prioritized at that time and places. For that reason, although the question of Zarate Salmerón's contribution pertains to a document that perhaps never directly affected the latter-day path of the narrative, the role his work played is worth consideration.

The 1634 *Memorial*, for its limited influence on the popular development of the Lady in Blue narrative, is of interest for illustrating how the narrative developed in church circles, how it was presented to the Pope, and how the narrative it consolidates was summarized. The three documents we have analyzed, all written by Fray Benavides,

shape the nature of the Lady in Blue narrative profoundly- its directionality (periphery to center, center to periphery), its origins, and its characterization of the protagonist. What does Sor María's biography –our final document- offer to the Lady in Blue narrative?

"Relación de la Vida de la Venerable sor María de Jesús de Agreda"

The fourth major document recounting the Lady in Blue narrative has objectives very different from those of three pieces above examined. Written in 1669 by Fray Joseph Ximénez Samaniego, the *Relación de la vida de la Venerable Madre Sor María de Jesús* is a saint's life, or vita, for Sor María. As very specific genre of writing, a vita presents the holy biography of an individual, usually with the intent of supporting the cause for their canonization. Vita are generally written after their protagonist has died, and use specific conventions in the portrayal of the subject's life that exemplify the subject's sanctity in standard ways. Ximénez Samaniego writes in response to these aims, for reasons that will be discussed in the next chapter, and in doing so, includes the account of the "Maravillosa conversión de los infieles."

The title and placement of the vita allude to the complex relationship between Sor María's life and her writing. The vita itself is the preface to another work, as Sor María is referred to in its title as the "escritora de esta obra." "Esta obra" is *La mystica ciudad de dios* (hereafter abbreviated MCD) , as the vita was frequently published as forward material to that work, a mystical treatise on the life of the Virgin Mary written by Sor María. (The text was also published numerous times separate from the MCD.) We will examine this relationship in greater detail in Chapter 4. Due to the popularity and

controversy associated with the MCD, and by extension with the vita, the Lady in Blue narrative contained in the vita may have been the most widely circulated of all.

As in the Benavides *Memoriales*, the miraculous conversion is treated as a discrete episode, the twelfth chapter of Sor María's vita. The "Maravillosa conversión de los infieles" falls in the middle of several chapters dedicated to the nature of Sor María's raptures, and her life within the convent. Tellingly, neither the Jumanos nor any other tribe is specified; they are referred to as "infieles" or "Gentiles de Nuevo México." Very much in keeping with the conventions of the vita, the episode opens with a description of Sor María's lifelong yearning to bring the Catholic religion to those who had not been exposed to it, and her prayers that she herself might bring about these conversions. Her desire for this was so deep ("se aumentó tanto este incendio de caridad" (Ximénez Samaniego 132)) that she would enter into states of ecstasy, during which she had visions, and received revelations.

After several experiences of mystically observing the various peoples and places of the world, it was made known to Sor María by God that there was a group of non-Christian people open to receipt of the Church's teachings, to whom "más su misericordia [de Dios] se inclinaba" (Ximénez Samaniego 132) These people were "los Gentiles del Nuevo Mexico, y otros Reynos remotos de àzia aquella parte" (Ximénez Samaniego 132). As was asked of her, Sor María worked towards their conversion by praying diligently for them, even as she received a greater understanding of their land and dispositions. Once, while in a state of prayer, she seemed to come across a place she had visited earlier through "especies abstractas." This time, though, it seemed that Sor María

experienced the place and its inhabitants "ocularmente." She was told to channel her anxiety about this new type of experience into compassion, "predicando su Fe, y Ley Santa a aquellas gentes." Ximénez Samaniego states that it seemed to her that she preached to the Indians in Spanish, but that they seemed to understand her in their own language. Before she returned to her convent, "hacía maravillas en confirmación de la Fe que predicaba" (Ximénez Samaniego 132), converting and catechizing the tribes.

During the more than 500 visits Ximénez Samaniego states that she made to New Mexican Indians, she converted an entire indigenous nation and its prince, and saw the Franciscan friars working in the region. According to the vita, she sent one of the nations, though far from the friars' mission, to seek them out, and ask for friars and baptism. Ximénez Samaniego asserts that this, and other, more remarkable things happened while she was in the region, so many that "sería muy largo el referir" (Ximénez Samaniego 132).

Ximénez Samaniego clarifies/argues a significant theological point that bore on Sor María's examination by the Inquisition: the physical nature of her travels to New Mexico. Out of humility and because her travels were so unusual, Sor María believed that she had most likely traveled in her spirit and not in her body (she specifies that her travel "no era cosa del demonio" (Ximénez Samaniego 133)). Ximénez Samaniego offers reasons supporting the argument for corporal travel: Sor María perceived her surroundings through her senses, experienced day and night in various locations, and left rosaries with the people she converted. Sor María's confessor was also convinced that she had traveled in her body, and Ximénez Samaniego deduces that the reason the

religious community in Spain "knew" that she had traveled in her body was because her confessor had spoken to some officials and the rumor spread because "es tan difícil, que secretos de este género, ya conferidos, se guarden" (Ximénez Samaniego 133). Ultimately, Ximénez Samaniego does not definitively say whether Sor María traveled in her body or not; "la verdad cierta" (Ximénez Samaniego 134) was that someone, either Sor María or an angel that looked like her, traveled to New Mexico.

Ximénez Samaniego presents a modified version of the "Milagrosa Conversión de la nación Xumana" from Benavides' 1630 *Memorial*, adding a few suggestive elements while mostly presenting the same account. He emphasizes the Franciscans' vital role in the conversions within the *custodia*, chosen, as they seem to be, for that specific purpose. The religious knowledge of the unnamed Indians- "perfectamente catequizados" (Ximénez Samaniego 134)- who seek baptism piques the friars' interest in figuring out who instructed them. A friars shows them the portrait of Luisa de Carrión "sospechando sí sería ella, por la gran fama de santidad" (Ximénez Samaniego 134). Ximénez Samaniego's minor addition suggests the renown of Luisa de Carrión that Benavides refers to in the 1634 *Memorial*.

Ximénez Samaniego's vita inverts Benavides' authorship, making a character in the narrative that he himself wrote. This "varón de mucho espíritu y zelo de la conversión" (Ximénez Samaniego 134), accompanies the Indians back to their home in the "hasta entonces incógnitas provincias" (Ximénez Samaniego 134). The only person who has been there, apparently, is the Lady in Blue, as the friars find the Indians "tan bien catequizados, que sin otra instrucción, pudieron baptizarlos" (Ximénez Samaniego

134). The seeds of the Lady in Blue's work take root, and as the number of converts increases, so do the numbers of friars sent there.

As in the *Tanto* and the 1630 *Memorial*, the friars in New Mexico have no idea who converted the Indians; for this reason, Fray Benavides travels to Spain to determine who had been catechizing the tribes. Ximénez Samaniego does not specify why, precisely, Benavides would immediately think of Spain as where the Lady in Blue came from, but this travel there is presented as "principal fin de su jornada" (Ximénez Samaniego 135). The Comisario General Fray Bernardino Sena, was an "ocular testigo" (135) to Sor María's travels and determined that "esta Sierva de Dios era el instrumento […] para obrar aquellas misericordias" (Ximénez Samaniego 135). Under his assurances, and with an invocation of obedience for Sor María, Benavides, Fray Sebastian Marcilla, and Fray Francisco Andrés de la Torre go to Agreda. Once there, Sor María is compelled, against her natural modesty, to comment: "y la Sierva de Dios, haciendo sacrificio de su secreto, en obsequio de la obediencia, se confesó con sincera verdad lo que a cerca de la materia le avia sucedido" (Ximénez Samaniego 135).

Benavides and the others composed "una relación de todos estos sucesos y lo que a cerca de ellos la Sierva de Dios avia declarado" (Ximénez Samaniego 136), leaving it in the possession of Sor María's confessor Andrés de la Torre. A reluctant Sor María, still believing that she had traveled in spirit and not body, is presented as being overwhelmed by the magnitude of the experience and the friars' pressure to assert that she traveled corporally; under their influence, "se escrivió así" (Ximénez Samaniego 136). This issue was of sufficient importance to her contemporaries that she addressed it directly in a

statement to Fray Manero. Ximénez Samaniego flashes forward in her life to cite a portion of this letter in the context of this episode. In it, she states that she does not know whether she traveled in body or in spirit, but that neither did San Pablo who "estaba a mejor luz" (Ximénez Samaniego 136) than Sor María and thus would have been more likely to understand the nature of his travel than she of hers. We will return to the topic of physical versus spiritual travel in Chapter 3.

Upon leaving Sor María's convent, Benavides insists that she write to the friars in New Mexico; thus compelled, she composes "una carta exortatoria a los Religiosos, que estaban en aquellas conversiones […] alentándolos a la prosecución constante de su santa ocupación" (136)- what appears to be the original *Tanto*. Ximénez Samaniego then attributes the dissemination of the news about Sor María's to Benavides, who, "aunque sabia quan importante era, que tan inauditos secretos no publicassen en España, viviendo la sierva de Dios […] fueron muchas las personas a quien en este Reyno comunicó estos sucesos." The events "se hicieron públicos" (Ximénez Samaniego 137).

In regards to the letter that Benavides had Sor María write, the *Tanto*, Ximénez Samaniego very casually casts it in a political way. As commented in the section on the *Tanto*, it was sent to Spain from Mexico as a testament to Franciscan labor in the region and "contra cierta emulación, que le pretendía obscurecer esta gloria" (Ximénez Samaniego 137). This offhanded comment surely refers to a specific attack on the Franciscan missionary work in the area. The miraculous, transatlantic conversion of the Indians of New Mexico, it is suggested, provides powerful evidence to the contrary.

In the *Relación de la Vida de la Venerable sor María de Jesús de Agreda*, Ximénez Samaniego writes the Peninsular, personal compliment to a narrative that was written into public in the Americas. As the purpose of the vita is to demonstrate the holiness of Sor María's life, and her compliance with the will of God, the perspective of the Lady in Blue narrative naturally shifts so that her role dominates. The narrative gains a focus on the physical nature of the travel, as much for the movement of her body and/or spirit to the Americas, as for the rosaries that are left there. In the vita, the Lady in Blue becomes rooted in Spain, seeking confirmation in the New World. In the next chapter, we will examine Sor María de Jesús more closely, examining how her life and writing reinforced and disseminated the Lady in Blue narrative in the Americas.

> [Su] fama de santidad egregia se había ya grandemente dilatado por entonces y se había difundido no sólo en la Antigua sino en hasta en la Nueva España.
>
> - Juan José de Eguiara y Eguren, *Biblioteca mexicana*, 232

Chapter 3

Given her renown in Spain during the 17th century, it is perhaps unsurprising that Sor María de Jesús de Agreda was frequently- painted subject. One particular painting of her, featured in Ricardo Fernández García's article on her17th century iconography, stands out because it acts as a "vita-in-paint," an organized collage depicting the events of her life. The work summarizes the nun's life, seamlessly incorporating its varied facets into a single statement. Fernández García comments that the painting, located at Sor María's convent in Agreda, seems to function as a "sermón gráfico" (Fernández García 169), intended to "instruir a las nuevas religiosas [del convento] en la vida de sor María" (Fernández García 169). The painting does so well, effectively capturing significant themes of her life and presenting them in fashion that both draws them together and maintains an episodic feel.

The work consists of a large central scene surrounded by eighteen much smaller images depicting various moments from Sor María's life. At the center of the painting, Sor María sits at a small table, book in front of her and quill in hand. Six angels surround her as she looks slightly upward to the Virgin Mary, suspended in the air to Sor María's left, who seems to be inspiring Sor María's writing. The surrounding images do not

appear to be in any particular order, but they refer the observer to episodes from Sor María's peripatetic life. These vignettes include: Sor María taking the veil to become a nun, burning of her own portrait, burning her work *La mística ciudad de dios* (henceforth referred to in this dissertation as the MCD), being tempted by the devil, and (last but not least) visiting the Americas and converting the indigenous people she meets (another picture shows their baptism by two friars). Clearly, though, the focus of the piece is the outsized central scene: Sor María's engagement in writing the biography of the Virgin Mary, the MCD.

I find this painting not only fascinating in content and structure, but also reflective of this chapter's theme, and its relationship to the rest of this dissertation. Just as the artist incorporated varied elements from Sor María's biography, but draws one's attention to her spiritual writing, so this chapter focuses on the influence of Sor María's writing in colonial Mexico. As the painting shifts Sor María's identity as the Lady in Blue to the side, still placing it in the context of her life, so this chapter hones in on the woman with pen in hand. The act of Sor María's writing made her a true literary presence in colonial Mexico. While still recognizing as the Lady in Blue as a major theme of Sor María's life, this chapter focuses on the painting's central concern- Sor María's writings- and on its ramifications for and relationship to New Spain.

Why examine Sor María's written work, a documentable, concrete entity, if this dissertation is on the more evasive Lady in Blue legend? Mainly because, aside from the accounts in Fray Benavides's texts (and the other predating materials mentioned in Chapter 2), the legacy of Sor María's spiritual writings is tightly bound up with her

identity as the Lady in Blue. In many historical accounts, the Lady in Blue is understood simultaneously as both the mystical writer, Sor María de Agreda, and also as "la voz de la conversión," (a term I take from a 1686 royal cédula directed to the governor of San Agustin de la Florida, Don Juan Márquez Cabrera). As "la voz de la conversión", the Lady in Blue's function is unique in the history of American colonial settlement- she represents a force that literally prepares the way for the friars who arrive later. Sor María's work reappears with unexpected consistency throughout the colonial period. Because the "voz" is so intimately bound up with the "letras" penned by the woman writer, it is necessary to discuss the two different facets of the same inscribed history: on one hand, the 17th- and 18th-century narratives of the Lady in Blue and on the other, the spiritual and literary legacy of this Spanish nun in the Americas. Sor María and her writings are inextricable from the legacy and renown of the Lady in Blue. These two aspects, individually and as they intersect, locate Maria de Agreda in the landscape of colonial northern Mexico.

One particularly strong example of this is a New Mexican Penitente (lay brotherhood) *alabado* dedicated to Sor María (to be discussed at greater length in Chapter 5), whose lyric not only offers the anticipated lauds for the nun's holiness and virtue, it also mentions her writing specifically. The *alabado* mentions not only the "mystica suidá de luz" (Colahan and Rodríguez 5-6), but a more mysterious "treinta y seis consejos que [dio] a Santa Teresa" (Colahan and Rodríguez 5-6). That these two references to works by Sor María exist in a folk song of praise from New Mexico would appear to point to an awareness not only of the mystical figure of the Lady in Blue, but also of the Spanish

nun's writings. Though it is true that that *alabado* does not appear to conceive of Sor María as the Lady in Blue specifically, the text itself is nonetheless a traditional rendering of the legacy of Sor María that arises from one of the many places where folklore about her, and therefore the recognition of her legend, exists. If only for this reason, it is necessary to examine, the real historical presence of the literary Sor María in colonial Mexico. To do that, however, we must know something of the author- her biography and what she wrote.

Thus, in Chapter 3, we will take a very brief look at the woman behind the writings and the legend, understand a little bit about her life, and discuss her writings, paying specific attention to the MCD. Next, we will discuss the publication and distribution of Sor María's written works, focusing on its publication in Europe and in Mexico. Third, we will look at the three examples in colonial Mexico of artists whose own works were influenced by Sor María's writing. Fourth, we will briefly note some of the more unusual places her work appeared in the northern frontier region of Mexico, namely in New Mexico and California. Finally, in transition to the next chapter, we will conclude with some comments on two interesting cases where the understanding of Sor María's writing intersects with her identity as the Lady in Blue.

Sor María's Biography and Works

In attempting a brief summary of Sor María's biography, it is nearly impossible to narrow down her life into a paragraph or two, and still do the topic justice. Clearly, such a reduced synopsis cannot adequately encompass her fascinating mystical experiences; her correspondence with King Felipe IV and with others in Spain and Europe; her

extensive and varied written works; her testimonies before the Inquisition; and her administrative experience as abbess of her family's convent. Truly, Sor María, like Sor Juana or Santa Teresa, is a multi-faceted historical actor who merits an attenuated modern historical examination; unfortunately, this dissertation does not allow for an extensive treatment of this topic. Clark Colahan has undertaken a modern history of her life. In Spain, interest in her life has been consistent over the past 370 years; there is some scholarly focus not only on her works, but on how she functioned in her historical and theological contexts.

There are a number of primary sources for Sor María's biography, such as her autobiographical works (including "De los sucesos que tuve en la edad pueril"), and Fray Joseph Ximénez Samaniego's vita (which derives, in part, from her own autobiographical writing). Others sources offer additional primary biographical information: from her testimony to Father Manero regarding the nature of her mystical travels; the glimpses into her own life that her political advisement of Felipe IV offer; and the reflections of her history to be found in her correspondence with others. Secondary sources focus on a variety of elements: from the sanctity of her life and the promotion of her case to sainthood; to the corpus of her writing; to the theological and doctrinal points presented in her writing; to her role as a political and representational figure. As interest in her canonization in Spain has been ongoing, and as her theological texts have exerted increased influence since the 19th century, a corresponding scholarly interest has accompanied it.

María de Jesús Coronel y Araña was born in Agreda, Soria, Spain on April 2, 1602, to a family of converso heritage through her father, Francisco Coronel. Around 1615, Sor María's mother Catalina Arana began to effectuate the conversion of the family's estate into a convent. After convincing her husband of the divine importance of this plan (Francisco and his two sons subsequently entered a Franciscan monastery), the home became a discalced Conceptionist convent in 1619. At that time, Sor María, her mother and her sister became nuns, and Sor María began to experience intense spiritual raptures, the notice of which traveled widely, as Sor María wryly notes in her letter to Father Manero regarding her mystical travels (Colahan, *Visions* 115-127). In 1627, she was elected abbess of the convent, having been granted a special dispensation on account of her youth. Shortly thereafter (1630-31) Sor María met with Fray Alonso de Benavides at her convent, and the two wrote the letters back to the friars in New Mexico that comprise the *Tanto*. By 1637, she commenced writing the MCD for the first time, though she subsequently burned the text in 1645 under the admonitions of a substitute confessor (Madden 97), who also ordered the destruction of her other writings. In 1643, King Felipe IV, having recently dismissed the Duque de Olivares of his responsibilities as *válido,* and intrigued by Sor María's growing reputation, visited her at the convent. Thus, the two began a 22-year correspondence in which Sor María functioned as his political advisor. By 1655, Sor María had begun a second version of the MDC (although it appears Felipe IV had retained a copy of the first version) (Madden 97) with the encouragement of her last confessor, Father Andrea de Fuenmayor, and finished the text

in 1660. On May 24, 1665, Sor María died. Her literary legacy, however, was just beginning.

Sor María wrote prolifically throughout her life (IV Centenario). Above, I only mentioned two of her works, but she produced copious writing, some of which was printed and others of which remained in manuscript. As it is unlikely that manuscript material would have traveled to Mexico from Spain (and thus would have had little influence on Sor María's renown in the Americas) I will not dwell on it, though it does bear mentioning. Her "Segundo ejercicio cotidiano," for example, is a continuation of a work printed numerous times, including in Mexico, the "Ejercicio cotidiano." The "Tratado de la unión celeste" and "Jardín espiritual y nivel del alma" seem to be in keeping thematically with Sor María's earlier mystical writing. "Las sabatinas," a prayer collection, also serves a bibliographic purpose, as it identifies texts that were destroyed by Sor María earlier in her life. The aforementioned "Escrito al Rvmo. Fr. Pedro Manero" explains and justifies the raptures and travels she experienced throughout her life.

Much of Sor María's writing has been published since 1670, when the first printing of the MCD is documented. Her exchanges with Felipe IV, as well as monographs of letters to other people, have been published numerous times, as have numerous editions of the "Vida de la Virgen" (a version of which was prefaced by one of Sor María's prominent promoters, 19th century Spanish novelist Emilia Pardo Bazán). Historian and bibliographer José Antonio Pérez-Rioja places the publication of her "Escala para subir a la perfección," "Ejercicio cotidiano," and "Leyes de esposa" in the

mid-19th to 20th centuries. Others works were first published during the colonial epoch, including the "Ejercicios espirituales" and, of course, the MCD. Though others of Sor María's pieces enjoyed popularity, the MCD (and the excerpts and prayers derived from it) was clearly the most widely published and read of Sor María's writing from the 17th through the 19th centuries.

In Pérez-Rioja's *Proyección de la Venerable María de Agreda*, he notes that three and four volume sets of the text appeared throughout Europe during that period, but that the MCD reached its zenith during the 18th century (Pérez-Rioja 4). He also offers abundant information regarding the locations and languages in which the MCD appeared. He found that within thirty-five years of Sor María's death, the MCD was published (either in its entirety or excepted) 22 times, in Spanish, French, Portuguese and Dutch. During the 18th century, Pérez-Rioja documents 72 instances of its publication, including in Germany, Poland, Guatemala, Italy and Austria, and in Arabic, Latin and Greek. In the 19th century, the work was finally published in English (in Philadelphia), and continued to be printed in Mexico, Spain, Italy and France. Interest in the MCD, particularly after its criticism by the Sorbonne for its perceived heretical content in the late 17th and early 18th century, is indisputable.

In fact, indications of the range of the MCD's reach appear in unexpected places, as both the website of Sor María's convent (which is still operating today), and Monique Gustin's *El barroco en la Sierra Gorda* confirm. Both sources cite Giacomo de Casanova's *Histoire de ma vie* in discussing the circulation of Sor María's work in Europe. In the famed European lover's late 18th-century biography, Casanova reads the

MCD in Venice's I Piombi prison while imprisoned by the Italian Inquisition for moral laxity. Given a copy of MCD for his spiritual betterment, Casanova remarks with cynical distaste that the book was authorized "avec la permission de la très sainte et très horrible inquisition" (Gustin 265), and comments that if the book was supposed to turn his heart towards religious matters, it wasn't quite successful. Instead " il m'excitait à traiter de fableaux tout ce que nous avions de mystique et même de dogmatique" (Gustin 265). He does find of the MCD that "tout est dit de bonne foi avec pleine conviction" and that "ce sont las les visions d'une cervelle subliméqui [sic], sans aucune ombre d'orgueil, ivre de Dieu, croit ne révéler que se que l'Esprit divin lui inspire" (Gustin 265). Casanova's subtle, tongue-in-cheek doubts about the text and its author are framed by his distaste for the Venetian Inquisition (and for moral restrictions generally). For our purposes, the fact that Casanova is forced to read the celibate nun's mystical treatise of the Virgin Mary's life (or so he claims) is ironic in itself, and, more importantly, is indicative of the work's wide European audience into the 18th century.

Though we could pursue the theological debates over the MCD that exploded in Europe, particularly against its support of the dogma of the Immaculate Conception, others have thoroughly studied this topic. To the extent that documents pertaining to this Europe-based debate were published and circulated in Mexico and its northern borders, we will touch on this topic. Turning our attention westward from Europe, let us next examine how Sor María's writing appears in Mexico, as documented by the eminent bibliographers José Toribio Medina and Amaya Garrtiz Ruíz, and cross-correlated with Pérez-Rioja.

"Corren sus escritos"

As in Europe, the MCD was the most widely circulated of Sor María's works in Mexico. Readers in colonial Mexico had access to both European and New World printings of the text, and it appears in some of the most remote corners of the northern Spanish frontier. This distribution of Sor María's writing related directly to the diffusion of the Lady in Blue narrative. As commented in Chapter 2, Sor María's biographer Fray Joseph Ximénez Samaniego's "Prólogo galeato" (the nun's vita) was published as a preface to the early versions of the MCD. The vita includes the episode of her travel to New Mexico and her conversion of the "infieles" she find there. Though this document was also printed separately, naturally, wherever the early versions of the MCD appeared, so also did the narrative of the Lady in Blue. Thus, the legend traveled sidecar with the popular religious text, sharing the same geographical distribution if not the same nature of influence.

Another document printed in Mexico similarly fostered the identification of Sor María with the Lady in Blue. In 1730 and 1747, the *Tanto* was printed, each time with a different plate depicting Sor María's evangelization of the "Chichimecos" of New Mexico. As we will see in the next chapter, the printing and circulation of this document exerted a remarkable influence over explorers and missionaries alike, and presented the narrative of the Lady in Blue/Sor María publicly for the first time, one hundred years after Fray Benavides wrote about her. For although editions of the 1630 *Memorial* had been published in the 17th century, that document did not positively identify Sor María as the Lady in Blue; the *Tanto* and the vita attached to the MCD, however, did. As I pointed

out in the previous chapter, the 1730 printing emphasized that that the *Tanto* supported the missionary work of the Franciscans, as evidence of their important role in northern Mexico. Clearly, some other politic was played out in the printing of that *Tanto* in the mid-18th century, one in which Sor María exemplifies Franciscan mission work. It serves a dual or triple role, as a testament to Sor María's literary presence, an affirmation of the Lady in Blue, and perhaps an argument in favor of Franciscan mission work.

Returning to the topic of Sor María's literary presence in Mexico, I'd like to mention that I am primarily depending on bibliographies to describe what was printed, where, and by whom. Although ideally I would have access to the original documents, these reliable bibliographical sources are sufficient to demonstrate the existence and prevalence of Sor María's writing in colonial Mexico. Certainly a more extensive study of the documents themselves would supplement this research, though the three bibliographies that I used overlapped enough to give me confidence in the existence of the works I will discuss. In addition, other texts, such as historian Nora Jaffary's *False Mystics*, provide substantial secondary information regarding the reception of her writing in colonial Mexico; Jaffary finds in the Inquisitorial records of several cloistered Mexican nuns (Josefa de San Luis Beltrán, María Rita Vargas, and Josefa Palacios (Jaffary 208)) testimony documenting their familiarity with the MCD. Hopefully, such information will suffice to begin to hypothesize as to Sor María's place in colonial Mexican letters.

These bibliographies indicate that excerpts of the MCD were by far the frequently printed of Sor María's works from the 17th through the 20th century. In fact, from 1693 to 1821, the MCD and documents relating to or borrowing from it were printed 27 times;

segments of the *Ejercicios espirituales* were published but once. Considering that Sor María was a Spanish woman writer who was not recognized as a saint by the Church, the extent to which she was published in Mexico is astounding. In addition, the bibliographical information associated with these texts offers insight into how Sor María was conceived of as a spiritual writer in Mexico. I believe that printings of her works other than those mentioned in these bibliographies exist, particularly in cities such as Querétaro and Zacatecas which, as the next chapter demonstrates, expressed an inordinate interest in Sor María and her writings.

These bibliographies do document what was printed and when. Only two versions of the MCD in its entirety are documented by Pérez-Rioja as being published, both in Mexico City in 1731. One document directly addresses Sor María's authorship of the MCD, linking it to two other remarkable incidents: "Traducción verídica, y autentica de tres sucesos prodigiosos […] el tercero de una Religiosa discreta, en que la Bondad Divina se ha dignado de acreditar los Libros de la Mystica ciudad de Dios" (1729) (Medina, vol. 4 279). One of the most frequently published excerpts of Sor María's writing was the "Septenario al Gloriosissimo Patriarca Sr. S Joseph de los siete privilegios de su Patrocinio, que refiere la V.M. Maria de Jesús de Agreda en su Mistica Ciudad de Dios" (1726, 1768, 1774, 1808) (Medina, vol. 4 174; Medina vol. 6 14, 146; Medina, vol. 7 424); these seven days of prayer were to fall over the seven days prior to Santa Teresa's feast. The 1777 "Ofrecimiento de la corona en honra de la Purísima Concepción" (Medina vol. 6 239) asserts that it derives its authority from the first part of the MCD, clearly in reference to the text's Conceptionist content.

Other publications refer simply to Sor María's "works" rather than to the MCD specifically. One, by Fray Agustín de Vetancurt, an 18th-century Franciscan colonial historian known for his *Teatro Mexicano* and *Menologio Franciscano*, focuses on the role of Joseph in Sor María's writing: "Vida [..] y favores hechos al Patriarca San José trasuntada de las obras de la Venerable" (1700) (Pérez-Rioja 24). Another such text is the "Oraciones A María Santísima, y Señor Joseph, para saludarlos y alabarlos, y para alentar nuestras confianzas" (1785) (Medina, vol. 6 426), which were "Deducidas de varias partes de la Venerable Madre Sor Maria de Jesús de Agreda." Pérez-Rioja also attributes two novenas dedicated to angels to the MCD as well: "Novena […] en honor de los mil ángeles" (1749) (Pérez-Rioja 16) and "Novena […] angelica dolorosa" (1763) (Pérez-Rioja 16) though he notes that he borrows these citations from Antonio Palau y Dulcet's *Manual del librero hispanoamericano*. The only example in these bibliographies of a printing that explicitly derives from text other than the MCD is the "Elogios a la reyna del Cielo Maria Santísima, sacados Del Libro intitulado Exercicios Espirituales de Retiro, que compuso la venerable Madre Maria de Jesús de Agreda" (1784) (Pérez-Rioja 16). This document clearly draws from Sor María's "Ejercicios espirituales"; as we will see in the next chapter, versions of these exercises are also likely to be found in the convents Santa Cruz de Querétaro, where Sor María's guides for prayer life were commonly used.

Several prayer series dedicated to the Virgin Mary are based on Sor María's writing. The "Triduo mensual […] Sacada de las obras de la V.M. Maria de Jesús de la Villa de Agreda" (1783, 1817) (Medina, vol. 6 381; Medina, vol.8 124) was to be prayed

the 13th, 14th and 15th of every month, "para alcanzar mediante su protección, una dichosa muerte." Another prayer with the same petition was the "Viernes de Maria en obsequio de su gloriosos Tránsito," taken from "lo que la misma Señora reveló a la venerable Madre Sor Maria de Jesús de Agreda. Lib.8. Cap.28. Núm. 745." (1816) (Garrtiz 571-2). A novena used by the discalced Franciscan friars ("Novena sagrada, que a la Inmaculada Concepción de la Serenissima Reyna de los Angeles Maria Santissima Nuestra Señora," 1758) (Medina, vol. 5 333-4) derives more generally from Sor María's works, which work's the title claims were excerpted by "un Esclavo de la Reyna de los Angeles"- likely the printer, Augustín Bernal.

The "Compendio de la Sagrada Passion y muerte de N. Señor Jesu-Christo, Sacado de la Mystica Ciudad de Dios y Historia Divina de N. Señora" was published in 1693 and 1717 (Medina, vol. 3 106, 539). This document has several important features. First, it specifies which parts of the MCD it derives from, as the title states: "de la segunda parte, libro quatro, desde el Capítulo nono, hasta el vigésimo quarto de dicha historia" (Medina, vol. 3 106). This specificity is helpful in identifying what particular segments of the four-volume MCD were most often cited or were of interest. Second, it is excerpted by Franciscan Fray Joseph de San Antonio y Flores, who hailed from the Province of Santo Evangelio, to which the friars of the newly established College of Propaganda Fide in Querétaro pertained. This relationship between the Colleges and María de Agreda will be more fully developed later, but suffice to say that it's interesting to note the early interest in her among the those missions. Third, and most significantly,

the title states that "El Ilustrissimo Señor Arçobispo deMexico, (sic) concede quarenta dias de Indulgencia à los que leyeren este Compendio" (Medina, vol. 3 106).

Indulgences in 17th- and 18th-century Mexico are interesting for the numerous political angles they manifest; they can reflect powerful private parties promoting the cases of particular individuals; the will of the Church hierarchy to increase devotion to a saint or cause; or the collective public desire for veneration of something or someone specific. In the case of this particular printing of Sor María's writing, the attachment of 400 days of indulgences (accompanied by the appropriate approbations by representatives of the Franciscan Order, the Viceroy and the Archbishop) demonstrates an official recognition of Sor María's writing and the assignation of a spiritual value/benefit to it. In order for this excerpt of the nun's work to have acquired official indulgences (and to be reprinted with the same), it had to have passed through a process that validated it. It appears that process occurred in Mexico. This printing demonstrates the centralized Church's recognition (not just the Franciscans' or secular local groups) of its spiritual worth and apparently its desire for continued veneration.

Another text, the "Aurora alegre del dichoso dia de la gracia Maria Santísima, Digna Madre de Dios […] Epítome de los Libros Mystica Ciudad de Dios y Vida de la Virgen Madre de Dios" (1730) (Medina, vol. 4 301-2), attributed to Franciscan Fray Antonio de Vereo is interesting not only because Fray Vereo, like Fray San Antonio y Flores, is also from the Province of Santo Evangelio, but because it includes the decree for the beatification of Sor María. The document itself consists of MCD excerpts, is dedicated to the Virgin of Tepepan, and includes the approbation of the Viceroy, Jesuit

Juan Igancio de Uribe and the Commissary General of the Franciscan Order. Though the existence of the document demonstrates Sor María's literary influence, it is fascinating to note that interest in the development of her case for sainthood was public in Mexico in 1730. The investment in the progress of this Spanish nun's case for canonization is also reflected in the biography of the Mexican painter Juan de Correa, as will be discussed shortly. The identifications of "writer" and "saint" converge on Sor María in this document, which was published the same year as the *Tanto*, and by the same press.

One of the most often-reproduced of Sor María's texts in late colonial Mexico was the "Modo de andar la Via-Sacra, sacado de la Mística Ciudad de Dios part. 2. lib. 6. cap12. por uno de los fundadores del Colegio de la Sta. Cruz de Querétaro" (1774, 1808, 1809, 1817, 1819, 1821) (Garritz 41, 106, 181, 373, 591, 676, 1064). The 1774 printing does not appear in any of the bibliographies I consulted, but it is among the University of Texas' Harry Ransom Center holdings. The 1774, 1809, 1819 and 1821 versions were all printed in Mexico City, and add in the title that the text is "reimpresa a devoción de los Misioneros del Colegio Apostólico de S. Fernando de esta ciudad de México" (Garrtiz 106). The 1808 printing was also made in Mexico City, and the 1817 in Guadalajara, but neither of these two versions mentions the friars of Propaganda Fide at San Fernando in Mexico City. In addition to the fact that it was printed so frequently within a short period of time in the early 19th century (apparently with an 18th-century precedent), the title itself intrigues. Who was the "fundador" of the College of Querétaro the title refers to? Why is the text so deeply linked to the Colleges of Propaganda Fide, both in the past (as Querétaro was established around 1687) and well into the late 18th/early 19th centuries?

And what does this interest on behalf of the missionary college of San Fernando signify at so late a date? And finally, how are these versions different from that published under the name of Fray Diego Miguel Bringas y Encinas in 1815, the "Práctica de las Estaciones de la Vía Sacra, Sacada de la Mística Ciudad de Dios. Por Fr. D.M.B. y E. Misionero Apostólico del Colegio de la Santa Cruz de Querétaro" (Garritz 275-6)?

And in reference to Bringas y Encinas, there is one final example that bears discussion. Although this text is not a printing of Sor María's writing, it does reference her and her convent in a most unusual way. Bringas y Encinas' 1813 "Sermón político moral" (Garritz 373-4) is recognized by historians for the prediction it make that if the Mexico were to break from Spain, the United States would invade Mexico (Bringas y Encinas himself being a supporter of the Spanish crown). The sermon's title mentions that the friar dedicates it to "la admirable y heróica virgen Sor María de Jesús de Ágreda." The title adds that any profits that are made from the sermon are indicated "al socorro de las actuales urgencias del religiosísimo convento de monjas de la Purísima Concepción de la Villa de Ágreda" (Garrtiz 373-4). Clearly, at least in Bringas y Encinas' case, Sor Maria and her convent continued to be a presence in the early 19th century, and through his speech, he links Mexico to Spain by referring the modern political conundrum to the 17th-century mystical writer.

Bringas y Encinas' sermon is an appropriate transition to the next section, in that the friar, even in his political speech-making, seems to be influenced by Sor María, or by an idea he has of her. I believe that the brief bibliography I have thus far presented provides a general sense of the presence of Sor María's writings in the 17th through 19th

centuries in Mexico. For her works to have been as thoroughly synthesized and manifested as they are in the three cases we will next examine, it seems certain that her writing not only was printed, but also that it had achieved considerable circulation and influence.

Sor María's Cultural Influence

Contextualizing the reading of Sor María's writings in Mexico is best led with the words of her counterpart, Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz. The "décima musa" of Mexican letters, Sor Juana (1651-1695) was celebrated not only for her writing, but also for her *astucia*- the breadth and depth of her erudition on a variety of topics- supported y external patronage behind the doors of her Heironymite convent in Mexico City. Her poetry, rich and dense in the Gongoran *culteranista* style, and her prose, often seating her argument within a context of deep knowledge of classical works, was recognized in its time for its scholarly and literary value. But, as was the case with Sor María, Sor Juana confronted the difficulty of negotiating gender relationships, within the church and outside of it. In her 1691 *Carta de respuesta a Sor Filotea de la Cruz* (in actuality the Bishop of Puebla, Manuel Fernández de Santa Cruz), she makes her argument for the education and scholarship of women.

In her essay on the *Carta*, literary critic Nina M. Scott notes that Sor Juana "cites[s] an extensive list of illustrious women of the past in order to justify [her] own literary activity" (Scott 206). Scott's appendix identifies the women that Sor Juana includes in her defense of feminine letters, offering brief biographies and explanations for how they are connected to literature and intellectual endeavors generally. Scott notes that

Sor Juana selects particular types of women to use as her examples of women writers in order to create "a sisterhood among women across the centuries" (Scott 212). Sor Juana includes among the women from the classical era to the 17th century "la monja de Agreda" (Juana Inés de la Cruz 843). In the context of her exposition on female religious writers, and along with saints Gertrudis, Teresa and Brígida, Sor Juana presents Sor María de Jesús as one of the women religious writers whose work was sanctioned by the Catholic Church. Sor Juana further employs Sor María as an example of a non-canonized religious woman whose works were sanctioned by the Church: "ahora vemos que la Iglesia permite escribir a las mujeres santas y a las no santas, pues la de Ágreda y María de la Antigua no están canonizadas y corren sus escritos" (Juana Inés de la Cruz 843). Sor Juana's inclusion of Sor María among this sisterhood of women intellectuals is all the more remarkable for that reason. The Mexican nun apparently knew enough about Sor María's writings and historical role to consider her a compelling example of legitimate feminine intellectualism.

The way Sor Juana discusses Sor María's writing in the *Carta* is also revealing. Sor Juana notes that, in spite of the fact that Sor María had not yet been canonized (which she notes "ni cuando Santa Teresa y las demás escribieron, lo estaban [canonizadas]" (Juana Inés de la Cruz 843)), her works were widely read. This comment is interesting for two reasons: one, it positively correlates Sor María's writings to the canonical mystical works of Santa Teresa; and two, it suggests a parallelism between Sor María's canonization-in-progress and Santa Teresa's sainthood. Sor Juana's comment that "corren sus escritos" alludes to the circulation of Sor María's works in the late 17th-

century in Mexico. Sor Juana wrote her reply to "Sor Filotea," a short twenty-six years after Sor María had died, yet the *Carta* reference indicates that Sor María's work was already popularly known in Mexico at that time, in spite of the fact that 1693 is the earliest publication date for her work in Mexico. Sor Juana's is but the briefest of references to the circulation of Sor María's work in Mexico; however, the comment emerges spontaneously from a reliable source who had a compelling personal investment in the soundness of her arguments, including this one in regards to Sor María. For these reasons, Sor Juana's seemingly offhanded reference wields more power than its brevity might otherwise indicate.

One of Sor Juana's own religious texts, her *Ejercicios devotos*, indicates the degree to which the Mexican nun read and synthesized the writing of Sor María. While Scott notes that Sor Juana alluded to the *Mystica ciudad de dios* in "some devotional exercises she composed in honor of the Virgin" (Scott 222), Spanish literary critic Grady Wray examines the relationship between Sor Juana's work and Sor Maria's writing closely, highlighting the degree to which Sor Juana's work derives from Sor María's, and referencing a critical agreement that "Sor Juana was very familiar with the Agredan nun's text" (Wray 126). In the "Introducción al intento" to the work, Sor Juana seems to concede as much, acknowledging explicitly that Sor María's writing underlies the text's thesis: "la Venerable Madre María de Jesús cuenta los inefables favores que Su Majestad Divina hizo a su escogida y carísima madre" (Juana Inés de la Cruz 848). Wray concludes that "there remains no doubt that the *Mystical* informs the *Exercises*" (Wray 126), the latter borrowing particular premises from the former. It assumes the validity of

the Immaculate Conception theology presented in the *Mystica*, explores the resulting ramifications of that theology as it pertains to the Incarnation, and shares with Sor María's text an appreciation for and imitation of Mary's wisdom. Wray comments that "Sor Juana deliberately reframes Ágreda's topics to fulfill her own agenda, namely the proclamation of Mary's wisdom" (Wray 128), implying that Sor Juana further develops the message of feminine significance outlined in Sor María's in accord with her own theological and feminist views.

Wray pinpoints the specific philosophical and theological points developed by Sor Juana in the *Ejercicios*, emphasizing those originating in Sor María's work such as the imitation of Mary. In the *Mystica ciudad de dios*, Mary asks that Sor María follow the example of Mary's (and Christ's) humility, sorrow and wisdom even as she imparts her wisdom to Sor Maria directly. Sor Juana takes this concept a step further in the "Ejercicios," suggesting that the pursuit of knowledge and wisdom is a way of imitating the virtue of Mary: "the pursuit of wisdom, one of Mary's most outstanding attributes, as well as her humility, becomes a legitimate goal for imitation by Sor Juana and her exercitants" (Wray 135). Wray links the Immaculate Conception theology, detailed and defended in the *Mystica ciudad de dios*, and the pursuit of feminine wisdom and knowledge promoted by Sor Juana in the *Ejercicios*, emphasizing how Sor Juana draws on and cultivates the Agredan ideas that circulated during the Mexican nun's lifetime. Clearly, Sor María's historical literary presence, as well as her philosophical/theological influence, are observable in Sor Juana's work,

A similar effect emerges in the work of Sor Juana's contemporary, the painter Juan Correa (1646-1716). He was one of the best-known and most prolific painters of the late 17th-century in Mexico, and his attributable works focus principally on religious themes and allegories. Although most of his paintings depict fairly canonical topics, many of which are rendered consistent with the artistic guidelines of colonial artistic guide, two articles discuss different ways the influence of Sor María's writing in manifested in his work. In the first case, art critics Amanda Martínez Reyes, Elisa Vargas Lugo and José Guadalupe Victoria find that the depiction of angels in Correa's work agrees with the description of angels provided by Sor María in the MCD. Although Italian Renaissance angels were nude, contemporaneous colonial angels were always represented as "púdica en las formas corpóreas y ostentosa en las vestiduras. Como máxima libertad de expresión generalmente se dejaron desnudas una o las dos piernas de las figuras" (Vargas Lugo 16). Both Martínez Reyes and art critic Francisco de la Maza agree that Pacheco and Sor María played important roles in determining how Correa (and others) conceived of and painted angels: "influyeron definitivamente en la manera de vestir a los ángeles dentro del arte barroco español (Vargas Lugo 15). According to de la Maza, the tendency of novohispanic artists including Juan Correa to "vestir con elegancia y desnudar con gracia a sus mancebos alados" (De la Maza 28) is traceable back to particular writers, included among them, Sor María. De la Maza in fact cites Sor María's description of the Angel Gabriel as indicative of the concepts 17th-century artist had in mind when painting angels: "el vestido era rozgante, y como si fuera todo resplandor, semejante a un lucidísimo y brillante oro esmaltado o entrepuesto con matices de

finísimos colores con que hacían una admirable y hermosísima variedad para la vista" (De la Maza 28).

But the influence of Sor María's writing can be directly observed in one of Correa's pieces, part of a series depicting the life of the Virgin Mary: *La comunión de María*. The scene depicts the Virgin Mary receiving communion from angel Gabriel, a topic which, though of interest to 9th-century mystics, was not recognized in Catholic dogma in the 17th century (nor is it now). As Elisa Varga Lugo notes, the theme for the painting "deriva, casi seguramente, del texto de la madre María de Jesús de Agreda titulado *Mística Ciudad de Dios"* (Vargas Lugo 85). Vargas Lugo recounts Sor María's description of this event: "María adoró la Eucaristía en cuanto ésta fue instituida por Cristo y que una vez que tuvo lugar la Comunión entre los apóstoles, Jesús partió otro pedazo de pan consagrado y lo dio a san Gabriel, para que comulgase María que se encontraba en un aposento contiguo" (Vargas Lugo 85). Correa must have been keenly aware of Sor María's narrative, as he closely reproduces her description on canvas, providing an image Vargas Lugo describes as "una de las más sugestivas creaciones de Correa, en la que logró un tono de irrealidad" (Vargas Lugo 85). Against the dark background of the Last Supper, the Virgin Mary receives a wafer from the angel, wings outspread, the somber contrast between light and darkness masterfully managed. The theme of the Virgin Mary's communion was not widely reproduced in colonial Mexican artwork; in fact, Vargas Lugo cites only one other example- a work signed "Arellano" in the church at Tepepan. It is evident that Correa, however, internalized Sor María's mystical writing, reproducing and weaving it into his creative production.

Lastly, Correa's understanding of Sor María and her writings highlights the degree to which the nun was known in the Americas not only as a writer, but also as a holy figure in the process of institutional legitimization. Vargas Lugo comments that it is not clear whether Correa chose the theme of "*La comunión de María*" "por su propia iniciativa o por la sugerencia de otra persona" (Vargas Lugo 85). I would suggest that Correa came up with the theme on his own, based upon what appears to be a personal interest and involvement in her case for canonization. Correa's last will and testament, dated October 17, 1716, includes the directive that money be given for the beatification processes of various individuals, included among them the Mexican bishop Juan de Palafox, the priest of Puebla, Sebastián de Aparicio; and "la madre María de Jesús de Agreda" (Vargas Lugo, 176). The fact that Correa is aware of the case for canonization for Sor María is indicative of the degree to which her renown had spread to the Americas. Indeed, patentes and cédulas (dated 1708, 1711 and 1713) from the Biblioteca Nacional de México point to a significant institutional interest in her canonization, as they document the collection of donations in Mexico for the promotion of her beatification (Álvarez de Toledo, Sanz, Felipe V). That Correa wills money for the promotion her case demonstrates an interest in Sor María as a religious figure with relevance in the Americas (the other cases to which he wills money are mostly Mexican figures).

The final example demonstrating the deep effects of Sor María's writing in Mexico is that of Cristobal de Villalpando, Correa's contemporary. In his 1706 painting *La anunciación*, located at the monastery of Guadalupe de Zacatecas, Villalpando seems to have cleaved fairly closely to Sor María's narration of the encounter in the MCD. In

her version, the angel Gabriel is accompanied by "millares de ángeles hermosísimos que le seguían en forma visible" (de la Maza 205). Thus, in contrast to most other artistic renderings of the Annunciation which feature the Virgin Mary and the angel Gabriel alone, Villalpando's work includes an entire celestial choir of angels arranged in rows circling above the two main figures. While de la Maza does not affirm that Villalpando's depiction of this scene is the only one of its kind in colonial art, he does assert that that particular aspect of the painting is in conformation with Sor Maria's writing, having little precedent other than what the critic terms a "baroque sensibility" for complication, excess and activity.

Villalpando also references both Sor María and her role as a spiritual writer explicitly in another work at the Zacatecas monastery, *La mística Jerusalén* (de la Maza 108). Villalpando depicts Saint John the Evangelist and Sor María in their roles as authors of works pertaining to the theological concept of the Mystical City of God: respectively, Saint John's Book of Revelation and Sor María's MCD. In the painting, Saint John sits to the left and Sor María to the right, each with a quill in one hand for writing and a book either in the lap (St. John) or in the hand (Sor María). Behind them, the New Jerusalem spreads its walls, and above them, the Virgin Mary is assumed into heaven, surrounded by the three persons of the Holy Trinity.

Villalpando clearly considered Sor María's writing in the context of that of other recognized religious writers; to conceive of a relationship between the writings of St. John and Sor María indicates that Villalpando likely had read both. Considering that St. John is a Biblical author, this collocation of Sor María alongside him is all the more

impressive, and is indicative of the renown of her writing, at least within particular circles. In fact, de la Maza remarks of this apparently unequal pairing that "igual daba el águila que la grulla en [las] superficiales devociones" (de la Maza 204). His cynical comment, implying that in colonial Mexico great theological writers were given equal weight as lesser-known ones, only underlines the influence Sor María's works had on Villalpando and perhaps his contemporaries as well (regardless of how negatively de la Maza views her).

As these three diverse examples demonstrate, Sor María's writings impacted 17th-century Mexican artistic and literary thought. Though these cases are by no means comprehensive- indeed, there are likely other similar examples- I believe they do offer insight into and confirmation of how Sor María's works (principally *La mística ciudad de dios*) were read, internalized and synthesized in colonial Mexico. Sor Juana capitalizes on the dual aspects of wisdom and femininity represented by and presented in Sor María's writing. Juan Correa's artistic work demonstrates an extensive familiarity with the contents of Sor María's work, and his last will and testament demonstrates his awareness of and engagement with her case for sainthood. Cristóbal de Villalpando's work indicates a similar recognition of Sor Maria's writing, and contextualizes her with other canonical Church authors. It is safe to say that, via her writings, Sor María the author and candidate for sainthood, was true historical presence in colonial Mexico.

The Distribution of Sor María's Writing

Having examined the numerous printings of Sor María's work in Mexico, and delved into some specific examples of how that work permeated colonial Mexican

thought and art, I'd like to examine another facet of the impact of Sor María's work in Mexico; namely, its documented distribution. It would be one thing if her writing remained only in urban centers such as Mexico City, where many of the presses were located, or in cities such as Zacatecas (where Villalpando's work referencing the MCD is located), or even in the libraries of the Colleges of Propaganda Fide in Querétaro, Mexico City and Zacatecas. However, her writing achieves a much wider audience that it continues to develop over decades. Not only do her works travel widely, they (and other works about her) appears in libraries with nominal collections demonstrates a disproportionate interest in her writing in those areas. Although, again, it is impossible to examine the primary documents themselves, secondary documentation serves the purpose of demonstrating the presence of the texts in particular locations.

The first of these examples is the library of Diego de Vargas, governor sent to New Mexico in 1689 to resettle the New Mexico territory after the 1680 Pueblo Revolt precipitated its 12-year abandonment. By 1692, after de Vargas' "bloodless Reconquest," Spanish settlers were again installed in the communities surrounding the presidio of Santa Fe. After de Vargas' successor Pedro Rodríguez de Cubero tried to have him permanently removed from New Mexico, resulting in de Vargas' exile from the community, de Vargas fought for and was granted a reappointment in 1697. A year after his return in 1703, De Vargas died, leaving behind a personal library, which was inventoried in 1704 by his lieutenant Juan Paez Hurtado as part of de Vargas' will. Although the small library consisted of only thirty-three texts, including histories of the political families of New Spain, Spanish American histories and political tracts,

Hurtado's list includes a curious, yet revealing entry: "tres tomos de la Madre María de Jesús de agreda [sic]" (Adams 151). Historian Eleanor Adams surmises that these three "tomos" are the multi-volume MCD, and cites the 1670 Madrid printing, among others, as a possible source of the texts. That de Vargas was in possession of this text while in New Mexico at the turn of the 18th century is remarkable. And, though de Vargas likely read the MCD simply as a piece of religious writing, Adam's commentary links the MCD immediately to the legend of the Lady in Blue: "Its author, the Spanish mystic Sor María Jesús de Agreda, was identified as the famous 'Lady in Blue' of Southwestern legend who was transported to that region in the early seventeenth century and prepared the way fro the conversion of certain tribes" (Adams 139). Whether de Vargas was familiar with the legend of the Lady in Blue remains to be seen; certainly, he seems to have been a fan of his writing.

Later in the 18th century, a Fray Atanasio Domínguez was sent from the Provincial office to report to the superiors in Mexico City on the Custodia de San Pablo. In his 1776 report on the progress of the missions in New Mexico, he lists the books at each mission, including those at the Custodia's library at Santo Domingo Pueblo. Although the smaller missions had few books apiece- the bare minimum for offering mass and administering the sacraments- the collection at Santo Domingo consisted of some 300 works. Fray Domínguez' inventory, as well as a 1788 inventory of the same library (comparatively presented by Fray Angélico in his commentary on the Domínguez account) offer a glimpse into the interests of the friars of the Custodia. This glimpse is

particularly important, as no traces of the original collection remains, likely destroyed by Rio Grande flooding in 1886.

Although the majority of the texts are extremely practical in nature (books of sermons, apologética, guides for administering particular sacraments), there are a number of volumes by or about Immaculate Conception theologian Duns Scotus as well as two that deal directly with the debate over the MCD. Although neither version of the inventory indicates that the mission had a copy of the MCD, they do document the presence of two works that dealt specifically with the Sorbonne's criticism of the text. The 1776 inventory (provided by both Adams and Fray Angélico) features one work of interest, the "Certámen Mariano de Arbiol" (Adams 157). This 1698 work ("Certamen marianum Parisiense ubi veritas examinatur in splendo. Ribus Sanctorum, et pous mirabile mysticae civitatis Dei, a censura doctorum, à sacra facultate parisiensi deputatorum, exegitatur liberum") by Franciscan Fray José Antonio Arbiol is an apology for the MCD. In Cháves and Adams' comparison of the 1776 and 1788 inventories, another text pops to attention: "Fr. José Nicolás Cavero Anti-Agredistae Parisiense Expugnati" (Domínguez 221). Like Arbiol's apologia, the Franciscan's 1698 defense of the first part of the MCD is a strong challenge to French theological criticism of the text. It is startling that the knowledge of Sor María's writing was perhaps sufficiently assumed that critical texts in her defense found a welcome home in the late 18th-century custodial library at Santo Domingo.

A final example clearly demonstrates an interested in the MCD among the missions well into the late 18th century. Founder of the California missions, Franciscan

Fray Junípero Serra was a devotee of the writing of Sor María. Serra's companion and biographer, Fray Francisco Palóu, confirms that the friar took with him copies of the MCD when he worked on the construction of the Sierra Gorda missions, and the evidence of the influence of her writing is observable in the architecture and artwork of the Jalpan and Landa churches. Franciscan historian Maynard Geiger observes in his notes to Palóu's biography of Serra that the College of San Fernando had various copies of the MCD in its library collection at the time Serra was sent to the Sierra Gorda (as per an 1800 inventory of the library) (Palóu, *Palóu's Life* 408). Geiger explains that not only did Palóu and Serra have copies of the MCD with them in the Sierra Gorda, but that these copies were sent to them at Jalpan from the college itself (Palóu, *Palóu's Life* 408). In fact, while in the Sierra Gorda, Serra followed the practices of humility outlined by Sor María in the MCD; although when in Mexico City in the College of San Fernando, Serra wore sandals, while in the Sierra Gorda missions, he resumed the use of *alpargatas* (hemp shoes), "como nos lo dice la V. Madre Maria de Jesús de Agreda en su Mística Ciudad (part. 2. lib. 4 cap. 28 num. 685)" (Palóu, *Vida* 290).

Copies of the MCD arrived as far as California, shadowing Serra's progress along the west coast, In Serra's February 5, 1775 report to the Mexican Viceroy Antonio Maria de Bucareli y Ursua, for example, the friar states that, among the improvements made to the new five California missions, Mission San Luis de Obispo had recently acquired "los tres tomos de la *Mística Ciudad de Dios*, para la librería" (Serra, vol. 2 235). Serra biographer Maynard Geiger's states that, "there was a set of [the MCD] at Mission San Diego in 1777 and other at Mission Santa Barbara in 1834. In 1777 Mission San Diego

also had a life of the Venerable María de Agreda" (Geiger, vol. 2 291). It seems Geiger is referring to a specific inventory in regards to both mission churches, though he does not cite which. The Online Archive of California lists a 1744 printing, (with the inscription "Fr. Thomas de la Pena Saravia. Del Colegio de San Fernando") ("María de Jesús. Mystica ciudad de Dios") among the holdings of the collection at Mission Santa Clara (founded in 1777), and confirms that the text was in the possession of the library when an inventory of the library was taken by a Fr. Real in 1851. Given Serra' devotion to Sor María, it seems more likely than not that her writings would also be present in the far-flung missions of California at the end of the 18th century.

Though Sor María's writing was widely published in Mexico, the distribution of her writing to the most remote regions of the northern Spanish empire is extraordinary. The journey her works take is in itself surprising.

Point of Departure: the Written Word, the History, the Legend

Finally, and by means of a transition to the next chapter, I present two examples that are superficially quite different from one anther. These cases illustrate the complex relationship between on the one hand Sor María' writing and her recognition as a spiritual figure, and on the other with her identity as the Lady in Blue. The first example is literary; it refers to one of the texts we will examine in the next chapter. The next example is architectural and artistic, in dialogue with the missionary labors of the friars of the Colleges of Propaganda Fide.

The first example, the *Epítome de la bibliotheca oriental, y occidental, náutica y geográfica, de Don Antonio de León Pinelo*, an interesting overlay of bibliography with

history and legend emerges. This bibliography cataloguing the collection of Antonio de León Pinelo, features a section called "Título V. Historias del Nuevo México," which includes numerous entries of primary sources for New Mexican history, including works by Fray Benavides and Fray Zarate Salmerón. One of the last entries is credited to "V.M. María de Jesús de Agreda," citing her work the "*Tratado de la redondez de la Tierra , de los Habitantes de ella, i de los quatro elementos*" (León Pinelo, 612).

Although the attribution of the text to Sor María is now regarded as dubious; regardless, it seems that the treatise, in which Sor María's describes her mystical travels to the four corners of the world, was attributed to her. The biographer, citing the *Ensayo cronológico para la Historia de la Florida*, and Fray Augustín de Vetancurt's *Teatro Mexicano*, states of the *Tratado de la Redondez* that "Trata de la America: de que la procedió el deseo de predicar à los Barbaros del Nuevo México, que logró, aunque no pudo discernir, si realmente ò en espiritu" (León Pinelo 612). As we will see in the next chapter, it would seem that the author of this entry makes explicit the relationship between Sor María as an author and as a mystical missionary. Later in the same bibliography, under the additions to the section on the history of New Mexico, León Pinelo adds another citation for Sor María in the "Carta de su Nueva Misión en el Nuevo México" (León Pinelo 916)- a reference to the *Tanto*. These two bibliographic entries are fascinating because they illustrate the close proximity between her writing and her travels, the juxtaposition between what she writes, the texts that were printed and read in Mexico and their seamless relationship to the Lady in Blue who visited the "bárbaros" of New Mexico. Although I can't be sure that Chapter 4 of the "*Redondez*" does mention

explicitly that she traveled to New Mexico, from the chapters I have seen, the section that pertains to America does not mention New Mexico explicitly, nor does it mention her questioning whether she traveled in body or in spirit. Those elements, it would seem, derive from other sources (likely her *vita*) but are linked to her writing.

The second example of the intersection between Sor María's literary legacy and her very real presence as the Lady in Blue in the northern frontiers of Mexico is viewable with the naked eye. The façade of the Santa María de la Purísima Concepción del Agua Mission at Landa in the Sierra Gorda is a masterful combination of theology and mission work. This mission church, thought to have been completed in 1768, was one of five constructed in the region under the supervision of the Franciscan friars from the College of San Fernando in Mexico City, an outlet of the College of Querétaro. Under the leadership of Fray Junípero Serra, the towns of Jalpan, Tilaco, Concá, Tancoyol and Landa each had mission churches of remarkable architectural beauty completed by the mid-to late- 18th century. Although it is unclear who designed and supervised the construction of the Landa church (thought both Serra and Fray Miguel de la Campa influenced its development), one of its unique and highly commented elements is its façade, prominently featuring Sor María de Agreda (Gómez Mont 81-2).

She is placed centrally over the church entry; opposite and seated facing her is Duns Scotus, whose writings were preserved at the library of Santo Domingo. Each sits at a covered table, pen in hand, resting just about the Virgin Mary and flanking the bottom sections of the octagonal window over the church's entry. Scotus was a popular theologian among the Franciscans for his defense of the Immaculate Conception

theology; at Landa, he also appears in the arched ceiling of the church, poised to defend the Immaculate Conception through his writing. But, why does Sor María figure into the façade of a mission created of by the Franciscan fathers of San Fernando? Sor María hadn't been canonized, was not a doctor of Church, and was not as widely popular a figure as the Mexican bishop Juan de Palafox or the Virgin of Guadalupe. How or why does she arrive at Landa? Or on the façade of the mission church at Zacatecas, which also features Scotus and Sor María ("Façade of Zacatecas church")? Or, for that matter, at the Convento de Ozumba in Mexico City, where a similar image depicting Scotus and Sor María is located ("Sor María and Duns Scotus"). The answer lies in the popularity of her writings in Mexico.

To explain this surprising appearance, historian Monique Gustin suggests that the idea of juxtaposing the two figures arises from the cover of one of the printings of the MCD. In this image, Scotus is on the left, Agreda on the right, San Juan in the middle, with the Virgin of the Immaculate Conception and the City of God suspended above all three writers, who are looking up in contemplation as they write. The layout for the façade is quite similar, minus San Juan and the City of God, and maintains the allusions writing and to the Immaculate Conception (as per the church's title and principal theme). It does appear that the design for this element of the façade derives directly from, or at the very least refers to, Agreda's writing.

Gustin also suggest that the unusual incorporation of the Virgin of Pilar in the façade at Jalpan is a reference taken from the MCD, as the Virgin's bilocation to Spain while Santiago (Saint James the Greater) was carrying out conversions there is discussed

extensively in the MCD (Gustin 146-147). (Interestingly, the Virgin of Pilar and the Virgin of Guadalupe are both featured in this mission façade- the Virgin patronesses of both continents.) Thought this more subtle presence in also notable (to say nothing of the juxtaposition of Marian images), the most remarkable aspect is how the Franciscan friars left a physical representation/recollection of her in the architecture that indicated their familiarity with and dedication to her writing. At the same time, friars such as Junípero Serra and Francisco Palóu display in their writings a cognizance of and belief in her mystical visits to their missionary areas. We will take a closer look at the shape of this belief and how it is inscribed in the next chapter, but for the time being, I will quote Serra's biographer Palóu who affirms Sor María as a compatriot in the missionary work he shared with Serra. In discussing his own decision to become a missionary of Propaganda Fide, Palóu states:

> This is a joy so great that in the mind of the Venerable Mother Agreda it is the envy of the blessed as this Servant of God wrote to the missionaries of my Seraphic Order, who were laboring for the conversion of the pagans in the Custody of New Mexico. I shall reproduce her letter at the end of this book if space permits. (Palóu, *Palóu's Life* 292)

Palóu is referring, of course, to the *Tanto*, in which Sor María not only wrote in support of the friars' mission labor system, but also confirms her presence among native tribes of New Mexico. The awareness of the Lady in Blue, to say nothing of the view of her as a fellow missionary, who predated Serra and Palóu , coexists with an appreciation for her as a mystical writer.

Sor María's writing presents a vital bridge between her and the missions of the Americas; through her works, she traveled literally (and literarily) from one continent to another. As we have seen in this chapter, her texts were printed and read throughout Mexico, establishing her spiritual literary presence there. Although it does seem that in some cases Sor María is known only as a writer, frequently those who recognize her as the Lady in Blue also acknowledge her as a writer. The portrait of Sor María above, held at the Museo Nacional del Virreinato in Tepozotlán, sums up this chapter ("Sor María depicted as writer and missionary"). The image is of Sor María as an author, wearing a blue mantle and standing with quill in hand, poised to write in the book she holds; a ribbon of words above her startlingly reads: "La V.M. María de Jesus, De Edad 20 Años Y De Esta Predico A Los Yndios De El Nuevo Mexico." In one image, writer and missionary are joined. As this portrait and chapter illustrate, the Lady in Blue is often shadowed by the writing of the historical Sor María; the former is almost always supported, sustained and grounded in the latter.

> Daré primero un sucinto diseño del principio de su admirable vida con el cual se les dé así el ascenso debido como que sirvan de estímulo, celo y fervor a los operarios evangélicos y entran a sacrificar sus vidas en al conversión de tantas y tan innumerables gentilidades.
>
> -Juan Mateo Manje,
> *Luz de Tierra Incógnita*, 183

> Mientras más la [Sor María] leía, más la creía arraigada en la realidad del México colonial. Tanto, que ni por un solo momento la sospeché ajena.
>
> - Rima de Valbona, "El legado de la Venerable María de Jesús de Agreda," 38

Chapter 4

In what was the dining room of the St. Katharine's Indian School in Santa Fe, New Mexico, in the near-complete darkness of the abandoned building, an unexpected, contemporary rendering of the colonial presence of the Lady in Blue emerges from the adobe walls. Artist Edward O'Brien painted a mural, an artistic spiritual meditation on Catholicism in the Americas, in the late 1960's or early 1970's, as part of his "Our Lady of the Americas" mural series (O'Brien *Our Lady of the Americas*). Two other murals, one in Pecos, New Mexico and another in Española, New Mexico, fill out the triptych of murals, each of which centrally features the Virgin of Guadalupe. Though we will examine this mural in greater depth in Chapter 6, for the moment, I'd like to focus on an

element of the mural that elegantly reflects the role Sor María and the Lady in Blue played in the landscape and history of colonial northern New Spain.

O'Brien's mural covers the entire long wall of the room, which has a fireplace at its center. Above the fireplace's mantel sits the Virgin of Guadalupe, the point of focus for all the other figures in the mural. She in flanked on her left by figures from the history of the Spanish Catholic conquest in South America, including Hernán Cortés, Cristóbal Colón, Doña Marina, and a miniaturized version of Guadalupe's apparition to Juan Diego and Bishop Zumárraga. On her right, figures from the Catholic tradition in the United States, including Kateri Tekawitha, St. Katharine Drexel, and representations of numerous tribes and pueblos catechized Catholic missionary friars are arranged. In addition to these historical figures, O'Brien included not only two of the best-known missionaries to the southwestern United States, Fray Junípero Serra, O.P., and Fray Eusebio Kino, S.J., but also Sor María de Agreda as the Lady in Blue.

The two friars are surrounded by representations of the missions they created and the geographies they occupied. What appears to be Arizona mission churches, surrounded by cactus, lie behind Serra's head, and under Kino's chin, another mission springs out of the desert landscape. Above them, a large cross divides the section on the southwest from the fleur-de-lis and trees of Kateri Tekawitha and the French missionaries of the northeast. The two friars' heads are staggered, Serra's tonsure below and to the right of Kino's black hat, and they both intently gaze along the same line at the Virgin of Guadalupe. Their shared steady gaze, however, passes over the peninsula of Baja California and straight through the bilocating Sor María. In an powerful, succinct

representation of the nun's mystical travel, Sor María's profile, eyes open, is superimposed on half of her full-frontal face, eyes closed. O'Brien's illustration gives the forceful impression that she is fully present in two places at once, and the friars behold her dual presence. Though the friars are ultimately fixed on the Virgin of Guadalupe, they literally see her via María de Agreda in the moment that she is the Lady in Blue.

If I might be allowed a moment of allegory, I'd propose reading this mural as a metaphor for the inscription of the Lady in Blue/Sor María in the history and landscape of the northern Mexico. Kino and Serra, who knew both of Sor María, her writings and her bilocations, discuss her in the context of their respective missionizing expeditions to the region. Though in fact Serra seems to have been far more devoted to writings and mission work of Sor María than Kino himself (the basis for which we will discuss later), both found Sor María in the conversion of the indigenous people they encountered to Catholicism- a process embodied by Virgin of Guadalupe herself.

Qualification of Texts and Contexts

However, before I take this flight of fancy too far, pressing this metaphor in excess of what it can sincerely encompass, I would like to acknowledge the Native American side of secular and religious colonization. Although I recount in this chapter the views of many religious and secular explorers towards the objects of their colonization (i.e., Native Americans, their traditions and practices, and the lands they inhabited), I do not in any way wish to give the impression that I share their viewpoint, nor that I read their thoughts and interpretations regarding these peoples to be accurate, or

even remotely reflective of indigenous reality. As noted by critics such as Steven Greenblatt and Sylvia Molloy, colonial writers write about their own experiences, referencing the (frequently European) contexts with which they are most familiar, and not that which surrounds them. Their writings speak more to who they are and who they are writing for than to their actual environs, and its inhabitants and dynamics.

In this chapter, I consider many histories and accounts that are fundamentally reflective of the colonizing gaze, as these texts tend to both describe Sor María and that place the Lady in Blue in the context of the nun's writing and life. In the words of my dissertation advisor, Sor María (at least in the 17th and 18th centuries) is the arch-colonizer. Although her story pertains directly to and is intimately involved with the native populations of northern Mexico, in its colonial manifestation it says more about the colonizers than the colonized. Many of the accounts pertaining to the Lady in Blue are legitimized or derive their significance from accounts that are presented as Native American legends or practices, as in the cases of the California friars, Fray Damián Manzanet, Fray Benavides and Juan Mateo Manje. In these three cases, witnesses report the actions or words of Native Americans, and present what their evidence for the Lady in Blue in those regions. Thus, whatever native versions of these accounts that might have existed are always mediated, seen through the eyes of, and interpreted by Spanish colonizers. In addition, as far as I have been able to discern, there is no indigenous counter-narrative to complement the Spanish accounts; for as much as I wish that there were a "voces de los vencidos," I have been unable to find anything analogous. As we shall see in the next chapter, however, folklore pertaining to the Lady in Blue does have

indigenous variations. In the case of the narrative's colonial manifestations, I feel that it is impossible to accurately render the Native American voice regarding the topic, if indeed there is one.

Which brings us to another point regarding the contextualization of the Lady in Blue narrative; namely, the historical moment in which this legend and the people who recount it participated. This narrative unfolded in the context of violence against and exploitation of native peoples. Though it seems obvious to say, it bears repeating that most of the chroniclers of the Lady in Blue actively acted as agents of the dually-reinforcing projects of conversion and colonization. What the people who write these histories did was always disruptive, often violent, and there is no doubt that their actions had grave ramifications on the cultures and peoples with which they came into contact.

Though I do not wish to divorce the actions of the friars and conquistadores from their texts, in my analysis I do focus narrowly on what is claimed by observers regarding the Lady in Blue. As this dissertation intends to chronicle and comment on the development of the Lady in Blue narrative, I maintain my focus rather narrowly on her story, who tells it, when, and where. And the Spanish-language voices, regardless of the activities they were engaged in, are those that recorded the narrative in print. For this reason, this chapter centers on Spanish and Mexican accounts and how they locate and describe the Lady in Blue, rather than problematizing what the friars or Spanish authorities are actually doing in the region at the time. In the conclusion of this dissertation, I will propose some ideas as to why the Lady in Blue is recalled in this particular context of brutal and intimate contact between cultures (which occurred for

European explorers at the very edge of the unknown). For the moment, I simply wish to acknowledge that she emerges during a period of intense violence and conflict, that her story is recounted contemporaneously by those who are doing the conquering, and that, as a result, I concentrate this study on those accounts and others that are similar in nature.

Sor María and the Lady in Blue in the Landscape

In this chapter I will demonstrate that the Lady in Blue became deeply inscribed in the landscape and history of colonial Mexico, specifically that of its northern frontier. I will also discuss the various means (accounts, histories, etc.) by which this inscription occurred. Far from a historical aberration, or figure of fleeting interest, the Lady in Blue becomes part of what I call the "known history" of the region. The Lady in Blue was a widely-recognized figure whose narrative contributed to the human geography and rich historical texture of the northern frontier. This renown was sustained by the deep roots of her literary presence in the region, discussed in Chapter 3.

Through a variety of texts and references, I will examine how Sor María/the Lady in Blue is viewed and depicted as a real, significant actor in the history of the region. Religious chroniclers and secular historians alike wrote about the Lady in Blue in the context of northern frontier history, including her alongside living historical figures such as Juan de Oñate and Fray Antonio Margil de Jesús. Based on particular texts that discuss the Lady in Blue and her evangelizing role in the northern region, it seems that the dissemination of her narrative is intimately linked with the Colleges of Propaganda Fide in Querétaro, Zacatecas and Mexico City (College of San Fernando). The beliefs and actions of its friars, Franciscans sent to create and administer the missions of Texas,

Arizona, New Mexico, California and the Sierra Gorda, were fundamental in situating the Lady in Blue firmly within the region, as much for the ways they positioned her in the region, as for they ways they related to her presence and influence there.

Others not directly associated with Propaganda Fide, such as Jesuit fathers Eusebio Kino, and Fray Luis Velarde, and their lieutenant Juan Mateo Manje, also present histories that directly place Sor María in the history of Pimería Alta. And in addition to the narratives that establish her historical precedent in the northern Mexico borderlands, other historical documents repeat or add to these earlier histories, participating in the creation of a collective memory by recounting her narrative in other contexts. Let's begin with Texas, California, and the Franciscan friars of Propaganda Fide from the convents of Querétaro, Zacatecas and San Fernando (Mexico City).

Posterior to the popularization of Fray Alonso de Benavides' 1630 *Memorial*, the idea that the region and its inhabitants were marked by the presence of *someone* was prevalent, as the 1686 royal cédula for the "Descubrimiento de la Bahía del Espíritu Santo" (*Real Cédula* 52) (modern-day Matagorda Bay) amply demonstrates. The cédula, directed to the governor of San Agustin de la Florida, Don Juan Márquez Cabrera, refers to an earlier cédula regarding exploration and the French threat in the region. The cédula's intent is to explain how possessing the Bahía would allow the Spanish to circumvent the dangerous regions between Mexico, and Quivira/Tagayo, as the latter promised gold and silver. To this end, the cédula defines the area of Quivira/Tagayo- not only by its distance in leagues from the New Mexican missions, but also by what had already happened there: "llegó también aquella Voz de las Conversiones al reyno de

quibira y al de los ayjoas […] y que enviaron sus embajadores a los Religiosos para que fuesen allá también a enseñarlos y bautizarlos" (*Real Cédula* 53). Not only had "la voz de las conversiones" already been to Quivira (and the friars, later, "también"), her presence there is part of the geographical characterization of Quivira.

Though it later mentions that establishing a presence in the Bahía would facilitate missionary work in Quivira/Tagayo ("para que se consiga […] la conversión de sus naturales a nuestra Santa Fe Católica") (*Real Cédula* 55), the tone of the document is clearly secular and political, in spite of the fact that it partially derives from Fray Benavides' 1630 *Memorial*. There would thus seem to be even less reason to include "aquella voz de la conversión," except that, as I above proposed, "la voz" was already so associated with that region that a designation of the area would call for her mention. Since the cédula draws from the 1630 *Memorial*, it cannot refer to Sor María specifically, but it does give us a sense of the Lady in Blue and how she was developing ever more into part of the landscape when the Franciscan friars of Propaganda Fide arrived in the northern Mexican frontier.

Other documents that predate or are contemporary to the presence of Propaganda Fide in Texas also seem to suggest a more diffuse conceptualization of "La Voz de la Conversión" in the region. Alonso de León's own account of the 1689 expedition to Texas, comments of the tribes there that that "they perform many Christian rites, and the governor asked us for missionaries to instruct them, saying that many years ago a woman went inland to instruct them, but that she had not been there for a very long time" (Donahue 310). Another source (1668) from around the San Augustine mission in West

Texas alluded to a similar visitation, as a group of indigenous people from around the Pecos River visited the mission and requested that priests be sent to them, "A woman had visited their people many years before, and had made known to them the life and doctrines of Jesus Christ; her visits to them had been many, and it was she who had told them to come to the missionaries. Where she had lived, how she came, they did not know" (Donohue 311). While it would be difficult to discern whether the authors of these texts were referring explicitly to Sor María's bilocations to area or not, they are still in dialogue with and reference the account of a lone woman proselytizing the tribes of Texas, and inducing them to seek out baptism- the narrative presented in Fray Benavides' 1630 *Memorial*. The history and landscape of Texas showed indications of being marked by the Lady in Blue.

The Colleges of Propaganda Fide

But why focus in particular on Propaganda Fide? As I alluded to in the previous chapter and will demonstrate in this section, its missionary friars had particular contact with Sor María not only through her writings, but through her manifestation as the Lady in Blue in the regions they worked as missionaries. Franciscan chronicles repeatedly demonstrate that the friars read her work, and occasionally considered her a co-worker in their labor of conversion. To this end, we will also briefly examine the establishment of the College of Propaganda Fide, a process facilitated and approved by the author of Sor María's vita, Fray Joseph Ximénez Samaniego. But let's start at the beginning, taking a look at one of the earliest and most frequently-cited narratives, definitively placing the Sor Maria as the Lady in Blue among the Tejas.

Fray Damián Manzanet, one of the original twenty four missionaries from Spain who established the missionary college in Querétaro, became a missionary to the Texas borderlands as early as 1689, when he first accompanied governor Alonso de León on his expedition to the region. After establishing the San Francisco de los Tejas Mission in 1690, he continued to work in the region until 1693, when he and the others who remained abandoned the mission and returned to Querétaro. At the conclusion of a letter he wrote to Mexican intellectual Carlos Sigüenza y Góngora (1689), describing the "Descubrimiento de la baya del Espíritu santo y Río de los Tejas," he relates what he observed among the Tejas vis-à-vis the Lady in Blue.

Namely, the "governor" of the Tejas requested a piece of "vayetta açul para mortaja y enterrar a Su Madre, cuando muriese" (Manzanet 279); when offered a piece of "paño" instead, the governor insisted on blue fabric. When Manzanet asked "que misterio tenía el color açul" (Manzanet 279), the governor told him that they preferred to bury people in blue because "en otro tiempo los yba ha uer una Mujer mui hermosa la Qual bajaua De lo alto Y dha Mujer Yba bestida de açul y que ellso querían ser como dha mujer" (Manzanet 279-80). When asked how long ago it was that the woman had visited the tribe, Manzanet was told that it wasn't during the governor's lifetime, but that "su Madre que era bieja la hauia bisto y los demas viejos" (Manzanet 280). As the tribe collectively participated in this commemorative tradition, and as Manzanet's estimation of the governor's mother's age corresponded with the period of Sor María's travels, he concludes: "se ve claramente fue la Madre, Maria de Jesús de agreda la qual estubo en aquellas tierras" (Manzanet 280). Manzanet continues, correlating Sor María's account,

as dictated Fray Benavides, with the tradition and history of the Tejas that he has observed.

As far as the narrative of the Lady in Blue in Texas goes, this is a fundamental account, for, as in Fray Benavides' *Memoriales*, the accounts of the Kino/Manje expedition and others, it locates her definitively by describing events and traditions that are consistent with the written accounts of her travel. Manzanet's narrative will later be retold and intertwined with folk beliefs as well; in its time, however, it simply presented a definite stand on Sor María's mission work as a conclusion to a letter to one of Mexico's greatest colonial-era intellectuals. The beginning of the letter, however, suggest further insight into how Manzanet, and other friars of the missionary college, became aware of the literature surrounding Sor María.

Manzanet states at the beginning of the letter that when he began to explore the Bahía del Espíritu Santo he was living as Misión Caldera, and that:

> hauia ydo ya con ynttenzion de ver si podia desCubrir y ttener alg[una] [255] Noticia de la thierra adentro haçia el norte Y nordeste por las noticias que ttenia de una carta que para en mi poder lo qual dieron a en Madrid a nro Padre frai Antonio linza la cual carta hace mençion de de lo que la Beata Madre Maria de Jhs. de agreda comunico en su Conbento al Padre, Custodio del nuevo México, Fray Alonso de Benauides (Manzanet 254-255).

Manzanet claims to have been sent to the area at least in part to determine what might have been heard there about Sor María, based on a letter that Manzanet received via the director of Propaganda Fide at Querétaro, Fray Antonio Llináz. Llináz, in turn, had been given the letter while in Madrid. It seems likely, given the fact that Manzanet mentions that that document is a letter, that the letter involves a conversation between Sor María

and Fray Benavides specifying conversion among tribes in the Texas region, that Manzanet is referring to the *Tanto*. However, as far as the friars of Propaganda Fide and their collective interest in Sor María as a missionary go, it bears taking a quick look at how the father general of the College of Propaganda Fide could have acquired such a letter while in Spain in the first place.

Although Colleges for the Propagation of the Faith had previously been established in Portugal, (Añíbaro 293-300), it was Fray Antonio Llináz, a native Mallorcan who had been a *lector* in Michoacán for fifteen years (McCloskey 15), and had been selected to participate in the general chapter meeting of the Franciscan Order in Spain in 1679 (Carreno 297), who seems to have got the ball rolling for such efforts in the Americas. In Madrid in 1681, Llináz presented his idea of sending 12 missionaries (including himself) to the northern frontier regions to the then-Minister General of the Franciscan Order, Fray Joseph Ximénez Samaniego, Sor María's biographer, and editor responsible for the post-mortem publication of her MCD. Ximénez Samaniego considered Llináz' request and then denied it, because "it must be expected that the time will without a doubt come when all eleven have died. Then the life of those tender spiritual plants will falter and die" (Carreno 298). Instead, Ximénez Samaniego ordered the founding of a missionary college "in the most convenient place and in the vicinity of those pagan peoples whose conversion is proposed" (Carreno 298) to ensure that the missionary endeavor in the area would endure. As Franciscan historian Alberto Maria Carreno comments in his article "The Missionary Influence of the College of Zacatecas" (299), the establishment of the College of Propaganda Fide at Querétaro (and later at

Zacatecas, San Fernando and Guatemala) was ultimately a joint effort between Fray Joseph Ximénez Samaniego and Fray Antonio Llináz (Carreno 299), occasioned by the latter's visit to Madrid in 1681. Querétaro was the third College of Propaganda Fide shepherded by Ximénez Samaniego, and "el primero de los de *Propaganda Fide* con destino directo a la conversión de los infieles" (Añíbarro 306).

McCloskey links this latter objective to Ximénez Samaniego's awareness of Sor María's work: "The Congregation of the Propagation of the Faith and the Spanish Crown appear to have been rather dissatisfied with the fact that that Franciscan missions of New Spain made no suitable progress for forty years; while Samaniego's association with Mary of Agreda must have made him keenly aware of the work to be done" (McCloskey 22-23). Though I have found no documentation indicating that Ximénez Samaniego's motive for establishing the College of Querétaro was influenced by Sor María's writing, the friar was undoubtedly a dedicated supported and promoter of her writings in general, particularly the MCD. Añíbarro comments that Ximénez Samaniego was "complicado personalmente" (Añíbarro 326) in the question of recognition of the MCD by the church. When the text was condemned by the Roman Inquisition without having yet been sent to Rome nor published in Italian (Añíbarro 326), Ximénez Samaniego appealed directly to King Carlos II, asking him to petition Rome and the other nobility to have the decree revoked. It was eventually revoked in Spain and in Portugal, and as Ximénez Samaniego's colleague Fray Juan de Torres died, "todo el negocio de la V. Madre Agreda quedó sobre los hombros del P. Samaniego" (Añíbarro 327). Though he did eventually distance himself from the active promotion of Sor María's works, due to Ximénez

Samaniego's intervention and efforts on her behalf, the Supremo Consejo de la Inquisición de España issued an approbation of the MCD in 1686. The friar did write her vita (based in part on Sor María's own writings on the topic), and was therefore aware of the narrative of bilocation and missionization of the region of Quivira contained therein (Añíbarro 373). Ximénez Samaniego's efforts seeking the institutional support of Sor María's writings began with his assignation as her biographer and editor by the Franciscan order, and extends beyond his tenure as Ministerio General of the Franciscans (1678-1681), when he met with Fray Antonio Llináz and provided a cédula for the College's founding.

Though it is possible that, given Ximénez Samaniego's active role in the composition and promotion of Sor María's work, he might have relayed a copy of the *Tanto* to Fray Antonio Llináz prior to his departure to the missionary field, it is by no means certain. Manzanet does state that Llináz brought the letter with him from Madrid, and Llináz left Madrid directly with the cédula from Ximénez Samaniego to recruit priests; the unit of friars traveled from Spain to Mexico, and settled in Querétaro in 1683. Llináz appears to have personally recruited friars from Cataluña, Valencia and Murcia (McCloskey 24), and it would be very difficult to determine how many times he returned to Madrid and could have been offered the document Manzanet refers to. Again, I offer Ximénez Samaniego as a possible, but by no means certain source. However, from whomever Llináz received the letter, the connection between the northern frontier missionary field (and those sent to administer to it) and the writing of Sor María had been

explicitly forged by the time the friars of Propaganda Fide were establishing their missions in the regions described by Sor María.

Espinosa's *Chrónica Apostólica*

The College of Propaganda Fide of Querétaro's best known *cronista*, Fray Isidro Félix de Espinosa, also noted the relationship between Ximénez Samaniego and Sor María in his history on the early years of the College and on its founders. Espinosa's *Chrónica apostólica, y seráphica de todos los Colegios de Propaganda Fide de esta Nueva-España* also highlights Ximénez Samaniego's dual roles as Minister General and as author of Sor María's vita in discussing the friar's role in establishing the College. In regards to Ximénez Samaniego's role in the MCD's publication, Espinosa comments that "la edición [del MCD] fue encargada al P. Samaniego en 1668 y salió a la luz en 1670, procedida del citado prólogo galeato, que se ha incluido después en todas las ediciones posteriores" (Espinosa 284). In regards to the founding of the missionary colleges themselves, Espinosa comments that Ximénez Samaniego "jugó papel principalísimo en la institución de los Colegios apostólicos de misiones, según iremos viendo" (Espinosa 284). Espinosa emphasizes Ximénez Samaniego's wisdom in mystical matters as well, offering that "[su] circunspección en materias místicas es notoria, y con luces meridianas lo da a conocer el *Prólogo Galeato* prefijo en las Obras de la V. M. María de Jesús de Agreda" (Espinosa 282). Thus even in the earliest histories of the College, Ximénez Samaniego is both the lynchpin for the establishment of the College and the collaborator/defender of Sor María.

But Espinosa's *Chrónica* offers even further insight into the way the original friars individually interacted with Sor María. Through his numerous subtle references to her in the descriptions of the friars' lives, a pattern emerges that underlines the degree to which Sor María entered into the day-to-day lives of these religious men and, contextualized and underpinned their experiences as missionaries. Espinosa also reveals his own familiarity with Agredan themes and representations, particularly as they pertained to the missionary field. At the opening of his description of the life of Fray Melchior López, Espinosa introduces the founding friar as an "árbol racional" on account of his "penitente vida" (Espinosa 529). The image Espinosa feels captures the friar's sensibility is "una cruz bien formada a manos de su penitencia y mortificación" (Espinosa 529), and he conjures up the image of Fray López with a *báculo* (crosier) in his right hand, and a small stick in his left, "como llevaban los Apóstoles en sus caminos, según refiere la V.M. María de Jesús de Agreda" (Espinosa 529). Espinosa derives his concept for the figure of the apostle, applying it to one of the founding members of the College, from Sor María's revelations. In Espinosa's history, the missionary apostle is cast into a figure that Espinosa recognizes as originating with Sor María.

Devotion to Sor María's writing and the practices detailed in them are featured in Espinosa's portrayal of the lives of founding friars Francisco Casañas de Jesús María and Francisco Frutos. In the case of "protomártir" Fray Casañas de Jesús María, it is unclear whether the reference to Sor María originates from Espinosa or if the friar intentionally imitated her spiritual practices:

> Tenía tiempos algunos días que dedicaba a hacer ejercicios semejantes a los de la V. M. María de Jesús de Agreda, especialmente el de la muerte, en cuya profunda meditación se consideraba como la cerca de los últimos lances de la vida, y se disponía como si acabado aquel ejercicio hubiesse de partir su alma a la eternidad (Espinosa 466)

In the case of Fray Frutos (whose name Espinosa plays with in the title "Vida Fructosa del Apostólico y Venerable P. Fr. Francisco Frutos" (Espinosa 506)), the friar's dedication to Sor María's writing and the practices therein is quite clear: "En la lección de libros sagrados se ocupaba todos los ratos que podía cercenar de las obligaciones de su ministerio, y éstos eran los de la *Mística Ciudad de Dios*, las obras de la Mística Doctora Santa Teresa de Jesús, el libro de oro de San Juan de la Cruz" (Espinosa 506). Fray Frutos, a close associate of the Jesuits in Querétaro, was also Espinosa's teacher and mentor.

Indeed, Espinosa was present when Fray Frutos passed away, and he inserts himself into the narrative about his *maestro*'s death. After confessing to Fray Antonio Margil de Jesús, Fray Frutos requests a particular favor from Espinosa:

> me mandaba que en un librito escrito de mano, donde tenía trasladadas las doctrinas que dio María Santísima a su sierva la Venerable María de Jesús de Agreda, le leyesse una, puesto de rodillas; y luego que la acababa, me mandaba lo dejasse solo y no dejasse entrar persona alguna a la celda hasta que él me llamasse. Quedábase en este tiempo en oración, rumiando lo que había oído en la doctrina (Espinosa 518)

For the next fifteen days prior to his death, Fray Frutos "repetía muchas veces esta diligencia" (Espinosa 518), meditating on the Marian revelations penned by Sor María. As the MCD was earlier associated with Fray Frutos (as are the writings of Maria la

Antigua), it seems a likely candidate what Espinosa was reading him, and which he contemplated.

Another founding friar of Propaganda Fide in Querétaro (and in Zacatecas and Guatemala for that matter) who was an avid reader of Sor María was Fray Antonio Margil de Jesús. The first book of 18th-century Franciscan chronist Fray Juan Domingo Arricivita's *Crónica apostólica y seráfica del colegio de Propaganda Fide de la Santa Cruz de Querétaro en al Nueva España dedicada al santísimo patriarca el señor San Joseph* (1792) (printed alongside Espinosa's *Crónica apostólica*) is a summary biography of Fray Margil's life, drawing on others' histories (including Espinosa's) of the famed missionary. Arricivita, writing in support of the case for Margil's sainthood, demonstrates the devotion the founding father of the College of Zacatecas and the Texas missions had for Sor María and for her writing.

When called to direct the college of Querétaro, Margil establishes an unusual routine of prayer and confession with another friar, Fray Antonio de los Angeles during which they would begin each session by reading a "lesson from the Venerable Madre Agreda" (Arrcivita 70). Once president of the college of Zacatecas, Fray Margil personally continued to practice the precepts set forth in Sor María's writing: "To imitate Mary, as he did Jesus, he took special care in observing the doctrines, which in the *Mística Ciudad de Dios* unravel the excellence of their virtues, with which he also aroused souls to emulate them" (Arricivita 171). Indeed, Fray Margil did more than arouse other souls to emulate, as the Virgin was elected as the College's principal prelate ("in conformance with the most pious circumstances that are read in the Venerable

Mother María de Jesús" (Arricivita 171)), and the other friars of the community began to observe Sor María's practices as well: "whose imitations they all embraced happily" (Arricivita 171). Another source, cited in Lázaro Lamadrid's 1951 article on a collection of Margil's letters at Guatemala's Archivo de la Recolección, features Fray Margil's undated letter of spiritual consolation to an unknown recipient. In it, the friar quotes extensively from the MCD in advising his addressee, adding in the margin of the letter "Ojo aquí" before the section citing Sor María (Lamadrid 347). It seems that Margil was not only personally interested in Sor María's writings, but encouraged (and instated) practices that actively employed her teachings as well.

In book two of his *Crónica,* Arricivita similarly describes how Fray Margil's confession and meditation partner, Fray Miguel Antonio de los Angeles (Arricivita 335), was also a devotee of Sor María's teachings. Although not a founding member of the College, Fray Antonio de los Angeles, a Santander native (Arricivita 315), professed in it in 1690 (Arricivita 326). Arricivita reiterates the nightly prayer practice Fray Margil and Fray Antonio de los Angeles shared for the four years the former was prelate of the College: "At eleven in the evening he [Fray Margil] would call me. We read the doctrine of Mother Agreda. He would sit as if my teacher, and I would confess my sins" (Arricivita 353).

In the chapter describing how Fray Antonio de los Angeles prepared for his death after years of charity and Marian devotion, the consistency of his devotion to Sor María is revealed: "He respected the Divine Lady [Mary] as a teacher, and every day he read with profound meditation some one of the teachings that she gave the Venerable Mother

Agreda" (Arricivita 381). As his death draws closer, Fray Antonio de los Angeles, like Fray Frutos, meditates on and prepares for death by following the guidelines prescribed by Sor María: "[he] reflected on its [death's] agony and prepared himself with particular care of it, using the same exercises that the Venerable Mother Agreda had practiced" (Arricivita 383). In discussing Fray Antonio de los Angeles' personal spiritual practices, Sor María again emerges as a consistent presence: "This earnest devotion induced him to ask for permission to go into retirement for ten days in order […] to reawaken his spirit in the exercises arranged by the Venerable Mother Agreda. In these, he centered his attention in learning how to die well" (Arricivita 364). Indeed, Fray Antonio's overall spiritual life is couched within the context of Agredan texts: "This was what illuminated his soul […] for he follows the footsteps of the Almighty and His Most Holy Mother through the history of the Venerable Mother Agreda" (Arricivita 362).

Texts outside of the religious context

Although the preceding examples could suggest that the friars of Propaganda Fide were devoted only to Agredan writings (a likely product of her work's overall popularity in colonial Mexico), their interest in Sor María goes beyond the literary/spiritual. I hypothesize, as Manzanet's account suggests, that the friars viewed Sor María simultaneously as a spiritual author whose works were worthy of imitation and practice, and as a missionary presence in the regions they proselytized. Sor María was already a presence within the institution of Propaganda Fide in northern Mexico at the end of the 17th century, but this person exists concurrently with Sor María, the mystical missionary.

One example of the pervasive influence of Sor María as a co-missionry can again be found in Espinosa's history, in a section pertaining to College's actions in Guatemala. Espinosa cites a letter sent from Fray Francisco de San Joseph and Fray Pablo Rebullida, stationed in the region, to the president of Guatemala. The two friars are frustrated with the secular presence (soldiers and settlers) in the region, stating that although masses of soldiers might seem to support the endeavor, that Sor María's advice concerning missions and settlements (deriving their information form the *Tanto*) recommends just the opposite: "que es consejo de la V.M. María de Jesús de Agreda que los soldados para las conversiones sean pocos y de buen ejemplo […] sólo servirán los pocos soldados para algunos descomedidos" (Espinosa 881). They add that their belief that few soldiers are needed relates to their religious order, and its particular concession for conversion, again as per Sor María's in the *Tanto*: "tiene concedido privilegio a N.P. San Francisco para que todas las naciones se conviertan con sólo ver su hábito" (Espinosa 881). They finally suggest that the governor send fewer men to them at the mission. One imagines this request was in response to the actual difficulties the soldiers might have presented to the friars in their conversion work, but the fact that they defer to Sor María's authority on the issue of mission staffing as a means of explaining their request is surprising.

The friars' labor as missionaries corresponded to and correlated with Sor María's role as a missionary in other ways as well, as her name was invoked as a landscape marker in the same region, and among the same people, as the *Tanto* states she visited. In 1716, a group of friars from Propaganda Fide, including Friars Isidro Félix Espinosa, Antonio Margil and Francisco Hidalgo, arrived in Texas and established or re-established

a series of missions in eastern Texas. These missions included: San Francisco de los Tejas, Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe de los Nacgdoches, Nuestra Señora de los Dolores de los Ais, San Miguel de los Adaes, Nuestra Señora de los Dolores de los Texas, and Nuestra Señora de la Puríssima Concepción, the "headquarters" (Céliz 13) for the friars from the Querétaro College, under the direction of Fray Espinosa.

Two years later, in response to a perceived French threat to the Texas settlements and to re-supply the missions and settlers, the Spanish crown sent Martín de Alarcón to head an expedition to see to those needs. Fray Francisco Céliz, a friar from Coahuila who served as the party's chaplain (Céliz 2), kept a diary of the 1718-1719 journey. In Céliz' dairy, quite matter-of-factly and without explanation, the friar simply and repeatedly refers to the indigenous village of "La Concepción de Agreda" (Céliz 76), (and, it is suggested, the mission by association as "Concepción de Agreda") Although the editorial notes to the diary (Céliz 105) suggest that Alarcón himself renamed the Hasinai village and mission (which would subsequently change names, to settle on "Concepción de Acuña"), there is no particular indication in the diary that this was the case, nor does Alarcón's brief biography allude to a particular Agreda dedication. It is possible that other documents pertaining to the Alarcón expedition (including the correspondence of another of the expedition's friars, Fray Olivares) could shed further light on the question of whether Alarcón himself chose the name.

However, I propose to focus on the reference itself rather than on its origins. As Fray Céliz casually refers to "Concepción de Agreda," in his text, it would again seem as though this was the accepted term for the tribal settlement (and the mission). Whether or

not name "Agreda" originated with the friars of Propaganda Fide, its common usage does not seem to be in question; one would imagine this terminology would also have been adopted by the friars who worked among the tribe and at the mission. The appending of "Agreda" to the title "Concepción" in the region of the settlement and the mission is additionally fascinating because it references the Conceptionist theological themes in Sor María's writings, while at the same time tying her actual name, not just that of the Lady in Blue, to the geography and people among which she ministered. "Concepción de Agreda" is a marking of the missionary territories by an explicit attachment of the Spanish nun's name (and even theological/literary identity) to the geography and people with whom she shared a mystical missionary relationship.

A final example of the understanding of Sor María as a mystical missionary presence among the friars of Propaganda Fide (one which is surely a single incident of which more are probable] can be found in the life of Querétaran nun Francisca de los Ángeles (1674-1744). A member of the religious community of Santa Cruz, Francisca had as her spiritual advisors Fray Francisco Frutos, Fray Damián Manzanet and, to a much greater extent, Fray Antonio Margil de Jesús (among others). As historian Ellen Gunnarsdóttir notes of Franciscan's convent:

> it was known that the community's great role model, Madre María de Jesús de Agreda, the famed Spanish nun, had experienced such bilocations to New Mexico between 1620 and 1631. With the help of angels she had been taken to several faraway kingdoms located beyond hostile lands […] Astutely, Madre Agreda hinted that perhaps her bilocations were simply owed to God's awareness of her intense evangelical desires, which had led Him to allow her to believe they were true" (Gunnarsdóttir 93-94)

Gunnarsdottir notes that in Querétaro and in the convent of Santa Cruz in particular, awareness of the mystical missionization of Sor María was widespread. In fact, Francisca herself began to have similar experiences of bilocation to some of the same places Sor María herself had visited; namely, the areas of the Tejas tribes, where Fray Manzanet and Fray Margil had traveled and would continue to travel, the renown of which increased in Querétaro with Fray Manzanet's 1690 return from Texas (Gunnarsdóttir 91).

In her communication with Fray Margil, Francisca states that her travels to Texas began before the friars of Propaganda Fide had fist visited there (94), with Alonso de León and Fray Manzanet. Her experiences were very similar to Sor María's, involving spiritual rapture, an intense desire to participate in the mission endeavor, and physical travel, and she also was careful in how she represented them, as she "took Madre Agreda's tack of diluting her experiences with doubt and caution" (Gunnarsdóttir 94). Francisca traveled to New Mexico, visiting some of the tribes described by Sor María and meeting "old people who she claimed had been baptized by Madre Agreda" (Gunnarsdóttir 96). Francisca did not claim to herself have baptized the tribes in New Mexico, although she did administer last rites to an old man who had lapsed into his pagan ways after Sor María baptized him and left (Gunnarsdottir 96).

In writing to Fray Margil in 1699, Francisca outlines what the friar is likely to find in Texas when he was to travel there to establish missions. Her knowledge, of course, derives from her experiences of bilocation, and she is able

to offer advice to Margil regarding the nature of the people he will find and what their lives are like. In spite of the fact that Margil did not find Francisca sufficiently humble, the fact that she mystically traveled to exactly the same places Sor María had did not seem to surprise him, nor does he question Sor María as her model and predecessor for her mystical travels. It is rather how Francisca presents herself and her relationship with God, as well as the continued development of her soul, that concerns Margil. Sor María the mystical missionary seems to be an acceptable (and comprehensible) example for Francisca.

This not only indicates the awareness of Margil and Manzanet of Sor María as the Lady in Blue, but it also indicates that this knowledge extended beyond the immediate Franciscan missionary community. That, in fact, other women were aware of Sor María's actions and, at least in the case of Francisca de los Angeles, experienced similar episodes and exercised similar capabilities. A profound knowledge of and devotion to Sor María's writing, therefore, seems to co-exist and even perhaps reinforce the presence of the Lady in Blue, even in later 17th-century colonial northern Mexico.

Though we could here discuss the masculinizing missionary impulse among cloistered women of the epoch, Francisca being an open manifestation and realization of that desire, we will explore that point at greater length in the conclusion. But as Francisca de los Angeles herself, her relationship to the friars of Propaganda Fide, and her missionizing travels to northern Mexico and Texas,

the influence of Sor María de Agreda as a role model is evident. Whether directly through the instruction and guidance of the friars, or more generally through Sor María's renown in the city that was their headquarters, Francisca seems to have been influenced by Sor María's mystical mission work, and indeed presents herself as Sor María's successor in that endeavor. That Francisca communicates as much to the friars and her narrative is accepted and disseminated indicates the degree to which, at that historical moment at least, the legacy of her predecessor Sor María already permeated the landscape.

Junípero Serra, Francisco Palóu and the California friars

In keeping with the friars of Propaganda Fide, and their knowledge of and dedication to Sor María de Agreda and the Lady in Blue, let us turn our attention to one of that organization's most prolific missionaries: Fray Junípero Serra. As O'Brien's mural suggests, depicting Serra gazing up at the Lady in Blue, the friar was not only a devotee of her writing, he also seemed to have viewed her either as a co-missionary, or at the very least as someone whose revelations regarding his mission work serves as reasonable justification for their labors. Serra and his companion Fray Francisco Palóu, as well as other missionaries in the California field, place Sor María in the California missionary context with a far more than incidental frequency. Although Serra and Palóu do not directly claim that Agreda traveled to California to convert the tribes there, other friars contemporaneous to and subsequent to them do. And as we shall see, Sor María is a constant presence and referent in Serra and Palóu's writing, particularly in regards to how they view themselves as missionaries to the northern regions.

I'd also like to mention at this point that the case for Sor María's sainthood was closed in 1773. Prior to this date, her case was as viable as any other for canonization, her writing and the claims about her life accepted lacking evidence to the contrary. After her case was closed by Pope Clement XIV, asserting that she had actually traveled to the Americas might not have been viewed favorably by church hierarchy. As such, it would be prudent in most cases not to mention the travel directly, if indeed one did put faith in that travel. Serra and Palóu cite on various occasions (as we saw with Fray Margil in Chapter 3) Sor María's exhortation that "los Gentiles con solo ver á sus hijos se conviertan á nuestra Santa Fé" (Palóu *Vida* 160). This quotation regarding the missionary work of the friars, and in which so many of them places great faith, is taken from the *Tanto*, the document that corroborated Sor María's mystical travels and is mostly about them.

I am not sure why neither Serra nor Palóu asserts directly Sor María's travels to the California region. It could very well be because they didn't believe it was the case. In the above paragraph, and in this section, it is clear that both friars were familiar with Agredan writing (in fact were very devoted to it), and incorporate it in significant ways into their own worldviews, interpretations of what they encounter during the course of their mission work, and conceptualizations of themselves as missionaries. At times, as we shall see, Serra and Palóu refer so closely to Sor María's account of travel, and articulate their belief in episodes that are quite similar, that it seems almost absurd to suggest that they do not ascribe to it. They certainly do view themselves in the context of her travels, as agents of the type of missionary work that she outlines in her writing.

In Palóu's *Relación histórica […] del Venerable Padre Fray Junípero Serra*, Serra's biography written by his longtime companion and apprentice, the life of Junípero Serra a as a missionary is literally bookended by Sor María's narrative. In this biography as well as in Serra's letters and diary, Sor María's presence is palpable. As commented briefly in Chapter 3, Serra preferred to go shoeless, or wear hemp shoes rather than sandals, a practice he continued during his time in the Sierra Gorda. Palóu states that Serra practiced this self-ablation in "empezando su oficio de la predicación á imitación de Jesu Christo de las sandalias, como nos dice la V. Madre Sor Maria de Jesus de Agreda en su Mística Ciudad" (Palóu *Vida* 290). I earlier used this example to demonstrate the far-reaching readings of the MCD, but this example also highlights the regard in which her writing and authority were held by Serra and Palóu. Serra demonstrated by his imitation of practices outlined in the MCD that he placed faith in them, in what Sor María had written. Palóu locates this Serra anecdote in the chapter summarizing his virtues, specifically that of "Profunda Humilidad" (Palóu *Vida* 290). Palóu comments of Sera's humility "esta divina doctrina [humility] de tal manera se imprimió en su corazón […] que desde luego propuso en su corazón imitarlo, siguiendo su doctrina en quanto le fuera posible, poniéndola en práctica" (Palóu *Vida* 290). The first example Palóu gives of Serra's humility is that of the barefoot/hemp-clad Serra ministering in the Sierra Gorda. Although Palóu offers several other anecdotes demonstrating Serra's humility, the most prominent of his examples is founded on the imitation of the behaviors outlined in Sor María's writing. The weight given to the practice, and thus to the work, gives foundation to the argument for Serra's humility; without that, the practice lacks context, and thus

substance. It is also worth nothing, that in going barefoot or wearing hemp sandals in the Sierra Gorda, Serra transfers the procedures of an unacknowledged European mystic to the unknown regions of north-central Mexico.

But let us first discuss the nature of the bookending of the *Relación histórica*, and then what it means in terms of Serra and Palóu's views regarding Sor María. In the Relación's second chapter ("Llámalo Dios para Doctor de las Gentes, solicita patente para Indias, y consiguela. Se embarca para Cádiz y lo que sucedió en el camino"), Palóu explains how Serra (and by extension, Palóu himself) was called to a life of mission work in the Americas. Serra asks that "si era de Dios dicha vocación, tocase el corazón á alguno que lo acompañase en la empresa de tan dilatado viage" (Palóu *Vida* 7); Palóu finds himself called to follow Serra and join the ranks of Propaganda Fide in the Americas, a fact he attributes to "las oraciones de mi venerado Padre Lector Junípero" (Palóu *Vida* 8). Palóu goes on to say that being a missionary in the Americas is a "felicidad tan grande que en sentir de la Venerable Madre es envidiable de los Bienaventurados" (Palóu *Vida* 8). What was Palóu's source for this assurance, underpinning and giving meaning to Serra and Palóu's mission from its very beginning? In fact, it was reading of Sor María's comments on the subject in the *Tanto*: "como lo escribió dicha Sierva de Dios a los misioneros de Nuestra Seráfica Religion empleados en la conversion de los Gentiles de la Custodia del Nuevo México" (Palóu *Vida* 8). In other words, it seems that Serra and Palóu believed their specific mission work was of particular spiritual importance based on what Sor María had written on the subject. One of the ironies here, of course, is that in the *Tanto*, Benavides writes this section; he claims

to recount Sor María's testimony that the native tribes would be converted on sight. However, as we have seen, most of the Propaganda Fide friars attribute the *Tanto* to Sor María alone, and thus the role of Fray Benavides as intermediary for Sor María is forgotten entirely.

Palóu goes on to say that he will reproduce the letter from Sor María in its entirety " á lo último si tengo lugar" (Palóu *Vida* 8); he does indeed reproduce the entire letter, the body of which describes her experiences among the tribes of the Custodia. He also affirms that the letter "es bastantemente eficaz para animar á todos á que vengan al trabajo de la Viña del Señor," (Palóu *Vida* 8) was an influential recruiting tool for future missionaries to the Americas specifically. Not only does the *Tanto* encourage the friars and verify the importance of their work, it also "confirma y aprueba el regimen que acostumbramos en estas Misiones" (Palóu *Vida* 8). Palóu can state that the mission are run well and appropriately because Sor María's text confirms that fact.

There seems to be little ambiguity in Palóu's treatment of the *Tanto* in this section. He references Sor María's letter (or the document that he considers as a whole to be Sor María's letter) as source for mission work in the areas administered by Propaganda Fide, acknowledging both the influence of the text on the missionaries call to the Americas, as well as its importance insofar as it "confirma y aprueba" the institution of the mission system. While it is true that Palóu's introduction does not affirm Sor María's travels to northern Mexico as the Lady in Blue, is does assert her authority as someone whose reflections on and knowledge of the missions are eminently respectable, and in some way authoritative.

Looking now to the appendix of Palóu's *Relación,* we note that Palóu makes good on his promise to print the *Tanto* at the end of the life of Serra. There, after the last bit of argument in favor of Serra, "Advertencia al curioso Lector y Ultima Protesta," Palóu reproduces the entire document, from Fray Benavides' introduction of Sor María and the narrative of the Lady in Blue (wherein the assurances regarding the instantaneous conversion of the native tribes can be found), to her statements to the friars in New Mexico, to Benavides' closing words on the matter. In expressing the humility typical of authors of the genre, Palóu expresses his concern that he might have omitted some of Serra's virtues in the course of the *Relación*, as Palóu's demands as Guardian of the College of San Fernando prevented him from spending further time on it. In spite of his constraints and preoccupation with having not represented Serra completely, Palóu both forces the text to accommodate, and believes that it is sufficiently important even in the context of elements of Serra's life that were not included in the text, to reprint the entire *Tanto*. This placement also offers an ellipticity to the text, as Palóu's claims in the introduction as to the importance of the *Tanto* in Serra's life are made manifest in the conclusion of the work, where the influential document appears.

What did Serra's life have to do with Sor María de Agreda, and her missions in the Americas? Outwardly, and without Palóu to illustrate, nothing. But by alluding to and ultimately placing Sor María's narrative where he does in Serra's life, Palóu draws our attention to how she does play into his missionary role, why she was important to the way he conceived of his order's mission, and the events that he himself witnessed. In the concluding section of the *Relación*, Palóu reveals that he was granted permission from his

superiors to publish the text because they thought that reading it "moveria á muchos á alistarse para Operaciones de la Viña que plantó este exemplar Misionero" (Palóu *Vida* 327). Perhaps Palóu thought that, as the narrative of the Lady in Blue had served to motivate himself and Serra, it belonged in the biography of Serra for the same reason- to inspire others as it had inspired him. Of course, the attachment of the *Tanto* to Serra' biography had the additional effect of further disseminating the narrative of the Lady in Blue, which rode sidecar to another widely-read text.

Palóu does not assert the belief that Sor María traveled to northern Mexico. In addition, both Serra and Palóu focus on other specific sections of the Tanto (the immediate conversion of the tribes, the two Friars mystically sent to the missions, the mystical transport of objects from Spain to northern Mexico) that do not have anything to do with the Lady in Blue narrative. We will discuss these specific references below, but in doing so it is important to keep in mind that the *Tanto*'s objective is to relay the Lady in Blue narrative. Palóu believed it was important enough to include in its entirety rather than in excerpts, or via the citations incorporated into the text. I would again suggest that the context (the Lady in Blue narrative) is inseparable from the episodes that the friars Serra and Palóu actually cite, whether or not they refer to it explicitly.

This being said, let's take a look at some of the places where Serra and Palóu both discuss Sor María and her writing in the context of their mission work. Many of the friars' comments derive in some way from the *Tanto*, usually indirectly referencing or, as Geiger suggests, assuming knowledge of, particular passages from it. One such case of the latter is Serra's 1770 letter to Joseph Galvéz written from Monterrey, CA during the

celebration of Corpus Christi. Finding that he lacked the candles needed to light the ceremony, Serra thought of the one lantern in the ship's cabin. Fortunately, and to everybody's great surprise, the crew opened a box they thought contained medical supplies and "se hallo ser de faroles de vidrio sin esttrenar, de que nadie tenía noticia" (Serra, vol. 1 184) instead. This would seem to be simple enough, but the unusual part about it is that Serra says of the origins of these lamps that "si no lo trageron los Angeles al menos a nosottros se nos hizo como llovido" (Serra, vol. 1 184). Serra's gentle suggestion that angels brought the lamps to the missionaries has its basis in the *Tanto*, which Serra refers to at the outset of the anecdote, "teniendo pressente el caso que se refiere de los dos religiosos nuesttros llevados al remoto reyno de Titlas" (Serra, vol. 1 182). Serra perhaps assumes that Galvez also "tenía presente" the *Tanto*'s reference to two friars who were also mystically sent to the missionary field (also alluded to by later 18th-century California friars). Remarkably, Serra continues the preface to the lamps by stating that those same two friars found a "custodia" (a monstrance for the host) that "les fue llevada desde España por manos de Angeles y de la Venerable Madre de Agreda" (Serra, vol. 1 184). That Serra draws the parallel between the miraculous appearance of the lamps in California, and Sor María (and the angels) bringing religious paraphernalia to the region of the Titlás demonstrates the degree to which he views (literally or figuratively) himself and his missions as a continuation of that mystical missionary tradition. Serra also assumes that others, in this case Galvez, would also understand the context of this vision.

This particular incident is also important because although Serra alludes to episodes in the *Tanto*, he generally does not locate Sor María in "Titlás." In this case, although Serra attributes the appearances of the monstrance to both Sor María and the angels he does definitively assume that she was present in northern Mexico: the monstrance was brought by "her hands." He is quite clear to place Sor María in the past by suggesting that only the angels (and not Sor María) could have brought the monstrance to California. Nevertheless, Sor María presence as a missionary in Titlás is confirmed by Serra in this example.

In 1769, as Serra traveled from the presidio of Loreto in California to San Diego, the friar discussed Sor María in his personal diary and in a letter written in San Diego to Fray Juan Andrés. In these instances, Serra mentions the Franciscan's efficacy of conversion, as per the abovementioned *Tanto* segment. He writes in his diary on May 18th that after baptizing a tribal leader and 43 of his followers, the leader was renamed "Francisco" in honor of St. Francis, "de cuya intercesión píamente creí provenir aquella feliz novedad como cumplimiento de la palabra que le tiene dada Dios Nuestro Señor en estos últimos siglos (según afirma la Venerable Madre María de Jesús de Agreda) de que los gentiles con sólo la vista de sus hijos se han de convertir a nuestra santa fe católica" (Serra, vol. 1 64). Serra views the willingness to convert to Christianity among the tribes as evidence of Sor María's assurances regarding the friars' mission labors. In his letter to Fray Juan Andrés, dated July 3, 1769, Serra says as much, but again assumes that the recipient will understand to what he is referring in regards to the Franciscan's effect on the tribes. Serra says of the conversions at the new San Diego mission: "y con la gracia

de Dios me parece que se hará cuanto se quisiere, y que le cumplirá Dios Nuestro Señor la palabra dada a nuestro Seráfico Padre San Francisco de que con sola la vista de sus hijos se conviertan en estos últimos siglos los gentiles" (Gomez Canedo 79). Without saying where this prophecy came from, Serra affirms Sor María's authority on the matter of Franciscan missions.

This proposition is confirmed in Serra's 1772 letter to Palóu, written while the former was at the San Carlos de Monterrey mission, and which Palóu includes in its entirety in the *Relación*. In it, as Serra discusses the progress of the conversions made there, he again compares his experience to Sor María's words on the matter in the *Tanto*: "Y sobre todo, la promesa hecha por Dios en estos últimos siglos á N.P.S. Francisco (como dice la Seráfica M. Maria de Jesús) de que los Gentiles con solo ver á sus hijos se han de convertir á nuestra Santa Fé Católica, ya me parece que la veo y palpo" (Palóu *Vida* 137). Among the California tribes, Serra perceives that Sor María's testimony as a missionary is held true, and that it is being realized. In discussing the Serra's labors to move the San Carlos mission to the Carmel River (where Serra wrote the letter to Palóu), Palóu comments that Serra did not foist this responsibility onto other friars, but worked on it himself, as through such actions "se dirigen á tan noble fin, y son muy del agrado de Dios (como dice en su citada Carta la V.M. María de de [sic] Jesús" (Palóu *Vida* 127). Thus, both Serra's actions at San Carlos, and the resulting conversion of the tribes are couched in terms of Sor María's accounts of their mission work in the Americas.

It would also seem that the *Tanto*'s statement regarding the Franciscan friars' efficacy at conversions circulated not only among the friars of Propaganda Fide, but also

in the viceregal court. According to Palóu, Serra advised viceroy Antonio María de Bucareli y Ursúa about exploration along the California coast, particularly in regards to the inclusion of Franciscan friars among the crew. Palóu states that Bucareli "insinuó […] al V. Padre los deseo que tenia de que fuese algun Misionero a dicha expedición" (Palóu *Vida* 160). Bucareli y Ursúa wanted to send a missionary on the basis of the Serra's testimony regarding the instant conversions at the hands of the Franciscans; in fact, Bucareli "tenía muy presente, y no olvidaba S. Eca. desde que la oyó al V. Fr. Junípero" (Palóu *Vida* 160). Whether or not Serra did advise Bucareli to this effect is unclear; however there seems to be little doubt in Palóu's mind that the *Tanto*'s assurances, insisted upon by Serra, had a significant effect on the secular exploration of the coast. While Serra and Palóu placed trust in the prediction regarding their order seems in keeping with their missionary order, that the viceroy would have as well is astounding- and certainly the friars did in fact travel with the expeditionary parties along the coast.

The last example of Sor María in Serra's conception of the mission and Palóu's writing about Serra is twofold, both elements based on the Mission San Antonio de Padua. In the first case, Palóu illustrates a side of Serra that shows the friar considering his own work in the context of Sor María's missionizing desire. Upon selecting the site for the San Antonio mission, Serra had the church bells unloaded, hung from a tree, and then vigorously rang them. When a fellow missionary criticized Serra for his jubilant turn, Sera replied: "Dexeme Padre explayar el corazon, que quisiera que esta campana se oyese por todo el Mundo, como deseaba la V. Madre Sor Maria de Jesús de Agreda"

(Palóu *Vida* 122). In his moment of happiness as a missionary, Serra relates what he does as a missionary- building churches, converting tribes, exploring unknown regions- to Sor María's will as a missionary, or as an authority on missions. The relationship that Palóu highlights between the real-life actions of Serra, and Sor María's texts or the concept of her as a missionary reveals a deeper sort of relationship between the two than perhaps even the previous examples demonstrated. Serra's happiness at the establishment of the mission is intimately tied to Sor María's longing and joy.

Finally, Palóu records an unusual account from Mission San Antonio, one that Geiger (Geiger, vol.1 293) states the friar had heard from Fray Verger, Fray Sitjar, and Fray Pieras, both of whom had been stationed there. Though Geiger stipulates that this narrative did not originate with Palóu, the friar certainly does not hesitate to include it in Serra's *Relación*. It concerns a new convert, a very old woman ("representaba tener de edad cien años" (Palóu *Vida* 124)) named "Agueda" who came to the mission and requested baptism from the friars. When asked why she wanted to be converted, she claimed that a long time ago a man dressed like the missionaries, with the ability to fly, came to her tribe and taught them the same doctrine as the missionaries. Upon further investigation, the friars discovered that the other tribal members confirmed this legendary tradition. Palóu correlates this information to the *Tanto*, concluding that the individual who visited this tribe must have been one of the two men Sor María said had visited the region during her lifetime. The events that Palóu describes are portrayed as happening in the distant past, in the early 17th century; he makes no claim for Sor María's presence at Mission San Antonio any time in contemporaneous history. But the fact that Palóu's

connects this information with Sor María's text demonstrates the proximity between these two missionary manifestations. And, of course, the name of the new convert who shares the tribe's history with the friars is surprisingly similar to Sor María's.

Other Californian friars from the later 17th and early 18th centuries continued to reference Sor María, and many cited tribal histories that recalled a Catholic evangelization predating Serra and Palóu (Geiger, vol. 1 295-7). These accounts extend the Lady in Blue's narrative even further in the history of Spain's last northern missionary frontier. With dates as late as 1856, the view of Sor María as a missionary that began with Serra, Palóu and the missionaries of Propaganda Fide continued in the region well into the mid-19th century.

Eusebio Kino and Juan Mateo Manje

Although in O'Brien's mural, the artist places Fray Junípero Serra, OFM alongside Fr. Eusebio Kino, SJ, both looking up and at the image of Sor María de Agreda, the nature of their individual relationships to her was different. As we have already seen, Serra was a devotee of Agredan writings, his belief in her religious texts and mystical travel manifested in his correspondence and in his missionary labors. In contrast, Kino does not seem to have had personal devotion to Sor María. This isn't especially surprising as Kino, a Jesuit, would have had far less exposure to Sor María than the friar from the San Fernando branch of Propaganda Fide did. Why, then, does O'Brien pair the two figures in his painting?

Kino does indeed briefly mention Sor María in his account of exploration to Pimería Alta (Kino *Misiones*). In Book Six, Chapter Six of this account, dated February 7, 1699, Kino writes of the party's exploration to the Río Azul and the Hopi region:

> Grasias a infinita bondad del Señor, tan patentemente logramos el deseado desengaño de si los naturales del Rio Grande o del Rio de los Apóstoles y sus contornos tatemavan y comian gente, que el Señor Theniente Juan Mateo Manje, en su curiosa y aseada relacion que escrivió de esta entrada, por aver tanta afabilidad, amor y cariño destas nuevas gentes, dize era de parezer que años antes la Venerable Madre de Jesús de Agreda les avia venido a domesticar e instruir, como ay tradision de que vino desde España milagrosamente a instruir algunas otras Naciones del Nuevo México. Que los Rev. Padres de San Francisco las allavan ya algo catequizadas (Kino *Misiones* 70)

Kino immediately offers another (perhaps to his mind more easily rationalized) explanation for the tribes' "afabilidad, amor y cariño": "otros an sido de parecer que la venturosa sangre del V.P. Francisco Xavier Saeta, fertilisa y zazona todas estas tan dilatadas mieses" (Kino *Misiones* 70-71). Fr. Francisco Saeta was a Jesuit missionary killed on April 2, 1695 at mission Concepción de Caborca. The first section of Kino's account consists of letters sent from Saeta to Kino, regarding the former's work at the missions, and the event leading up to his death. As Kino writes in metaphor in regards to Saeta, it is not clear whether he means that the Indians Kino's detachment had just encountered were previously in contact with Saeta's mission, or if the friar's work and death had a more general spiritualizing effect on the native populations of the region.

Perhaps Kino had been appraised of the existence of Sor María via his friend and fellow scientist Carlos de Sigüenza y Góngora, who had received notice of Sor María's presence in Texas via Fray Damián Manzanet's letter reporting on the missions of Texas.

Perhaps her renown within Mexico, or at least in Mexico City and the state of Sinaloa, where Kino was stationed prior to his explorations of California and Pimería Alta, was such that the Jesuit priest was aware of Sor María's voyages of conversion to the Jumanos of New Mexico. Though he does acknowledge that "ay tradision" regarding Sor María in the region, Kino comments regarding Sor Maria give no indication of his devotion to such a belief. One gets the sense from Kino's brief account that the Jesuit priest is primarily relieved to find that the region's inhabitants are not cannibals, and that they appear to welcome his party. While acknowledging that lieutenant Juan Mateo Manje believes that this affability is due to Sor Maria, Kino subtly distances himself from that hypothesis. Kino refers to Manje's account of the same events rather than to Manje's personal opinion of them, and offers an alternative explanation that is less metaphysical and also reflects well on his own order. However powerful the artist effect of his presence alongside Serra in O'Brien's mural is, Kino really serves a more symbolic purpose, standing in as a representative for the true author of her history in Pimería Alta: Kino's lieutenant, Juan Mateo Manje.

Manje accompanied Kino on his explorations throughout Arizona and California, compiling a work on the experience in the process. His text, *Luz de Tierra Incógnita en la América Septentrional Y Diario de las Exploraciones en Sonora*, is one of the most oft-cited pieces of colonial writing from the Arizona region. Historians and ethnographers find in the second of the two books comprising the text useful information regarding the people, customs and geography of that region in the late 17th- and early 18th- centuries. We will examine Manje's description of the events relative to Sor María,

which appear in the second book of *Luz de Tierra Incógnita*. Certainly, Manje's assertion (and that of Fray Luis Velarde, a friar who traveled in the company of Kino and Manje) of her presence among the Pimas in this second book is much more enthusiastic and emphatic than is Kino's circumspect allusion. It is clearly from Manje and Velarde's account that later folkloric and modern literary works are drawn, as the frequently-reproduced details of the narrative indicate.

As Manje editor Francisco Fernández del Castillo notes of the lieutenant's life "no se tienen más noticias biográficas que las que él mismo intercala en su obra" (Fernández del Castillo VII). As a result it is quite difficult to discern where Manje might have heard of Sor María /The Lady in Blue, or who he conferred with in the process of composing and publishing the work. Fernández del Castillo ascribes Manje's serious interest in the case of Sor Maria's travels in the Southwest to "la credulidad propia de la época" (Fernández del Castillo VII): "así se explica que Mange ponga como cierta la tradición de que la Madre Sor Maria de Jesús de Agreda, caminando por los aires, se transportara […] a los indios de Nuevo México" (Fernández del Castillo VIII).

But it seems that there is more to it that this, as the first, often disregarded book of *Luz de Tierra Incógnita* indicates. More than just the a manifestation of the credulity of the period, as Fernández del Castillo indicates, Manje's portrayal of and reference to Sor María exemplifies the intersection of her literary influence in colonial Mexico, with her contemporaneous and co-locational historical presence. Through the dual movements and natures embodied in Manje's work, the Lady in Blue/Sor María becomes part of the textual history of Sonora and Arizona.

Let us first focus on the second half of Manje's work, in which he describes events that led him to conclude that Sor María had visited the Pima Indians sometime prior to the arrival of the Kino/Manje expedition. When questioning the Pimas as to whether they had heard of Spanish men in the area (anticipating a response in reference to the Oñate expeditions of the early 17th century), Manje states the Pimas volunteered some additional information:

> Añadieron (sin ofrecernos preguntar la tal cosa) que siendo ellos muchachos, vino a sus tierras una mujer blanca y hermosa vestida de blanco, pardo y azul, hasta los pies y un paño o velo con que cubría la cabeza, la cual les hablaba y gritaba, y reñía, con una cruz, en lengua que no entendían y que las naciones del río Colorado la flecharon y dejaron por muerta dos veces y que resucitado se iba por el aire sin saber donde era su casa y vivienda, y a pocos días volvía muchas veces a reñirlos; lo mismo nos habían dicho 5 días antes en la ranchería de San Marcelo a que no dábamos ascenso, pero confirmando éstos lo mismo y en lugares tan apartados, discurrimos si acaso la venerable María de Jesús de Agreda, por decir en la Relación de su vida que por los años de 1,630 predicó a los indios gentiles de esta Septentrional América y contornos del Nuevo México, y habiendo pasado 68 años hasta el corriente en que nos dan esta noticia los viejos que parecen según el aspecto de 80 años pueden acordarse. (Manje *Luz* 266)

Manje's explanation for Sor María de Agreda's visit is multi-layered and complex. First, he asserts that the tribe offering this information did so without any prompting from the exploration group: "sin ofrecernos preguntar tal cosa." Manje makes clear that this narrative arose spontaneously (much as Fray Benavides did) and that, furthermore, other tribes at the San Marcelo settlement had related the same information ("lo mismo") to them five days pervious. Manje asserts that both versions recalled the detailed account of a beautiful veiled woman dressed in white, brownish and blue who visited them, carrying with her a cross, and scolding them at in an unknown language. In addition, this figure,

whose home was unknown, was short through with arrows twice, returning then, and on other occasions to rebuke the tribes in her incomprehensible language.

In a statement that links literature to history, Manje references Sor María's vita, by Ximénez Samaniego, the *Relación*, published separate from the MCD. Manje asserts the Spanish party's skepticism of the tribes' account of this woman, but then correlates what he has heard from the tribes with what he has previously read. The final detail, as was the case with Manzanet's contemporaneous account in Texas, concerns timing and the nature of the visits the woman made to the region. Manje says that the *Relación* places Sor María in the region around 1630. He states that at the time he writing his diary (apparently 1698), those telling who have related the account are in their 80's-clearly old enough to have been alive and witnessed Sor María when she was alive. This particular detail is important because, theologically, it is very safe. The date of the visits simply corroborate the dates already established for Sor María's bilocation; it doesn't assert anything regarding Sor María's possible sainthood as she was not appearing after her death.

Then, Manje explains why both reports indicate that Sor María was incomprehensible; for in the *Relación* of her life and in the *Tanto*, she comments that she was understood by those she evangelized. Manje suggests that perhaps the reason the tribes said they could not understand Sor María was because they lacked comprehension, but for other reasons:

> Solo reparamos el añadir no la entendían por que Dios obrando el mayor milagro de ser conducida a estas regiones desde España, no hace las cosas imperfectas y le había de dar el don de lenguas para ser entendida, así, pues, a lo principal sigue lo accesorio de ser ella, pero como ha pasado tanto tiempo y ser entonces muchachos harían poco concepto en lo que les enseñaba o el Demonio, caos de confusión, los confundió después borrándoles la memoria, o será los que notamos en estas naciones, en que hablándoles en distinta lengua a la suya, aunque la entiendan usan de la frase de no la entienden, para explicar que no es su lengua. Apunto sólo esto, por si en algún tiempo se hicieran más individuales pesquisas con las naciones del Norte." (Manje *Luz* 267)

Manje suggests that perhaps either the individuals who had seen her were young, and did not remember what she had taught (or that the Devil later played tricks on their memories). His final suggestion is the most interesting, as it suggests that the problem in communication lies not between Sor María and the tribes, but rather between the tribes and the present company, as according to Manje, their manner of expressing "in a different, intelligible language" is to say "we didn't understand."

The final narrative of Sor María's visit to region of Pimería Alta during the Kino expedition is also located in the second book of *Luz de Tierra Incógnita*. According to Fernández de Castillo (VIII) and Luis González Rodríguez (19) it is taken from the notes of Fray Luis Velarde, a Jesuit friar whose texts on Pimería Alta were employed by Manje because, as González Rodríguez suggests, "completaban perfectamente el plan de Manje y por eso los utilizó, dando pleno crédito al autor" (González Rodríguez 20). Velarde's account, completed May 30, 1716 (González Rodríguez 9), after Kino's death, is very similar to Manje's, in that it mentions the *Relación*, uses the title "venerable" to refer to Sor María, and explicitly places her evangelizing in the region, but it includes a few new details:

> Lograráse averiguar que misterio tendrá lo que dicen los Pimas del Norte, de una mujer española que en años pasados salía a temporadas de una casa de la otra banda del Colorado a predicar lo que predican los padres y a enseñar a aquellos naturales gentiles el camino del Cielo, lo cual conviene con lo que se lee en la vida de la Venerable Madre María de Jesús, conocida por el nombre de la Venerable Agreda, y mucho más por sus celestiales escritos que muchas veces fue vista en las partes del Nuevo México y adyacentes, predicándole quizás y repartir rosarios y otros donecillos a los indios, lo cual se averiguó en la manera que se escribe en su vida a que me remito y de aquí puede ser se origine la divisa de los *crucíferos*. (Manje 330-331)

Velarde also refers to Sor María's own writings, in addition to the *Relación*, and mentions that the tribes apparently had crucifixes or crosses in their possession. Fray Velarde's narration of the encounter between Sor María and Pimas demonstrates least a familiarity with the nun's writings, even as it adds further details to the overall account of her missionizing presence, and suggests the physicality of the nature of her travel (someone must have been able to bring the "rosarios, donecillos y crucíferos" to which Velarde refers.

But if Fray Velarde's addition to the account suggests a previous knowledge of Sor María's work, the Introduction and first book of *Luz de Tierra Incógnita* openly displays Manje's knowledge of and ascription to Sor María's writing and to writing about her. In reference to the dissemination of Sor María's writing, discussed in Chapter 3, Manje's interest in it seems particularly relevant and speaks to the degree to which Agredan knowledge had extended by the late 17th century. In regards to the Jesuit order's missionary work in Pimería Alta, Manje seems to quote Sor María's *Tanto* regarding conversions in that region: "dice el Señor por la Venerable María de Ag(r)eda, que el servicio más grato a su Divina Majestad y a quien da más grados de gloria, es a las almas

que se emplean en convertir a otras y las obras que recibe con más agrado y complacencia que dirá su carta" (Manje *Luz* 7). Though this attribution to Sor María regarding the mission work could also have arisen from Ximénez Samaniego's *Relación* of her life, the fact that Manje later cites the *Tanto* (as this quotation suggests) would make that seem the more likely of the two sources.

Manje goes on in the same introduction to quote from the MCD and, in the process, to flesh out a fascinating parallel between the conversion of the Apache nation by the Jesuit friars, and the conversion of the "cesaragustanos" (Manje *Luz* 7) of Spain by Saint James the Greater. Santiago, dejected by the Zaragossans' unwillingness to convert, is encouraged by a most unexpected individual, the Virgin Mary. According to Sor María, she was appeared in life as la Virgen del Pilar, sent from Jerusalem to Zaragossa to reassure Santiago and encourage him in his labors there. Manje says that it such miracles occur "por que entendamos que [los] mandatos [de Dios] embeben diferentes sentidos que nuestra limitada comprensión alcanza" (Manje *Luz* 7). Manje then concludes the metaphor by pointing out that the nations that are the most difficult to convert are also those whose conversions are the longest-lasting; a double metaphor for the Apaches awaiting conversions, and the Spanish converted by Santiago.

At its most fundamental level, this segment demonstrates that Manje was familiar with the particulars of Sor María's writing. He also clearly viewed his role as a secular official involved in the actions of conquest as analogous to his religious antecedents. Though Manje does not complete the parallel triptychs of Spain- Santiago- la Virgen del Pilar, and Apache nation- Jesuits- Sor María, their relative relationships almost suggest

themselves. I previously suggested the similarities between the bilocations of la Virgen del Pilar and Sor María; though Manje does not say so explicitly, the construction of his argument seems to draw the two into closer dialogue.

In closing the introduction, Manje's "Protesta del autor" further suggests the lieutenant's understanding of the provisional status of an individual such as Sor María's within the Catholic Church. Although she was widely read and, as we shall see, both imitated and venerated, her case for sainthood had not been (still has not been) approved. As if to acknowledge the fact that he discusses Sor María at length in his work, calling her Venerable and citing her works, he nonetheless cites Pope Urban VIII's 1634 bull (referred to in Chapter 1) prohibiting the "dar culto de santidad o de mártires o varones que de esta vida pasaron sin estar declarado por tales en el oráculo del Espíritu Santo" (Manje *Luz* 11). This bull was intended to curb the practice of representing local holy people as saints before they had passed through the complete process of beatification; the bull served a centralizing purpose as it sought to maintain the establishment of sanctity within the Church organization. In reference to the bull, Manje asserts that, although he might call individuals in his text by the titles "Santo," "Beato," and "Venerable" (as he does Sor María), "no es [su] intención (ni que lo entiendan otros) caigan tales elogios sobre las personas" (Manje *Luz* 11). Manje states that he in applying such terms, he only defers to custom as he narrates the actual events. He affirms that he is not is not trying to make a claim for the sanctity of such events, but rather that right "está reservado, toca y pertenece a la infalible decisión de la Santa Sede Católica" (Manje *Luz* 11).

This "Protesta" indicates that Manje wrote in response to, or in the context of an environment that might have interpreted his narratives regarding martyred priests, miraculous events, and Sor María as an attempt to kindle regional adoration of or devotion to these individuals, previously unrecognized by the Church. Though these comments to not directly indicate that that Manje was aware of Sor María's pending case for sainthood, it at very least illustrates his awareness of a tenuous category between legitimacy and popular recognition into which a narrative about Sor María (particularly one explicitly connected to her writings) could potentially fall. For all that Manje will subsequently write about Sor María (in the process, inscribing her into the history of the region), he clearly does not wish to invoke sanctity when it is not permitted for him to do so. As the Introduction and first book are peppered with references to Catholic figures, beliefs and doctrine, Manje's deep faith is evident.

I would suspect that the reason most historians pass over the first book of *Luz de Tierra Incógnita* is because in it, Manje summarizes other histories of discovery and exploration in the Americas to present. Of the book's 27 chapters, the first four deal with the earliest exploration of the Americas and what was found there. The first include everything from the end of the Spanish reconquista ((Manje *Luz* 14); to Cortés' first marriage to Catarina Suárez (Manje *Luz* 19) and conquest of Mexico (Manje *Luz* 19-41) (including Doña Marina's role as his translator (Manje *Luz* 22)); to the Spanish presence in Peru/Chile (Manje *Luz* 41-42), the Philippines (Manje *Luz* 42-43), and New Mexico (Manje *Luz* 43). Manje continues to describe generally the geography, flora and fauna of the Americas (Manje *Luz* 44-46); the nature of the religious hierarchy in the Americas

(Manje *Luz* 46-48); the origin and lineage of the indigenous peoples (48-55); various specific cases of conversion (and the friars that effected them- another source, perhaps, for Manje's caution in the *Prólogo*) (Manje *Luz* 59-64); and of the creation of the magnetic compass needle, ultimately used by the Spanish, according to Manje, for the conversion of the peoples of America. Manje specifically cites the MCD in this last case (Capítulo 4), in support of the claim that 5200 years had elapsed between the creation of the universe and the birth of Jesus.

The next 23 chapters generally recount the history of exploration and conversion on the northern frontiers of Spain's empire: the "Californias" (Capítulos 5, 7, 15, 18, 21, 23-24), Florida (Capítulo 6), New Mexico (Capítulos 8-13, 16, 19-20); as well as outside threats to its integrity, namely that of Captain Francis Drake (Capítulo 14). He includes further commentary directed to the Crown regarding the settlement of the region, and its potential benefits (Captítulo 22), reports on the semi-mythical Strait of Anián and Quivira (Captítulo 17), and as summary of the actual settlements and necessary exploration that remain to be completed (Capítulo 25). The last two chapters, however, are devoted solely to Sor María, her life and her travels to New Mexico.

Manje writes at the beginning of Capítulo 26 that the two letters of Sor Maria's that he is planning on presenting will serve "para coronar esta obra" (Manje *Luz* 183), acting as the centerpiece for the first book. He wishes to include these two letters in his history of the early exploration of the Americas (particularly its northern frontiers) because they report on the "las gentilidades de esta América Septentrional" (Manje *Luz* 183). For Manje, it seems that Sor María's letter regarding her travels to the Americas

(the *Tanto*) was as much a part of the history and known anthropology of the region as were the accounts of Cortés and Zarate Salmerón that he had earlier cited. As Manje demonstrated in the introduction and in the chapter on the compass needle, he was knowledgeable about other Agredan writings; in this chapter, he shows that he also has read Ximénez Samaniego's vita of Sor María, whether as a loose document (the *Relación* referred to in the second book of *Luz*) or simply as the introduction to the MCD, as he presents extensive biographical information about her. In this particular summary history of the Americas, the life of a Spanish nun plays a prominent role.

In Capítulo 26, Manje presents a summary of Sor María's life, derived from the abovementioned sources (and ultimately taken from Sor María's own account of her childhood), as his quotes and references to a "tratado" (work) indicate. Manje reduces the text somewhat, presenting the details about her birth and family history, as well as the founding of the Coronel family Conceptionist community. Following the lead of the vita, Manje's abridged version recounts the physical trials that Sor María underwent as her spiritual encounters (divine and demonic) increased in intensity, culminating in the ecstatic experiences in which the nations of New Mexico were revealed to her**.** Manje cites: "dígalo el tratado que por obediencia escribió que llamó escala" (Manje *Luz* 187), which would seem to refer to another of her works, the *Escala para subir a la perfección*. Manje continues in the same vein as Ximénez Samaniego, commenting extensively on Sor María's numerous spiritual/mystical experience, in particular on her role in the conversions in New Mexico (Manje *Luz* 188, 192-93), her blue robes (Manje *Luz* 191), the debate regarding whether her travels were corporeal or spiritual (Manje *Luz* 192-193),

and her eventual meeting with Fray Alonso de Benavides of the Custodia of New Mexico (Manje *Luz* 194-6).

In Capítulo 27, Manje (who was clearly already familiar with Fray Gerónimo de Zarate Salmerón's *Relación*) cites the same two paragraphs attributed to Archbishop Manso y Zuñiga that Zarate Salmerón quotes, and adds the friar's reflections (derived from some unknown source) on Sor María's presence in New Mexico: "Lo que yo sé acerca de esto, no por revelación que soy muy malo […] digo que no llegó indio alguno de la tierra adentro del Nuevo México que no le preguntase los secretos de ella" (Manje *Luz* 197). In introducing his abridgement of Sor María's part of the *Tanto*, Manje adds some confusing commentary regarding the loss of a collection of documents, apparently including the *Tanto* as well as a "cuadro" (Manje *Luz* 198) in the 1680 Pueblo Revolt. Manje offers a fairly short modified excerpt from the *Tanto* ("la carta exhortatoria de la Venerable Madre […] que es del tono siguiente" (Manje *Luz* 198)), citing the portions pertaining to Sor María's obedience to her male superiors, the kingdoms (slightly misquoted) that she visited and converted, her recommendations regarding settlement ("que los gobernadores pudieran ordenar, los [frailes] acompañen algunos soldados de buena vida y costumbres" (Manje *Luz* 199)), and the divine importance of the friars' work for conversion.

Then, the chapter takes on a melancholy tone, as Manje (or someone he is quoting) ascribes to Sor María sentiments that are perhaps more reflective of his own view than of anything Sor María actually said. He mourns the lack of missionary zeal and rigor which Sor María advises the friars against, but does not in fact accuse them of.

Manje (or the person he is citing) carries on a sort of imagined dialogue in which Sor María is an implied participant, as the repeated ejaculations of "oh hija mía" (Manje *Luz* 199, 201) indicate. In this dialogue, Manje criticizes those whose actions undermine the work of conversion: "¡en qué lamentable estrago han puesto al pueblo cristiano los poderosos pastores, los malos ministros que estas les ha dado por sus secretos juicios!" (Manje *Luz* 201). It seems that Manje holds Sor María's conversions in positive contrast to the missionary labor executed by the actual religious and secular explorers who were present in the region. For Manje, Sor María would seem to be the epitome of what conversion in the colonial borderlands would ideally have been: passionate, mystical, selfless, and faith-filled.

Clearly, Juan Mateo Manje's relationship with Sor María extended beyond his report of her real-life presence among the Pima tribe of Sonora/Arizona. As the text from the first book of *Luz de Tierra Incógnita* demonstrates, he not only viewed her as a major historical figure of the region (on par with figures such as Oñate and Coronado), he had a working knowledge of her writing, and viewed her as an exemplary missionary figure. Though the relationship between Kino/Manje and Sor Maria alluded to in the St. Katharine's mural is still fundamentally valid, Manje's clear devotion to her as a spiritual missionary and writer nuances an already complex relationship.

The legacy of Sor María's missionizing presence in what would be Arizona, pioneered by Manje and Kino, continued into the mid-18th century, and seems to have been partially adopted by the Jesuit missionaries. Fray Carlos Delgado, a Franciscan writing from the San Felipe Presidio in 1746 comments on a report from the Hopi area:

> Los honorables Padres Jesuitas me dijeron […] cómo nuestra Madre María de Agreda se halla todavía en las vertientes de Moqui en vía corpórea, cuia noticia tienen de los Indios gentiles q' por allá transitan […] noticia que puede alegrar a Vuestra Ilustrísima para q' vea cómo nuestra apreciada misionera nos está ayudando a cultivar la Viña del Señor. (Valbona 41-42)

Thus, "Nuestra misionera," the Lady in Blue, remained deeply inscribed in the conceptual landscape of the Arizona and New Mexico even as the mission field continued to expand.

Contemporary and later histories

As we have just discussed, many colonial missionaries and explorers identified Sor María within the context of their own, lived frontier environments. Others would either include her narrative explicitly in their own colonial histories (as is the case of José Augustín Campos, Andrés González de Barcia, Juan Villagutierre Soto-Mayor, and, of course, Fray Agustín de Vetancurt, Fray Rosa Figueroa), highlighting the degree to which the narrative was considered worthy of historicization; or, as in the case of Vélez de Escalante, impart a startling insight into the degree to which Sor María/the Lady in Blue truly existed in the collective conceptualization of the northern borderlands. That she is invoked intentionally speaks to the official meaning allocated to her narrative; that she appears unintentionally as well, as in Vélez de Escalante's account, the naming of the Concepción de Agreda mission, and the royal cédula for the exploration of the Bahía del Espiritu Santo, suggests that she was even more present that the histories themselves indicate. We will begin with Vélez de Escalante, and a history that, while it does not explicitly intend to include Sor María, does so anyway.

Vélez de Escalante

In *Documentos para la Historia de Nuevo México* (Series 3, Tomo 1), Fray Silvestre Vélez de Escalante presents another summary regional history, dated 2 April 1778, on Pueblo Revolt-era New Mexico. Vélez de Escalante had apparently been charged with recovering governmental documentation from the region for the Reverend Lector Juan Agustín Morfí. In an introductory letter for the materials, Vélez de Escalante apologizes for the lack of documents predating the 1680 revolt, and "para que V.R. vea que estas dilaciones no son escusas" (Vélez de Escalante 115), he sends his historical narrative accompanied by original, usually excerpted texts from the epoch, written by secular and religious officials.

Near the end of the *epítome*, there is a demarcation for the year 1707, and the governorship of Don José Chacón Medina Salazar; Vélez de Escalante continues, narrating the growing hostilities between the Spanish, and the Hopi and Navajo tribes under governor Juan Ignacio Flores Mogollon five years later. The governor hears that "en algunos pueblos habían los indios reedificado sus estufas" (Vélez de Escalante 201) and he orders destroyed; he also orders that arms be collected from all but a few Christianized indigenous people. Flores convenes the secular and religious leadership to consider whether they should require that the same "indios reducidos" quit painting their bodies various colors and using their "monterrillas de piel" (big leather pack covers), as this gave them opportunity to steal from (an assumption that Vélez de Escalante characterizes as "sin el más débil fundamento" (Vélez de Escalante 202)) and otherwise subvert the Spanish. The soldiers are in favor of forbidding the painting and monterrillas,

while the majority of the friars (with two noted exceptions) are not, and request that the Viceroy be consulted lest this act of little faith cause "una grave y general inquietud" (202).

Vélez de Escalante quotes Fray Antonio Miranda, "un religioso de una vida muy ejemplar, de experiencia y activísimo celo" (Vélez de Escalante 202), stationed at Acoma, who offers his deftly-crafted recommendation. He suggests that ripping away a centuries-old tradition from the indigenous tribes might not be the best course of action, that they should be treated "con la paciencia con que un hortelano cultiva una huerta recién planteada" (Vélez de Escalante 203). Miranda continues his garden metaphor, responding to the criticism against the indigenous people there, and deferring ultimate authority as to the worthiness of those they cultivate to Sor María: "Muy repetidas vienen las consultas contra este nuevo-verjel, de los naturales del Nuevo-Mexico, huerto á que Dios se inclina como lo dice la madre Agreda. Y pues Dios se inclina a estos naturales, alguna cosa buena mueve la voluntad" (Vélez de Escalante 203).

Thus, if Sor María testifies that the people of New Mexico are favored for conversion, they are. And from Miranda's point of view, this testimony is enough to stand in face of the "muy repetidas consultas" against their worthiness for conversion. Such a fact suggests that they are inherently worthy of the Spaniard's trust, and not their abuse; that their habits of body painting are no worse, Miranda points out, than Spanish practices of putting on makeup.

Through Vélez de Escalante's history and selective documentary recopilation, we are offered a rather starling view into another historical context into which Sor María

suddenly, yet candidly appears. In this case, the argument for the significance of her presence in this history is different from that for Campos, Barcia, and Villagutierre Sotomayor; selective recollection at the level of text does not function well here. However, the nature of Miranda's usage illustrates quite clearly what this chapter has intended to demonstrate: Sor María became inscribed into the northern colonial history and landscape, and into the way those who recalled her framed, and argued for the actions in which they participated. She may not appear everywhere, but where she does, she is present to a remarkably profound degree.

Fray José Augustín de Campos

But Kino and Manje weren't the only colonial explorer/historians of Arizona to write about Sor María. One later work, written by Jesuit missionary José Augustín de Campos, clearly draws on Kino/Manje/Velarde narratives of Sor María/Lady in Blue. Texts such as this make no original claims regarding her existence, but by including this improbable and improvable narrative, these histories repeatedly affirm her place in the colonial northern borderlands. In this and other later colonial chronicles, the narrative appears even when its repetition does not have any apparent bearing on the rest of the document, or when the author is not especially invested in miraculous/spiritual accounts (much less, in those of women in the Americas). In once instance, it appears in a summary history that describes and entirely different section of the frontier region (Florida).

Fray Campos' account of Sor María appears in a proposal the friar intended for the superiors of his order in regards to the settlement of Pimería Alta. Campos had

already been a missionary for thirty years when he composed his proposal to the Mexican Viceroy (Marquis of Casafuerte) in Mexico City in 1723, having accompanied Kino in his explorations in 1693. Campos had been sent with general Domingo Jironza to assess the damage accompanying Fray Saeta's at the Inmaculada Concepción mission in April of 1695 (González Rodríguez 229), and himself narrowly avoided Saeta's fate at Mission Dolores shortly thereafter. He was stationed in the region, rebuilding and administering missions, in particular San Ignacio, (González Rodríguez 232), until 1722, when he was sent to Mexico City.

Clearly no stranger to the Jesuit missions of Pimería Alta, Campos' account is "un plan para colonizar el noreste de la Pimería, con la fundación de una villa en el remate donde el río Terrenate entra en el Gila" (González Rodríguez 245) and proposal for the reduction of the Moqui (Hopi) nation of east-central Arizona. Campos is in the midst of describing the indigenous nations living near the Río Colorado, who frequently fought with the Pima, when he includes the following anecdote:

> Decía el mismo Padre [González suggests Kino] haberle contado los indios esta rareza: haber una casa o salón, donde vive una mujer sola, que ya no habla con nadie. Venla salirse como a pasear, y se vuelve. Dan a entender suele estar escribiendo en su casa; que antiguamente les hablaba y enseñaba varias cosas, y solía repartirles algunos donecillos. Discurría el padre si sería la venerable madre María de Jesús de Agreda. Fundábase en lo que en su vida, por el padre Samaniego, se refiere de su transmigración, por virtud divina, a las regiones del Nuevo México, y el caso de los rosarios. Cotejado el convenir indios ignorantísimos de historias distantes tantas mil leguas de España, con la relación de su vida, parece impele a una probable verdad. Esta, Dios la sabe y sus fines. (Campos 256)

Though Campos states that he is citing Kino's words on the matter, he does add some interesting details to the narrative: namely, that a woman still lives there and occasionally

walks around and also writes, but no longer talks to the people as she did in the past. Campos also mentions not only the *Relación*, but that it was written by Ximénez Samaniego, perhaps demonstrating his own familiarity with the text.

Aside from the new features it contributes (which Campos ascribes to another source, and does not claim as his own observations), this retelling of the narrative is significant because it places Sor María in the context of the northern missions as naturally and straightforwardly as any other element in the proposal- whether that's the location of the Río Colorado, or of the exploration of the "Siete cuevas" (Campos 253). Though Campos frames Sor María's presence in the region as conjecture ("parece impele a una probable verdad"), thereby complying with his assurance to the viceroy that he presented "lo cierto como cierto, lo dudoso como dudoso" (Campos 256), the fact that he includes it at all is notable. To Campos, it would seem, a document treating what one might find near the Gila River was not complete without mentioning Sor María, and her instruction of the indigenous people there. Whether or not confirming her continued existence in Pimería Alta was possible ("Esta, Dios la sabe y sus fines"), that she was already a part of the history of the region seems evident by Campos' presentation of her as such.

Ensayo Cronológico

Another excellent example of the deft, casual inclusion of Sor María's narrative into a more general history is Andrés González de Barcía Caballido y Zúñiga's *Ensayo cronológico para la historia general de la Florida* (written under his pseudonym Don Gabriel de Cardenas Z'Cano). Printed in Madrid in 1723 as an appendix to an edition of El Inca Garcilaso de la Vega's *La florida del Inca*, the text attempts to describe

chronologically the exploration and settlement of the region known as "La Florida" from its "discovery" in 1512 by Ponce de León to 1722. Barcía includes the incursions of the French, Spanish, Danish, English and Swedish as well, commenting on the various places they had established footholds that would challenge the Spanish.

Barcia opens the chapter "Década duodécima" with a short list of the highlights the reader will encounter therein. This includes the throwing out of Franciscan friars from the English province of Acadia (1628) (Barcía Caballido y Zúñiga 196), the political conflict between France and England for control in Canada (1630) (Barcía Caballido y Zúñiga 197) and the following: "Predica à los Teguas la V.M. Maria de Jesus de Agreda" (Barcía Caballido y Zúñiga 192). In the chapter's first section, "Año M.DC.XXII." (1622), just after discussing the routing of the British in Virginia, Barcia tucks in his rendering of the Lady in Blue narrative: "La V. Madre María de Jesús de Agreda, Predicó en la Provincia de los Tejas; si fue en Espíritu, o realmente, no pudo distinguirlo ella misma" (Barcía Caballido y Zúñiga 193). This departure is fascinating for many reasons: Barcía seems to be referencing an entirely different date for Sor María's visits to the southwest than the accepted one of 1630; he limits where she visited to just "la Provincia de los Tejas;" and he seems to be using as a source something other than Benavides or the *Tanto*, as he refers to Sor María's personal doubts regarding the nature of her travel. Immediately after his foray into Texan conversions, Barcía returns to describing the tribulations experienced in New Rochelle and Québec.

Had Barcía randomly slipped this anecdote into the rest of the narrative for the year 1622 (as it is context-less placement could suggest), it seems unlikely that he would

also have featured it as one of the key points of the chapter. What I like about this particular historical, extremely brief recounting of the account is that it is so casual, yet tells so much about the events themselves and how they were perceived and weighed historically. If you are trying to write a concise historical summary of all the conquest and settlement undertaken over a period of 200 years, why give space to the story of Sor María unless is really is part of that history? The inclusion of this particular episode was important enough to interrupt the flow of the rest of the northeasterly-oriented chapter; it is a telling inclusion.

In his introduction, Barcia says that the intent of the *Ensayo cronológico* was as a "reflexión general" (Barcía Caballido y Zúñiga 5), excerpts of history "para que se comprenda universalmente algún indicio, do lo mucho, que havia de decir" (Barcía Caballido y Zúñiga 5). He goes on (as the pseudonymous Don Gabriel) to list the major sources for the *historia*, most of which were held in the collection of a Señor Don Andrés González de Barcia. Among the works cites, it seems that the most likely candidate for the source of the Sor María anecdote is Fray Agustín de Vetancurt's *Teatro Mexicano* (Barcía Caballido y Zúñiga 6), Part 4, in which the Franciscan historian details the religious conversion that took place in Mexico (including that of Sor María). Barcía seemed to have no lack of sources for information about Sor María. And, of the countless other "noticias" regarding the history of Florida ("que especificarlas todas, era salir de los límites" (Barcía Caballido y Zúñiga 5), Barcia chose to include Sor María's.

Villagutierre Soto-Mayor: Historia de la Nueva México

A very suggestive example of the Lady in Blue/Sor María's incorporation as an active agent in the history of the colonization and settlement of New Mexico is present in the *Historia de la conquista, pérdida y restauración del reino de la Nuevba México en la América Septentrional* (1698), by madrileño Juan de Villagutierre Soto-Mayor. Villagutierre Soto-Mayor was the Relator (royal historian) del Real Consejo de las Indias (Lárraga 3) from approximately 1695-1709 (Lárraga 2). Having never himself traveled to the America (Lárraga 8), Villagutierre Sotomayor relied on other historical documents to compose his *historia* from Madrid, namely Gaspar Pérez de Villagrá's epic poem and, apparently, Fray Joseph Ximénez Samaniego's vita on Sor María.

In Chapter 15 of the *Historia'*s third book, after having cited segments of histories from Villagrá and others, and in beginning to describe the missionary work of the friars in the region of New Mexico, Villagutierre Soto-Mayor jumps directly to "Samaniego, en la 'Vida de la Madre María'" (Villagutierre Sotomayor 113). He smoothly transitions directly from Oñate and his conquests, to the friars and their missionary work, to Sor María's vita, and its bearing on the conversions of the region. He begins in the middle of the narrative, as does Benavides, with legions of indigenous people requesting baptism from the friars of the *custodia*, without previous catechization. In condensing Samaniego's account, Villagutierre Soto-Mayor summarizes Sor María's action among the tribes prior to the friars' baptizing: "por tener ya la sierva de Dios tan bien dispuestas aquellas almas con su maravillosa predicación, habiendo dejado tan poco que trabajar con ellas fueron innumerables las que en cortísimo tiempo bautizaron los religiosos"

(Villagutierre Sotomayor 115). Sor María's work was so effective that, in reality, the friars had little to do other than administer baptism. Throughout Chapters 16 and 17, Villagutierre Soto-Mayor continues to cite Ximénez Samaniego's version of the Sor María narrative, possibly with some interjections of Benavides's *1630 Memorial*.

That Villagutierre Soto-Mayor incorporates Sor María's history so seamlessly into the flow of the rest of the document is, of course, in keeping with the other histories that do the same. From his station in Madrid, he, too, locates Sor María in the colonial borderlands, placing her on equal ground with other explorers and missionaries. Near the end of the treatise on Sor María, he presents the issue of the nature of Sor María's travel, citing Sor María's reflections (via Ximénez Samaniego) on whether she traveled in body or in spirit, while asserting that there were many reasons ("tenía muchos fundamentos") (Villagutierre Sotomayor 121) to believe that she traveled in body. In addition to the fact that he develops the Sor María facet of New Mexican history extensively, what sets Villagutierre Soto-Mayor apart is that the way he frames her actions and describes her role. How he presents her reveals that she was understood, at least from the part of the Royal Historian, as an active agent in the colonial borderlands. As Maribel Lárraga points out in her dissertation on this history: "Villagutierre Sotomayor no hace ningún comentario crítico en torno a lo que significó Sor María de Agreda ni tampoco menciona en su manuscrito alguna razón que haya tenido para incluir este episodio en su obra. Concluyo que su fin principal para incluir la historia de María de Agreda fue de presentar una historia integra sobre el norte del Virreinato de la Nueva España y hacer hincapié en la meta evangelizadora que tenían los españoles" (Lárraga162-63).

As we have already seen, Villagutierre Soto-Mayor draws the conclusion that the reasons so few friars were needed to baptize the tribes was because Sor María had already catechized them. At the conclusion of the section "Relación de la Madre María" (Villagutierre Soto-Mayor 127), in which he remarks of that travels that "en ninguna otra parte de los dilatadísimos imperios de la América, no se habrá oído que haya sido practicado" (Villagutierre Soto-Mayor 127), he says of Sor María "y que la añadió a esta venerable sierva de Dios, el dictado que la ponen los que de ella escriben en aquellas partas, llamándola 'La Madre Mariana de Jesús, de Ágreda, Predicadora de la Nueva México'" (Villagutierre Soto-Mayor 128). Here, her role extends beyond the "venerable" that she is in other accounts: she is "una predicadora," a preacher in New Mexico. Furthermore, Villagutierre Soto-Mayor suggests that those already living in that area ("que de ella escriben en aquellas partes" (Villagutierre Soto-Mayor 128)) refer to her and/or conceive of her as a missionary or preacher.

At this point, the history seemingly leaves off with Sor María's conversions, only to pick up with them near the end of the book, when Villagutierre Soto-Mayor brings up the loss of the Tejas tribes to the Spanish crown. In spite of the fact that "por tan maravillosos medios, como vimos, habían sido convertidos a nuestra santa fe" (145), the unconverted Tejas tribe defeated the Franciscans and the converted Tejas. Villagutierre Soto-Mayor adds a comment about this towards the end of the section "Sólo quedó la memoria" in which he laments the failure of the mission. He mentions the *Tanto*, sent to the friars "que andaban en las conversiones de la Nueva México, y bautizando en el reino

de los texas a los indios que la misma Madre María había reducido" (Villagutierre Soto-Mayor 145).

Villagutierre Soto-Mayor's word choice is important in understanding how Sor María is cast in this historical role; rather than use the terms "había convertido" or "catequizado," he chooses "reducido." While these other verbs suggest a mostly instructive function, one that does not necessarily draw conclusions about the ultimate socio-political objective of Sor María's actions, "reducido" compellingly construes her as an actor in the colonizing process. To "reducir" was to not only catechize, but to hispanize a native population, changing beliefs as well as a way of life. For Villagutierre Soto-Mayor, Sor María is the active agent who accomplishes this, well in advance of the friars who later follow. She clearly both converts and colonizes. Even if Villagutierre Soto-Mayor's history is derivative, lacking firsthand evidence and experience, what is says about Sor María, and how it places her in the context of colonization is instructive, because it offers insight into who she was in the "Historia de la Nueva México" and that of the region.

Fray Augustín de Vetancurt and Fray Francisco Antonio de la Rosa Figueroa

A final pair of examples of Sor María in colonial histories is, perhaps, not surprising. Both Fray Augustín Vetancurt and Fray Francisco Antonio de la Rosa Figueroa were Franciscan administrators and historians, Vetancurt from the late 17th century and de la Rosa Figueroa from the mid- to late- 18th century. Vetancurt, in his 1697 *Teatro mexicano*, discusses Sor María's mystical conversion of the Jumanos explicitly (Vetancurt 96), citing the *1630 Memorial* and the *Tanto* as his sources for the

account. Vetancurt also mentions Sor María as the Lady in Blue in his 1697 *Menologio Franciscano*, under his entry on Fray Alonso de Benavides. Vetancurt states that his source was the *Tanto*, though the earliest recorded date for its publication is 1730. As Fray Manzanet claims in 1689 that he possessed a copy of the Tanto brought from Spain by Fray Antonio Llináz, it seems that it must have been circulating in Mexico well before it was printed. One result of this is that Sor María becomes part of history as that history is unfolding.

De la Rosa Figueroa also discusses Sor María in his 1764 manuscript *Bezerro general menológico y chronológico de todos los religiosos que … ha avido en esta Sta. Provincia … desde su fundación hasta el presente año de 1764 y de todos los prelados … que la han governado"* (Benavides *Fray Alonso* 200). De la Rosa Figueroa ostensibly reports on Fray Alonso de Benavides, offering a bit of biography and some history of his role as *custos* in New Mexico. Very shortly into this description, the historian veers into a description of the meeting between Fray Benavides and Sor María, and, after chiding Vetancurt for inaccuracies and misleading information in the *Teatro*, cites the versions of the *Tanto* printed in Mexico, a "letter written by the venerable father in the year 1631 in Madrid after he spoke with the venerable mother" (Benavides *Fray Alonso* 202) which I believe is related to the *Tanto*, and the vita of Sor María printed as a preface to the MCD. This last source supports the idea proposed in Chapter 3 that the vita attached to the MCD could be and was in fact read as an account of the Lady in Blue. In any event, de la Rosa Figueroa's entry on Fray Benavides very little is said about the friar himself; a significant portion is dominated by the account of Sor María's bilocation. Through this late- 18th

century religious text, the narrative of the bilocating Lady in Blue becomes an even more fixed element in the history of the region.

As this chapter has demonstrated, the narrative of the Lady in Blue developed into an integral part of the history, landscape and mission to the northern Mexican frontier in the 17th through 18th centuries. In Chapter 5, we will examine some of the ways this history because manifest as folklore in various communities, as well as how that folklore functioned socio-politically in its time.

> Las virtudes de los Siervos de Dios salen al público medrosas, hasta que la perezosa volubilidad de los años va limpiando la idea de ciertas materiales impresiones que le ofuscan el brillante lustre.
>
> - Francisco Palóu, *Relación histórica*, 329

Chapter 5

Though we are now into the fifth dissertation chapter, it must be said -in this chapter on the Lady in Blue in folklore- that I indeed came upon my dissertation topic through the folklore/oral tradition in my native New Mexico. I had heard legends of a nun visiting what is now New Mexico during its colonial epoch, and suggestions and rumors spun about her spiritual travel and her conversion of the native populations to Catholicism. When I first started research on the project, I learned of an alabado (Catholic-based folk song of prayer and praise)(Perea), an artifact that demanded my attention as it evidenced her commemoration within in the oral tradition. I had no sense for the complexity of the narrative's history, nor of its transmission. As I met the Lady in Blue through her lore, I encountered only "el brillante lustre" produced, as Palóu observes, after centuries had smoothed the roughness from her story. I hope I have described this "roughness" in previous chapters, leaving behind the brilliant glow for this chapter.

Folktales about the Lady in Blue are a midpoint in the trajectory of her narrative- a transitional, but vital link between transatlantic colonial-era histories that cast her as a contemporaneous missionary figure, and contemporary literary and artistic works that

selectively re-imagine her actions. The Lady in Blue's inscription into the conceptualized landscape during the colonial epoch (as indicated by the artifacts presented in Chapters 3 and 4) resulted in narrative's migration into collective history. Contemporary renderings, such as those in Chapter 6, frequently derive the narrative from the body of folklore that developed out of the regional history, rather than from the historical documents. For many contemporary artists and writers, the folklore's "stickiness"- the narrative's recounting and preservation over hundreds of years- is its most appealing characteristic, the reason artists choose the narrative as a subject for their works.

But what makes up the body of folklore on the Lady in Blue? What elements are shared across various artifacts? What significance has the folklore assumed over time? I present the folklore as pertaining to three categories: 1) lore that reproduces and conforms to the original narrative without adding new information; 2) lore that contributes new elements to the Lady in Blue narrative; and 3) lore used for purposes of resistive self-definition within the Tejano Mexican American community. Although the first category does not provide the same newness of content or usage as the other two groups, it is no less significant for it; the means by which the narrative is reproduced is important, as is the fact that such repetition establishes the fundamental folkloric narrative. The second category displays the degree to which the figure of the Lady in Blue was internalized in various communities; the resulting accounts about her conceive of a far broader range of action for her than her narrative does. The final grouping

conveys a sense for how the folkloric figure was actively used in a political way, illuminating its continued representational relevance well into the 20th century.

Interestingly, a glimpse into the entry "Agreda, María de Jesus Coronel- The Blue Lady" in the *Dictionary of Chicano Folklore* offers examples of the three kinds of folklore about her outlined above. The first and longest portion of the entry presents the fundamental Lady in Blue narrative, representing the first type of Lady in Blue folklore: "A woman dressed in a blue veil or the blue habit of a nun who appeared to help the sick and afflicted during the 17th century […] it appears her goal was also to Christianize the Indians of the Southwest, whom she visited often" (Castro 6). This is the most frequently encountered type of folklore about the Lady in Blue, recounting basic narrative elements: woman, blue, Spanish, conversion, Indians and (often) text. These highly regular narratives are of interest for the frequency of their occurrence, where they appear, and that fact that this narrative consistency produces a recognizable, coherent body of folklore. In this section in which I discuss the foundational folkloric narrative, I will examine several examples of this type of folklore (both oral and written accounts), discuss the lore's textual origins, and discuss the Lady in Blue as a "leyenda."

Near the end of the "Blue Lady" entry in the Dictionary, De Zavala's recounting of the Lady in Blue's once-a-generation gift to the women of San Antonio is cited: "a mystifying woman in blue […] bearing a distinctive gift that she bestows on a woman" (Castro 7). In the Dictionary entry, De Zavala's account contributes new elements to the Lady in Blue's original narrative, representing the second type of folklore (though we will analyze her text later on as an example of the third, politically active folklore). Other

accounts are less dramatically different from the base narrative than hers is, yet their contributions are still noteworthy for how they calibrate one's reading of the narrative. In analyzing this group of folklore, I will identify several accounts that present the Lady in Blue in different contexts and endowed with novel abilities, and will attempt to determine the representational meaning of such accounts. What might her actions and abilities signify?

Finally, tucked in among entries on La Llorona, Joaquín Murrieta and El Chupacabras, the inclusion of the Blue Lady with these well-known folk figures indicates a similar renown for her within the body of "Chicano" folklore. This last example of Lady in Blue folklore shows the figure cast into her political role. First by claiming rights over the Lady in Blue narrative, and then by assigning it the political identity "Chicano," as opposed to "Mexican-American" or "Hispano," the collection itself participates in the type of self-conscious, self-defining political action for which the Lady in Blue narrative is employed, and which I will describe in this last section. (While the intent of including her in the this collection may not have been explicitly political (in that it documents the fact that her narrative is reproduced and commemorated by the Mexican American community), the term "Chicano" is nevertheless a politically-charged appellation.) I will examine how Tejanos Adina De Zavala, Jovita González, and Carlos Castañeda wielded the Lady in Blue's folk narrative as a means of political self-identification during the racially charged period of social change.

Folklore: Repeating the Narrative

The most commonly encountered type of folklore about the Lady in Blue is that which recounts the basic mystical bilocation and/or conversion narrative. One can find this type of folklore, which does not deviate from the core account, in a variety of collections, from the Texas Good Roads Association's *Texas Parade Magazine*; to the American Catholic Church Extension Society (an organization dedicated to supporting Catholic missions) publication *Extension Magazine* ("The Lady in Blue"); to standard folklore collections such as *Legendary Ladies of Texas* (Abernathy *Legendary*), *The Lore of New Mexico* (Weigel and White), *Legends of Texas* (Hemisath), *The Folklore of Texan Cultures* (Abernathy *Folklore*), *Las Mujeres Hablan* (C. DeBaca "Lady"), *Ghost Stories from the American Southwest* (Young and Young), *Texas Unexplained* (Sharp), *Folk Tales of New Mexico* (C. DeBaca *Folk*) , *Off the Beaten Trail* (Syers); and many, many other works. The core folkloric narrative of the Lady in Blue appears as unexpectedly, surprisingly and frequently as it did during the colonial epoch. Although in this section we will focus on the lore that presents the core folk narrative only, most of the accounts discussed in the other two sections have the core narrative as their base or referent.

In these texts, the Lady in Blue is presented as a folkloric legend, based on a historical individual. The categorization of the Lady in Blue as folk legend allows the speaker to recount the narrative without the obligation of proving historical veracity (though many accounts do address this question and produce interesting explanations- see note). Without addressing questions of why contemporary narrators are inclined to categorize the narrative as folklore rather than as history, or extensively problematizing

the types of folklore collections that feature the Lady in Blue, I'd like to discuss the nature of this type of folklore and its idiosyncrasies.

One the reasons for the consistency across versions of the Lady in Blue narrative is that, unlike other folk stories that originate in the oral tradition and migrate to written texts, the Lady in Blue's folklore is based on a written text. The original narrative is fixed in writing, a fact that naturally lends stability to subsequent folk stories. A survey of critical literature in the field of folklore studies that addressed narratives of this type did not yield the interpretive angle I had hoped to find. Most folklore studies are concerned with the movement of narratives from the oral tradition to the written, precisely the opposite of how the Lady in Blue moved. Such studies examine the movement of certain topics, genres, themes, etc. from the oral tradition to the written, looking at compilations, exclusions, inclusions and emphases. Lacking critical literature on the subject of folklore derived from text, I decided to interrogate the Lady in Blue's text-based folklore. Is it folklore if it derives from text? Given the fixed origins of such lore, does its repetitiveness have validity?

In response to the first question, the issue of transmission of the narrative is very significant in defining its folkloric nature. As I discovered when examining the Baughman Folklore collection at the University of New Mexico's Center for Southwest Research, it appears that many speakers recount the narrative, whether orally or in writing, without having read the originary texts. They reproduce what they have heard, a practice which his most readily observed in the oral folklore collections. In the Baughman collection, for example, four correspondents (G.L. Campbell, Julia Keleher,

Mark Gens and "Mrs. Ed Dwyer") recounted the major elements of the Lady in Blue narrative orally, and several could not remember when they had first heard the legend- but they recalled the telling and the listening. The *Hispanic Legends From New Mexico* collection features the same orality in its entry on the Lady in Blue; the narrator, Father J.M. Holman, not only tells the story, but it appears he himself heard it, as he starts the narrative "Once upon a time" and concludes "the same story is told over and over again in Spain" (Holman 531-2) And in *Ghost Stories from the American Southwest* collection, one version assigns the storytelling tradition about her to a particular indigenous group: "In the Pueblo, they used to tell the story of […]" (Young and Young 117). These several examples evidence the fact that, although the Lady in Blue's narrative might have had written textual origins, its transmission and reception in many cases were oral, affirming the "folkloricity" of the narrative.

What of the narrative's repetitive nature? Although it is true that the folklore about the Lady in Blue likely derives some of its repetitiveness from its textual foundations, many non-text-based folkloric stories are also repetitive. The *Dictionary of Chicano Literature* in fact posits the Lady in Blue as a "leyenda" (Castro 150) because the places and protagonist are recognizable to the audience. This familiarity, of course, is only possible via repetition; if the story does not repeat particular vital elements, it cannot be recognized and thus cannot survive as a coherent folk account. As Domino Perez's *There Was a Woman: La Llorona From Folklore to Popular Culture* demonstrates, the recurring core narrative can be added on to, recast, and re-contextualized, but for the final product to be part of the tradition of the legend, it must conserve enough core elements to

be decipherable. It thus seems that faulting this grouping of the Lady in Blue's lore for its consistency is at odds with requirements of folklore itself. Since the mechanism by which this uniformity is produced does not seem to drive directly from the texts (as discussed above) it seems that it is indicative of the lore's folkloric nature.

Finally, whether called "sacerdotal humbuggery," as J. Frank Dobie terms Lady in Blue lore in the introduction to his *Tales of Old Time Texas* (1984); or "one of the most beautiful legends of the Texas missions," as *Extension Magazine* calls the narrative ("The Lady in Blue" 18); or simply "the story of Texas' infinite journey, over three centuries ago" (Syers 117) which is "not for skeptics" (Syers 117), the designation of the Lady in Blue narrative as lore is important. What was named and read as history a hundred years previous changes title to "folklore." Through the important process of claiming the narrative as lore, rather than as history, it begins to pertain to a particular group of people or to a region, rather than just to the anonymous timelines of history. By applying the term "folklore" to the Lady in Blue narrative, the focus shifts from the content of the legend, to the communities that conserve and reproduce it. And when the narrative belongs to the collective, the collective can begin to do work on it, as we will see in the next section.

The Lady in Blue in other roles

In this section, we will consider lore about the Lady in Blue that imagines stories, actions and abilities for her that vary from the standard bilocation/conversion narrative. These accounts position the Lady in Blue in new locales; assign her particular achievements; exploit her to explain historical events, natural conditions and social

practices; and sometimes simply add new wrinkles to her story. As these stories envision the Lady in Blue's influence in the narrators' own context, they are an indicator of how she became embedded in but also transformed the collective imagination. Such stories demonstrate an active engagement with the Lady in Blue's narrative, a placing of its protagonist in different contexts and to various ends. In this way, the lore's narrators claim the Lady in Blue as their own in much more specific ways than the first group which abstracts the story from the written corpus.

Domino Perez' *There Was a Woman: La Llorona From Folklore to Popular Culture* is a smart, skillful analysis of the narrative of La Llorona, the famous wailing woman of Texas lore. Perez examines the many and varied manifestations of La Llorona, defining the versions of the La Llorona narrative by how they vary from the core legend and considering what such variation signifies. As the Lady in Blue is not as widely known as La Llorona, there are far fewer artifacts pertaining to her than there are for the wailing woman; however, I have aimed in this section to follow Perez' lead in documenting and analyzing the artifacts I did encounter.

One of the most notable additive folkloric accounts is Adina De Zavala's, in which the Lady in Blue lives under the Alamo in San Antonio, bestowing her gift to generation after generation of Tejanas (we will see more of this legend in the next section). De Zavala re-imagines the Lady in Blue in a radical way, one that perhaps draws on a larger body of Texan folklore pertaining to the Alamo. Certainly, Hallenbeck and Williams suggest that such a corpus of "little stories of the Blue Lady, or the Lady in Blue, are to found in the San Antonio valley of Texas" (Hallenbeck and Williams 305)

(though De Zavala would probably be chagrined to find that, according to Hallenbeck and Williams, those who tell such stories are "of part indian [sic] blood" (Hallenbeck and Williams 305)). Hallenbeck and Williams, further racializing their characterization of such narratives, add that the secret tunnels under San Antonio are known by "the Mexicans of San Antonio," and ascribe other responsibilities to the De Zavala's subterranean Lady in Blue, stating that she (in an interesting counterpoint to La Llorona) protects and guides the city's children.

Hallenbeck and Williams contribute three more version of the narrative, which they locate in Texas, New Mexico and Arizona. The Texan story, which the authors claim is typical of the genre of stories about the Lady in Blue in Texas, is a treasure narrative rewarding kindness to a stranger whose protagonist is a Mexican American child named Ursula Valdéz. In contrast to other folk accounts, this story is very specific regarding the names of its characters and the dates during which the story occurred. Ursula's father, José, gravely injured in a skirmish during the Comanche Wars, was unable to support his family and could not travel to Mexico City to be treated for his injuries. One day, while collecting flowers and playing with her playmates near the Alamo, Ursula disappeared. Her mother feared that she had been kidnapped, and the town searched for the little girl, finding her asleep in one of the rooms of the convent near the Alamo.

The girl explained that she had been playing with the other children when a woman dressed in blue caught her garments on some shrubs and fell. Ursula disentangled the lady's dress and helped her stand. In repayment, the lady gave Ursula a

small, heavy package and left. Ursula hid in the convent as part of the game she was playing and fell asleep without opening the package. Once home, Ursula gave the packet to her mother. Out of it fell an authentic booty: gold, diamonds and pearls. Ursula's father was treated and, his masculinity reinstated, resumed supporting his family. Ursula's act of kindness towards a stranger is rewarded by the restoration of her family that "so lately had been enveloped in despair" (Hallenbeck and Williams 308). The Lady in Blue's test is exemplary, reinforcing moral behavior in very obvious way.

The New Mexican tale is written in a pidgin English one assumes is supposed to suggest the authenticity of its narrator, a "native chief" from the southern part of the state. The tale is fore grounded by generalities about the tribe's experience of the Lady in Blue: she brings blue flowers to the area, doesn't appear at night, and disappears if approached by a member of the tribe (which the tribe avoids doing, for "Why molest her who brings only blessing with her? (Hallenbeck and Williams 309)). The story itself explains the appearance of a natural spring of drinking water in the otherwise arid Jornada del muerto, in New Mexico's' southern desert.

A "young Indian chief" leaves on an expedition to the far southern mountains only to be called back to the tribe by a messenger informing him that his wife had become ill. The young man immediately leaves to aid his wife, traveling through the desert, and become lost at night when clouds cover the start he had been following. Desperately thirsty and close to death, the chief is saved when the Lady in Blue guides him to the spring. He drinks until he is well, at which point the clouds clear and he finds his way home. The storyteller concludes in his odd pidgin (which strangely uses Spanish

although the speaker is a Native American): "And the spring is there today, Señor; the only water to drink that is to be found in the whole country of *la Jornada del muerte*" (Hallenbeck and Williams 310). This story serves two purposes: the first is to explain the existence a spring of drinkable water in an unexpected location, and the second is to again show how the Lady in Blue repays virtuous behavior: the young chief who immediately attends to the needs of his family is saved from death and is rewarded with the knowledge of the location of drinking water in a very valuable place.

The third Hallenbeck and Williams story is from Arizona, again involves a Native American tribe (the Papagos) and occurred in the distant past: "before the grandfather of my grandmother's grandfather lived" (Hallenbeck and Williams 311). This story is only that mentions religion and missionization specifically, as the Lady in Blue acts after the tribe has been informed about monotheism. The tribe's chief's grandson fell ill, and despite their attempts "the magic of the medicine men [was not] of any avail" (Hallenbeck and Williams 311). The tribe glumly gathered, when suddenly a flash of white light blinded them and a young woman dressed in blue appeared to them. She announces that there is one god above all other gods (presenting them with Christian monotheism) and asked if anyone in the tribe was ill. The chief led her to the child and his mother. The Lady in Blue "began saying prayers to the god whereof she had spoken" (Hallenbeck and Williams 312) placing her hand on the child's head as she prayed "for the time it would take to smoke a small pipe" (Hallenbeck and Williams 312).

The Lady in Blue did not stay and refused offers of food. Instead, she informed the tribe that "teachers would appear" (Hallenbeck and Williams 313) who would instruct

them about the God to whom she had prayed for the boy. The tribe is overcome by sleep as the Lady in Blue departs. When they awake, they doubt that the woman was real, but the boy is healthy and his mother confirms that the Lady visited and healed him. The narrator concludes the story by affirming not only that the priests she predicted would come did, but also that they instructed the tribe on how to live "even as the white people lived" (Hallenbeck and Williams 313). The tribe and its chief are rewarded for entertaining the possibility of pending Christianization and European colonization by the boy's healing. Hallenbeck and Williams also mention Kino's narrative of the lady who was shot with arrows several times by the Pimas as she tried to convert them, but distinguish between the two stories in regards to the their sources; while the Kino story has no indigenous source according to Hallenbeck and Williams, apparently the account of the ill native boy does.

At the end of the section on the Lady in Blue, Hallenbeck and Williams offer one final teaser, referencing an article by Will Robinson, "a journalist of New Mexico" (Hallenbeck and Williams 314). They comment that Robinson wrote that that Navajos had anticipated a return of the Lady in Blue to their tribe in 1935 and 1936; the further wonder if the tribe still awaited the arrival of the Lady in Blue and state they had not been able to find the source for Robinson's statement. The article has by Robinson is still at large, though as we shall see in Chapter 6, it appears that playwright and UNM professor Julia Keleher based her 1936 play on the Lady in Blue at least partially on Robinson's claims about New Mexico's' native tribes (Keleher *Lady in Blue* script).

Let us momentarily set aside the vexing sowing of the text with Spanish to suggest local flavor and authenticity, the use of pidgin English when recounting the New Mexican folk story, and Hallenbeck and William's references to Comanches lurking about in the hopes of snatching away a child. Still, their variations on the Lady in Blue are notable for the agency they assign to the figure, for the values her actions seem to reinforce or reward, and for the communities in which they place her. The authors earnestly present these narratives as factual, and distinguish between those they determine to be from reliable sources and those whose sources they cannot verify. Hallenbeck, as is indicated in an 1945 article in New Mexico Magazine, appears to take the physical bilocation element of the Lady in Blue narrative to heart, presenting several arguments supporting her active role in the Southwest (such as the naming of Gran Quivira).

Francis Abernathys's contribution to the Texas Folklore Society's collection *Legendary Ladies of Texas* is the first entry in the book, whose introduction lauds "Clara Driscoll and the Daughters of the Republic of Texas [who] saved the Alamo" (Abernathy *Legendary* 5), apparently overlooking Adina De Zavala. Abernathy characterizes the Lady in Blue as "somewhere between the world of legend and myth" (Abernathy *Legendary* 9) casting her in the mold of the "peaceful conquest" colonial narrative, "bringer of a soft and generous Christianity to the tribes of the Southwest and East Texas" (Abernathy *Legendary* 9). Abernathy contributes two fresh folk elements to the story (in addition to his own commentary), one concerning her role as a guardian of the Texan settlers, and another sharing some elements with the La Llorona legend. In the

first case, Abernathy states that she returned to east Texas in the 1840's, when the Sabine River flooded, and the inhabitants of the regions were trapped in the lowlands near the river. These inhabitants became ill with malaria (some versions say yellow fever) and many died. But before all was lost, "a mysterious lady in blue appeared to look after the sick. She stayed and cheered and healed the sick until the plague abated" (Abernathy *Legendary* 13). She left unannounced and as unanticipated as she came, having succored her Texans. Again, the narrative presents her as emerging unbidden to aid the people of the area.

Abernathy's second narrative echoes ghost stories frequently attributed to La Llorona, and it lacks the element of aid present in the other accounts. Abernathy portrays her "[wandering] the Camino del Caballo, the old Smugglers Road that skirted the customs and outposts at Nacogdoches" (Abernathy *Legendary* 13). As she wanders, she "cries sadly" (Abernathy *Legendary* 13), "perhaps in mourning for the vanished Tejas whom she came to save" (Abernathy *Legendary* 13). As Abernathy presents the Lady in Blue-cum- La Llorona, she too mourns the death of her metaphorical "children", the tribes she came to convert who no longer exist. She cries over a lost tribe and a lost history. This is the only story I found where the Lady in Blue mourns rather than taking action or inspiring positive action on the part of the people who inhabit the areas she visited.

Alice Bullock's *Legends of the Santa Fe Country* contributes a narrative variation, and posits a commemorative practice related to her. While conceding that Bullock's collection in general is kitschy, voyeuristic and racially biased, the story she relates,

about a young girl lost on the Texas plains, is nonetheless offers additional insight into the folkloric variations on the Lady in Blue narrative. A woman dressed in a long blue garment that the little girl described as resembling a nun's habit ("including the veil" (Bullock 72)), took the little girl to an abandoned church and cared for her for three days. The Lady in Blue had seen to the little girl's needs, as she did not need food or water once she was found. Although the actors in this story are similar to those in the Hallenbeck and Williams' story, there is no moral to reinforce a behavior. The little girl in not rewarded for her virtue; rather, the Lady in Blue is an agent of assistance in dire circumstances.

Bullock alludes to/creates a relationship between a common turn-of the century architectural practice and the Lady in Blue narrative. With the exception of the tradition of wrapping the dead in blue cloth mentioned by Manzanet, Bullock's is one of the few actions commemorating the Lady in Blue. Bullock comments that "occasionally one will hear that the Indian and Spanish custom of paining window facings and doors "Taos" blue goes back to the Blue Lady" (Bullock 72). Although Bullock states that it would be difficult to positively ascribe this practice to the Lady in Blue, she nonetheless proposes just that. In fact, in attempting to substantiate the stories she has heard, she asks a "plump, kindly Indian matron" (Bullock 72) why she paints her doorway blue, and presents her respondent's taciturn response ("It's pretty,' she said, and turned back to her" (Bullock 72)) as at the very least a non-negation of the commemorative practice Bullock proposed. Though Bullock leaves the interpretation of the episode open to her readers, her inclusion of the episode clearly suggests that Bullock sees more the blue

doors than just prettiness, assigning popular practice the meaning of the commemoration of the Lady in Blue.

Julia Keleher's oral account from the Baughman Folklore collection at the University New Mexico's Center for Southwest Research adds to Bullock's versions, commenting that not only the frames of the windows, but also the "cement floors" of Native American homes were painted that "particular and peculiar shade" of blue in her honor (Keleher "Lady in Blue"). Keleher also comments on what sounds like a variation on the Adina De Zavala's story, maintaining the element of gifting to a female, but removing her from the exclusive purview of San Antonio, and removing much of the agency De Zavala emphasized: "this mystic endowed the power of prophecy upon the favorite daughters of certain families." Though the two accounts share some elements, "prophecy" is clearly a less-active characteristic than is "the gift of seeing to the heart of things" and defending one's people.

Dee Strickland Johnson's *Arizona Herstory*, a collection of poetry based on Arizona folktales, relates a detailed dated folktale in which the Lady in Blue protects both the physical presence of Catholic Church in Arizona, as well as the Mexican citizenry, from invading American forces. Although "The Mysterious Lady in Blue" itself will be considered in the next chapter on contemporary renderings of the Lady in Blue, the story the poem tells more properly pertains to this chapter. The poem and its footnotes assert that an160-men strong American filibuster mission led by Henry Crabbe to Sonora in 1857 fought against the Mexican forces to assume control over the region. Then, the Americans attempted to cannon-blast a Catholic church. The cannon fuse was lit "half a

dozen times" (Johnson 182), and each time, a woman wearing blue appeared, extinguishing the flame and preventing the church's destruction. During the delay caused by the Lady in Blue's intervention, Mexican reinforcements arrived, killing all the American troops except for sharpshooter Charlie Evans (who claimed to have given the Mexicans soldiers a cache of gold the soldiers had buried prior to the mission). Strickland cites James Griffith's introduction to Margaret Proctor Redondo's "Valley of Iron" for the story; it is on of few originating in Arizona. In this version, the Lady clearly defends the Mexicans against the American forces (and is complicit in killing), and upholds, symbolically at least, the Catholic institution.

The Lady in Blue demonstrates her sympathy towards the Native American population of New Mexico in a story from the Baughman Collection. In this collection of oral stories, publisher G.L. Campbell of Colorado related his knowledge regarding the Lady in Blue: "During the Pueblo Revolt [of 1686] she appeared, because she liked the Indians better, and led them to a place of hiding. It is said that one of the places that she led them was east of Bloomfield, N.M, in Governordor [sic] Canyon" (Campbell). This anecdote is changes the role of the Lady in Blue portrayed in many of the other stories; in most of the other versions of the story, she rewards individual virtue and/or holds up the presence of the Catholic Church. As in the Strickland Johnson story, however, in this version the Lady in Blue favors one group over another; though in both cases, she favors the conquered over the colonizing. In a similar vein, Father J.M. Holman's contribution to *Hispanic Legends of New Mexico* emphasizes her continuing presence among the

tribes she converted, noting that "This 'Lady in Blue' lived among [the tribes] at certain times of the year" (Holman 532).

Then, there are the Lady in Blue's famous culinary abilities- a skill which there is little evidence Sor María employed in her convent, but which was manifested during her visits to the southwest. (As we will see in Chapter 6, this legacy carries into the TV cooking shows of the 21st century.) In *Bull Cook and Authentic Historical Recipes and Practices*, authors George and Berthe Herter feature "Chile con Carne Mary of Agreda" in their section on meats. According to the Herters, the recipe was "created by the first missionary to Texas, New Mexico, Arizona and Southern California […] she taught this recipe to the Indians in these areas and the recipe remains almost exactly the same in the southwest today" (Herter 52). Surprisingly, they categorize the recipe as Spanish, "not at all Mexican and […] not popular in Mexico" (Herter 52); since one of the main ingredients in chile con carne is chile, a New World food rarely used in Spanish cooking, their characterization of the recipe is interesting. Clearly, the objective is to draw Spain and the southwest into closer exchange (and Mexico somehow does not fit into this equation), but this is done by emphasizing the importance of cumin and oregano (which they suggest are native to Spain). After a narrative on Spanish history and cuisine, Sor María's recipe is presented, with specifications as to what meats were "originally" called for: venison or antelope (instead of beef or mutton), and javelina (instead of pork). The source of the original recipe remains undocumented, but not the fact that is it part of the Lady in Blue's folkloric legacy. Indeed the association between the nun and her famed chile dish is not limited to the Americas: the *Bull Cook* version of Sor María's chile con

carne recipe was republished by Larry Torres in commemoration of the 400th birthday of María de Agreda, a celebration hosted by her convent in Agreda, Spain (Torres). In addition, a 2007 episode on "chili" on the Food Network television program "Good Eats" ("The Big Chili") reiterated Sor María's inauguration of chile con carne; nutritionist Deb Duchon comments in her conversation with chef Alton Brown that the nun was given the recipe while in a trance.

Other additive folkloric allusions to the Lady in Blue are found in a variety of sources, most of which mention instances in which she appeared in surprising places. As noted above in the section on Jovita González claimed the blue fences, crosses and coffins used in Mexican cemeteries in the Texas in the name of commemoration of the Lady in Blue. Like apparitions of the Elvis in the tortilla, the Lady in Blue emerges in everyday contexts, such appearances contributing to the body of folklore about her. Jane Eppinga's *Arizona Twilight Tales*, which will also be considered briefly in Chapter 6, comments that in Arizona "her image has been seen in the gnarled roots of a mesquite tree, in the rust of leaking water pipes, and in many other unlikely places" (Eppinga 144). An online article from the immigrant-amnesty website "Humane Borders," promoting the placement of fresh-water stations for migrants crossing the brutal Arizona desert, mentions the Lady in Blue among the humanitarians: "many are the stories and legends (such as the legend of the Lady in Blue) of how water has saved lives in desert" (Human Borders Essays and Opinion Pieces"). (Though it is possible this version references the Hallenbeck and Williams story, the context seems to imply the setting is the Arizona desert, rather than southern New Mexico). One of Lady in Blue accounts presents in

Ghost Stories from the American Southwest claims that, as the Lady in Blue suffered from illness in Spain, the teachers she would send the tribes would help the tribal members "who also suffered from illnesses" (Young and Young 117). The *Ghost Stories* version has the Franciscans believing that she was "a visitor from the Other World" (Young and Young 117). Finally, in a *New Mexico Magazine* article by May Raizizun (author Cleofas Jaramillo's sister), the author correlates the Lady in Blue to the geological formation the "Kneeling Nun" near Silver City, New Mexico (Raizizun). Though these examples only briefly mention the Lady I Blue, they clearly place in her in contexts and activities different from those presented in the original narrative of mystical travel and conversion.

Some folk versions seem to adhere more closely to the European, literary, mystical legacy- more akin to Sor María the literary religious figure- than to Sor Maria the missionary and succor. Mark B. Gens' account from the Baughman collection, correlates the Lady in Blue's mystical trances with "a Nun in France who had the phenomenal ability to put herself into a deep trance" (Gens) during which she could send "her personality and some semblance of her body" (Gens) to the southwest. Where the correlation between the Lady in Blue and the anonymous nun in Frances comes from is not clear, but it references institutional Catholicism, rather than focusing on the uniqueness of the local figure.

New Mexican Alabado

I mentioned the final folkloric artifact that contributes a new element to the narrative at the beginning of this chapter: the New Mexican Penitente *alabado* dedicated

to “Madre Agueda de Jesús.” Alabados in New Mexico have traditionally been composed, preserved and sung by members of the secular religious group popularly known as the hermanos penitentes (the “Confradía de Nuestro Padre Jesús Nazareno”). Although most penitente groups prefer not to release their alabados to the public, a 1985 *Liberal and Fine Arts Review* article by Clark Colahan and Alfred Rodríguez presents the alabado in its entirety and analyzes its lyrics.

The authors encountered this artifact in the alabado collection of Stanford professor and New Mexican native Juan B. Rael, who had placed the song with whose themes he determined were dedicated to the Virgin Mary. Upon reading this alabado, it becomes clear why Rael so categorized the piece; the figure of “Madre Agueda de Jesús” becomes intertwined with that of the Virgin Mary. The “Madre Agueda de Jesús” of the first stanza becomes “María, Madre de Jesús” in the second, and “Eres Madre de Jesús” in the third. The fifth stanza appears to incorporate a line from the Catholic prayer “Hail Mary” though it begins by referencing Sor María: "Agueda de Jesús eres/ el centro de tu nobleza/ entre todas las mujeres, / bendita sea tu pureza.” Colahan and Rodríguez indicate that convergence of Sor María with the Virgin Mary might have occurred when the alabado itself was composed (its composer having conflated the author of the MCD with its subject matter) or, more likely, that an original alabado dedicated solely to Sor María evolved over centuries of oral transmission (and lack of formal knowledge about the nun and her writings) into the present-day alabado (Colahan and Rodríguez 7).

Though the alabado's ostensible subject is “Madre *Agueda* de Jesús” as opposed to “Madre *Agreda* de Jesús,” other elements of the song support the assumption that Sor

María de Agreda was its original focus, though years of oral production have pulled the song in a Marian direction and led to the modification of her name. The element that most clearly ties Sor María to the alabado is the repetition of the phrase "mística ciudad de luz." The recurring association between "Agueda" and a term so closely resembling the MCD would seem to reflect Sor María's renown as a writer within New Mexican folklore. The association Agueda-Virgin Mary-mística ciudad is suggestive of an acknowledgement with the alabado of the relationship among the three elements. Further stressing this relationship, as Colahan and Rodríguez point out, the terms "mística suidá," "princesa," and the repetition of "nobleza," are expressions regarding the Virgin Mary that are repeated throughout the MCD, but which are absent from other alabados dedicated to the Virgin Mary. It must also be noted that the knowledge of the MCD that that the alabado suggests has its limits: there is no reference to the Immaculate Conception, to the theological content of the MCD. These elements indicate the close intertextuality of Sor María and her writing in this folkloric account.

Though Colahan and Rodríguez examine the alabado's lyrics quite closely, seeking to determine which stanza could pertain solely to Sor María, their analysis does not explore the remarkable, yet enigmatic eighth stanza: "Los treinta-y-siete consejos/ que diste a Santa Teresa, / de moralidad inmensa, / bendita sea tu pureza." Given the confusion between Sor María and the Virgin Mary throughout the alabado, the subject of the verb "diste" is unclear; it could be either woman. As I am not familiar with Santa Teresa's writings, I do now know if the famed mystic writes that she received divine advice. The potential relationship Agreda/Santa Teresa of Avila is anachronistic, Santa

Teresa having died in 1582, well before Sor María's birth. The association between the two nuns is meaningful, as Santa Teresa was also a female Franciscan, her own mysticism providing a basis for Sor María's, and a short letter of Sor María's having been published by the nuns of Santa Teresa's convent along with some of the nun's own "Avisos." Regardless of the precise nature of their relationship to Santa Teresa, the continued specification of *thirty-seven* consejos is remarkable and, given the intertextuality suggested earlier in the alabado by the reference to the "mística suidá de luz." presents an interesting avenue for further research. In addition, the alabados' twelfth stanza comments "Agueda las profecías/ a ti Dios las endereza, / Madre pues las cumplirías," an allusion again to prophecy and to the subject's actions regarding them. As outlined in Chapter 3, Sor María's writing was published in Mexico City and achieved a wide circulation throughout northern New Spain. As much of the writing that circulated was didactic in nature ("Escala espiritual para subir a la perfección"; "Las leyes de la esposa"), examining both Sor María's circulated publications and those attributed to Santa Teresa would add depth to the study of this alabado's intertextuality in the context of the Lady in Blue narrative.

Insofar as the alabado's circulation is concerned, Colahan and Rodríguez speculate that the Real alabado is just one artifact representative of a greater body of folklore about the Lady in Blue and/or Sor María. Their hypothesis would seem to be supported by the fact that the same alabado appears in other parts of the state. Although the authors sought out other versions of the alabado (Colahan and Rodríguez 9), they were unsuccessful in locating one, asserting that "Juan Rael appears to have been the

only collector to record the following folk hymn" (Colahan and Rodríguez 4-5). In 1998, when I began work on this project, I received a copy of an alabado dedicated to "Madre Agueda de Jesús" from a fellow student and hermano from Torreón, New Mexico (Perea). The lyrics of this alabado are identical to those of the Rael version; the alabado thus does not offer any additional information that would help to disentangle Sor María from the Virgin Mary or clarify how the composer regarded Sor María. It does suggest that the alabado popularly survived in locations far from Arroyo Hondo; the folkloric commemoration of Sor María was seems not have been limited to a single hermano cofradía or geographic locale.

However, as this chapter examines the Lady in Blue narrative in folklore, and not necessarily Sor María as a literary figure, how relevant is the alabado, as it makes no explicit mention of bilocation or conversion of indigenous peoples? Its value lies in the connections its continued usage suggests. As discussed in Chapter 3, Sor María's vita, including bilocation story, traveled alongside the MCD; thus knowledge of the MCD such as was demonstrated in the alabado, implies at least exposure to the Lady in Blue narrative. In addition, the alabado appears in a region where the Lady in Blue exists as a folk figure, and indeed her primary identity is as the woman who bilocated to the region; in the alabado her name links the legendary figure with the historical one. The alabado's evocation of the name "Agreda" could have reinforced extant ideas of the Lady in Blue narrative in spite of the fact that its content does not deal explicitly with the narrative. I thus find the alabado a pertinent example of how Sor María's literary identity transcended though folklore (as it is indeed evidence of the degree to which her writing

was assimilated into common religious knowledge in the southwest) and how this song complimented and emphasized the folkloric conceptualization of the nun as the missionary Lady in Blue.

Folklore as Political Identity

Adina De Zavala, Jovita González and Carlos Castañeda make for an interesting triumvirate; all three are historians and folklorists of a sense, all three are invested in the composition of Texas's history during points of transition, and all three are Mexican American, experiencing first-hand the social and racial tensions that formed the backdrop for life in Texas during the late 19th- and first half of the 20th- century. Though they are in many ways more dissimilar than alike, they share at least one other characteristic: they include folkloric accounts of the Lady in Blue in their historical writing. Given the historical moment at which they invoke her, choosing a colonizing figure such as the Lady in Blue to represent or speak for the Mexican American community seems like an odd choice. However, her adoption by and significance within the Mexican American community spoke more compellingly than did her role as a colonizer.

For many Tejanos at the turn of the century and now, Catholicism is a vital component of their identity, from the familial and community celebrations of church sacraments, to the centrality of the Catholic Church in many communities, to their very names. It seems very likely, therefore, that these three authors identified with Catholic origin element of the narrative as part of their own geographical and spiritual identity- which was of course related to their social and racial identity. In the context of an Anglo Protestant presence in Texas, the contrastive assertion of a Catholic identity via the Lady

in Blue might have re-affirmed Mexican American identity. In addition, the core Lady in Blue narrative might have held appeal because of how it echoes these three writers' own experiences in Anglo-dominated social spheres. The historical Sor María acted within the societal norms of her time while at the same time breaking with them to claim her agency, much as these three authors did in their own environments. In a third sense, Adina De Zavala and Jovita González differ from Castañeda in that their conceptualization of the Lady in Blue via folklore pertains to an even more specific group- Mexican American women- and speaks to this group's political and historical agency, using the Lady in Blue as a metric for action.

Whatever the reason for her appeal as a Mexican American folk figure, in the cases of De Zavala and González it is clear that she is evoked politically in a political context. Thus the analytical question becomes not only the nature of the lore they present about her, but how it is used and the extent to which the narrative functions in an active, identity-defining way within the Mexican American community. The evocation of Lady in Blue lore exemplifies the continued relevance and pull of her story in a latter-day, identity-defining, political context.

Adina De Zavala

Adina De Zavala's folkloric narrative of the Lady in Blue is the most elaborate and extensive that I have encountered. De Zavala's account asserts that tradition states that the Lady in Blue lives underneath the Alamo, returning once a generation to bequeath her gift of clear-sightedness to a native Texan woman of good character, for the benefit of her (Mexican American) community. I will shortly discuss how De Zavala

imagines the Lady in Blue in the author's own early- 20th century context, and what she could signify vis-à-vis De Zavala's objectives in writing her *History and Legends of the Alamo and Other Missions* (1917). By comparison, Jovita González's folkloric account in her article does not add as many new details to the narrative as does De Zavala's; she simply states in her 1936 *Southern Messenger* article "Catholic Heroines of Texas" that "to this day, beautiful legends, stories and beliefs are still told about her, and every Mexican cemetery in the state has its quota of blue crosses and blue fences around the grove, and blue coffins are still in popular use" (González 2) Though her references to folkloric practices are unique and would seem to reflect a communitarian recollection of the Lady in Blue, for González the folkloric tradition serves as a means of affirming the long-standing and continuing recognition of her within the Tejano community. Thus both De Zavala and Gonzalez cite not only the literary-folkloric tradition of the Lady in Blue; they individually affirm particular folkloric practices and beliefs regarding her presence in Texas. But under what conditions to these women recount their folkloric accounts? And to what ends?

Anthropologist Richard Flores and literary critic John Gonzalez discuss De Zavala and González, respectively, and their roles in the creation of the counter histories of the Mexican American community during the first half of 20th century, as the "standard" Texan histories largely excluded the Mexican American community. The attendant racial and social pressures extant during that period provide context for De Zavala, Gonzalez and Castañeda's writing generally, including their invocation of the Lady in Blue in their works. How does each incorporate the Lady in Blue into their

arguments in support of the Mexican American community's presence in Texas? In De Zavala's and González' cases, how is the active historical role of the female within the Mexican American community made manifest through the recounting the Lady in Blue narrative?

For Adina De Zavala, the legend of the Lady in Blue surfaces at a moment of crisis within the Mexican American community, one in which De Zavala herself had been actively engaged. As Flores masterfully comments, De Zavala fought for the preservation of the history of her community, engaging in an epic battle against Clara Driscoll and the Daughters of the Republic of Texas for control over the physical structure of the Alamo, as well as over its narrative. De Zavala's book is an integral part of this struggle; in it she presents both a historical summary of the events of the battle of the Alamo and a suite of legends, including that of the Lady in Blue, which Flores states "allow us to understand the 'historical' significance of the Alamo, not as a place with a chronology, but as an event whose meaning is situated within the larger process of Texas social life" (Flores 82).

Richard Flores maintains that "The narrative of the Lady in Blue and the other legends De Zavala presents "seek to 'fix' the problem of socioeconomic displacement by pointing to various forms of restoration and recalling the 'enchanted city of Tejas' where social and racial cleavage is unknown" (Flores 83). And while it is true that the underground city of Texas is idyllic- as Flores suggests, it is a kind of Utopia. The gift that the Lady brings is almost more remarkable than the utopian social situation she represents: "What is the Gift? The gift of seeing to the heart of things! She sees with the

clear-eyed vision of a Joan of Arc all that might vitally affect, for good or ill, the people of her city and State whom she ardently loves with a strange devotion. All the children are her children- all the people are to her friends, and brothers and sisters!" (De Zavala 61) Further, the woman with the Lady in Blue's gift is "superior, pure and good, well-bred, intelligent, spiritual and patriotic (De Zavala 61). Her clear-sightedness both benefits her own community and frustrates the designs of others who would abuse it, as "Tradition says she is always busy on the side of right, humanity, truth, justice, and patriotism […] She is a mascot to those who help her on her work, and the 'Devil's Own Luck' to those that hinder" (De Zavala 61).

While the folkloric elements she contributes to the narrative are remarkable and unique, De Zavala rather dwells on the effects the gift of the Lady in Blue could have on her community via the woman endowed with them. It thus seems that De Zavala is drawing upon the feminine agency of the San Antonian women gifted by the Lady in Blue. The Lady in Blue is simply the source of the Gift; De Zavala is more interested in what that gift ("Tradition further says that she is always ready to help the rich, the poor, the artist, the artisan, the writer, the children- the whole people of her beloved Texas land" (De Zavala 62)) can bring about in her San Antonian community through the women who wields it. The focus is on the action engaged in by the female giftee ("She has the Gift and therefore can not choose but use it for San Antonio" (De Zavala 62)) rather than on the legend itself. I find this interesting because it seems that De Zavala sees the source for this female agency, for efficacious in a struggle that with very clear racial boundaries, in the Lady in Blue. She draws from the folklore an example for her

community- and perhaps more specifically for the female "Texans"- of what their succor might look like- a woman. De Zavala states "She is here now- the Woman with the Gift for San Antonio, and Oh how we need her! She will help you and she will help me if we find her!" (De Zavala 61)

De Zavala finally rhetorically asks, "Who is she?" (De Zavala 61) leaving the discernment of which woman will be the one to save her people to the reader. I would offer that, considering De Zavala's resistive action in response the Daughters of the Texas Revolution, as well as her family's long and prominent history in Texas (her grandfather, Lorenzo De Zavala was the first vice-president of the Republic of Texas), that perhaps the answer to her rhetorical question is: herself. Certainly, De Zavala defended her community's place in Texas history, fighting tooth and nail for Tejano recognition and remembrance. Her book is in fact dedicated to "The De Zavala Daughters, Noble, Loyal, Unselfish, Patriotic Women in Whose Veins Course the Blood of the Heroes, Statesmen, Patriots, Pioneers, and Founders of Texas" (3). As a native San Antonian woman, and one of the De Zavala sisters, it seems as though Adina De Zavala appoints herself as the defender of her people, applying the Lady in Blue's legacy as a means of self-identification and call to political action. Read this way, De Zavala's conclusion to the account suggests a mild warning to those who would not support her activities in resistance to the DRT or who would frustrate her efforts: "If you do not profit by the Gift the fault is yours, not that of the Mysterious Woman in Blue, nor of the Woman who holds the precious Gift as Almoner for San Antonio" (De Zavala 62). Indeed, in De Zavala's hands, the Lady in Blue, as Hallenbeck and Williams comment,

"is not a legendary character for she still lives" (Hallenbeck and Williams 305-306). Through De Zavala's politicized, community-focused, self-identification with the Lady in Blue lore, she keeps the figure alive and possessed of a resistive agency to be transferred to the Texan Mexican Americans' most righteous female representative.

Jovita González

The nature of Jovita González's employ of the Lady in Blue legend is perhaps less clear than is Adina De Zavala's. Jovita González' article appears in the context of an exhibition for the Central Centennial celebration put on by the Diocese of Dallas as part of a Catholic Exhibit. In the article, González presents "a hasty list of our more outstanding heroines" (González 2) women who "have made every sacrifice within their power for the welfare of our people and the advancement of our state" (González 2). Gonzalez frames her list of notable Texas heroines by affirming that women as great as the state itself shaped its progress every step of the way, comparing the unflagging good works of these women on behalf of their community to the eternal mercy of God: "Never in the existence of time has the Mercy of God been straightened, nor has the sacrifice of woman ever been found wanting- so no wonder then that in this great empire state of the Southwest, there are to be found in each stage of its progress and development, outstanding examples of real greatness in our women" (González 2). Of the several women Gonzalez highlights in her article, the first native Texan heroine she features is the "Woman in Blue," for though "the historic past of our state is filled with wonders and great events, [none is] more marvelous than our 'Woman in Blue' and her supernatural bilocations to Texas from her convent in Spain" (González 2) . Clearly, Jovita places a

premium on the significance of the Lady in Blue's actions in the context of Texas' long history, giving it precedence over all other "wonders and great events."

Like Sor Juana Inez de la Cruz in her "Carta a Sor Filotea de la Cruz," the very inclusion of the Lady in Blue among the women Jovita González considers worthy of praise speaks to her renown and to the way González perceives her actions and renown. Like Sor Juana, Jovita González employs the Lady in Blue as a main feature of her argument for the agency of women- in this case, in the context of Texas history. Literary critic John Gonzalez suggest that Jovita González's article, part of the Mexican American community's response to the largely Anglo Texas Centennial celebrations, is representative of her resistive feminine voice within the Mexican American community, a voice arguing not only for the community's importance in Texas' history, but also for the role of women as significant historical actors within that community. It would seem, then, that Jovita González constructs the Lady in Blue as one of these female figures of agency, in fact emphasizing the range of her actions, as "No part of our state seems to have been neglected, for the Jumanos on the Concho River around present-day San Angelo know her as well as the Tejas of East Texas" (González 3) as well as the fact that she laid the ground work for the male Franciscan missionaries to follow her: "Great then was the wonder of the first missionary to find the Indians acquainted with the truths of Our Holy Religion and ready for the Salvation of the Lord" (González 3). Though Jovita González generally recounts the core narrative of the Lady in Blue, her framing of it illustrates how she wishes it to be read.

Secondly, Jovita González firmly claims the Lady in Blue as a heroine of Texas, in spite of the fact that she was Spanish (as Gonzalez explicitly acknowledges) and her presence in Texas (whether mystical or physical, as the narrative discusses) was achieved via mystical travel. Since the project Gonzalez is working for is a Catholic one, perhaps it is not surprising that she chooses the Lady in Blue as an example of heroism among women in Texas- her conversions of the tribes of east Texas would certainly fall within the purview of Catholic heroism and female agency. But what is remarkable is that Gonzalez makes the argument that the Lady in Blue pertains not the to colonizing Spanish, but to the Catholic (presumably Mexican American) community of Texas; she claims the colonizing force in the name of the colonized Texans in the interest of demonstrating female action in the history of Texas. Using folklore as the basis for establishing the Lady in Blue's continued commemoration and place of permanence in Texas, Jovita contends that, at least in the context of her argument on behalf of the women of Texas, the Lady in Blue belongs to that group of "our own consecrated nuns and devoted womenfolk [who] have made every sacrifice within their power for the welfare of our people and the advancement of our state" (González 2). The Lady in Blue is thus every bit the historical actor that any of the other women presented in Jovita's article were, and every bit the actors any of the men, Tejano or Anglo, were.

Carlos Castañeda

I include Castañeda with González and De Zavala in spite of the fact that his case is complex, and perhaps he perhaps does not properly belong in this section. Castañeda was a rigorous historian, and he probably did not consider himself a representative of

Mexican American resistance. To be sure, his *Our Catholic Heritage in Texas* is the most overtly Catholic of the three example I present in this section, as it documents the history of the Catholic Church in Texas. If one considers both that Catholicism was a major point of identification for the Mexican American community in Texas (the "heritage" Castañeda describes, after all, is "ours"), as well as the socio-political context of the time, it could be argued that his employ of Lady in Blue folklore in this historical text is a non-neutral act. Judging from the Castañeda's archive at the Center for American History at The University of Texas at Austin, in which the portion of the collection regarding Sor María includes a mystical travel treatise attributed to her ("Tratado del grado de la luz"), it seems that Castañeda was very interested in her mystical travel. For a 20th-century historian whose contemporaries (Webb, Hodge, Lummis and many others) were writing Sor María out of their regional histories, that Castañeda not only features her, but also adds the folkloric account about the Texas bluebonnets is surprising and, I believe, can be considered resistive.

Castañeda's contribution to the Marian magazine *Age of Mary* shows a considerably more fanciful, less historical version of the Lady in Blue narrative. Between the two sources, Castañeda manages to cover the range of tone of the types of articles about her- at once a of resistive history and at the same time an awareness of her as a significant folk figure in Texas history. His is the version that everyone cites as "the" story about Sor María and the Texas bluebonnets: "an Indian tradition has it that the last time the Woman in Blue appeared to them, she blessed them and was then slowly wafted away into the distant hills […] Next morning the plains and fields were covered with a

carpet of strange flowers, all of a deep blue shade that reminded them of the mantel she wore" (Castañeda "Woman" 28-29). Castañeda does not reinterpret the narrative; his is a dramatic rendering that conforms to the core elements. Castañeda, unlike Jovita González, does not appear to using the folklore as a means for validating the history, but he does include it- an interesting choice for a historian.

In this chapter, we have seen some examples of the folklore about the Lady in Blue, and have discussed the nature of that lore and how it was been applied in various contexts. In the next and final chapter, we will examine how Lady in Blue has been appropriated, re-imagined, and recast in the 20th and 21st centuries through a selection of poetry, short story, novels, drama and art.

¿Pero que raro misterio tiene la Venerable
María de Jesús que aún ahora, pasados los
siglos, se instala en esta realidad moderna de
vehículos motorizados y aparatos
electrónicos?

- Rima de Valbona, "El legado de la
Venerable María de Jesús de Agreda," 38

Chapter 6

We have now arrived at the last leg of the Lady in Blue's 370-year journey, the 20th and 21st century. The works examined in this chapter demonstrate a shift in how the narrative is used; in these examples, the Lady in Blue's account is manipulated consciously through a variety of literary and artistic genres to effects other than those originally indicated by the narrative. Ed De Grazia's short, illustrated pamphlet-book *The Blue Lady* (1957) is our point of departure for the analysis of the Lady in Blue as she is imagined in the (relatively) present day.

De Grazia, best known for his southwestern-themed paintings and drawings, presents the reader with both literary and visual interpretations of the Lady in Blue narrative. Subtitled "A Desert Fantasy of Papago Land," the limited-run book, published in conjunction with *Arizona Highway* magazine opens with a quixotic depiction of the Arizona desert: "The desert is spiritual, mysterious and religious. It is a dream within a dream […] There is peace and quiet upon you in the desert" (De Grazia 1,3). Accompanied by De Grazia's familiar impressionistic sketches and watercolors, it seems he wishes to depict a folkloric, quaint, and yet somehow nebulous notion of the Arizona desert and its indigenous inhabitants.

De Grazia leads the reader into a story told by an old Papago (now Tohono O'odham) chief to his tribe, gathered around the campfire, "all the Indians lean[ing] forward to hear his words" (De Grazia). Into the grandfather's account, De Grazia seeds elements of the *1630 Benavides Memorial*, adding the detail that the Lady in Blue brought with her a generalized happiness that the Tohono O'odham enjoyed. However, when she visited the Yuma tribe, they shot her with arrows numerous times. The old man concludes his story as the house in which he is seated becomes saturated with blue light; suddenly, "the old man lifted his arm to speak to the Blue Lady. Voices, faint voices, could be heard. They were singing an ancient hymn to the cross" (De Grazia). With that, the old man disappears into the night.

Why does De Grazia select an old and relatively marginal folk story to portray in this 1957 collector's work? What is he selecting from the Lady in Blue narrative to relay to a contemporary audience? How does her narrative, consciously chosen, staged and relocated in this text, function? In De Grazia's case, it seems the artist uses the narrative to distinguish between native tribes that were accepting of Christianity, and those who rejected it; to assign the narrative an indigenous resonance and cultural identification; to illustrate the desert's mysterious, eerie quality; and to cash in on a particular type of cultural currency.

As this chapter will demonstrate, however, De Grazia's handling of the narrative is far from representative. The genres of works that treat the Lady in Blue narrative, how the authors re-cast, re-imagine and re-tread the account, and even the artist and authors themselves are wildly different. Now at the end of the Lady in Blue's trajectory, I would

invoke the critical rationale for treating the topic in this way, sated in the introduction. Through the lens of Mexican American cultural studies, it has been possible to focus on birth, development, and dissemination of the Lady in Blue narrative over a long period, and using approaches appropriates to the materials and epochs examined. We now know what the Lady in Blue narrative signified in the 17th through 19th centuries, how it was deeply entangled with the popularity and dissemination of Sor María's writing in New Spain, how the Franciscan missionaries viewed her as a proto-missionary and missionary authority, how the narrative became inscribed in the landscape via the histories and artwork of the region, and, in the past chapter, how the narrative was both preserved and added to in the folkloric tradition. With the passage of time, a narrative whose original significance and content were rather narrow has become more diffuse and acquired new meanings and nuances.

In the present day (from the early 20th-cenuty onward), as writers and artists do intentionally imaginative work on the narrative, the results produced are necessarily quite varied. What unites the diverse artifacts discussed in this chapter is fundamentally a question of selectivity; they have couched, modified or re-conceptualized the narrative in a way that highlights particular elements of it, that explores particular tensions or relationships, or that makes the most of its regional cultural currency. As a result, the artifacts here considered generally do not share a common interpretation or view of the narrative; in fact, as in other thematic or narrative studies, they are presented together because they share a desire to dialogue on the same topic. In some ways, the multiplicity

of their expression originates from the variation of among the artists, and in another, from the suggestiveness of the narrative itself.

This chapter is thus organized less rigidly than the previous five, though it does move in a general progression from less radically innovative in its use of the narrative to more. Genres are not segregated into separate categories; they fall into the analysis as befits their use of the narrative. In addition, the "contemporary" period this chapter discusses begins in 1932 with Julia Keleher's play; the works are arranged by the nature of how they manipulate the Lady in Blue narrative, rather than following a chronological arrangement. The first grouping of artifacts (Tey Diana Rebolledo and others, Jane Eppinga, Dee Strickland Johnson) seeks to recast the Lady in Blue as a historical figure, carving out a place for her a place in colonial regional history. Two Mexican American writers, Luis Alberto Urrea and Ana Castillo, use the narrative to establish a regional feel in their novels, while Amy Córdova's retablo suggests a local reverence for the narrative. Julia Keleher's dramatic work takes this play with regionality a step further, as she fuses a historical event concerning the Acoma and Laguna Pueblos with the Lady in Blue narrative. William Jones Wallrich's children's story imitates the structure of Lady in Blue folklore, by using the narrative to reinforce positive social values.

Four works by Rima de Valbona, Bert Wall, Joseph Webber and Michele Larson, and Francisco Goldman play in various ways with the ideas of transcendence and transcendental movement inherent to the narrative. Francis Parkinson Keyes also engages with mystical travel, but as a rationale for historical events- namely, Sor María's advisement of King Felipe IV. Four works by Eric Kimmel, Victoria Edwards Tester,

Edward O'Brien and Marilyn Westfall, take up the Lady in Blue's role as a colonizer and/or evangelizer, though each arrives at an exceedingly different conclusion. The question of belief in the narrative and of verifiability is considered by S.E. Schlosser and, to a much greater extent, Lisa Sandlin. Finally, novelist Javier Sierra asks us to bring the Lady in Blue fully into the 21st century by stretching the limits of belief as the narrative takes center stage in a conspiracy-theory novel. In the text that follows, each artifact is set off separately by its creator and title, and is arranged in the order suggested above.

The Historical Lady in Blue

The first and perhaps most important re-casting of the Lady in Blue, a project to which this dissertation contributes, is the historicization of the Lady in Blue. As documented in Chapter 1, early 20th- and late 19th- century southwestern historians tended to marginalize the narrative of the Lady in Blue, writing Sor María out of traditional colonial-era histories by classifying her as a fraud or figment of the Franciscan friars' imagination. As demonstrated in Chapters 2 through 4, the Lady in Blue's representational presence during the 17th through 19th centuries in northern New Spain was substantial, and the conscious exclusion of her from the dominant historical narrative is reflective of dated interpretations of the function of women and of spiritual narratives in the colonial context. Contemporary scholars of women in the colonial Spanish milieu, Kathleen Meyers (*Neither Saints Nor Sinners*) and Ellen Gunnarsdottir (*Mexican Karismata*), have included her in their works on other topics, where Sor María's influence is unmistakable. In keeping with their works, this dissertation has striven to first establish and then characterize the nature and influence of the Lady in Blue's

narrative, preparing the story behind the narrative to be incorporated into contemporary histories and cultural studies projects.

Other present-day, often feminist, historians and scholars have taken steps towards reclaiming the Lady in Blue explicitly in the name of contemporary colonial southwest history. Though most examples appropriate only the general narrative, leaving out the specifics of how the narrative functioned in the 17th-19th centuries, their emphatic assertion of Sor María's impact is vital and long overdue. Tey Diana Rebolledo's *Nuestras Mujeres* (1992), for example, succinctly but cogently affirms the Lady in Blue's historical role in colonial New Mexico. To a lesser extent, so does the Hispano Roundtable of New Mexico's recognition of her as "Distinguished Hispana of New Mexico," and even her brief mention in the Library of Congress' *American Memory* series, "'With Peace and Freedom Blest!' Woman As Symbol in America, 1590-1800." These texts do important work in recasting the Lady in Blue narrative by establishing that it does belong in the historical context of Junípero Serra, Eusebio Kino, and Antonio Márgil de Jesús. These texts and others imagine, and rightfully so, that the Lady in Blue belongs in colonial (and contemporary) histories.

The adoption of Immaculate Conception theology by the Catholic Church in the 19th century spurred interest in promoting Sor María's case to sainthood. 19th-century Gallegan writer Emilia Pardo Bazán took up Sor María's cause as one of Spain's founding female writers (Pardo Bazán); though criticized by her contemporaries for championing the mystical writer, Pardo Bazán nonetheless re-imagined and recast her as

one of Spain's noteworthy Golden Age writers (as one observes the prologue she wrote for Sor María's *Vida de la Virgen María*).

Jane Eppinga: "The Blue Nun" (2000)

In her ghost story collection *Arizona Twilight Tales*, Jane Eppinga does not so much select a particular facet of the Lady in Blue narrative to emphasize, as she does re-imagine her in a broader, feminized historical context. By grouping the narrative in the introduction with those of two other well-known female folk/religious figures, La Llorona and La Virgen de Guadalupe, Eppinga is moving the Lady in Blue into dialogue with more recognizable "powerful feminine spirits" (Eppinga xi), in her account "The Blue Nun." While leaving an un-problematized La Llorona weeping for her "heinous crime" (xi), she categorizes the other two figures as "pure goodness" (Eppinga xi), a conclusion while definitely open to debate from a post-colonial point of view, nevertheless elevates the Lady in Blue's historical profile. In addition, it locates her narrative in a middle space within new feminized historical discourse, on a continuum between an accepted religious account (Guadalupe) and a much more folkloric one (La Llorona).

However, in spite of her extensive exposition of Sor María's biography and to contextualization of the Lady in Blue, it must be noted that Eppinga rather confusingly refers to Sor María as a "barely literate young girl" (Eppinga 139) and "a simple country girl" (Eppinga 143)- odd statements given that Eppinga later details the nun's composition of the MCD and her extensive correspondence with Felipe IV. In spite of this minor inconsistency, Eppinga's account depicts a "ghost" with a real human history

that the author co-locates with other iconic figures of "female history" in the American southwest. Although she approaches Sor María from the vantage point of fable (laced with biographical history), Eppinga's account achieves an end similar to that of other present-day historians and feminist critics who seek to restore or locate the Lady in Blue in regional, literary and colonial histories.

Dee Strickland Johnson: "The Mysterious Lady in Blue" (2003)

Dee Strickland Johnson's "The Mysterious Lady in Blue," from her collection of poems on Arizona's history and legends (*Arizona Herstory*), is an example of literature-cum-history. As she notes in the collection's introductions, "unlike most poetry books, it includes copious footnotes" (Johnson 10). Strickland Johnson presents her readers with a text that they may read for its historical information or for the form by which is tells that history; she encourages the reader, however, to keep their eye on the history: "If […] you read to learn, I implore you to read the poem straight through once and then go back a second time, in order to explore the subject further by referring to the footnotes" (Johnson 11). Strickland Johnson's is an approach uniquely suited to the Lady in Blue's narrative, which, like Eppinga's text, locates the legendary figure in a contemporary historical (in this case, literary/historical) context. However, Strickland Johnson does not place her in a feminized historical context; "herstory" is not presented in contrast to "*history*," it simply reflects the fact that Strickland Johnson conceives of Arizona in the feminine and thus, "it's her story!" (Johnson 10).

Attributing the legend to "Mexican country" (Johnson 170), Strickland Johnson adds very little to the narrative itself in the poem, thought she emphasizes the

transgression that the Lady in Blue committed by traveling mystically: "Reincarnation? Out of body affair? / The church would have frowned in the face/ Of such an idea! 'Twas evil! Occult!" (Johnson 180-181); "Had some strange nun really wandered among/ The Indians? Could it be abuse/ Of God's holy vows? No nuns in New Spain!/ The church in Old Spain had confirmed!" (Johnson 181). As was noted in Chapter 5, Strickland Johnson includes the story of the frustrated American filibuster mission to Sonora in the Lady in Blue's "history." In the context of the book as a whole, the inclusion of this folkloric account adds another element of agency to the Lady in Blue as a contemporary historical figure. Although Strickland Johnson uses the genre of poetry instead of prose, she accomplishes what the subsequent examples intend: to claim the Lady in Blue's narrative in a contemporary history.

Luis Alberto Urrea: *The Devil's Highway* (2004)

In *The Devil's Highway*, journalist and novelist Luis Alberto Urrea presents the reader with a fictionalized version of the tragic migration of 22 illegal Mexican immigrants across the Arizona-Sonora desert. Subtitled *A True Story*, and dedicated to "the dead and […] those who rescue the living," the novel is a discerning work, focused on the real and appalling outcomes of a human traffic across the US-Mexico border. Urrea begins the narrative in media res, portraying the state of the men who survived most of the terrible trip along the Devil's Highway: "they were burned nearly black, their lips huge and cracking, what paltry drool still available to them spuming from their mouths in a salty foam as they walked" (Urrea 3). Urrea graphically describes their struggle to hold on to life in the harsh environment- an environment they suffer because

they cannot enter legally, and there are few or no life-saving measures in place for them along the way.

Before narrating how the men's torturous journey began, Urrea develops the Devil's Highway as one of the story's protagonists, establishing the character and context of a place that "has set out to illuminate one notion: *bad medicine*" (Urrea 5). For Urrea, the place is steeped in death, suffering and darkness: "those who worship desert gods know them to favor retribution over the tender dove of forgiveness. In Desolation, doves are at the bottom of the food chain" (Urrea 5). The mythology Urrea creates for the Devil's Highway is brutal and hostile, from its landscape ("the plants are noxious and spiked," the wildlife "creeps through the nights, poisonous and alien" (Urrea 6)), to its human history ("As Melchior [Díaz] died […] on his stinking cot, he burned and howled. Flies settled in his entrails)" (Urrea 10)), to its legends ("the dreaded Chupacabras […] has been seen attacking animals, lurking in outhouses, and even jumping in bedroom windows to munch on sleeping children" (Urrea 6)). Though she is mentioned but briefly, the Lady in Blue contributes to the unwelcoming environment Urrea composes for his story.

Urrea references what seems to be the Kino/Manje account of the encounter between the Lady in Blue and the Pima (O'odham), saying that it was "written down in 1699" (Urrea 11). Though the tribes inhabiting the Devil's Highway thought the were free of the Spanish after Melchior Diaz' death, they were continuously bothered by "meddlesome white women who flew above their heads," and "a white woman who came bearing a cross." Urrea offers, as did Kino and Manje, that the "warriors did the only

practical thing they could: they filled her with arrows" (Urrea 11), noting that this seemed to have little effect on her as "They said she said she refused to die. Kept on flying" (Urrea 11). Urrea also divides the Lady in Blue story somewhat, claiming that the 1699 account referred to a "Blessed Virgin UFO" (Urrea 11), but that fifty years later "a female prophet came out of the desert. She was known as *La Mujer Azul*." (Urrea 11). The native tribes, now thoroughly annoyed at these European Catholic disturbances, shot her with arrows; Urrea comments "this time, she died" (Urrea 11). Finally, when the Jesuits arrived in the region to effect conversions, the tribes killed the friars, because "they made the People as unhappy as the mysterious spirit-woman" (Urrea 11).

Urrea's inclusion of the Lady in Blue is not especially distinguished nor involved, and he does not cast her in a significant role. But what does he interpret out of her narrative? What did he find in her that was meaningful enough to incorporate her? Finally, how does he recast her in his novel, about a contemporary, completely unrelated topic? I think that the Lady in Blue serves several ends. First, like everything else the comes in contact with the Devil's Highway, she is touched by death; although the she is not killed the first time she's shot with arrows, the second round removes her from that environment. Second, she represents transgression- she is not supposed to be there, and the tribes find her presence distressing; she is treading (or floating) where she is not wanted and her symbols are found to be offensive. Third, she is coded as European, or at least non-indigenous; since she is not a part of the desert, the desert feels free to get rid of her. In all these ways, Urrea casts the Lady in Blue as one of the casualties of the Devil's Highway-proof of its dark deathiness. On the other hand, in the regional, environmental

context of the novel, her inclusion is important because, although Urrea does not dwell on the detail of bilocation, nuns, and conversions (though these elements are suggested), the Lady in Blue narrative carries with it sufficient resonance that she is part of the backdrop Urrea portrays. He does not omit her when personifying the Devil's Highway, making the most of her regional resonance in demonstrating the "bad medicine" that defines the region.

Ana Castillo: *So Far From God* (1993)

Ana Castillo's novel *So Far From God*, a fictionalization of the Hispanic people and culture of New Mexico, features the Lady in Blue in a brief, but significant role. Pulled form the folk tradition and relocated as an active agent in the present day, the Lady in Blue acts on two different interpretive levels. The novel, set in the farming community of Tomé, New Mexico, concerns four sisters (Esperanza, Caridad, Fe, La Loca) and their mother (Sofia). In the course of the novel, three of the sisters die or disappear, leaving the highly idiosyncratic La Loca at home with her mother. As the novel draws to a close, and in spite of the fact that she never leaves the family house and has never had a boyfriend, it is revealed that La Loca has contracted AIDS. Though the family physician Dr. Tolentino attempts to cure her, eventually Loca begs him to stop his treatments. As she prepares to die, she is visited by an unexpected guest, a individual who does not smell human, who is certainly a nun, and who "must be related to Francisco el Penitente" (Castillo 244): "the Lady in Blue started coming to visit her, walked right into Loca's little room when no one was around one day" (Castillo 244). During her visits, Loca and the Lady in Blue play lotería ("Loca beat the nun two out of three"

(Castillo 245)), the nun listening to and soothing Loca: "the Lady in Blue did not seem interested in talking about nobody besides La Loca and just making her feel better when she couldn't get out of bed no more" (Castillo 244). While there is no mention of bilocation directly, the Lady in Blue sings Loca a final song as she holds her, a song called a "fade" that she says is from Portugal. As Loca listens to the Lady in Blue's song, and comforted by the nun's embrace, she drifts off.

As we know from the title of the previous chapter, "La Loca Santa Returns to the World via Albuquerque Before Her Transcendental Departure" (Castillo 238), Loca does not actually die. As was the case when she was three, when her epileptic seizure was mistaken for was mistaken for death, Loca experienced a "transcendental departure" rather than and actual death. On the level of plot and character, the Lady in Blue is the mechanism for a true deus ex machina ending (all that's missing are the strings pulling the two characters off stage). In the book's last chapter, Sofia forms an organization for mothers of saints; the implication of her doing so is that Loca, in transcendent departure as in life, was a saint. Who better, then, then to lead her on her journey than a ubiquitous mythico-spiritual figure known for her unusual mode of travel? La Loca the character is too non-conformist to die (even the unusual ectoplasmic death of one of her sisters); the Lady in Blue helps her transition with grace and love.

But why the Lady in Blue? Why does Castillo choose her over other bilocating saints, or female saints, or saints with an affinity for animals, or even just a spiritual or mystical folk figure? What is Castillo striving for in setting the Lady in Blue to the task? Castillo aligns Loca with the Lady in Blue in the chapter previous to her disappearance;

putting on her sister Esperanza's blue bathrobe to go out on Good Friday, Loca comments "It's blue. Blue is good. And this was no naïve remark coming from a young woman who knew, among other things she was never given credit for knowing, that in her land, blue was a sacred color and, therefore, very appropriate for the occasion" (Castillo 241). Here, Castillo prepares the reader for the following chapter; we know that the Lady in Blue is positive, and that, in some way, she is known in Loca's part of the world. Though Castillo seemingly scrambles the origin of the Lady in Blue (it appears that she is from Portugal), her inclusion in the chapter and paralleling with Loca serve the second purpose of providing a nuevomexicano valence to the work as a whole. Castillo aims to present a New Mexico that rings true culturally, and tries to accomplish this by including elements such as Francisco el Penitente, the national labs, and nuevomexicano religious culture. Her use, then of the Lady in Blue assumes her renown as a folk figure in New Mexico; in fact, one could go so far as to say that Castillo's ingratiating use of her in a contemporary setting is a strong indicator of the Lady In Blue's cultural pervasiveness in New Mexico. By affixing her most nuevomexicana of characters to the Lady in Blue, Castillo resolves the character's conclusion in way that allows Castillo to use employ nuevomexicano cultural currency. But, like everything else nuevomexicano in the novel, she is not quite characteristic.

Amy Córdova: Retablo (n/d)

Amy Córdova's retablo is a contemporary re-imagining of Sor María via a devotional folk art genre. Córdova, a writer and illustrator of New Mexico-themed children's books (*Juan the Bear and the Acequia of Life/La acequia de Juan del Oso*,

What Can You Do With a Rebozo, *The First Tortilla*, *The Santero's Miracle*), co-owner of Enger-Córdova Fine Art in Taos, New Mexico, and santera, deliberately, though fancifully, interprets the devotional 17th-century images presenting the Lady in Blue in this piece. In the 18th-century European and Mexican printings of the *Tanto*, she is upright, located superior to the indigenous people, with a quill in one hand, and a cross in the other, representing her dual role as a writer and evangelizer. In Córdova's rendering, the figure is still positioned superior to the indigenous tribes, but she is horizontal, extended above the indigenous people beneath her, on whose faces a range of emotions are registered- none of which appear to be the stereotypical/iconic ferociousness and/or terror illustrated in the earlier versions. The feather she holds in her hand almost suggests flying (as in the wing of a bird) rather than a quill for writing, as neither it nor the cross is extended heavenward. A rainbow stretches behind Sor María, her smiling face in contrast to the colonial-era hagiographic illustrations.

The significance of the piece as regards the Lady in Blue narrative is twofold. On one level, as a folk artist, Córdova's work is popularly recognized and consumed. As an entry into the corpus of that work, Sor María's retablo constitutes the visual art that that is perceived and purchased as local, whether as viewed as true devotional art, or depart from Catholic practices. In this sense, Córdova's creation applies the Lady in Blue as a marker for locality that is inherent in the "folk" nature of her production; it could indeed be reflective of the Chapter 5 legend in which Sor María hides away indigenous tribes from the Spanish near Bloomfield. Cordova self-consciously uses a local figure, presented in a non-threatening way, through a local art form, securing the Lady in Blue's

place and relevance in the contemporary southwest. In addition, in portraying Sor María as the Lady in Blue, and not as an author, Córdova centers attention on her as a local figure because she is portrayed as pertaining to the local landscape, rather than to Spain and the literary tradition.

In the second sense, Córdova selected a devotional art from to illustrate the Lady in Blue, who, particularly in that manifestation, is not a saint, though she has been granted the title "Venerable." Certainly, retablos and other genres of folk religious art feature individuals who are not saints in the Catholic Church; the image of Blessed Kateri Tekawitha included in the reredo behind the altar at the St. Francis Cathedral Basilica in Santa Fe is an example. However, by incorporating the image of Sor María into a devotional art form, the genre itself suggests the interpretation of her as a missionary proto-saint or simply as a religious figure in a contemporary Catholic context. Córdova's selection of a devotional art form could lead her audience to read the figure depicted in a hagiographic manner.

Julia Keleher: *Lady in Blue* (1932)

The script for University of New Mexico drama professor Julia Keleher's play *Lady in Blue* was kindly provided by Keleher's nephew, William Keleher. Though the playbill and cast list were catalogued in the UNM Fine Arts Department Collection at the Center for Southwest Research, and since the play was performed, May 17, 1932 at the University of New Mexico's Rodey Theater (Keleher *Lady in Blue* program), attending the show was clearly out of the question! The seems to have been part of a series of "local interest" topic plays (short works based on New Mexico folk traditions or

histories) that continued into 1934; though it predates those works, as we shall see, the play seems in keeping with the spirit of the series. In fact, as her commentary on the playbill suggests, the work echoes Keleher's folkloric account of the Lady in Blue we saw in Chapter 5 merging a variation of it with the historical purloining of a Spanish painting from the Acoma tribe by the Laguna tribe. According to Keleher, the painting was given to Acoma by the King of Spain in 1629, stolen by Laguna around 1807, and returned to Acoma "by order of the District Court of New Mexico" in 1857 (Keleher *Lady in Blue* program). Through Keleher's fusing of the two histories, and her situating of the compound history among New Mexico's tribes, she envisions a new context for the Lady in Blue and projects a prominence for her within the Native American community in a historical-folkloric manner non-native to either narrative.

The work opens in the home of a tribal elder from the prosperous Acoma Pueblo, Lorenzo. Lorenzo and his beloved, devoted daughter Anita discuss her upcoming marriage to Pablo, another Acoman, as she sits at her loom, weaving a cloth of black, grey, red and blue thread, asking her father to tell her a story she can weave into the fabric. Lorenzo, preoccupied with some general misgivings about the future, finally decides to tell her a story themed on the blue thread, that of the Lady in Blue. Lorenzo recounts the bilocation narrative, and then adds a variation on the Lady in Blue's gift: the Lady chooses one woman every generation, who must be "good of heart," who will be able to see into the future: "The gift that she gives is of the mind. Of being able to read what is happening in the hearts of men, of being able to tell of future happenings" (Keleher *Lady in Blue* script 5). Lorenzo notes that no woman at Acoma has ever been

chosen by the Lady in Blue; later, Lorenzo confirms that Laguna Pueblo had received the gift, but dismisses the suggestion that she lives in an enchanted underground castle as "a story for the children to believe" (Keleher *Lady in Blue* script 8).

While Anita mulls over her father's story, a knock at the door hails the arrival of four representatives from the downtrodden Laguna Pueblo. The men describe their pueblo's misfortune to Lorenzo, comparing it to the prosperity and happiness at Acoma. The Lagunans have come to ask for the object to which they attribute Acoma's well-being and their own sad state: a paining of Saint Joseph given to the pueblo by the king of Spain. The Lagunans were the first tribe that receive the Lady in Blue's gift, as one of the grandmothers foresaw the Pueblo Revolt of 1680; Lorenzo fairly tries to determine which of the two tribes will keep the miraculous painting by drawing straws; although Acoma wins, a Lagunan has meanwhile snuck of and stolen the painting. "Tom toms" beat in the background as the Acomans prepare to fight the Lagunans for the painting. Anita, preparing to join the rest of Acoma, is suddenly confronted by the Lady in Blue, "looking steadily at [Anita] with great concentration and power" (Keleher *Lady in Blue* script 17). The Lady in Blue asks Anita about the future of her pueblo, their relationship with Laguna and the picture; through Anita's answers, it becomes apparent that she has received the Lady in Blue's gift. Like a Cassandra, she predicts the painting will note return to Acoma for fifty years and when it does return, it will not be as a result of force of arms; turning to the Lady in Blue as the percussive noise increases, Anita begs her to help convince her tribe not to enter into battle with Laguna.

Keleher's set, costumes and dialogue are marked as regional, Native American and Native American: Anita's hair is "black […] banged above her eyes, the side locks cut square, even with the mouth. Her back hair is wound around a red cord" (Keleher *Lady in Blue* script 1), her clothes and her father's are suggestive (concha belt, moccasins "with no stockings", strands of silver beads), and she is seated a loom, weaving, as the play opens. The characters' speech is problematic, projecting a stereotypical Native American quality. Notably, in depicting the transmission of the Lady in Blue narrative by the Acomans and Lagunans ("Is it not of wonderment that this woman wrote books telling of our customs, our beliefs and our language as if she had lived among us, or known us for a long time?" (Keleher *Lady in Blue* script 4)), Keleher adds to her contemporary rendition an implicit confirmation by and pertinence to the two pueblos, neither of which figured into the historical narratives of the Lady in Blue. In addition, by maintaining the folkloric element of a female recipient of the Lady in Blue's gift, and combing this textually with the historically verifiable incident of the portrait's loss and recuperation, Keleher both subtly presents a Lady in Blue whose gift is demonstrably effective, and an indigenous woman far wiser than any of the men surrounding her. Through the Lady in Blue, Anita's becomes, in a sly move for female agency, the only character capable of averting disaster for both tribes; whether she does so is left open as the work's close.

William Jones Wallrich: "The Blue Lady" (1949)

William Jones Wallrich's children's book *The Strange Little Man in the Chili-Red Pants* features a number of stories that Wallrich adapted from "northern Rio Grande"

folktales. Wallrich makes clear that he derived the original ideas for his stories from the oral folk tradition of the region, attributing the accounts to individuals he puzzlingly calls "*el cuento*," or the storyteller. Rather than simply recounting Lady in Blue narrative in a format suitable for children, Wallrich instead innovates on the subjects, with "no attempt […] made towards strict accuracy in the following of established patterns or to recount the most traditional versions" (Wallrich Introduction). "The Lady In Blue" is thus an explicit link between the folk tradition and contemporary literary production (albeit with a bizarre illustration of the Lady in Blue as a somewhat sexualized, certainly not nun-like young "señorita"). In composing a new version of the Lady In Blue narrative, Wallrich follows some of the folk conventions we observed in the lore presented in Chapter 5, namely the reinforcement of moral or positive behaviors. As the book is intended for a young audience, and as the story's protagonists are both boys, Wallrich's invented story serves the specific purpose of illustrating and supporting several cultural values via the rewards bestowed by the Lady in Blue for children.

The story revolves around a little boy from the mountains of New Mexico named Miguel who goes by the name Mike. Mike visits the local village for a feast day, where sees an impressive store owned by Don Pablo, a man adored by all the village members. When Mike asks his grandmother how Don Pablo became so beloved, his grandmother replies that when Don Pablo was a boy, Pablito met the Lady in Blue while driving his father's goats to water. She was disguised as an old woman carrying a load of sticks, and while Pablito's brother Juan ran ahead, Pablito stopped to offer to help the woman with her burden.

Suddenly, she changed from an old woman into the beautiful, young Lady in Blue, who offered him three wishes to reward him for his goodness. Pablo's first two wishes benefited his community (shoes so that everyone in the village could go to school even when there was snow) and his sister (a mechanism to help her walk with a bad leg). The Lady in Blue affirmed that both were good wishes. Pablito leaves his last wish up to the "gracious Blue Lady" who silently disappears as the boy's attention is distracted by a puppy barking in the distance. When Mike asks what wish the Blue Lady gave to Pablito, his grandmother replies that nobody knew, but that Don Pablo "has prospered, and is loved by all. A truly good and happy man" (Wallrich 11). Mike considers what his grandmother has told him about the Lady in Blue and Don Pablo, but he cannot decide if the storeowner is great because of the encounter; he simply knows he wants to be like Don Pablo. The next day, Mike offers to help his neighbor Mrs. Garcia, "even though he knew her and knew that she couldn't be the Lady in Blue" (Wallrich 12), demonstrating that Mike, like Don Pablo, chooses to do good for others, even though he knows it will not benefit him in the same way.

As in the Hallenbeck and Williams accounts, there is no mention of the bilocation narrative; the only indication that Wallrich's Lady in Blue is *the* Lady in Blue are the geographical origins of the oral story and the references to the folk tradition: "about her feet flowers of blue sprang up" (Wallrich 8); "Everyone knew that she lived in a beautiful castle deep in the earth and that at times she came up to the surface to visit the earth people. And when she did so, she would grant wishes" (Wallrich 7). Wallrich reinforces the folk tradition's prevalence and persistence via Mike's familiarity with the narrative

("He had heard of the Blue Lady, but then, who hadn't?" (Wallrich 7)), and with the rules governing her actions. Wallrich then connects the gifts bestowed by the Lady in Blue with particular values and the conduct supporting them: Pablito is rewarded both for helping a person in need, and for wisely and generously thinking to benefit others (his community and family) even when he could ask for and receive anything. He is rewarded for goodness with lifelong goodness. Underpinning the immediate rewards for good behavior is the most valued outcome of all: being happy, well-off, wise and beloved in one's old age, a gift of which the Lady in Blue deems Pablito worthy. Wallrich's elucidation of Mike's decision, to help an old woman out in spite of the fact that he knows he will not receive the benefits that Don Pedro did, makes explicit the didactic success of the fable within the text. One imagines that Wallrich intends his young readership to learn as much from the story, and to act as Mike did.

Rima de Valbona: "El Legado de la Venerable Sor María de Agreda" (1988)

Costa Rican author Rima de Valbona contributes an structurally interesting entry to the contemporary Sor María corpus. Her Spanish-language, semi-historical short story "El legado de la Venerable María de Jesús de Agreda" plays not only with the idea of bilocation in the present-day (by presenting a syncretic relationship between the story's protagonist and the bilocative experiences of Sor María), but also with bilocation as a structural element in the story (as she stages the story's various narrative voices). As literary critic Lee Daniels comments, the question of the "legado," and who or what is inherited, is central to meaning Valbona intends to transmit, and to how she translates the Lady in Blue narrative.

The account begins with the first-person voice of the first narrator, an anonymous female university professor conducting research at the Biblioteca Nacional Mexico City on a colonial-era topic in anticipation of a conference she is to attend. While perusing the city's Mercado one Sunday, she encounters a copy of the 1670 printing of the MCD; the professor had already once been diverted from her research by the nun, when she found the account of her canonization tucked in among the archives she was researching. Almost immediately, Valbona switches the narrative voice, to another first person narrator, a nun, we gather, who lives in Sor María's convent during her lifetime, observing Sor María's writing and her travel to convert the "Moqui" (Hopi): "La veo en uno de los momentos de arrobo, suspendida en el aire, transfigurada y tan ligera de peso, que la brisa de mañana mece su leve cuerpo con el mismo vaivén de las hojas de lirio que bordean el jardín del claustro" (Valbona 34). The story seamlessly alternates between the professor, attempting in the present day to complete her research yet driven to distraction by her involvement with Sor María's writings, and the 17th-century Agredan nun, who observes Sor María's correspondence with Felipe IV, and hears the abbess' plea to seek out who might teach and baptize the tribes she visits.

The professor, "enredada en una confusa telaraña entre el ayer barroco y el hoy de la electrónica" (168), decides she must leave Sor María aside or risk losing her career; yet, when immersed in her research at the Biblioteca Nacional, she finds a (real) historical tract composed by Franciscan Fray Carlos Delgado (1746), claiming that Sor María continued to visit the Moqui during his lifetime, asserting that "nuestra apreciada misionera nos está ayudando a cultivar la Viña del Señor" (Valbona 42). Throwing all

her weeks of research into the trash, the professor requests a map of Mexico from the librarian, exclaiming: "¡Qué bueno liberarme así de la tiranía académica!" (Valbona 43). As the story closes, Valbona changes the narrative voice a third and final time, to a dispassionate third person, who observes from the outside as the past and present converge. The professor, described by the narrative voice as "impeccable […] de gesto intellectual" (Valbona 43) throws herself at the librarian, pleading "Vuestra Ilustrísima, os ruego dejarme ir al Moqui […] Me lo manda la Venerable María de Jesús… en su lecho de muerte me legó esta misión y por lo mismo no puedo dejar de cumplirla. ¡Mandadme a Moqui, por el amor de Dios!" (Valbona 43). The convergence between the 18th century and past is complete; as the 3rd-person narrator informs us of the librarian's consternation and the professor/nun's continued pleas to be sent to the Moqui, "cueste lo que cueste" (Valbona 44)

Lee Daniels, who presented me with Valbona's work and with his own criticism of it, reads the story as a manifestation of two different types of "legado," based on two definitions of the word. In the first sense, that of an inheritance transmitted to one's successors, Daniels sees the text itself (the MCD) as the object which is passed along (170), the point of connection between the 17th and 20th centuries (167). It is as if Sor María has left the book for the unnamed professor to find as the nun's bequest to her. Daniels also reads "legado" in a second sense- that of an ambassador sent by a Church official and charged with a particular mission. The professor, as a "legado," thus acts as the emissary of Sor María, the person dispatched to complete the nun's objectives. In Daniels' projection of a possible ending for the story, he suggests that Sor María reaches

back across centuries through her text to choose the professor "mientras está loca" (Daniels 171) to continue her incomplete missionary work. While this hypothesis is certainly supported by the third person narrative voice which views the professor's conversion into a17th-century missionary nun objectively, I offer that Valbona is playing an even more subtle game with the reader through the professor's assumption of the role of Sor María's protégé.

I propose a third way Valbona might imagine Sor María's "legado," in the sense that a "legado" may also be a "legacy" that is more abstract and literary than it is physical. The legacy the professor inherits and enacts is that of bilocation or bitemporality, expressed via the structure of the story itself. Because both the 17th-century Agredan nun and the present-day professor are expressed in the first person voice, it would seem that Valbona is playing with reality in a manner reminiscent of Julio Cortázar's, running one narrative "yo" into the other, blurring the lines between past and present, between the "real" and the "imagined," to reproduce the sense of bilocation: "Mientras recorro la calle Bolívar de vuelta al hotel, experimento la más intensa enajenación, como si estas peregrinas calles del México dieciochesco fueran de tiempos muy lejanos, todo un mundo desconocido por mí racionalmente, pero que me es muy familiar en el ámbito de mi yo profundo. En aquel instante las otras monjas se cuchichearon a mi lado" (Valbona 39). Both voices are genuine to their environments and yet it is clear, thorough the eyes of the present-day observer, that they are one and the same. It could be that, instead of the professor losing her mind, the "legado" the modern-day academic inherits from Sor María is not only her text and her role as Sor María's

emissary, but also the nun's ability to be in two places at once, an effect Valbona creates via the structure of the narrative and the presentation of space.

Valbona thus plays with "legado" on several levels: literally, as the contemporary professor inherits the book; metaphorically, as she assumes Sor María's evangelical mission to the Moqui; and structurally, by how she wields the various narrative voices and situations in the story to create a sense of bilocation. Valbona reads Sor María as the multifaceted historical figure that she is, but she saves her most structural argument for the Lady in Blue, as the author cleverly uses the story's structure to creates a sense for how her contemporary colonial historian, is both clearly in the present, even as she simultaneously belongs to the past.

Bert Wall "The Blue Nun" (2001)

Bert Wall's *The Devil's Backbone II* is the author's second collection of "stories of the supernatural told by old-timers" (Wall vii), many of which pertain to or are narrated as relating to his ranch in the Devil's Backbone, a range in the Texas Hill Country between Blanco and Wimberly. Rather than recounting a "straight" rendering of the Lady in Blue narrative, which would be more in keeping with other "ghost story" collections featured in the previous chapter, Wall's short story presents an innovative narrative that focuses on the Lady in Blue's feminine, Catholic elements in an unexpected context.

"The Blue Nun" is set on Wall's ranch, in August; the workmen exhausted from heat and exertion, the ranch's staff, including its youthful cook Ventura (coded for as Mexican by virtue of her dark eyes and "flowing black hair" (Wall 88)) rests during the

heat of the day. Later in the evening, Ventura, who as a youth was an excellent student with leanings towards the religious life, approaches Wall's office reluctantly. While Wall lingers on the cook's hesitance, Ventura nevertheless is compelled to tell her employer and his wife about what had occurred to her as the rest of the ranch napped. Falling into a deep sleep, Ventura experienced a convergence of herself with the mystical movement of the Lady in Blue in the colonial period, though the ranch cook was unaware of the legend she embodied: "I left my body and was floating high above myself […] I was dressed in a sky-blue habit; I was definitely a Catholic nun […] I saw Indians, tribes of Indians, all over Texas, east, west, all over, and then all seemed to know me, or at least the nun in the blue robes" (Wall 89). Shortly after describing her experience to the spellbound narrator and his wife, Ventura leaves the ranch, choosing to "follow her religious calling" (Wall 89) and become a Catholic sister as a result of her extraordinary dream. Later, upon researching some of Texas' stories under Spanish rule and learning of the Lady in Blue, the narrator speculates on Ventura's experience, wondering: "Did Ventura see the old spirit? Did the old spirit call her to the sisterhood?" (Wall 90). The narrator abruptly concludes with the hope that the Catholic Church will dress Sister Ventura in the blue robes of the woman who so deeply influenced her decision to enter the sisterhood.

As in Rima de Valbona's story, Wall's Ventura slips into the mystically-traveling role of the Lady in Blue seamlessly, though she does so without prior knowledge of the Lady in Blue narrative, and through the permissive mechanism of sleep or reverie. Ventura essentially becomes the Lady in Blue, seeing herself in the characteristically-

named blue robes (though it is interesting that the color is sky-blue, and not the darker blue of the Conceptionist habit). However instead of an assertion of the freedom of movement or liberty of agency that other associative versions offer, Ventura's conflation with the Lady in Blue, particularly as emphasized by the narrator's final exhortation, leads her closer to the Catholic Church. Rather than carefully trespassing the lines of patriarchal authority, Ventura's experience confirms her faith, solidifies her resolve, and leads her into the distinctly feminine religious life rather than around it. The narrator also develops the Spanish-Texan facet of the Lady in Blue, and assigns it authority when he states that "it took the church [sic] several decades to recognize this story as having a factual basis of some kind" (Wall 90). Wall's rendering of the Lady in Blue narrative is thus coded as Spanish, feminine, factual and significantly supernatural; her particularly emphasized characteristic in the story is her ability to inspire a positive response to the call to institutional participation in the Catholic Church on the part of another woman. This conflation is further emphasized by title of the story and its peculiar ending, as both leave the reader wondering, "Which is the Blue Nun?"

Joseph Webber and Michele Larson: *Sor María* (1980's)

Though I have been unable to locate a complete recording of the dance opera *Sor María*, written by Joseph Webber and choreographed by Michele Larson, the production's program and publicity imagine a Lady in Blue whose mystical travel acts as a metaphor for Sor María's relationship with God, and who develops an active engagement with that spirituality. In *Sor María*'s case, the form of the representation is quite unusual; the topic perhaps lends itself to the distinctive genre. While other

contemporary renderings of the Lady in Blue narrative are mostly textual, Webber and Larson's work is a "chamber opera/ dance-theater work" (Webber and Larson *Sor María* Advertisement, KiMo) featuring only two characters, Sor María and her biographer Fray Joseph Ximénez Samaniego, and a chamber orchestra. Though the textual origins of the work are evident (the program's introduction discusses Sor María's vita at length), and the work portrays two individuals who have only a textual relationship to one another, the theme is expressed via artistic movement, set/atmosphere, and music. Accompanied by a chamber orchestra, the production intends to portray "a blend of emotions of the heart and aspirations of the soul in the portrayal of Maria in her mystical states as human being undergoing transformational experience" (Webber and Larson *Sor María* Advertisement, KiMo). Without the script/libretto or a recording of the music and/or the production, it is difficult to say with accuracy what was conveyed in the performances. However, judging from the photographs featured on the posters for the performance, and the tone observable in the short clips of the work (taken from the website dedicated to the 400th anniversary of Sor María's birth), it appears that the creators intended to project a spare, modernist/interpretive tone onto the topic.

Though Webber and Larson emphasize in the program that "the subject of the work is a religious person, the work itself is not a 'religious' piece" (Webber and Larson *Sor María* Program). They do not comment of the veracity of her trance, though they affirm: "it is evident from her own and her biographer's writing that she experienced transcendental states, and wrote about them." (Webber and Larson *Sor María* Program). Webber and Larson wish to portray Sor María "in her trances, ecstasies and mystical

states, as a human being undergoing transformational experience" (Webber and Larson *Sor María* Program), stating that "she was describing very real, personal experiences however the external reality might appear to an 'objective' observer" (Webber and Larson *Sor María* Program). Though the bilocations are categorized as "astral projections" (Webber and Larson *Sor María* Advertisement, KiMo) (and her inspired writing as "trance-writing" (Webber and Larson *Sor María* Advertisement, KiMo), the idea behind the portrayal of mystical travel cleaves to traditional, rather than New Age, spiritual themes. In the work's third movement, "New Mexico," the Lady in Blue's bilocation is explicitly developed: "the choreographer [Michele Larson] uses this story of María's travels and preaching in the New World as a metaphor for María's struggles with her darker self and her attempts to convert her soul to the will of God" (Webber and Larson *Sor María* Program). In the last two movements, Sor María expresses through dance and music her conformation with God's will and rejection of sins, her dance now ecstatic, rather than trance-like as in the first scenes.

It is worth mentioning, in closing, that the *Sor María* as a performance piece appears to have enjoyed a reasonable regional popularity. At least two sets of three-day runs, one at the KiMo Theater in Albuquerque and another at Northern New Mexico Community College, occurred one year. Notes on the poster for the NNMCC performance indicate that is was preceded a year before by an earlier production (Webber and Larson *Sor María* Advertisement, Northern). While it is certainly true that such interpretive dance performances attract a specific audience, it is as apparent that the work was sufficiently appealing to both justify a second run, and to increase the number of

venues. Though dance as an artistic medium does not share the same breadth of audience that the oral folkloric tradition does, *Sor María* reached a contemporary audience that would have been unlikely to seek out contemporary textual renderings of the narrative, and additionally, envision the narrative through a modern spiritual lens.

Francisco Goldman: *The Divine Husband* (2004)

Guatemalan-American writer Francisco Goldman is known primarily as an author of historical fiction novels set in Latin America. His 2004 novel *The Divine Husband* begins in 19th-century revolutionary Cuba, having as its implicit protagonist none other than author and revolutionary leader José Martí. The action of the novel, however, surrounds a girl named María de las Nieves Moran, servant and companion to Paquita Aparicio, who would later marry the country's dictator and be forced to flee the country after his death. At the beginning of the story, the two girls are sent to a convent school to be educated, though as her friend is pursued ever more intensely by the dictator, María de las Nieves becomes a novice nun in the convent (which is summarily closed by "El Anticristo") in an effort to prevent the union. While observing the nun's strict rules, María de las Nieves is introduced Sor María's vita: "Nothing she had ever read before had so impressed or stimulated her, or awoken such concentrated yearning" (Goldman 41). María de la Nieves mentally compares herself to Sor María, noting that she began her mystical travels at about the same age that María de las Nieves was. Although the novel is far from focused on Sor María de Agreda, the fact that the young girl perceives "several provocative parallels between her own life and that of mystically bilocating Spanish nun" (Goldman 42) is echoed throughout the novel. And, the question of this

Sor María-like bilocation is invoked in answering the book's central question: is the unknown father of María de la Nieves' child José Martí?

Goldman weaves both Sor María the spiritual author, and the mystical traveler into the plot of the novel, as María de las Nieves is completely absorbed by the book as a novice (particularly by the idea of bilocation) and evokes the nun's writing throughout her peripatetic life (in following Paquita to New York, her travels lead her far from Cuba). The reader discovers that the book had been a favorite among the nuns of the convent for generations ("Our predecessors must have loved it very much" (Goldman 44)); a miserable María de las Nieves gives herself over entirely to the book, losing herself "in the methodically narrated adventures and inner dialogues inspired by the mystical travels of the Spanish nun" (Goldman 46). The novice becomes so absorbed that she herself begins to imagine herself traveling as well, trying to "lose herself in meticulously guided day and night dreams of mystical bilocation" (Goldman 46) in order to visit the family and friends she missed. The Spanish nun's counsel comforts María de las Nieves during her novitiate, and she learns that the travel is a reward of sorts for spiritual forbearance: "María de las Nieves knew now that such flights and visions were won only through the most heroic discipline, suffering and selflessness, and by the twinned powers of reason and faith" (49). When she finally finishes the nun's vita, María de la Nieves relinquishes the book only regretfully: "Goodbye beautiful, beloved book, goodbye, I love you" (Goldman 54).

María de la Nieves carries Sor María's lessons throughout her life, wishing variously that she could mystically travel through the convent's walls (Goldman 60) to

talk to Paquita, comparing unexpected her escape from urban poverty "a mystical escape as wondrous as any she'd read about in Sor María de Agreda" (Goldman 91), and eventually recalling, upon receiving a postcard of Cañon de Chelle, the nun's travel to the area, recalling the book read in the distant past of her life in the convent. María de la Nieves' longed-for bilocation is ironically realized near the novel's end, when the paternity of her second child is explored. Though the narrator believes that Charles López' father was José Martí, María de las Nieves' first child, Mathilde, comments that instead her mother trilocated to three different men, including Martí, "herself corporally manifesting with all three" (Goldman 432). The narrator comments that such a ludicrous story must have been concocted to disguise Martí's paternity, but the Mathilde's conviction and the lingering theme of bilocation persist; did Martí leave behind a another son as a result of a former Cuban nun's tri-location? Goldman, of course, cheekily suggests the possibility and returns to the sidelong meditation on Martí, the "divine husband." Goldman thus casts the Lady in Blue narrative, "María de las Nieves' old favorite" (Goldman 146), as a leitmotif for escape and for the miraculous throughout the novel, allowing it to periodically edge into the protagonist's thoughts, parallel the book's action, or even produce an extra branch on José Martí's family tree.

Frances Parkinson Keyes: *I, The King* (1966)

Frances Parkinson Keyes' *I, The King* is an historical fiction novel based on the life of Spain's 17th-cenuty monarch, Felipe IV. Sor María's role conforms with her historical relationship with Felipe IV as his spiritual and personal advisor for 23 years via written correspondence. As in Felipe IV's actual life, Sor María does not appear until the

last third of the book, after the king has dismissed his válido (political advisor) the Duke of Olivares. The action of this last section is punctuated by translated excerpts from Sor María's letters to the king, in which Sor María's responds to and advises on the king's numerous executive and personal crises. Keyes plays on these excerpts to give an immediate sense of perspective to the events of the king's life; because she is on the outside looking in, and because Felipe IV often followed her advice (even in military and political question), these passages (as the actual letters themselves) provide remarkable insight into his reign (and, of course, to her influence). But for this interaction to have existed, Keyes must explain how Sor María became the King's consigliore, how his confidence was won to such an extent that "until death snapped the spiritual link that joined them, the heart of Philip was bared in all its sorrow, its weakness, to Sor María alone" (Keyes 212).

The meeting and interaction between the two figures is presented in dialogue, Sor María at first reluctant to advise the king because of her limited experience with worldly affairs, and because she had never left Agreda in a traditional sense. Then, Sor María explains to Felipe IV that she had traveled all over the world, including to the New World, but had done so spiritually rather than physically, In what is likely a reference to the *Orbes Celestiales* attributes to her, Sor María describes the people, languages, geography and customs she observed in various worldwide locales. After much prayer and pleading, Sor María was sent to the Indian villages of the New World, which she portrays in great detail for the king. Felipe IV listens, spellbound, asking the occasional question, as Sor María relates the conversions she effected, and the people she found

there. As she concludes her narration, Felipe IV gazes at her habit and murmurs: "The lady in blue, of course, was you, Sor María" (Keyes 227). After a brief moment of silence, the king looks up at her "with a thoughtful smile" (Keyes 228). Dismissing the nun's misgivings about whether he would believe her experience of mystical travel, the king states that he believes her absolutely. Further, he wonders "why a woman who has been so favored of the Almighty that He has send her on theses mystical missions, and who has been so far successful in them […] should doubt that she can give solace and support of one lonely man in his extremity?" (Keyes 228). Though Sor María avers that she cannot be so favored by God since her travels to the New World have ceased, Felipe IV assures her that her abilities ("your intelligence, your judgment, your executive abilities and your integrity, not to mention your piety" (Keyes 229)) that were manifested via the mystical travel have simply been channeled elsewhere, and that he in fact seeks her counsel because, and not in spite, of the travel.

Keyes thus uses the Lady in Blue narrative as fundamental to the historical Felipe IV's rationale in choosing Sor María as his advisor. The Lady in Blue narrative, far from discrediting Sor María, increases her appeal to the king and broadens, in his eyes, both her sphere of knowledge and her efficacy. In so constructing the interaction between monarch and abbess, Keyes demonstrates the attitudes of the period and place, tells us more about Felipe IV by illustrating his rationale and perspective on the bilocation and its significance. The Sor María Keyes presents is thus bolstered rather than hobbled by the Lady in Blue, and additionally fits with the portrait of the sympathetic but flawed king Keyes portrays.

Eric Kimmel, Illustrations by Susan Guevara:

"The Lady in the Blue Cloak" (2006)

Eric Kimmel's children's book, with illustrations by Susan Guevara, offers a series of modernized legends concerning the Texas missions that intend to present a mission enterprise consisting of peaceful cultural assimilation. *The Lady in the Blue Cloak: Legends From the Texas Missions* acknowledges in the introduction that the mission enterprise was traumatic for the native tribes, ("becoming farmers and Christians required a total break with their past" (Kimmel vii)) and that contemporary criticism interprets the missions with a justifiably critical eye ("the padres are often condemned as agents of imperialism" (Kimmel vii), Kimmel nonetheless chooses to interprets the friars' action as representative of their earnestness "they sincerely believed they were doing God's work, saving lives as well as souls" (Kimmel vii). Kimmel concludes in the introduction that the conflict between the European padres and the indigenous tribes was justified, as it "ultimately led to the growth of a new culture- one that combined elements of both European and American civilizations [sic]" (Kimmel vii). It is in this vein, through the genres of children's fiction, that Kimmel casts the Lady in Blue narrative. Though generally conforming to the narrative as a whole, both the text of "The Lady in the Blue Cloak" and its illustration emphasize that not only did the Lady in Blue bring European religion to Texas' tribes, but she that she also portended the arrival of its agriculture and livestock, and thus the tribes' cultural Europeanization.

This effect is prefigured in the illustration that prefaces the story. In it, the Lady in Blue bows down on one knee, holding a miniaturized version of a mission in one arm,

another arm reaching heavenward. An angel wearing blue flies above her, native peoples wearing European-style clothing happily greet her, and several domesticated European animals (sheep, chicken, horse) cluster at her knees in the foreground. It is this last detail that sets this story apart, particularly in light of Kimmel's introduction. Reading the story, the meaning of the animals in regards to the Lady in Blue narrative becomes clear.

The account is based on the encounter between Fray Damián Massanet and the Texas tribes. The Tejas, after requesting blue fabric to bury their dead, assert that they area ready to convert to Catholicism, as "God is our friend. God and the Lady in Blue will protect us" (Kimmel 3). Then, Kimmel adds the significant detail that is reflected in the illustration and alluded to in the introduction, as the Tejas chief continues: "the Lady also promised you would bring us new plants, new animals. Everything she said has come true. We will never be hungry and cold" (Kimmel 3). The Lady in Blue is thus a harbinger and advocate not only for religious conversion, but also for the adoption of agricultural and living practices via the introduction of livestock cultivation. Though Kimmel scrambles other historical details in the story, it is clear that he wishes to emphasize the Lady in Blue as an agent for the overall Europeanization of the Tejas tribes, exerting a colonizing influence that extends beyond the purview of conversion.

Victoria Edwards Tester: "The Blue Lady, 1635" (2002)

Victoria Tester's poem "The Blue Lady, 1635" employs the Lady in Blue's firs-person voice to compellingly assert claim not only to her participation in the bilocation experience, but also to the Lady in Blue's authority over New Mexico's missions and northern frontier politics. The poem, from Testers collection *Miracles of Sainted Earth*,

hints at the idea of a peaceful conquest, casting the Lady in Blue in the role of a peacemaker who, by virtue of her lack of force, is the voice of spiritual efficaciousness, love and syncretic wisdom. Tester thus affirms and augments the Lady in Blue's agency, envisioning a Lady in Blue unhesitating in addressing male missionaries, hopeful in her prayer for peace, and unabashed in telling the missionaries what their goals show be and how they should carry them out. Tester's Sor María does, however, present an oversimplified interpretation of the indigenous tribes, the "people as brown as Our Lord's sparrows" (Tester 108).

The poem opens with a tone that is part confessional and part testimonial: "I, Sister María de Jesus de Agreda/ made five hundred blessed journeys to New Spain" (Tester 108). In contrast to the diffident tone Sor María usually used when discussing the bilocative travels, reluctantly submitting to male authority or averring that "something" happened, Tester has Sor María's own lay direct claim to her travels. It seems this voice is speaking in the present, in Spain, as it refuses to comment on "my three-hundred-year-old/ body that refuses to corrupt in this glass coffin" (Tester 109) and states that the mystical travel occurred "at this very table" [in her convent] (Tester 108). The apostrophe Sor María uses is directed at the New Mexican friars in general, and Fray Benavides in particular: "I saw you, Fray Alonso, baptizing the pueblos of Piro" (Tester 108); "I turned the Indians towards you desert fathers" (Tester 109). In reference to the political divisions between secular and religious leadership that divided 17th and 18th century New Mexico, Sor María rebukes the friars: "I have prayed for harmony between the governors and you friars" (Tester 109). She herself found her travels a "duty sweet as

the fold of a dove's wing" (Tester 108) and was sent "without a horse, / without the swords of Toledo" (Tester 108), in contrast to the masculine means of conquest. Sor María asserts her authority over the missionary enterprise in general, doing so by praying that the friars, soldiers and tribal members emulate her actions (which it seems we are to read as representative of a "peaceful conquest"): "I have prayed for swords and arrows to return to water" (Tester 109). In a final (somewhat confusing) admonition of peace and religious cooperation if not syncretism, Sor María advises the mission friars "Spanish and Indian must be one prayer, the two wings of the same Inca dove" (Tester 109). In her poem, Tester draws on the Lady in Blue bilocation narrative to give (female) control to Sor María over the travel, to assert authority over what other (male) missionaries did/do, and to declare what shape Indo-Hispano relationships should take.

Edward O'Brien: Mural, St. Katharine's Indian School (1960's)

Stretching across the wall of what used to be the dining room of the now-closed St. Katharine's Indian School in Santa Fe, New Mexico, a remarkable mural depicts the conversion to Catholicism of the indigenous American tribes. This mural was discussed briefly in the introduction to Chapter 4, in reference to the Lady in Blue's symbolic role relative to Fray Junípero Serra and Eusebio Kino in the conversion of indigenous tribes in the northern frontier regions of 17th and 18th century New Spain; the two friars gaze through the Lady in Blue as they look to the Virgin of Guadalupe. In this chapter, I will consider O'Brien's stated conceptualization of the mural and its overall composition, as well as the interpretive lore that emerged form the student community, children from Laguna Pueblo who boarded at the school, about it. (Many thanks to Mariano Chávez,

Samia Adelo, and Martin Varela for their help locating, accessing and photographing the mural, to Shannon Murray for allowing me onto the property and speaking to me at length about the mural, and to Carol Vogel for sharing her memories of her uncle with me.)

This mural is one of three O'Brien completed as part of his "Our Lady of the Americas" series; the other two are at a monastery in Pecos, New Mexico, and at the Sikh ashram in Abiquiu, New Mexico. All three murals feature the Virgin of Guadalupe as their focal point, though the size and scope of each mural varies. According to O'Brien's notes on the mural (O'Brien *Story*), kindly provided by his niece Carol Vogel (Vogel), the artist conceptualized the mural as an attempt "to re-echo her [Virgin of Guadalupe] words through ten significant events on the South and North American continents and to portray her role in drawing to God this race so close to her heart" (O'Brien *Story* 1). O'Brien places five events pertaining to the Catholic conversion of South America on the left as one faces the mural, and five pertaining to the North America on the right. The right-hand side features: Sor María de Agreda, friars Serra and Kino, Kateri Tekawitha, and Katharine Drexel, founder of the Sisters of the Sacred Heart, and her assistant Mother Mercedes. A horizontal band of Pueblo ceremonial masks extends above the North American side of the mural, reflecting the "great spirit" collectively reverenced, which becomes in the churches below it "the Holy Spirit sent by Christ to abide with His church forever" (O'Brien *Story* 3).

The depiction of the Lady in Blue in the mural is fascinating and striking, forming a triangle directly to the right of the Virgin of Guadalupe. Wearing a blue habit, she is

presented in profile, eyes opened, superimposed over herself, facing forward with her eyes shut. With her eyes closed, she is meditative, almost tranquil, while her double is actively gazing towards something. The stone-walled architecture in the background indicates that she is in Europe, while the upper part leg of the triangle, connected to the superimposed image of the nun by a map detail of Baja California and the image of waves, depicts the Lady in Blue in the desert southwest, mesas in the background. The triangle's upper leg depicts a detail of the Lady in Blue's open blue eye and a woman stepping out into the dessert from the nun's temple, arms outstretched to the native population in front of her. The one open blue eye is completely alert, absorbedly gazing at the viewer; the pupil is small, and the tone of the image projects intensity, a focus on the person who is looking at it. The almost-transparent woman emerging from the temple-area of the nun's habit is overlaid by an equally transparent cubist cross, superimposed over her body. A yellow aura radiates from her to the rather indistinct grouping of Native Americans in front of her, half standing, half kneeling. The rendering of the bilocation is impactful, though it is most notable for the collocation of the narrative in the context of the overall conversion of the Americans via the Patroness of the Americas.

However, according to the caretaker of St. Katharine's grounds, Shannon Murray, who herself attended St. Katharine's as a child, the Lady in Blue featured in the painting took an entirely different meaning for the Lagunan children living on the school's premises (Murray). In Murray's oral account, the Lady in Blue of the mural is conflated with a the nun the Laguna students called "Blue Eyes;" Blue Eyes used to appear to the

Laguna children sent to the nuns of the Sacred Heart who ran the school. To the children, the nuns were very cold, distant and strict; but Blue Eyes used to appear to the children and comfort them. Shannon suggested that her name arose from the fact that the reference set her apart from the Laguna children (though blue eyes do appear in the tribe) and from the nuns as well, as she did not bear the title "Sister." According to Shannon, those who remained at the pueblo teased children who attended St. Katharine's; they were asked if they had seen Blue eyes while they were there.

The origin of the association between Blue Eyes and the image of the Lady in Blue is based on the color blue: the blue of Sor María's habit in Spain become the blue her one open blue eye, facing the dining room. The nun with the blue eyes is the connection between the double nun in Spain and the nun preaching to the Indians. Whether the narrative of "Blue Eyes" arose as result of the mural, or whether O'Brien was aware of it, incorporating it into the design of the mural, is unclear. What is clear is that the Lady in Blue is both featured and (re-) re-imagined in a painting conveying as its theme the conversion of indigenous American peoples to Christianity- in a 20th century school whose mission was the education and conversion of Native Americans. As O'Brien himself stated in his notes on the mural, "this is a conversation piece, a background asserting and emphasizing in all ways its main theme- Our Lady's love for the Indian, making whoever dines in this room aware of her special love for this race to whom she gave her image" (O'Brien *Story* 1). In its context within the school, O'Brien's piece advances a message of didactic evangelization specific to its audience, with the

Virgin of Guadalupe as its focal point, in which the Lady in Blue plays a specifically articulated and communally recast role.

Marilyn Westfall:

"The Blue Lady" and "From the Diary of Cacnumaie" (1998)

The collection *Quartet in Blue* by Marilyn Westfall, a four-part "dramatized spiritual history of California from 1776 to 1998" (Westfall 2), features two entries that impart a critical post-colonial historical view of the Lady in Blue narrative. This segment of Westfall's overall project seeks to read California's mission history through the lens of dramatized historical fiction. Westfall is one of the few contemporary writers who does not cast Sor María's missionary actions, nor her mystical travel, in a positive light. Although she creates a Sor María that is a sympathetic, if somewhat terrified, individual in the first story, "Blue Lady," Westfall's depiction of the colonization of California by the Franciscan friars in "The Blue Lady" and "From the Diary of Cacnumaie" underscores the violence and ambivalence of the enterprise. A student of California history familiar with current literary, historical and feminist criticism, Westfall does not shirk from illustrating the brutality suffered by the California tribes, the inconsistency of the vocation of the friars who attended to conversions and directed the missions, and the tension embodied in the Lady in Blue/Sor María, both in her own socio-historical context and as a representational figure among 18th-century California tribes.

In the introduction to *Quartet in Blue*, Westfall hones in on this last point, commenting that her interpretation of the Lady in Blue narrative views it at least partially as an exoneration of the aggressive actions of the Franciscan friars (and Spanish military)

against indigenous Californians during and after the mission period: "In 'The Blue Lady,' this supernatural frame [of the narrative of the Lady in Blue] refocuses California history on the divine precepts employed by the Franciscans to justify their intrusion into native domains" (Westfall 10). Westfall's Sor María/Lady in Blue is "a key to interpreting California" (Westfall 11), as she functions as "a source for sublimation on the part of the Franciscan friars" (Westfall 11), though, as we will see below, she cannot control to any significant degree her future effect, either on the tribes or on the Franciscans themselves, as her encounters with California mission friars Junípero Serra and Francisco Palóu demonstrate.

"The Blue Lady" is a fantastical story unworldly in tone that explores in detail the mechanics of bilocation, Sor María's views regarding her mission to the Americas, the ultimate ends of such travel, and the nature of her legacy among native Californians. Westfall imaginatively captures the idea of mystical travel; in the story's first pages, Sor María, weakened from bouts of "travel illness," suddenly alights accompanied by angels who speak to her in tongues (she was granted the "Apostle's legacy" (Westfall 16), the gift of tongues). The reader sees the mystical travel from the points of view of the other nuns, the California tribes, the Franciscan friars and the angels themselves. When Sor María is speaking in tongues to the various native tribes, Westfall projects her compassion for the people to whom she speaks: "*¡Qué triste!* Her breast ached with pity. It was terrible to observe the torments they suffered when confronting God's will" (Westfall 17). Sor María's mind wanders to her experiences writing the MCD, particularly her communication with the divine, as she continues speaking to the tribes,

evangelizing even as she is martyred. As she continues her exhausting journey towards California, her ambivalence about her actions and about the perception of the native populations by the Spanish surface: "In secret she worried equally for these pagans' lives […] She remembered Oviedo's comment that gunpowder used to kill pagans was the burning of incense to the Lord" (Westfall 20-21). Exhausted by her travel, Sor María does not wish to continue preaching in California, but she is stopped by "a stern force" that pulls her back to California, under the threat of punishment by Michael the archangel.

Sor María opens her eyes after confessing her guilt for losing hope, and is addressed by a figure intended to offer her hope and a vision of the future fruits of her efforts- Fray Francisco Palóu, in an inversion of inspirer/inspired. He informs her that her "divinely sanctioned journeys to the New World aroused *conversos* by the hundreds […]" (26) and that "the *indios* revere your story […] in their legends, your mantle […] filled you with supernatural powers" (Westfall 26). Palóu relates how the tribes want to be like the Lady in Blue, and how she inspired him to join Propaganda Fide. Sor María wants to take heart in the successful future missions occasioned by her travel occasioned, but is led to tears when she notices an old native woman, beaten and with a gash on her head, inside the San Francisco mission. Though Palóu assures her that the friars following guidelines for loving treatment of the natives, Sor María can't help but feel that the mission endeavor is somehow amiss. Palóu, begging for forgiveness, then confesses that the soldiers have been abusing the indigenous population, and Sor María sees her work unfolded in a different way: "bitter harvest, and she was to blame! Her message

had borne only a plague!" (Westfall 31). The scene fades to Sor María's encounter with an infirm, but jubilant Fray Junípero Serra, calling out for the bells to be rung loudly at Mission San Antonio. He reads to her the part of the *Tanto* that inspired him to join the mission church, and Sor María, unbelieving that the document is hers, starts to turn away, praying for the sickly priest. Serra calls her back, reminding her to remain fixed on the Virgin and not lose hope, when she receives another vision of the image of the Virgin of Guadalupe and the native women's veneration of it, which is conflated with her when an old woman (perhaps Agueda) addresses it as "Ycaiut" or "La Dama Azul" (Westfall 40). Sor María recalls the woman beaten by the Spanish as she hears the "strained enunciation, awkward pauses and flat trills" (Westfall 40) of the native children singing hymns, as Serra exhorts her to take faith in how she has inspired such conversions, as "only from pain are children born" (Westfall 43). She takes leave of the scene, floating away to be awakened in Spain by the arrival of Fray Alonso to her convent. As she departs, her mantle falls, left behind for her followers in California and serving as a transition into the next story, "From the Diary of Cacnumaie."

Thus, in "The Lady in Blue" Westfall envisions Sor María as mission muse, but one who sees her own role in uncertain terms. Though the text weaves in Sor María's authorship of Mary's spiritual autobiography, and although the appearance of Serra and Palóu is intended to offer a her sense of purpose for her travels, the ultimate message of her travels is not wholly positive. It's not so much the conversion to Catholicism itself that is the source of contradiction; it's more the means by which it is accomplished. Indeed, the Lady in Blue is a beloved, venerated, enduring (and possibly conflated) mark

of hope among the tribes she visits. She herself, independent of what devotion to her results in, is positive- compassionate, suffering, and in conformation with what she is sent to do. However, though Sor María herself is not the person who inflicts harm on the native population, she both leads the tribes to being hurt by the Spanish and them to accept it. As the "the padre de las mamas," she wonders if she is the reason they are abused and taken advantage of. Westfall's recasting of the Lady in Blue in this story thus maintains the essential integrity of the Lady in Blue and her relationship with the groups she visited, but critically questions how others drew on that narrative and used it to deleterious ends.

Westfall continues with the development of the California missions in the pseudo-autobiography of a California mestiza "From the Diary of Cacnumaie." Here, Westfall plays with authorial authority and the genre of memoir, as she presents a "first person account" of what happened to the native Californian tribes at the hands of the Spanish friars. Though Westfall construct complex social, ethnic, religious and gender dynamics into the narrative (which she very much wants the reader to see, as her introduction indicates) I will focus my analysis narrowly on how the Lady in Blue's legacy functions in this account, trying to decipher how Westfall wishes her to be read.

Introduced by a lengthy forward that offers a critical contextualization (historical, feminist, literary) for the diary, the reader is led to approach the story as if it were a "true" account. Told from the point of view of a 100-year-old mestiza woman partially raised at a Catholic mission during the late 18th-early 19th century, she is the last recipient of the Lady in Blue's cloak, which she received from her mother. Her mother

encountered the cloak, bearing an image of María de Agreda, as a girl, when a trader to her village inadvertently proved that it possessed the power to cure people (he was shot with arrows) and provided the recipient with the ability to understand and speak many languages. As a result of the unique abilities the cloak afforded her, Cacnumaie's mother was raised outside of her village as a shaman, exercising her curing abilities, until she was raped by a Spanish soldier, became pregnant with the narrator, and was relocated to the Mission Dolores (Mission San Francisco) labor camp (monjerío). The conditions at the camp were squalid, oppressive and depressing, and Cacnumaie's mother, with the help of the blue mantle, tried to heal as many people as possible. However, as her mentor the shaman had noted, the blue cloth can only work its effect if the recipient of its aid believes in it.

Cacnumaie received a section of the blue fabric form her mother, from who she was taken when she fell ill, and was subsequently cared for by a novice native nun, Teresa, who cleans, mends and embroiders the blue mantel with gold thread. Being so near the priests, Cacnumaie is exposed to the sadistic, syphilitic kind, and the crazily faithful kind (Father Landaeta); she is paraded out to mass wearing her blue cloth so that the indigenous people in attendance can see her and identify with the mass and with Catholicism via the symbol of the Lady in Blue. When Cacnumaie is reunited with her mother, it is so that both of them, acting as interpreters, can translate the theological lessons and liturgy into the many different languages of the California people so that they might be converted. We find at the end of the piece, which Cacnumaie is writing under the patronage of a *california* ranch owner, that Cacnumaie received the rest of mantle

when her mother was killed by the Spanish for her escape from Mission Dolores. Cacnumaie uses what seems like the last of the mantle's powers ("the last ragged fragment of the long blue cloth" (Westfall 155)) to cure her aged and ill benefactress before disappearing from the ranch. Although the ostensible purpose of her composing the memoir was to leave a record of the abuse that occurred at the mission, the Anglo journalist rejected it for being too fantastical, and also not in conformation with the idea of the peaceful California mission set forth in *Ramona*.

In "Diary," Westfall more fully develops the idea of the Lady in Blue as the protectress of the native Californians, though that role is still an ambivalent one. Although the mantle bestows great and important gifts to the bearer, the gifts do not last forever- perhaps because belief in the cloth's efficacy also does not last forever. The missions and conversion of the tribes are presented as almost wholly negative, yet the native Californian's belief in the mantle is what is used to lead them into and develop faith in, the Catholic tradition. The mantle is used to both undo the Spanish's abuse (healing people who were hurt by them, including Cacnumaie's mother) and to promote their ends (using the gift of tongues to recruit or fully convert native neophytes). Though the cloak was used for the healing of tribal members before Cacnumaie's mother was captured, her tribe did not understand her ability to heal; she was thus ostracized by her tribe (as indicated by her lack of facial tattooing), indicating that they did not quite understand how she was enacting the Lady in Blue's legacy. Finally as Cacnumaie's mother and then Cacnumaie participate in the tradition of, share the gifts of, and embody the Lady in Blue via her mantle, it is clear that legacy is not at least clearly defined as

good and evil, though in the end, Cacnumaie and her mother both act in redeeming ways-leaving the mantel behind as they do so.

In these two stories, Westfall uses the Lady in Blue's legacy at the center of a mission narrative that is much more ambiguous than late 19th-century romances and the late-modern desire to "see the west" would permit. A 2002 talk Westfall presented at the First Unitarian Universalist Church in Lubbock, Texas alludes to the themes manifested in the two stories, the focus being on the convergence nationalism and religion in a figure such as the Lady in Blue, asking "Would anyone in 21st century America use the rather innocent perspective of a religious woman to marry nationalism to religion?" Westfall examines and employs the Lady in Blue narrative to criticize the actual violence enacted against native populations in California by the Spanish church (and military), but more particularly to criticize the rationale and justification by which the friars felt they had the right and obligation to act in such a way. Through the Lady in Blue, Westfall criticizes the action of the Spanish Catholic mission in California, suggesting that, even though the figure herself was innocent of ill intent, and even if she was beloved by the indigenous population, this fact did not pardon or erase her part in the missions.

S.E. Schlosser: "The Lady in Blue" (2004)

S.E. Schlosser's "The Lady in Blue," an entry in her book of southwestern US folklore and ghost stories for children, uses the dynamic between and mother and child to assert the authenticity of the Lady in Blue narrative, and to locate it in the present day. Although narrated from the first person point of view of a child named Sammy, the bulk of the story consists of a straightforward recounting of the Lady in Blue narrative by his

mother. The premise for the legend's narration is that Sammy has brought his mother fresh blue flowers for her birthday. The mother exclaims over her son's thoughtful gesture, and asks if he ran into the Blue Lady while collecting them. Sammy replies that he had wanted to buy the flowers at the florist's, but didn't have enough money. A lady dressed in blue observes Sammy's disappointment at not being able to complete his selfless gesture, and kindly directs him, in Spanish, to where he might pick some flowers for his mother. She then vanishes. When Sammy relates this meeting to his mother, she exclaims that he must have met the Lady in Blue, for she would "stop and help a little boy trying to do something special for his mama" (Schlosser 170). At Sammy's questioning, his mother launches into the Lady in Blue narrative, highlighting the questioning of her mystical travels and the fact that she left blue flowers wherever she steeped. The mother concludes the story by commenting that although perhaps Sammy did not meet with the actual Lady in Blue, the woman who helped him "certainly acted in the same gracious manner as María Coronel de Agreda" (Schlosser 173).

This artifact's most notable element, aside from its similarity to flower-centric narratives pertaining to the Virgin of Guadalupe, is the fact that the narrator, with whom we identify through the first person narrative voice, is a child. As a result, when his mother directs the narrative and her interpretation of it to us, her authoritative retelling of the story has the effect of affirming the present-day truth of the narrative. In addition, the mother reads the Lady in Blue for Sammy and for us as a present-day affirmation of the positive values of selflessness and consideration that Sammy displays. Echoing the Hallenbeck and William's folktales, Sammy is aided in and rewarded for his desire to do

good for others by the Lady in Blue. Schlosser adds another layer to the narrative's context in the story as Sammy and his mother seem to be coded for as Spanish bilingual and/or Hispanic (Sammy because he understands the Lady in Blue when she speaks to him in Spanish, and his mother for her ejaculation of "*Dios mío*!" (italics Schlosser's)), a choice which localizes the present-day context of the conceptually if not geographically, and offers another echo to the Virgin of Guadalupe. In keeping with the context of the mother's contemporary rendering of the narrative, Sammy expresses surprise when he realizes that, as a woman, the Lady in Blue's presence in the American was transgressive. Though the use of a child as a first-person voice may seem like a contrived narrative tool, it is nonetheless effective in affirming the Lady in Blue in a contemporary context, and in assigning to her the distinction of reinforcing behavioral values. Schlosser's contemporary recasting of the Lady in Blue narrative thus shares much with the folk tales or the colonial accounts that perceived the nun in a similar way.

Lisa Sandlin "Saint of Bilocation" (2004)

Lisa Sandlin's "Saint of Bilocation," from her collection *In the River Province*, tells the Lady in Blue narrative from the colonial-era point of view of a fictionalized Fray Alonso de Benavides. In recasting the narrative, Sandlin plays with ideas of the limits and consequences of faith, the rational or rationalizeable, and the center versus the periphery. Hers may be the only contemporary rendition to deal explicitly with the narrative itself (rather than reinterpreting or commenting on Sor María's experiences), as it focuses on the significance and weightiness of the narrative in its time. Sandlin writes

a story about what is needed to secure belief, and about acknowledging the tenuousness and variability of such belief.

The story takes place over the course of Fray Antonio's visit to Sor María in her convent at Agreda; based upon Fray Alonso's trip to Spain in 1630 to present the 1630 *Memorial*, all characters except Sor María have names that are similar to the historical figures on which they are based. Fray Antonio is sent to Sor María's convent to interview her and the members of her convent and community regarding her claims to have bilocated to New Mexico and converted thousands of tribal members to Catholicism. Prior to his arrival in Spain, Fray Antonio meets with the Jesuit secretary to the Mexican archbishop; during their encounter, the secretary emphasized the importance of "mathematics" in establishing both what is beautiful and what is truthful, establishing the parameters by which objective reality is determined (Sandlin 130). Fray Antonio's response, in which he is unable to couch his experience as a missionary as a mathematical, limited or quantifiable truth, sets the stage for the account's principal quandary: knowing that others might take one's faith as an opportunity to challenge, should one, faithful and yet reluctant, stake himself anyways?

The narrative voice is mostly in third person, relating the thoughts of Fray Antonio, and in the first person voice of Baptista, a mischievous, waiflike novice nun at the convent who is particularly close to Sor María, and who both witnesses and experiences transcendent spiritual union similar to the abbess'. Baptist first appears spying on Fray Antonio as he sits in the convent's courtyard; the face the terrified friar observed was "plain as a painted angel's, yet dreadful as a demon's in its wicked

mobility" (Sandlin 132). The hesitant Fray Antonio, sent to report on the validity of Sor María's claims ("The archbishop has charged me with this task, that the infant Church of the New World not be damaged by a fraud or by an insane woman'" (Sandlin 136)), comes face-to face with the near-demonic, mocking figure that believes unquestioningly in Sor María's mystical travels. Baptista, author of a journal recording Sor María's travels, plans to abandon the religious life to which her impoverished brothers have subjected her; she confides in Sor María that she will travel to Seville and live a life as an anonymous merchant. The stage is thus set, with tension between the European, skeptical, compartmentalized (and, it is suggested, masculine) and the New World, believing, limitless (and feminine).

A sympathetic Fray Antonio, accompanied by his loyal and faith-filled man-at-arms Juan, conducts interviews to determine if Sor María truly did travel to New Mexico. Baptista and Juan, in the meantime, carry on a secret, semi-anonymous nighttime liaison, during which the novice seduces the soldier and tells him of her involvement with and belief in Sor María. Wrestling with his duty to be objective, Fray Antonio literally weighs Sor María's testimony, and that of the nuns and the citizens of Agreda, using small pieces of paper and a scale to determine whether doubt or belief provides the more substantial collection of evidence. Fray Antonio is acutely aware that, if he opines in favor of the miracle, he opens Sor María to certain scrutiny by the Inquisition: "If no one authenticated her claims, what happened to her then? The proofs of her innocence-or guilt- could be prolonged, terrible and bloody" (Sandlin 145). However, although both her original testimony was not compelling and much of the testimony in her favor is

indistinct, Fray Alonso, impressed with Sor María's impassiveness and conviction and deeply moved by his own feelings of spiritual limitlessness and joy among the Jumanos in New Mexico, cannot dismiss the case. Fray Antonio readies himself to leave the convent (Baptista, disguised by the enamored Juan, in tow), with a document for Sor María to sign stating that Fray Antonio does not find sufficient evidence confirming her mystical travels. As they leave, Sor María gazes at Fray Antonio and speaks to him the words he whispered to himself at the Jumano conversion ("God, live in me and I lie in You […] You have in this world no humbler servant" (Sandlin 159)); as the only person who heard Fray Antonio was Juan (and Fray Antonio asks the perplexed soldier if he had revealed the words to Sor Maria), Fray Antonio is finally convinced of the expansive truth of Sor María's claims, regardless of the Inquisitorial difficulties it might mean for both of them. In a twist that varies from the historical narrative, Sandlin places Fray Antonio back in New Mexico many years after the incident, after Sor María has successfully passed the Inquisition's questions, the old priest corresponding with the still-vital nun. He finally asks her to describe what bilocation really is like: she responds with an answer that reaffirms the limitlessness both of the travel and of faith, including the leanings towards syncretic faith experienced by Fray Antonio, itself: "One world like without boundaries inside, the other, Fray Antonio" (Sandlin 164).

In conclusion, Sandlin's rendering of the Lady in Blue narrative examines the issue of the tenuousness nature and risk involved in asserting belief in the implausible; the bilocation narrative lies at the crux of such a question. Sandlin's depiction of the characters highlight the acceptance that the friar eventually concedes to the experience:

Sor María (distant, intense, yet with a hidden warmth and credibility), Fray Antonio (conflicted in the clash between mathematical, rational, limited European reason, and his own strangely transcendent and indefinable experiences in the missionary field), Juan's stolid belief, and Baptista's ecstatic emulation of Sor María. As Fray Antonio, leaving the convent, wraps himself in Sor María's cloak, the significance "The Saint of Bilocation" becomes apparent: that 1) it is through the trail of faith overcoming doubt and fear that one is determined a saint, and that 2) she acts the patroness of those who, like Fray Antonio y Baptista, experience the type of spiritual ubiquity to which she laid claim. In this story, the Lady in Blue narrative is less about feminine agency and/or colonization, and more about belief, and about the "River Province," part of "the New World […] a place without bounds. Earth and heavens folding into one" (Sandlin 131) where bilocation is part of the warp and weft of the fabric of the place.

Javier Sierra: *La dama azul* (2005); *The Lady in Blue* (2007)

Javier Sierra's *La dama azul* (2002; translated and published in 2007 as *The Lady in Blue*) is by far the most elaborate re-imagining of the Lady in Blue narrative among the contemporary pieces. Elaborately researched, as a research-request letter from Sierra archived at the Palace of the Governors attests, the novel is in the conspiracy-theory style of *The DaVinci Code*. Subtitled "El vaticano nunca contó toda la verdad" ("The Vatican never told the whole truth"), the novel interlaces four different plotlines that are united by the bilocation narrative of the Lady in Blue. The bilocation narrative lies squarely at the center of a novel concerned with thoroughly contemporary issues: the acquisition of technology, and its application and intentional concealment from the public through

powerful hierarchical organizations. Sierra uses the Lady in Blue narrative as a means of exploring dynamics of control and secrecy, transitioning a 17th century account seamlessly into the 21st century.

The four plotlines involve: the 1630 bilocation to the Jumano tribes of New Mexico, and Sor María's confusion as to the nature of her travel; the development of a cadre of "astral spies" by the United States government; four priests who conduct secret research on a technology called "Chronovision" that records sounds and pictures at points in the past; and a journalist who specializes in investigating supernatural and unexplained phenomena. Through the novel, we discover that bilocation is an old technology, based on mastering certain types of energetic vibrations, that the travel functions on a mystical plane, that a certain caste of half-angel/half humans were imbued with this ability, and that it had been controlled and manipulated over the centuries. A modern-day María Coronel, capable of this type of travel, speaks to the priest-scientists near the novel's close and is presented as a member of a rebel group (the Ordo Sanctae Imaginis) who frustrate the Church's exploitation of bilocation as a means of duping the native populations. As the cadre of spirit-travelers failed in their original attempt to expose the conspiracy by calling one of the priest-scientists to publish on it, the Spanish journalist is mysteriously called to the task. The text closes with a meta-literary reference to the novel itself: "Why don't we simply invite this journalist to write the novel you propose? […] He could even title is something like *The Lady in Blue*" (Sierra 322).

Sierra leads the reader through a maze of schemes that entangle the spiritual, the political and the implausible, but maintaining the Lady in Blue narrative as the lynchpin

for the entire plot. Sierra's underlying message questions authority, known facts, and the motivations that underlie powerful forces, and the book's conclusion imagines a subversion of those hierarchies. *The Lady in Blue*'s appendix provides summaries of the historical materials Sierra used in composing the novel, adding that it is intended for "those readers who have already intuited that *The Lady in Blue* is more than a work of fiction" (329). Sierra bring the Lady in Blue into the 21st century in a startlingly current way, creating a story around her that has the stylings of an X-Files episode.

Loca was not sure if she was a present nun
or a past nun or maybe hasta una future
subjunctive nun.

- Ana Castillo, *So Far From God*, 244

Conclusion

After covering 370 years and two continents, we have arrived as the end of the Lady in Blue's travels- at least for the time being. As Ana Castillo's La Loca intimates, this project may be the first step "hasta una future subjunctive nun." By employing a Mexican American cultural studies framework to the Lady in Blue/La monja azul/Sor María narrative, this dissertation has presented a unique interpretation of the founding, acceptance, dissemination, development, and innovation of the account of a bilocating literary missionary Spanish nun. Like many of the contemporary authors who have written about the Lady in Blue, I suppose that the Lady in Blue's story, with its complexity and curious contradictions, simply captivated me. In this project, I have tracked her route as she made her way through almost four centuries of history, seeking to uncover how her narrative moved and what it signified for particular groups of people. In the context of this investigation, the folkloric accounts can been seen as evidence of the narrative's deep roots in the American Southwest and northern Mexico, an indicator of the Lady in Blue's entrance into the collective history of the region. More recently, some contemporary writers and artists have capitalized on the narrative's regional currency (and, in doing so, affirmed this currency), while others have developed select elements of the narrative that highlight its peculiar dynamic.

Though I derived my critical approach from Mexican American cultural studies scholars Américo Paredes, José Limón, Richard Flores, and Domino Perez, my usage of their methodology has perhaps differed slightly from what I had originally envisioned. Like Paredes in *With His Pistol in His Hand*, I have sought to identify not only the "history" behind Sor María/La monja azul/The Lady in Blue, I have attempted to ascertain how she has been popularly recognized (in folklore and in contemporary texts) and by whom. As José Limón in *Dancing with the Devil*, I have endeavored to cleave close to a particular concept, the narrative of the Lady in Blue, as I've encountered her in a variety of artifacts, uncovering an individual whose manifestations were much more nuanced than I anticipated. In approximating Richard Flores' approach in *Remembering the Alamo*, I have sought to find where the Lady in Blue narrative has been retold, focusing on how it is understood and what it is intended to convey to its audience. As in the case of the story of the Battle of the Alamo, often the impact produced by the Lady in Blue's re-telling is its most quantifiable characteristic, rather than the content of what is related. Finally, in emulation of Domino Perez' critical organizational approach in *There Was a Woman*, I have established the foundational narrative of the Lady in Blue, and then comparatively analyzed subsequent renderings of it, from the 17th century onwards. I do view the Mexican American community sharing in the Lady in Blue's legacy, determining, to a great extent, its continuation and contemporary renaissance.

Over this dissertation's six chapters, I have sought to unravel the Lady in Blue's legacy from its establishment to its most recent manifestations. In each of these chapters, I sought to apply critical techniques that seemed appropriate to both the material's time

period, and to the nature of the material itself. In Chapter 1, I explored how the Lady in Blue narrative fit into its socio-historical context, setting the stage for her emergence, and for her acceptance during her lifetime, answering the fundamental question of why she fell within acceptable limits for that time and place. Chapter 2 ascertains which documents established the foundational narrative, with particular attention paid to the chronology of these documents, who was writing them and for what purposes. Sor María's literary legacy, and her biography, are the focus of Chapter 3, specifically the reading and dissemination of her writing in colonial Northern New Spain, and the intertwining of the Lady in Blue legacy (via her vita) with Sor María's renown as a writer. Chapter 4's objective was to detail how Sor María was viewed and commemorated during the 17th through 19th centuries in the same region, concentrating on the Franciscan friars of Propaganda Fide and her continued evocation as a proto-missionary figure in that context. The folklore recounting, developing and adding to the Lady in Blue narrative is the focus of Chapter 5, which also aims to explain the folkloric nature of an oral tradition based on written documents. Finally, Chapter 6 examines the Lady in Blue's numerous contemporary appearances, evaluating each artifact as it both derives and varies from the foundational narrative.

Through the course of researching this project, as her narrative has evolved in a way I could not have anticipated at the beginning of this project, additional research leads have presented themselves. In Chapter 4, as I began to consider how Sor María was inscribed into the history of Northern Mexico, additional sources emerged that supported my hypothesis regarding the nature of Sor María's influence over the missionaries in the

region. The archives of the College of Propaganda Fide in Querétaro, held in Celaya, Mexico, hold numerous documents referencing Sor María, as do Spain and Mexico's national libraries, and several other archival sources. Unsurprisingly, perhaps, given the continuous nature of this project, a colonial-era source confirming my hypothesis surfaced in Rima de Valbona's short story, an echo of the colonial resounding in the 20th century. These prospects for future investigation offer a promising next step in the development of this project.

Though the Lady in Blue is characterized, to an extent, by the marginality of her narrative over the centuries (in that it seems to have been less prominent than the Virgin of Guadalupe, La Llorona, and other similar cultural figures), she is no less remarkable nor worthy of critical examination for it. The present study of her narrative contributes to the field of Mexican American cultural studies by illustrating her significant role within it, as much for the representative meaning she both brings to bear on and reflects in the Mexican American community, as for her intimate relevance to and continued commemoration within it. Within Colonial Latin American literary studies, this dissertation offers an analysis of a one woman's role in the dual projects of colonization and conversion, participating on several levels in the missionization of northern New Spain (albeit in a highly mediated manner and via exceptional means). I hope that through this dissertation, in which the Lady in Blue/Sor María has been tugged out from the dank footnotes of colonial history, her proper place in the history the Southwest and Northern Mexico has begun to come to light. I greatly look forward to continuing to research the narrative of the Lady in Blue in the future, elaborating the ideas presented in

this dissertation, and graining a greater understanding of how this enduring figure acted and survived into the 21st century, across an ocean, and over hundreds of years.

Thank you.

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Sor María and Duns Scotus, Convento de Ozumba, Mexico City. Photo by Cristina Cruz González.
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