Chapter III

Sor Juana and the Influence
of the Coimbra Jesuits

The Philosophy of Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz: Five Philosophical Journeys in *Primero Sueño* and a Heterodox Proposal

In this chapter I present two points that should be taken into account when reading the poem *Primero Sueño*[254] by Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz. First off, I have sought the philosophical-poetic justifications for the text, as well as its possible interpretations, in order to demonstrate that any unilateral focus on its content and meanings must be shunned. *Primero Sueño* has to be read as it is, an open and polysemic philosophical poem that incorporates the cultural influences of a recently-born Novohispanic *Criollismo* in a novel fashion.

Secondly, my investigation proposes a new reading of the poem, focusing on the connection and relevance of 17th century Jesuit theology to the author's lines.

In my opinion, the emphasis on the differences between the nun and Núñez de Miranda—Sor Juana's confessor for two decades—have eclipsed a key point of influence in the spiritual direction and counseling of the Jesuit confessor. I refer to the budding development of the theological thesis of the middle science, or conditioned science. In his *Tractatus de scientia Dei*, Núñez de Miranda advocates having the students learn that there exists a vast and complex terrain dependent on the decisions of the human being, decisions through which "in learning to use freedom, the human being will learn the capacity to respond to a society that has determined patterns and structures."[255] It is likely that this theological influence was transmitted from the confessor to the nun, and that it strengthened many of her decisions. The problems between Núñez de Miranda and Sor Juana occurred after years of spiritual direction, during which there were apparently no conflicts. What was the intellectual environment of Núñez de Miranda that could have influenced Sor Juana so? In the recently published work by Ramón Kuri Camacho entitled *El barroco novohispano: la forja de un México posible* (*Novohispanic Baroque: The Forge of a Possible Mexico*), Camacho presents a translation of unpublished works by Jesuits from the 17th century, writing

on the topic of conditioned science. These texts open a new hermeneutic path for Sorjuanian writings. The theory of the middle science proposes the formation of a patriotic consciousness that is forged by incorporating certain ethical and political theses of Francisco Suárez. It seems likely that this science had an influence on the nun, specifically via the Jesuits.

In the present chapter I point out the connections between these texts and the life of Sor Juana, along with a theological renovation of the conditioned science of her times. I wish to emphasize that the hypothesis I present here would not have arisen without the recent studies conducted by Kuri Camacho.

The methodology I have followed in my research consists of the analysis of three key Sorjuanian texts: *The Athenagoric Letter*, *Response to Sor Filotea de la Cruz* and *First Dream*.[256] On the basis of these texts, I present an intertextual analysis that connects them with the theses of middle science, the theology of her time.

The Historical Context of Jesuit Theology in 17th-Century New Spain

The Jesuit *ratio atque institutio* is known to all—it is an integral methodology that systematized the intelligence and perfected polemical reasoning, which gave the order a great degree of strength and popularity. In the century and place discussed here, the Jesuits were already professors of diverse forms of language and communication, due to a *ratio* that made them worthy of "a multitude of signs, images and perceptive, theoretical and literary genera that drenched the entire population, from the Sunday worshippers to the convents and political hierarchies."[257] This form even found its way to the prisoners and the slaves, the students and nuns, since the Jesuits had an "endless supply of strategies and methods useful for each social class and cultural level."[258] For those in the Company, the key to this dissemination was theater, since it facilitated an eclectic language that united theological teachings with compendiums of Mexican history through a type of Baroque art with strong social impact. The second half of the Novohispanic 17th century is rich in key occurrences that foster this incorporation. For instance, there is a consolidation of Jesuit Guadalupanism: once Fr. Miguel Sánchez (1606-1674)[259] began to speak of the dark-skinned virgin, he was followed by the writings of Jesuits like Lasso de la Vega, Becerra Tanco y Florencia.[260] Additionally, in 1647 the canonization of Francisco Borja—third Superior General and saint of the Society of Jesus—was being celebrated in a multitude of events, such as poetry contests, carnivals, and comical, theatrical masks that mocked bishop Palafox, opponent of the Company. In this epoch, this can also be seen reforms in university studies and the growing autonomy of the various

Novohispanic castes from the Peninsula, which gave rise to a consciousness that was different from that of the metropolis. The 180-degree turn we see in the 17th century was also due in part to an economic surge resulting from mining, commerce, and textile manufacturing.[261]

New Spain was also influenced by the vice regal policy of expansion toward the North and the emergence of an autonomous *Criollo* aristocracy. This gave rise to a generation that Antonio Rubial has called "pre-Enlightened," with Jesuit intellectuals and lay and religious thinkers that were attracted to them, as was the case for Francisco de Florencia, SJ (1605-1681), Carlos de Sigüenza y Góngora and Juana Inés de la Cruz.

In this environment of renewal and reformulation, Sor Juana is influenced and in turn becomes influential through her own texts. *Carta Atenagórica*[262] proves her opposition to traditional influences that hindered her development and autonomy in thought and action.[263] If we did not take into consideration this particular heterodox confluence from the past and the present of the 17th century, we would be interpreting the writings of Sor Juana from a traditional perspective,[264] or else through modern enlightened categories, alien to her context.[265] In contrast, it is precisely in the 17th century that there was a 180-degree turn in mentalities, which is a result of Jesuit theology, a turnaround that is expressed through the Baroque, both literary and architectural.[266]

This influence is so clear in Sor Juana that the political-theological fusion typical in Jesuit authors already appears in her early sacramental works.[267] Several Sor Juana specialists have underscored the modernity of the nun in defending her freedom in the face of the bishop's command.[268] Nevertheless, they fail to establish a connection between her confessor, Núñez de Miranda, the Suarezian theological theses and Sor Juana's literary texts. For example, Puccini holds that *Carta Atenagórica* was not precisely a reply to Antonio Vieira regarding what the greatest *fineza*[269] or proof of love left by Christ to humankind was: it was rather a defense of her intellectual freedom. According to Suárez, and to Sor Juana herself, both questions, as seen from the perspective of the theology of conditioned science, arise from a single problem: the greatest *fineza* of Christ upon his advent was to not bequeath any *fineza* at all, *i.e.* to leave human beings with the freedom to decide their future by free acts. Decisions about Christ's greatest legacy had to do with free will, since the conditioned science affirmed the human being has full moral autonomy in the practical-prudential domain, in particular with respect to the saving life of grace. That is, in the theological polemic between grace and freedom, Novohispanic Jesuits believed divine grace saved in an absolute manner; however, from the efficient perspective of freedom, grace does not act, but leaves the human being in autonomy.

The dispute about the greatest gift of Christ and the detonator of the problem with the bishop is found in the *Athenagoric Letter. Letter from mother Juana Inés de la*

Cruz, religious of the convent of St. Jerome of Mexico City, in which she renders a judgment on the sermon of the mandate preached by the Most Reverend P. Antonio de Vieira, of the Society of Jesus, in the Colegio *of Lisboa*.[270]

In her letter, she defines human understanding as "a free power that assents or dissents necessarily according to what it judges to be or not to be the truth, to yield to the sweet flattery of desire."[271]

Augustine of Hippo believes that Christ's greatest gift to us was his death.[272] From Thomas Aquinas we learn the greatest bequest of Christ was to have remained with us in the sacramental host[273] while Chrysostom teaches that his greatest legacy was to have washed the feet of his disciples. According to Sor Juana, Christ's greatest *fineza* was renouncing all corresponding love because "Christ did not want the corresponding love from us for himself, but wanted it for us."[274]

In getting to know the theology of the middle science as presented by the Novohispanic Jesuits of the 17th century, one can more deeply appreciate Sor Juana's argument in *Carta Atenagórica*. In it, Sor Juana defends the exercise of her own freedom at the same time she champions her interpretation of the greatest *fineza* given by Christ. In the *Respuesta a Sor Filotea de la Cruz* the nun responds sharply to the bishop with a defense of free will. It is then that the bishop of Puebla and the bishop of Mexico City join together to demand obedience and silence. The poem in *silva*, *Primero Sueño*, appears after this theological-ethical controversy as a muted reply. For Sor Juana, the paradox of *Dream* is that it communicates at the same time that it maintains silence; it consists in saying poetically what silence is, that silence that the nun, by express episcopal authority, must conform herself to. The poem is a testimonial text that narrates a contradictory event in a tragic mode, even though it lacks a biographical content: the speaking of silence.[275]

The *Reply to Sor Filotea de la Cruz* demonstrates her silence and shows she knows how to keep quiet:

> *Forgive this digression, my lady, which the force of truth has torn from me. I confess I was looking for a subterfuge that would allow me to evade the difficulty of responding to you. I had nearly determined to let silence be my response. But silence is a negative thing, and although it explains much through its emphasis on not explaining, it is necessary to affix some brief label to it so that it is understood to be signifying silence. Without this label silence would not be saying anything, because its proper office is to say nothing.*[276]

There is a constant use in *Primero Sueño* of the tragic *hybris* of the *Poetics* of Aristotle. In lines 74, 226, 380-382, and 947, Sor Juana's first word appears, with the term

"I say" and is linked to the constant drama of a soul that is at the same time the creator and the protagonist of the *silva*. Upon wanting to see everything, "she saw nothing." The tragic hero of the poem is reason, which arrogantly seeks a full understanding of the Cosmos and which goes astray in the attempt, albeit without any cause or fault. Sor Juana uses the Aristotelian *hamartía* in order to reveal a mistake: the attempt by reason to gain access to complete knowledge in one fell swoop, thus violating the imposed order. For this reason, Maria Dolores Bravo has proposed the tragic hero of the poem is Phaeton,[277] who incarnates *pathos*. As Bravo says, "the key is that by the daring decision of his will—the glory of the good charioteer, safe from any challenge from authority, consists of his also being a *sinecdoque*[278] of the disturbing tragic element that inspires human beings to excel through the daring decision of their own free will. They escape the limits imposed on their freedom and their imagination." As conceptual philosophy, the poem achieves an artistic-theological identity via the counterpoints of the Baroque and the Suarezian chasm between grace and freedom. Sor Juana herself gives us a synthesis of the poem: "Since it was night, I slept, and dreamed that I wanted to understand, all at once, all the things that constitute the universe. I could not even make out a single individual by its categories; disappointed, dawn came and I awoke."[279]

Georgina Sabat Rivers is, perhaps, the scholar who has provided the best summary of the poem:

> *The narration begins with a description of the arrival of night and of how all animals sleep. This description constitutes a kind of prologue to the human dream, strictly speaking, which occupies the center of the poem, and which contains a main action. Later on the individual begins to awaken. The day comes and they awaken completely. This epilogue is shorter than the prologue, but formal symmetry is evident.*[280]

There is a threefold structure in the poem: from night and sleep, the dream of the soul, and the final awakening. The structure is achieved via the Baroque tool of the contraries: sleep - awaken; shadow - light; night - day; seeking knowledge - doubting it; calm - movement; high - low... it is a "poetic polysemy, Hermetic, plastic and deliberately conceptual."[281] Sor Juana emphasizes the growing drama involved in the search for knowledge. The drama is better emphasized if we understand the Jesuit renewal that was underway at the time; the Jesuits freely seek knowledge once the autonomy of the free will has been emphasized through the Suarezian theory of middle science.[282]

The interpretation of the poem in the light of its historiographic context becomes complicated if we do not keep in mind what knowledge meant in the 17th century. Beatriz Ferrús Antón, in her interesting article entitled "Me obligaba a que escribiera

todo el tiempo: sobre las vidas de las monjas en el período virreinal,"[283] draws attention to an essential point about knowledge as it was seen in Sor Juana's epoch, and notes that *imitatio* remained in use during the Baroque period as an artistic, moral, and religious principle. As a result, there appear numerous references to fathers of the Church, Eastern authors, both Greek and Roman, in addition to the mandatory medieval Christians.

Imitatio has to do with the classical concept of *episteme*, which represents an objective and external world where the subject is still passive. Sor Juana is found precociously at the epistemic crossroads between the objective tradition and the subjectivizing tradition that is activated by freedom. But those interpreters who believe there is an anticipation of enlightened modernity in the poem's active valuation of knowledge are deluded. The nun found herself participating in the alternative epistemic project promoted by the Jesuits as a response to the Scholastic tradition and the European Enlightenment. In Sor Juana, *imitatio* is reformulated, thus bringing the ancient symbols of the medieval tradition and of Renaissance Hermeticism into the present. Her interest in profane things is understood together with her theological inspiration. This is a new religious focus that affirms the human being: it is a humanism based on social and political action in favor of the exercise of freedom. This human revitalization is a new patriotic project.

Primero Sueño and Its Viewpoints

We have arrived now at the possibility of unearthing the deeper meaning of *Primero Sueño*. Written between 1690 and 1692, the poem is a *silva* and its measures evoke free movement. This is a poem in which *imitatio* covers the history of ideas in Mexico, as Gaos correctly indicates, since it presents the state of philosophical knowledge of Sor Juana's age. It is a poem that—due to its multiple meanings—can be interpreted from diverse standpoints. Because it is a poem, and since it holds an ambiguous message, its conceptual content is integrated within a Baroque structure. This is how there can be a correspondence between beauty and ideas, musicality and intellectual flow, as well as between imagination and thought.

In addition, it is a text that, in the on-the-mark words of Sánchez Robayna, "belongs in the category of limit texts"[284]: it delves into what is unutterable, the silence of the soul, in order to access primal knowledge.

We can also speak of an *imitatio* of Góngora's poem *Soledades*. It is clear that the text alludes to the Spaniard, something typical of the Mannerism of the 16th century

and which continued in the 17th century in New Spain. However, Sor Juana selected a model, chose a master and afterwards wrote "in her own way."[285]

In writing in her own way, the model consists in continuing the *imitatio*—originally combined—and bringing the sources up to date. We need to keep in mind here that the alternative Jesuit project of the Baroque is clarified by observing the Hermetic-Renaissance path of *Primero Sueño*. By bringing mythic and religious characters from years gone by into the present time, Sor Juana gives them a totally different meaning. They are no longer gods or real myths; rather, they are ideas represented and brought into play in order to affirm the freedom and heterogeneity of knowledge.

The general plan of the poem separates it from the repertory of names, myths, and codices that must be clarified prior to philosophical conceptualization. Rocío Olivares Zorrilla is the author who has perhaps best analyzed this perspective in *Primero Sueño*.[286] She was the first to point out its Renaissance resonances,[287] and has shown that the topic of silence in the poem derives from the Pythagorean silence that Juana took from the *Hieroglyphica* of Valeriano and the *Dialogs* of Luciano. In the latter, the "days of Alcion," as Zorrilla tells us, "appear as winter days of silence and of doldrums on the sea, as Aristotle described them in *History of Animals*."[288] Following Olivares Zorrilla, it is important to note that, as with every Baroque poet, Sor Juana combined freely and creatively the elements she took from texts like *On Isis and Osiris* in Plutarch or from the repertory of Baltazar de Vitoria in his *Theater of the Gods of Paganism*. In order to bring in the ancients, Sor Juana had to liberate them from pagan content and, in accordance with her Christian faith, making them into mere symbols of their poetic mission. The setting produces a poem that combines the rhetorical planes of the *inventio* and of *elocutio*, and in her text Sor Juana creates a code for herself. Here, the central idea is a vision of the world that discreetly suggests a silence of content that is biographical, poetic, and theological.[289]

There is, then, a thread that connects the classical-oriental, the Greco-Roman, and the Early Modern, for example, with the appearance of Harpocrates (lines 70-80), who is associated with the Orphic night of Pico della Mirandola in his *Magical and Kabbalistic Conclusions*.[290]

This relationship between dream and microcosm shows that the *imitatio* of Sor Juana is no longer passive. It should be clear that the Hermetic-Renaissance aspect of the poem has an artistic purpose, *i.e.* it is subordinate to the Baroque. On the other hand, there are epistemic contents in the reading of the text which can be dealt with from multiple philosophical points of view, such as the Platonic perspective, the Aristotelian categories, the Scholastic vision of a Thomistic stripe, even Hermetic and Cartesian proposals. On the basis of this conceptual combination, one could hold that in the poem, starting with Plato and continuing through the *Iter extaticum* of Kircher, names appear that are contributed by the Latin tradition of Cicero and Macrobius;

this is demonstrated by an allusion to the infinite circumference and another to the pyramids (lines 340ff.).

In contrast, Aristotelian arguments[291] are more prominent in the poem. The doctrine of the sublunar and supralunar zones is clear (lines 285-291), the hylemorphic theory (lines 157-160), substance and accidents, which are also predicated of the categories (lines 285-291 and 576-583); the theory of potency and act (for example in lines 446-450); the agent intellect (lines 192-209 and 240-264) as well as the Stagirite's cosmogony (in lines 151-191).

Her allusion to the degrees of life can be interpreted as Scholastic[292] (lines 620-660); likewise, with the issue of the inner and outer senses (lines 255ff). The doctrine of intentional species (in line 402ff) clearly evokes Thomas Aquinas, as do Sor Juana's allusions to the first cause (in 408ff). In addition, there are allusions to Scholastic logic in the verses and in the general structure that they mention, compose and divide; further, there are mentions of the Bible and the Neoplatonic elements that survive in Thomism, such as analogy *ad unum*.

Alternatively, one might adopt a Cartesian point of view regarding the use of dreams and the awakened state in the poem, because of the mechanicist explanation of human physiology (verses 205-212, 216) and Descartes's vision of the world as a machine (verse 165). The Cartesian method is also found in the poem (line 570ff), in a verse regarding gnoseological skepticism in 701, as well as at the fall of reason (line 470ff). Some say Francis Bacon influenced the poem, for instance in line 680ff. The same has been said with regard to the topic of induction in line 583.[293]

A possible path would be an analogy with the *Ascent of Mount Carmel* of St. John of the Cross. The silence and the dream provide ground for John's negative platform, and his wager on freedom; this is shown in the *Respuesta a Sor Filotea*:

> *The holy chosen vessel, St. Paul, having been caught up in paradise, and having heard the arcane secrets of God, heard secret words that men may not utter* [Audivit arcana Dei, quae non licet homini loqui.]. *He does not say what he heard, he says that he cannot speak it. So, of things one cannot say, it is needful to say at least that they cannot be said, so that it may be understood that remaining silent is not the same thing as having nothing to say; rather, it is being unable to express the many things there are to say.*[294]

She also alludes to St. John the Evangelist and later reiterates the point explicitly:

> *St. John the Evangelist says that if all the marvels our Redeemer wrought "were written every one, the world itself, I think, would not be able to contain the books that would need to be written." (St. John 21:25) [...] because in those words St. John said everything left unsaid, and expressed all that was left to be expressed.*[295]

As an open text, *Primero Sueño* is filled with references common to all times and affiliations and expresses heterodox values that are typical of the Jesuit mentality of the 17th century.

The Theological Proposal of *Primero Sueño*, or towards a Re-reading and Contextualized Integration of the Perspective of *Primero Sueño*

As Carmen Beatriz López Portillo has accurately noted, every reading of Sor Juana has to take into account a multitude of points of view and influences, a variety of psychological-cultural elements and principles, power and counter-power, both philosophical and scientific, thus guarding against any illicit reduction of her contribution through falling into dogmatisms. López Portillo tells us that

> *the dichotomous vision of the world has insistently split reality into extremes opposed to one another, and has reduced the possibility of its understanding to nothing more than dialectical discourse. This an attempt that totalizing will carries out as a dominating expansion of what Sor Juana criticizes when she says "a proof is found for everything, / a reason on which to base it, / and nothing has a good reason / since there is reason for so much."*[296]

The rules of the philosophical outlook underlying her writings are clarified by understanding the variability of factors in the personality and poetry of Sor Juana. A study by Elías Trabulse[297] shows how multiple viewpoints are necessary to understand even just Sor Juana's personality. To counter the common belief that she entered the Hieronymite convent exclusively in order to study and dedicate herself to the intellectual life, Trabulse presents an edict signed by the prioress of the Hieronymites in 1688, where Sor Juana appears as the bookkeeper and administrator of the convent.

Note that this convent was the richest of New Spain, and between nuns, servants and slaves, it accomodated three-hundred people.

One must also keep in mind that Sor Juana published many of her writings between 1688 and 1695. This included the *Carta Atenagórica* of 1690, where she disagrees with Vieira, the famous Portuguese bishop and theologian.

If we consider her work as bookkeeper for the convent, together with her intellectual production, there appears a personality and character connected to the day-to-day world, one who was able to make time for economic-administrative activities as well as the reading, research and writing of texts. This distances us from a false interpretation of the 17th-century nun who wanted to hide away in solitude in the convent in order to study when she was punished by the authorities. While it is true Sor Juana suffered and had to struggle against the traditional ideas of her age, a unilateral and simplistic vision of her situation causes us to lose sight of the truth about her personality and capacities. Reductionism separates us from the authentic *leitmotiv* of her philosophy: Sor Juana does not deal—as a priority—with the topic of solitude and absence, as her best interpreters have held.[298] For the nun, the topics of solitude, absence, and deprivation are prolegomena to a philosophy emphasizing the autonomy of personal freedom. This was a key issue in her view on free will, one which she had inherited from the theological disputes in the Jesuit schools of her time.

As I have said before, during the 17th century, a debate about the middle science or conditioned science arose among the *Criollo* Jesuits of Puebla. This was a doctrine of science inherited from Luis de Molina and Francisco Suárez[299] in Spain. The Mexican Jesuits nuanced it, moderating certain theses of de Molina while privileging others by Suárez in order to articulate a new project for Novohispanic society.[300]

There were three theological ideas that evolved through the reflection of *Criollo* Jesuits: the relation between grace and freedom, the autonomy of the person in the exercise of his or her free will, and the consequent fictionalism and probabilism which arose from this proposal. Camacho[301] holds that one cannot understand either the Mexican Baroque, or the 17th and 18th centuries in general, if one does not study the theological evolution of this problem. This theological proposal had repercussions in the public and private realms of society. It is a social project that provides an alternative to that proposed by enlightened European modernity, and which drinks from a renewed Scholasticism founded on certain theses of Thomas Aquinas, Duns Scotus, Ockham, Vitoria and Soto. These theses were ultimately integrated into the political theology of Suárez.

Matias Blanco was the American to formulate the state of the question: reconciling Thomas Aquinas with Scotus and Suárez on the issue of human will as the *topos* of freedom. The proposal consisted in confronting human freedom in its daily exercise of choice with the concrete situation of New Spain and its encounter with the Other. The solution lay in demonstrating that the people have sovereignty, even against a tyrant,

a right that is common to all peoples. As previously presented, in the Jesuit proposal there was an underlying theological axiom: the dual nature of the Son of God made possible the difference between idol and image; in turn, the Incarnation of the Word justified the knowledge of oneself and of the other via visual production. For the Jesuits, if Catholicism is the religion of the Incarnation and of appearance, the world and the flesh are affirmed at a deep level. Human beings are similar to God due to their freedom, and it is in free will that affirmation and acceptance are to be found. They clinged to the necessity of grace as a relation to the divine, but emphasized the efficacy of human freedom as contributing to the Creator's plan. Jesuit *Criollos* like Pedro Abarca and Miguel de Castilla[302] defined the problem; others like Figueroa Valdés[303] proposed a change and reform in teaching; some, like Tomás Alfaro,[304] connected the issue of grace and freedom with the Ignatian experience of the Spiritual Exercises. Núñez de Miranda[305] discussed the issue of contingent possible future events, demonstrating a fine-grained and subtle appreciation of the autonomy of free human action. Others, like Diego Martín Alcázar and Pablo Salcedo,[306] delve into the compatibility between grace and freedom, proving there is no incompatibility between the two. Some, such as Matías Blanco, take a step in the study of this conditioned science by developing its logical ground. They begin with human intentionality and prove that its logical truths do not have any causal nexus, *i.e.*, that they are counterfactual.

Basically, the Jesuits are eliminating Aristotelian naturalistic necessitarianism while privileging the ethical and political environment of the human being, to the detriment of traditional essentialism. At the same time, the theological thesis of the middle science permits an appreciation of the depth of the Mexican Baroque. It was never just a question of an artistic style brought from Europe and incorporated into Latin-American society by cultural hybridism; rather, it was a concrete expression of a new project for society.[307] The Novohispanic Baroque—inseparable from the Jesuit and Criollo proposals of the 17th century—appears as a new way of seeing the world and understanding God. This is a theology of freedom that looks at the world with surprise and incorporates the issues of solitude, privation and the conscience—not in a solipsist or interiorist manner, but rather as a personal drama of the human *ethos* that decides with autonomy. Due to freedom, invention, and creativity, the concrete human being knows the world better, emerging with new capabilities by making art and personal decisions. A *Criollo* celebration of Guadalupe is at the apex of this integration. Guadalupe is both the dusky indigenous virgin and the Mother of God of the Judeo-Christian tradition. The *Criollo* Jesuit Miguel Sánchez[308] relates her appearance to the text of Apocalypse 12. In a paragraph, Kuri Camacho explains the socio-political project this theological-aesthetic proposal generated during the Novohispanic 17th century:

> *The Jesuits conceive the state of the indigenous person in a radically distinct manner: since they have no consciousness of their acts, unsophisticated and barbarian men can irretrievably lack knowledge of the existence of God, without therefore being guilty of infidelity or grave sin.*[309]

It is not just a question of the justification, on the part of the native people, of acts due to lack of knowledge of the new gospel law, but also of the autonomy of moral freedom when the human being acts in a world which does not know God.

I will return to this point after a theological digression concerning the influence of Pueblan Jesuit *Criollismo* upon Sor Juana, who was contemporary to them. It is important to note there is a tendency amongst scholars to uproot the personality of the nun from her religious and spiritual environment. It is true Sor Juana is of a rational character, and that any mystical idealization of her persona is wrong. It is another thing, however, to wish to unlink her from the Baroque Catholicism of her era and from the theological openness the Jesuits maintained in her times.

In my view, her participation in the development of this *Criollo* theology has been minimized. This is shown by her works and her trajectory. "For Sor Juana, humanizing and Christianizing are partners."[310] In her the issue of the Other and of Catholicism are indissolubly united; this is shown by her Christmas carols for Black and Indigenous people[311] and her *Incarnation Exercises*, whose title alone reveals its affiliation with the Jesuit Criollo theology discussed above. Her syncretism, typical of her spirituality and theology, appears in the *Divino Narciso (Divine Narcissus)* where she speaks of Aztec communion as an anticipation of the Eucharist; Sor Juana incorporates different times in an optimistic and inclusive way, unifying ruptures, conciliating contraries. Her interpretations of differences reveal an active intellectual exercise that is not subordinated to grace in the predestined fashion advocated by Augustine of Hippo. For her, the central mystery of Catholicism is the Incarnation of Christ.[312] This was the topic of the dispute with her confessor Núñez de Miranda, who followed Vieira in putting the Eucharist at the ceter of things. This theological background leads to her prioritizing her passion for knowledge and action as shown in her *Carta a Sor Filotea de la Cruz*.[313] Sor Juana regarded freedom as the primary legacy of Christ:

> *God gave us free will, the power to desire or not desire to do good or evil. When we do not exercise it, we suffer violence to ourselves, because it is a tribute that God has granted us and a deed of authentic liberty that he has awarded us.*[314]

And concerning the greatest *fineza* of Christ according to Sor Juana: "The greatest demonstrations of divine love, in my opinion, are the *finezas* God omits performing because of our ingratitude."[315]

If Sor Juana includes the issue of absence and privation in her texts, it is because from that consciousness human beings make the act of deciding possible. Juliana González reiterates the thesis proposed here when she claims that Sor Juana was not Augustinian in the sense of believing that in the absence of divine grace human beings are unworthy, nor was she fearful about her own salvation.[316] The active participation of free will develops one's imaginative soul, turned towards the particular and outer; this is how knowledge in Sor Juana is representative, poetic, and visual. Now we can fully understand the philosophy written in poetic form in *Primero Sueño*, which has the purpose of representing the eternal universe to the soul. The theology of middle science had opened the doors to a dialectic between the exterior and the interior, the temporal and the spiritual. In the poetic opening of *Primero Sueño* all philosophical positions have their place: there is here an unavoidable Cartesian rationalism, whose skepticism and doubt form the mesotes or middle ground in the poem.[317] However, there is, at the same time, a place for the Hermeticism of Kircher, which develops out of awe in the face of the cosmic mystery.[318] The Aristotelian theory of the agent intellect is present, in the sense that the image refers to time as well as to what is atemporal, timeless.[319] The Platonic dualism of soul and body is to be found here and, at the same time, it is possible to trace the Scholastic structure of the poem[320] as a theory of knowledge that begins with the simple grasping of judgment, and migrates from the latter to reasoning and back again.[321]

All of this is possible; what we have here is a philosophical poem that, like the great myths of Plato, can be interpreted in several ways.[322]

This is the open, mythic-poetic formulation of philosophy. However, in Sor Juana's *Primero Sueño* there is something more: there is the syncretism and heterodoxy of a philosophy that expresses itself poetically. This is not just in order that it might remain open and always prevailing, as in the myths of Plato, but also so that it would be formulated in the eclectic and syncretic manner in which philosophical identity arises in these Latin American lands. It is an original philosophical proposal that seeks to express all possible paths in an integrated fashion. For the nun, the underlying axiom in these American lands is that God, out of love, had given to a concrete person the divine gift of freedom. The amazement at the cosmos expressed in the poem is the art of the legacy of this humanizing task. Solitude consists of the fact that concrete human beings must exercise their own freedom.

This hermeneutic proposal can be connected with the historic context in which the final events of Sor Juana's life took place, in order to conclude her proposal. If we compare the response Sor Juana gives to the Núñez de Miranda, who had repri-

manded the nun for getting involved in worldly things rather than remaining with the spiritual, we encounter the justification for her fame in the world and for her passion for a theology that affirms freedom, and the possibility that women might one day enter that field. In the letter Sor Juana defends the right and duty of women to use their intelligence in religious matters.[323]

In *Primero Sueño*, one can find all of the following: intellectual curiosity; rationalism and moral autonomy; eclectic positions; the topic of the Other; the synthesis between the Judeo-Christian tradition and that of Greece and Rome; the heterodox integration of modes of argumentation; the frank Hermeticism of the Jesuit Kircher; her lacking any obsession with miracles; the presence of mythologies; exuberance in form; and the conceptualization of the background of the poem in black and white. All these elements of *Primero Sueño* reflect a serious philosophical position regarding the world and human reason, in the manner of the middle science or determined science of the Novohispanic 17th century.

As I have mentioned before, in 1690 Sor Juana had an argument with bishop Antonio Vieira, who promoted a spirituality close to Jansenism, as would Juan de Palafox y Mendoza. The first of Palafox's reprimands of the Jesuits consisted in denying them permission for their theatrical representations. If one understands the fusion between the Jesuit Baroque and theater, it will become obvious that this punishment went to the core of Jesuit pretensions. Afterwards, he eliminated the Jesuits Chair in rhetoric. Sor Juana defends—as the Jesuits would also do—the theology of Thomas Aquinas united with that of the Fathers of the Church. Confronting her own confessor, Núñez de Miranda, who believed the Eucharist was the greatest legacy of Christ, Sor Juana responds that "the greatest *fineza* of Christ lay in not giving us any *finezas* at all," in order to prove that God had provided the human race with absolute freedom.[324]

Here we have the nexus between Sor Juana and the conditioned science of the *Criollo* Jesuits of the 17th century. Nonetheless, that kind of response to the episcopal authorities was—in the words of Elias Trabulse—a genuine provocation. For Bishop Vieira, to deny and displace interest in the priority of the Eucharistic gift of Christ implies violating Rule 18 of the fundamental principles of the Congregation of the Purest that he supported, a Rule that dealt with frequent communion:

> *Sor Juana underestimated the theological judgment, as well as the convictions of the brothers that Núñez indoctrinated [...] From the point of view of her political relations, the entirety of her argumentation could well have turned out to be suicidal. And if the jokes of Sor Serafina are added to this, we are authorized to come to the conclusion that Sor Juana was not just politically imprudent and indiscreet, but was in fact overtly reckless.*[325]

In the *Respuesta a Sor Filotea* we witness the frontal collision between Sor Juana, the bishop Santa Cruz and Vieira. She states:

> *If the problem is with the* Athenagoric Letter, *was it not a simple expression of my feeling, written with the implicit permission of our Holy Mother Church? For if the Church does not forbid, in her most sacred authority, why must others do so? It was audacious that I proffered an opinion contrary to that of Vieira, but, as a Father, was it not equally audacious that he spoke against the three holy Fathers of the Church?*
>
> *My reason, such as it is, is not as unfettered as his, as both issue from the same source. Is his opinion to be considered a revelation, as a principle of the Holy Faith, that we must accept it blindly?*
>
> *I did not touch a thread of the robes of the Society of Jesus [...] if it is, as the censor says, heretical, why does he not report it? [...] if it is rash, [...] then laugh!"*[326]

But Sor Juana's imprudence had been present throughout the entirety of her works, and not just in defending the cultured and the profane in the face of religiosity. Her works were marked through and through by her affirmation of the world, of love, of philosophical knowledge and of the science of her time, issues deeply related to the theological position of the middle science. Her proposal concerning the relationship between grace and freedom responded by incorporating the issue of the "Other" from the perspective of her feminine nature, together with the topic of the indigenous peoples and blacks. In a word, she affirmed the moral autonomy of every person, as well as their equality. The *Criollo* Jesuit project involved a theological-poetic proposal that was questionable from the perspective of orthodox Catholicism, even though none of the authors I have mentioned were accused of heresy in New Spain. It also involved a new mentality, a *habitus*, of which the poetry and prose of Sor Juana had been made carriers: independence-minded and favoring popular autonomy. The result of the conditioned theology in Suárez was the legitimate insubordination of people against a tyrant. Ultimately, it was a question of a political renewal on the basis of a re-reading of the Scholastic sources themselves. Philosophy, politics, and morality brought the thinkers and poets much closer to their people. While profoundly Catholic, this mentality was nevertheless dissident: in their program, they one-sidedly criticized the excesses of the political and ecclesiastical hierarchy.

Conceptually, in the speculative environment, Sor Juana expressed the "whereto" of philosophy in New Spain through a "black and white" poem. It is no accident the philosophy that arose in the 18th century in Mexico, after the expulsion of the Jesuits, is the eclecticism of Benito Díaz de Gamarra. But from a practical point of view, Sor Juana's work narrates the journey of the soul towards emancipation.[327]

The Presence of Suárez in the Work of Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz

In recent years there has been an important change in how scholars approach the prose work of Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz. On the one hand, many journal articles and works about Sor Juana's cloister have appeared, in addition to contributions by philosophers, philologists and men and women of letters, all of whom have strengthened the interdisciplinary dialog that permeates her writings. On the other hand, we have now acquired a certain distance from Octavio Paz's book *Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz o de las trampas de la fe*, a distance responsible for a greater equilibrium and adjustment regarding the poet's interpretations. The masterful command of Paz's pen and the wit and erudition of his theories dominated the first years after the book's publication, but later authors such as Tarsicio Herrera Sapién, Aureliano Tapía Méndez, Alejandro Soriano Vallés, Dolores Bravo Arriaga, and Dorothy Schons, to mention only a few, proposed new interpretations of the nun's works. In addition, after the publication of Paz's work, new writings by Sor Juana were discovered and new translations were produced of a number of philosophical works from the Novohispanic 17th century. These translations forced a reworking of some of the hypotheses that were in play during the 1980s. This time saw an explosion of literary criticism about Sor Juana's work, and many critics left Octavio Paz and his ideas out of their writings. Among the new documents that surfaced was Ramón Kuri Camacho's translations of treaties by Pueblan Jesuits contemporary to Sor Juana. These texts are relevant to better understand certain poems and prose works of the nun, as well as the contact she had with the group of Pueblan Jesuits. Recall that Antonio Núñez de Miranda was Sor Juana's Jesuit confessor for more than twenty years and she maintained a constant epistolary relationship with the bishop of Puebla, Manuel Fernández de Santa Cruz. It is time to re-examine the influence these philosophical discussions on the relations between grace and freedom had upon Sor Juana.

In this chapter I will not take into account the interpretations of Octavio Paz, nor will I refer to the Pueblan Jesuits who participated in these debates, having dedicated a

previous analysis to these controversies. What I purport to demonstrate here is the presence of Francisco Suárez in the works of the nun. I take as settled the question of the reception of the texts of Suárez and Molina by the Pueblan Jesuits, as Kuri Camacho has clearly demonstrated; in addition, I consider that the matter of the connection Sor Juana had to those texts through her confessor has also been settled. She also corresponded with Bishop Santa Cruz of Puebla and other Jesuit colleagues. As I suggested in an earlier chapter, it seems now is an ideal time to trace the Suarezian stamp on the nun's works, in order to better delimit this particular philosophical path in the understanding of her thought.

Philosophical Backgrounds in Suárez on the Topic of Freedom

Three topics are crucial for understanding the defence of freedom that Suárez mounts: 1) the choice of a new manner of accessing sources, both classical and theological; 2) an anthropological proposal that responds to Luther's denial of freedom in *De servo arbitrio*, and 3) the alternative project of nationhood that Suárez proposes, which involved a rejection of absolutism. Some of these issues can be found formulated in Sor Juana, and I will sketch them towards the end of this chapter. Concerning the first point, *i.e.* that Suárez chose a new method for accessing theological and philosophical sources, we must bear in mind that his starting point is in the *Disputationes metaphysicae* (*Metaphysical Disputations*, Salamanca, 1597), which is where his separation from the Scholastic tradition began. In that work, Suárez holds that theologians must know philosophy, since otherwise they will not be able to carry out their task. He is one of the first thinkers that no longer speaks simply of theology, but rather of a *Christian philosophy*, a combination with a religious element, but has given priority to philosophy.[328]

We know that Suárez, prior to writing his commentaries on the third part of the *Summa theologica*, paused in order to study what in its day was called natural wisdom:

> *I am momentarily obliged to interrupt them [...] (referring here to his theological writings) [...] or, rather, to leave them until later, with the goal of reviewing—and enriching, now that years have passed—my notes about natural wisdom. Many years ago, when I was still a young man, I prepared them and taught them publicly, with the goal that they might be communicated to everyone for the common good.*[329]

The "Proemio a las Disputaciones Metafísicas" (Preface to *Metaphysical Disputations*) reveals both the *intentio auctoris* and a radical change: it is no longer possible to

do theology without philosophy, something that Thomas Aquinas had already stated in the 13th century. In this text, Suárez maintains the position that philosophy is the handmaid of theology, but grants to reason a preponderant role in the explanation of theological questions. This led, for example, the Suárez specialist J.F. Courtine[330] to claim Suárez seems to be saying that if we possessed the common *rationes* of being, *i.e.* substance, causes and other similar notions, we would be prepared for the study of theology. The issue is not trivial, since it connects Suárez to a slow secularization of theological knowledge at a moment when he had begun to explore the problem of the relationship between grace and freedom. In his commentary on the relationship between philosophy and theology in Suárez, Víctor Sanz Santa Cruz claims a proof of this can be derived from the fact that at the beginning of the second part of the *Disputationes metaphysicae*, specifically in disputation 29, Suárez defends his decision to place the study of God as known by natural reason there, instead of placing it at the end of his work, *i.e.* in the third and final part, as the metaphysical theologians of a medieval stamp habitually did, following the criteria given in Book XII of Aristotle's *Metaphysics*. It is obvious that "prescinding from the starting point of revelation" did not, to Suárez, imply a separation from what is known by faith. Rather, it established a different methodology, a certain theological naturalism that placed an emphasis on human freedom as opposed to grace. In so doing, Suárez is laying the groundwork for a new form of humanism, different from that humanism of a supernatural flavor characteristic of Scholasticism.[331]

The point is that Suárez was slowly distancing himself from the traditional Scholastic interpretation of an Aristotelian-Thomistic persuasion. He is moving instead to an Aristotelianism of a Renaissance character, something that can also be seen in Sor Juana. What is the Suarezian response in the face of this Aristotelian option? A rational, critical and aporetic approach to the interpretation of the world painted by the Aristotelian texts. The University of Coimbra, the last place where Suárez taught, would bear witness to this choice.[332]

It is well known the 16th century saw a wide array of Aristotelianisms which differed according to their reception of Alexandrian influences, the tradition of the humanists of Padua, Averroist influences, or those of a medieval Aristotelian-Thomistic type, etc. In contrast to the interpretations that had prevailed in the curriculum of the University of Paris after so many fights between the mendicant religious orders, the Spanish Jesuits, led by Suárez, formulated a type of Aristotelianism that demanded a direct study of the sources and a critical analysis of the texts and their arguments. In this era, the texts of Aristotle provided the guiding framework for the four faculties of Arts, Theology, Medicine, and Law. There were also certain points developed by the reading of the four basic works studied each semester in Arts schools: the *Organon*, *Ethics*, *Metaphysics*, and *Physics*. There was only one of the obligatory texts not written by Aris-

totle, namely the *Summulae* of Peter of Spain, which were used as a prolegomenon to logic. The texts of Aristotle served as a pretext for analyzing contemporary issues and their implications. Nevertheless, there were certain key issues that influenced the Jesuits' choice to change their approach to Aristotle. The first had to do with moral pre-knowledge, a topic in natural law that concerned Suárez greatly, since he could not see how to reconcile it with the individual freedom he defended. The Aristotelian conception of moral pre-knowledge, formulated in the *Topics* and in the *Nicomachean Ethics*, was seen as the fruit of a principle not universal among human beings. Instead, it was the product of convictions held by the various peoples, the product of the interpretations of a community's elders and wise citizens, *i.e.* of those most highly reputed and listened to. For Aristotle, traditions play a preponderant role in the rightness of the moral act, and Suárez opted for this formula as a solution to the defence of freedom, and as a conciliating solution for resolving the problems that arise from differences in uses and customs among different peoples.[333]

The second point Suárez takes from Aristotle, and which undoubtedly comes to him from the Salamancan imprint of Victorian vein, is his approach to ethical and political problems in the light of the four Aristotelian causes. Regarding moral action, Suárez shares the Augustinian idea that in itself an action is neither good nor evil, but is so by the rightness or perversion of the form or intention of the agent, with that intention being united intrinsically to the matter of the moral act. This view permits the Jesuit to emphasize the personal will of the human being and his or her effort. In opposition to Luther, Suárez wanted to give greater autonomy to freedom, to personal merit, and to the responsibility of the agent. The problem is complicated, because, to the degree that Aristotle opens a space for the traditions of a people, Suárez is left vulnerable to falling into moral relativism. He avoids this problem by emphasizing the key to freedom is not in the efficient cause, which, to express it in a colloquial and vulgar way, would imply that anyone could do as they please. Rather, freedom is in the final cause, since it is with a view to the end that human beings commit themselves to projects and invest personal effort in order to act according to virtue. Daniel Schwartz, a specialist in Suárez at the University of Cambridge,[334] is perhaps the person who best understands this point in Suárez. He explains the problem Suárez confronted in emphasizing freedom arose because his proposal had immediate consequences in the realms of politics and the family. The family is a pre-political organization exempt from the law, and it was unclear how the autonomy of individual freedom meshes with the governance of the family. Schwartz claims that for Suárez,[335] as with Aristotle, the family is conceived of as the space for friendship relations of a moral type, thus saving him from the pitfall of a freedom without responsibilities or any center of authority; the emphasis was placed on virtue instead. Individual freedom is sometimes seen as being potentially in conflict with the political life, but Schwartz says that Suárez saw no opposition, for

the public space has laws. A conception of autonomous freedom for all human beings certainly undermines the political theory of the legitimacy of the absolute monarch and his or her dynastic inheritance. Still, the nation isn't therefore stripped of authority, since the community itself holds supreme power.[336]

The second antecedent for understanding Suárez's commitment to freedom is noting he has Martin Luther as an interlocutor.[337]

We know Luther's interlocutor in *De servo arbitrio* is Erasmus of Rotterdam, to whom Luther explicitly dedicates his arguments. However, recent studies[338] have demonstrated that in the *Metaphysical Disputations* Suárez has Luther as his implicit interlocutor. In *De servo arbitrio*, Luther claims that human certainty derives from faith, and that the academics are skeptics, stealing inner peace from the faithful. For Luther, the discussion about human wisdom must be preceded by a clarification of our capacity for free will, in order to establish the importance, it has in the face of God's grace, and whether, in the divine pre-science, there remains freedom for the free play of contingencies.[339]

Luther responds that there is no such freedom; God sees everything beforehand, and things occur necessarily by his will. For Luther *omnia necesario fieri*, everything happens by necessity. The result is that God separates himself from human beings once he has created them, with the divine plan thoroughly predetermined. The issue of separation from God will be extensively dealt with by Suárez and by Sor Juana, but they will use a completely different approach. To Luther, this separation from men means He's a hidden God, while to Suárez and Sor Juana, God retreats so freedom may appear.[340]

For Luther faith is confidence about things that are hidden; he holds that salvation depends on God and what humans must do is abandon themselves. Against this interpretation, Suárez enters into the discussion about whether the knowledge (science) of God is the cause in act of all things. This has to do with the old Augustinian argument in *De Trinitate*, lib. 15, chap. 13, followed by Thomas Aquinas in *S. Th.*, 1 q., a, 8 and which Luis de Molina takes up again in his *Concord of Free Will*.[341] However, in regard to the issue that brings us together, Luther's conclusion is that:

> *Everything we do, everything that happens, even though it appears to occur mutably and in such a way that it could have occurred in another manner, in fact occurs necessarily, without being able to occur in any other way, and speaking immutably with the will of God.* [342]

Luther closes the arguments in his treaty by saying "the will of God is efficacious and cannot be impeded."[343] Suárez formulates his new concept of freedom based

on this conclusion, beginning with the nominalist notion of subjective law that he encountered at the University of Salamanca.[344]

Recent studies have shown that the authors belonging to the so-called School of Salamanca extended or adopted, each in his own way, the notion of "rights of the people" —an antecedent of human rights—, a faculty that Francisco de Vitoria had himself developed from Augustine and Thomas Aquinas with a few nominal contributions of Jean-Charlier Gerson and Conrad Summenhart.[345]

For this moderate tradition of late nominalism, the capacity to overview the rights of the people was considered a faculty, which was understood as the ontological power any being has of acting in accordance with its nature. It is by following this reasoning that Gerson went so far as to offer rights to animals and inanimate beings.[346] On the other hand, since human acts are rational Suárez would only interpret law as the *potestas* of a moral order in human beings.

Here I need to provide some context about Suárez's intellectual education: Francisco Baciero tells us Suárez and his uncle Cardinal Francisco Toledo were the "ambassadors" for the political philosophy of the School of Salamanca at the Collegio Romano. Suárez studied at Salamanca between 1566 and 1570 and it was there that he wrote his *De legibus ac Deo legislatore* in 1612, and his *Defensio fidei* in 1613. It was first in *De legibus* that he expressed the idea of subjective right as a moral faculty. "[T]hese faculties belong to human beings, and it is they that are owed rights, since rights are properties of the man or woman.[347]

According to the analysis of Charles Lohr, the Jesuit Aristotelianism of Suárez took shape as an academic philosophy in the following manner: as a professor in the University of Alcalá, 1585-1592; as professor in Salamanca, 1593-1597; and finally, as professor in Coimbra, 1605-1617. Suárez wrote *De Incarnatione* in 1590 in Alcalá, although he published it in Salamanca in 1595; from that time on, Suárez began to prepare the polemical work *De Auxiliis*, which would be published posthumously. Beginning with the treaty *De incarnatione* Suárez connects the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius with the theology of the divine Word and with the connection between grace and human freedom. This treaty would be the definitive work for configuring the present problem. The *Metaphysical Disputations* date from 1597 in Salamanca, from the same period in which he finishes *In Tertiam Partem Divi Thomae*.[348]

His proposal is that work grants autonomy to freedom; however, human beings are not just conceived as being able to dominate the physical realm, but the spiritual as well, and as a result they can control themselves in body and soul. This reflecting upon one's own self is what makes personal freedom into a right.[349]

Suárez calls freedom an active potency of the will, and believes human beings exercise a specific causality because of that freedom. The divine concurrence does not determine the act of free will but rather leaves to that will the decision to act or not act,

to do something or its opposite. In Baciero Ruiz's opinion, Suárez dedicates *Disputations* XIII-XXVII to a reconstruction of the problem of freedom on the basis of the four Aristotelian causes, defining a cause as "the principle that inserts being into another essentially." In his theory of the virtual act, Suárez explains that the step from potency to act in the understanding and the will is taken by these faculties by themselves and not by something outside the subject. It is therefore possible to act without divine concurrence. In *De Legibus*, II-14, Suárez states: "if we speak of natural law as a power or dominion, then it is true that freedom is from the natural law positively, because nature itself has conferred on humankind a true dominion over freedom." His conclusion is that the force that obliges the subject to act morally is intrinsic, that it does not stem from the subject as an efficient cause, but is instead a final cause; *i.e.* that as a subject it is better and more appropriate for his or her life. This last part is what justifies the political consequences in Suárezian anthropology.

The Presence of the Thought of Suárez in Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz

Next, I will analyze certain poems by Sor Juana, poems where there is an anticipation of what she will present in her own prose works. She wrote a "Prologue for the Reader" for the first part of her complete works (entitled *Castálida Inundación*); later on, the same prologue would be used at the beginning of the critical edition of the Fondo de Cultura Económica, edited by Alfonso Méndez Plancarte. She states: "[...] there is nothing more free / than human understanding, / to which God does no violence, / so why should I?"

The lines clearly allude to the problem of the relationship between grace and freedom—they are intended to show that God parts from the life of human beings, thus respecting their freedom. A poem explicitly about the topic proposed here is the second piece catalogued by Méndez Plancarte as a *philosophic romance*. Note that light that appears in this and further poems under the perspective underlined; these poems had been previously mentioned, but now with Suárez's lectures, acquire a profound meaning, Sor Juana's true intention. At the beginning of the poem the verses allude to the free and creative understanding, full of opinions, able to reflect on itself and not limited to working with additional data:

Let us pretend to be happy,
melancholic thought for a while;
perhaps you can persuade me, though
I know the contrary is true.[350]

[Finjamos que soy feliz,
triste pensamiento, un rato;
quizá podréis persuadirme,
aunque yo sé lo contrario.]

There she shows the struggle between knowledge, learning and studying, and her confessor's prohibition to study profane things:

For since on mere apprehension
they say all suffering depends,
if you imagine good fortune,
you will not be so downcast.

Let my understanding at times
allow me to rest a while,
and let my wits not always be
opposed to my own benefit.[351]

[Que pues sólo en la aprehensión
dicen que estriban los daños,
si os imagináis dichoso
no seréis tan desdichado.

Sírvame el entendimiento
alguna vez de descanso,
y no siempre esté el ingenio
con el provecho encontrado.]

Sor Juana makes constant allusions to free understanding:

All people have opinions and
judgments so multitudinous
that when one states that this is black
the other proves it is white.[352]

[Todo el mundo es opiniones
de pareceres tan varios,
que lo que el uno que es negro
el otro prueba que es blanco.]

This is far from Lutheran immutability, where determinism constitutes the core of the divine plan for human beings. Instead, Sor Juana speaks of variety in judgement and the contingency of things, which she proves through philosophy:

The two philosophers of Greece
offered perfect proof of this truth
for what caused laughter in one man
occasioned tears in the other.[353]

[Los dos filósofos griegos
bien esta verdad probaron:
pues lo que en el uno risa,
causaba en el otro llanto.]

Furthermore, this goes against the universality of knowledge, and against the imposition of criteria:

A proof is found for everything
a reason on which to base it
and nothing has a good reason
since there is reason for so much.[354]

[Para todo se halla prueba
y razón en qué fundarlo:
y no hay razón para nada,
de haber razón para tanto.]

And for the same reason she rejected harsh judgments and the absurdity that they imply from God's perspective:

All people are equal judges,
being both equal and varied
there is no one who can decide
which argument is true and right.[355]

[Todos son iguales jueces;
y siendo iguales y varios,
no hay quien pueda decidir,
cuál es el más acertado.]

Later come the key line in her interpretation of pre-knowledge or the guarantee of an immobile principle that establishes criteria:

If no one can adjudicate,
why do you think, mistakenly
that God entrusted you alone
with the decision in this case?[356]

[Pues si no hay quien sentencie,
¿por qué pensáis vos errado,
que os cometió Dios a vos
la decisión de los casos?]

She coincides with Luther on the fact that only God can judge, and thus criticizes ecclesiastical authority due to its interventionism in personal consciences:

Oh why, inhuman and severe
and acting against yourself, in
the choice between bitter and sweet
do you wish to choose the bitter?

If my understanding is my
own, why must I always find it
so slow and dull about relief
So sharp and keen about distress?[357]

[¿O por qué contra vos mismo,
severamente inhumano,
entre lo amargo y lo dulce,
queréis elegir lo amargo?

Si es mío mi entendimiento
¿por qué siempre he de encontrarlo
tan torpe para el alivio,
tan agudo para el daño?]

She reiterates that God gave humans freedom, which they might use it in their understanding:

This appalling, daunting practice
this harsh and onerous toil
God gave to the children of men
for the sake of their discipline.[358]

[Este pésimo ejercicio,
este duro afán pesado,
a los hijos de los hombres,
dio Dios para ejercitarlos.]

But Sor Juana also criticizes so much knowledge and wishes that there were a school of ignorance:

Oh, if only there were a school
or seminary where they taught
classes in how not to know,
as they teach classes in knowing.[359]

[¡Oh, si como hay de saber,
hubiera algún seminario o escuela
donde a ignorar
se enseñaran los trabajos!]

As I previously mentioned, the philosophical poem *Primero Sueño* is the apex of Sor Juana's exploration into human knowledge and the impossibility of grasping knowledge suddenly, a poetic argumentation which sustains reason must advance step by step until it achieves a certain vision of things. It follows that *Primero Sueño* is where the Sorjuanian theory of knowledge has its foundation; but it is in her prose work that the she dives into the discussion about the autonomy of Suarezian freedom. In the *Carta Atenagórica*—as Elias Trabusle interprets it in his commentaries on the facsimile edition—one encounters Sor Juana's opposition to traditional forces. Instead, she dedicates herself to the autonomy of thought and action, which explains her use of certain Suárezian theological theses. Far from being a response to the Portuguese bishop Vieira, the letter is a defense of intellectual freedom: this is precisely what Luther criticized, a rational theology and the false belief that human freedom is capable of making decisions.[360]

There, Sor Juana defends human understanding just as Suárez did in the *Disputations:* it is "a free power [...] that assents or dissents necessarily according to what it judges to be the truth."[361]

We must remember that in this letter she also gives her interpretation of the *Sermon of the Mandate*, the text—referred to later—that Bishop Vieira had composed for Holy Thursday of the Holy Week. Let us remember that Vieira cites St. Augustine, who said that the greatest gift Christ gave us was dying on the Cross for us. For Chrysostom, in turn, Christ's greatest legacy was the washing of his disciples' feet, since in so doing he humbled himself before human beings. Vieira also cites the interpretation of Thomas Aquinas, for whom the greatest bequest of the Lord was his real presence in the Eucharist. But the entire discussion that the nun recounts was nothing more than a pretext for explaining her own position: instead of speaking of Christ's legacy, Sor Juana chooses the word *fineza*, thereby avoiding a frontal opposition to these theologians by using another term. She claims the greatest *fineza* that Christ gave to humanity was not giving them any *fineza* at all, instead leaving us men and women in freedom. In the *Respuesta a Sor Filotea de la Cruz*, Sor Juana is blunt regarding the free will of human knowledge. Letters relating to this key issue were discovered after the publication of Octavio Paz's book—letters where Sor Juana revisits the issue of the autonomy of freedom. However, Sor Juana received a great deal of pressure from her confessor, who imposed silence upon her. In response, she writes the philosophical poem *Primero Sueño*, which, as we know, was the only text she had composed for pleasure, instead of at the behest of another. In this poem, Sor Juana seeks to say what silence says, and hence she says she will say nothing about silence, for silence holds its tongue and its office is to say nothing. In the *Carta Atenagórica* she accepts that Vieira has a son's affection for the holy religion, posing the problem in theological fashion while giving three reasons for the debate:

> *[...] these reasons, joined to the general one of hating controversy, would have been more than enough to silence me, had I not your command to the contrary. However, all of them together do not suffice for forcing human reason—a free power that assents or dissents necessarily according to that which it judges to be the truth—to yield to the sweet flattery of desire.*[362]

In her analysis of each of the theologians' proposals, Sor Juana lays out the implicit argument that interests her, which is that God retreats in order that human freedom might appear. She says that the *fineza* is the terminus *a quo* of the one who brings it into being, and that its cost is found in the lover and terminus *ad quem* of the one who achieves it: "the greatest of all demonstrations of love must cost the lover and profit the beloved."[363] Here we have the Sorjuanian theory of the relations between God and human beings: it is God who suffers, while it is the beloved man or women who creates an impediment to divine love. She says, "if dying was the costliest gift for Christ, the demonstration of love that was most useful was that which saved humanity from death, the Redemption."[364] She also says, confronting another theologian, that "the *fineza* of dying was greater than that of becoming incarnate because in becoming incarnate, he did not lose the being of God. Rather, in dying he was unlinked from his body and soul." She holds the Incarnation was "the means for [Christ's] death, and that in dying he redeemed us [...] the means is at the end; for even though the Incarnation might be a great marvel, the even greater *fineza* is the memory that the beloved wants to fix upon the lover." For Sor Juana, the greatest absence is death, where God retreats from the life of the human being, although he certainly remains in the Eucharist and the washing of the feet. It is, furthermore, an interest without correspondence, since "Christ wanted the interest of our love for himself, for the use of humankind [...] Christ wants everything to be for humankind." And in another passage of the letter Sor Juana concludes:

> *God gave us free will, the power to desire or not to desire to do good or evil. When we don't exercise it, we do violence to ourselves, because it is a tribute God has granted us, and a deed of authentic liberty that he has awarded us. So, this freedom is why it is not sufficient for God to desire to be ours, if we do not desire to be God's.*[365]

A Sorjuanian Kaleidoscope: The Cell, the Heavens and the Defense of Intellectual Freedom

Let us finish the journey through Sor Juana's *Primero Sueño* and her prose by joining together all the pieces of the navigation –her context and biography, her scientific interest and her passion for literature– in one final dissertation.

As I have previously mentioned, in recent years I have dedicated my studies to Sor Juana's prose works and to *Primero Sueño*, her philosophical poem.[366] In 2014, on the occasion of the commemorative festivities for Octavio Paz's birthday, I wrote two works on the theological dimension of Sor Juana's work in its relation to her concept of freedom. In these studies, I demonstrated the influence of texts by Pueblan Jesuits and by Francisco Suárez[367] showed Paz's interpretations of the events surrounding the end of Sor Juana's life were not entirely correct. According to Paz, the nun became trapped between a rock and a hard place due to the conflict between Manuel Fernández de Santa Cruz, bishop of Puebla, and the Archbishop of Mexico City Aguilar y Seijas. My disagreement with Octavio Paz has to do with the fact that he presented the life of Sor Juana as though it were a drama, introducing the thesis that because of the *hamartía* of her character the dénouement of her life played out amid a chain of events that, without cause or guilt, brought her to her death.

In *Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz o las trampas de la fe* (*Sor Juana, or the Traps of Faith*),[368] the erudite essay I have previously mentioned, the Nobel awardee builds a complex drama with contretemps and anagnorisis, in which the nun is overwhelmed by circumstances and interests that are foreign to her. Something told me that this schema did not respond to the authentic personality of Sor Juana, but rather was the result of a tremendous exhibition of poetic skill that flowed from Paz's pen in the form of a fictionalized drama. It was not, however, until I had access to new documents that I was able to confirm those suspicions.[369]

In reading his work, it is obvious that Octavio Paz did not write as a historian or a philosopher, but rather as one of the literati that praised Sor Juana, viewing her as a

poetic genius. After Paz's work, many scholars took his essay as recounting the historical truth of Sor Juana's life, while in fact it was a literary text and not the product of scientific research. As a result, many false interpretations about Sor Juana's life and work arose, basing themselves on Paz's book as a source of Gospel truth. As a member of the literati himself, Paz took the occasional poetic license, distancing himself from the facts and basing his work exclusively on literary rules, proposing explanations in accordance with the norms applicable to fictionalized writings. Nonetheless, some commentators on Sor Juana took Paz's poetic work as providing historical truth, which is unjustifiable. In the terrain of the historicity and scientific value of knowledge about Sor Juana, it is the philologists and specialists in classical letters like Alfonso Méndez Plancarte, Antonio Alatorre, Tarsicio Herrera Sapién, Andrés Sanchez Robayna and José Pascual Buxó, philosophers such as Ramón Xirau, Alejandro Soriano Vallés and Mauricio Beuchot, specialists in gender and literature such as Dorothy Schöns, Georgina Sabat de Rivers, and Rosa Perelmuter, and scholars interested in Mexican culture of the stature of Ernesto de la Torre Villar, Aureliano Tapia, Dolores Bravo Arriaga, etc., who together, each from their respective specialties, have correctly analyzed the life and production of Sor Juana. It is well-established that in the realm of poetry, Octavio Paz has taken on the task of being the principal interlocutor of the nun; however, there is as yet no one to provide leadership to the philosophical-theological project that investigates the production of Sor Juana; my recent research is a step in this direction.

Among the issues I have worked on, and which must be taken into consideration after Paz's work, the translation of texts by the Pueblan Jesuits of the 17th century is of particular importance. These writings clarify the relationship between Sor Juana and the bishop of Puebla, Manuel Fernández de la Santa Cruz. In addition, there is the impact that Portuguese literature had on the nun, the analysis of her theological posture, and the concept of freedom found in the previously unknown works of Antonio Núñez de Miranda. Finally, there is the stamp that Coimbran Aristotelianism left upon her, together with the influence of certain passages of the work of Francisco Suárez and Luis de Molina, found both in *Primero Sueño* and in the nun's prose work. For reasons of space my analysis focuses only on the influence of the *De Concordia* of Luis de Molina, although I occasionally refer to some of the issues mentioned above.[370]

Topics relevant to Sor Juana, such as her life in the convent, her conception of dreams and of knowledge, her idea of the heavens and her concept of freedom, are understood better if we interpret them together with the newly translated documents mentioned above, and relate them all to the writings of Francisco Suárez and Luis de Molina. However, in this chapter much of the bibliography on the nun[371] will be omitted, in order to exclusively follow the presence and influence of certain arguments from the treaty *De Concordia* by Luis de Molina, and in order to prove its connection to Sor Juana's prose work and to her poem *Primero Sueño*.[372] In order to conduct this theo-

logical analysis, both *Primero Sueño* and her prose works will be re-examined in this chapter, providing a full balance of the texts examined at the end.

The Relation Between Molina and Sor Juana's Conflicts

The relationship between Molina and the works of Sor Juana is not explicit: she neither cites Molina nor mentions him. Nevertheless, in this chapter I have drawn up a detailed tracing of the arguments about freedom, moral responsibility and judicial astrology found in *De Concordia*, pointing out similarities in topics and coincidences between arguments in the works of the two thinkers. There are reasons to justify Sor Juana's lack of citations of Molina: recently Molina had been questioned by the ecclesiastical authorities in regards to his contribution to the *De auxiliis* polemic between Jesuits and Dominicans. Domingo Báñez had published his treaty *Apología de los hermanos dominicos contra la* Concordia *de Luis de Molina* (*Apology of the Dominican Brothers Against the* Concordia *of Luis de Molina*),[373] rejecting Molina's interpretations of the relations between grace and freedom. In addition, it should be recalled that in New Spain, the bishops were already concerned about certain Jesuit reforms of the curricula of their schools.[374] Sor Juana herself produced the works that we are analyzing in an especially turbulent moment of her life. Among the writings and conflicts of those years, the critique of the *Sermon of the Mandate* of the Portuguese theologian Vieira stands out,[375] as do the pressing problems that she had with her confessor and the epistolary relationship she maintained with the bishop of Puebla, Santa Cruz.[376] These are facts that coincide with the influence of Lusitanian literature in New Spain and with the epistolary communication Sor Juana maintained with her Portuguese interlocutors.[377]

The relationship with Portugal antedates Sor Juana's knowledge about the University of Coimbra. In order to understand the influence of the treaty of Luis de Molina, the reader should know that the so-called *School of Salamanca* of the Spanish Golden Age had as its paradigmatic representatives two great universities that influenced the Hispano-Portuguese crown of the 17th century: the University of Salamanca in Spain and the University of Coimbra in Portugal. This institution distinguished itself from the former by labelling its teachings *Baroque Scholasticism*. Its thought was characterized by the prevalence of theologians of the 16th century, especially Fonseca, Suárez and Molina, who commented on the complete works of Aristotle; Salamanca, on the other hand, followed the Dominican path based on the thought of Francisco de Vitoria, Domingo de Soto, and Domingo Báñez, who commented and based their writings on the *Summa Theologica* of Thomas Aquinas and his commentaries on Aristotle. We must avoid undue simplification and dichotomies, for it is clear that both universities

knew and worked with the thought of both Aquinas and Aristotle, also having Scotist, Nominalist and Renaissance influences. However, in the realm of methodology and of philosophical assimilation, each institution was determined by the specific emphasis indicated.

In my opinion, and as I will attempt to demonstrate here, Sor Juana pursued the topic of intellectual freedom in a different way from the Salamancan Scholastic tradition.[378] Regarding argumentative content, authors such as Grossi have stated that "through her principal conclusions, Sor Juana holds that dogmas and doctrines are the product of human interpretation, which is fallible."[379] Her arguments suggest that she knew and followed the thought of Suárez and Luis de Molina; that is, she followed the Coimbran tradition. The hypothesis of a link between Sor Juana and Coimbra is reinforced by her contact with Puebla. There are clues that allow us to acknowledge this relationship: it was in Puebla that the Jesuits developed the subject of middle science. In addition to their works there are texts by Núñez de Miranda, the Jesuit confessor of Sor Juana. Finally, we know today that the bishop of Puebla, Santa Cruz, constantly purchased works of Portuguese literature and spirituality[380] as well as that he maintained an epistolary relationship with Sor Juana.[381]

But the most solid criterion for drawing attention on the connection between Sor Juana, Portugal, and Coimbra are the writings of the nun herself: it is there we can establish a link with the topics and arguments of *De Concordia*.

The new findings that came after the work of Octavio Paz reinforce my hypothesis: in particular, the *Letter from Monterrey* entitled *Carta de Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz a su confesor. Autodefensa Espiritual.* (*Letter from Sor Juana de la Cruz to her Confessor. Spiritual Self-Defense*), found by Aureliano Tapía Méndez in 1981, which proves Sor Juana previously had a good working relationship with her confessor for many years, and that he encouraged her to study theology. This, together with the Pueblan writings about the *De auxillis* polemic, suggests that Sor Juana was familiar with these discussions. As previously stated, in the Novohispanic period a confessor oriented and educated the nuns under his care, and the confessional, locutorium and sermons[382] were the places where the nuns established contact with the exterior world. If we unite this with the collection of books that we have documented in the personal library of Sor Juana, the point made in this chapter is strengthened.[383]

Another point to keep in mind is that, despite Octavio Paz's having written the introduction to the *Spiritual Self-Defense*—a document found by Aureliano Tapía and published in Monterrey—, we know by the dates of publication that Paz wrote that introduction in the same year as he published his book *Sor Juana, or the Traps of Faith*. The coincidence between the dates shows that Paz had already concluded his book when the *Spiritual Self-Defense* appeared, and he could not have taken it into consideration in his study of Sor Juana. In addition, other letters by Sor Juana appeared

after Paz's book came out, such as that of Alejandro Soriano Vallés from the Palafoxian Library of Puebla, and that of Margo Glantz.

This, together with the recently translated writings of the Pueblan Jesuits, urges us to be open to other possible influences on the thought of the nun. The Pueblan writings referred to were theological dissertations contemporary to Sor Juana; the text of Núñez de Miranda is among them, a work that apparently was known neither to Octavio Paz nor to Dolores Bravo Arriaga.[384] These texts prove that the polemics regarding *De auxiliis* and the *middle science* of Francisco Suárez and Luis de Molina had an impact on the mentality of the time. The conflict seems to involve more than a quarrel between two hierarchs: indeed, Sor Juana's final destiny came to be due to her philosophical-theological defense of freedom. It seems that this exploration has not yet been undertaken, but it would allow us to reunite the pieces of the kaleidoscope of the life and literary production of the nun.

Coimbran Aristotelian science and Sor Juana

When Octavio Paz analyzes the poem *Primero Sueño* he opposes the Scholastic tradition to the Hermetism of Kircher, leaving aside an entire scientific tradition that explains Sor Juana's gaze up to the firmament. Did the thought of Núñez de Miranda and that of the Pueblan Jesuits—who commented on Aristotelian works in the style of Coimbra and Luis de Molina—influence Sor Juana's interpretations of the heavens?[385]

Sor Juana did not connect with Jesuit philosophy just through her confessor; we also know that she maintained correspondence with the bishop of Puebla, Manuel Fernández de Santa Cruz, a proof of it is the fact that it was he who published the *Carta Atenagórica* for her. Fernández de Santa Cruz sympathized with the Portuguese Jesuits' writings, and knew texts by the Portuguese bishop Vieira and the commentaries of Pueblan Jesuits on the works of Suárez and Molina. In addition, we know the Pueblan bishop promoted academies and gatherings of laypeople to discuss these problems, and that Sor Juana participated in these debates via the reports and writings that she got from the bishop. There is a great deal of documentation on this issue, which has not yet been properly studied.[386]

The Jesuits of Sor Juana's time had a specific idea of science that they derived from a re-reading of the Aristotelian *Corpus*, an approach that came from a policy promoted by Fonseca in Coimbra and supported by Aquaviva in Rome. They emphasized the observation and induction of natural phenomena, a method that was better suited for Aristotle's works of natural science than for the syllogistic interpretation that the Scholastic-medieval tradition had promoted. In this recuperation, the issue of

method and the importance of mathematical measurements of natural phenomena were crucial; this is a theme in Sor Juana's *Primero Sueño*, where reason requires a method in order to reach the highest truth. Seen from that perspective, the ascent of reason in the poem is not an example of the Cartesian method, but rather appears to derive from the recuperation of Aristotle that was occurring in New Spain thanks to the Jesuits, although it cannot be doubted that the poem possesses[387] certain Cartesian elements I will discuss later. However, the point is that Sor Juana borrows from the Aristotelian-Coimbran school, despite using a discourse and terminology that are largely Scholastic.[388]

In this era, Novohispanic philosophers shared certain organicist and animist conceptions of nature, which were transmitted by influences from the north of Italy, there where Jesuit Kircher had drunk from oriental scientific outlooks less esoteric than what has frequently been thought. The curricular reforms the Jesuits had designed came from Coimbra and showed a well-known sympathy for experimentation.[389] This combines with an emphasis on rhetoric and grammar, something typical of Renaissance models, but also of the *Spiritual Exercises* of St. Ignatius of Loyola and of Aristotelian rhetoric. These curricula provided an idea of science and of education that was different from those of the medieval Spanish tradition. Sigüenza y Góngora was also influenced by the Jesuit current that had embraced scientific novelty; however, in contrast to European scientists, who—beginning with the Renaissance—had distanced themselves from Aristotle, the Novohispanics argued against modern scientists by basing themselves on Aristotle himself, as is seen with Sigüenza in his *Libra astronómica y filosófica* (*Astronomical and Philosophical Libra*) where, with Aristotelian arguments, he refutes the positions taken by Kino.[390] The result was that in New Spain, Aristotelianism continued to be a key philosophy, one in which the topic of the heavens had a decisive importance.

Luis de Molina and the treaty *De Concordia liberi arbitrii*

A brief introduction to Luis de Molina is needed here. This Jesuit theologian was born in Cuenca, Spain in 1535 and died in Madrid in 1600. He studied grammar and letters in his native land, and later studied Law at the University of Salamanca from 1551 to 1552 and the *Summulas* at Alcalá. In 1553, he took the Jesuit habit and left for the University of Coimbra in Portugal; he concluded his studies in Évora, another Portuguese Jesuit university that had the same regulations and rights as Coimbra. Molina lived 29 years of his life in Portugal as a student and later professor at the University of Coimbra, where he wrote all his works, including his still-untranslated *Curso de filosofía* (*Course of Philosophy*), which

consisted of a number of commentaries on the works of Aristotle. Indeed, the philosophy of Suárez and Molina cannot be grasped without understanding their recuperation they did of a naturalistic Aristotle that employs a mathematical methodology. In addition, the Jesuits reordered the Aristotelian logic, giving priority to grammar and rhetoric instead of imitating the medieval emphasis on the syllogism. This is where the topic of freedom appears, with the inclusion of the ethical works of the Stagirite, a relevant inclusion in the light of the connection that they developed.

After his commentaries on the works of Aristotle, and not without many problems with Fonseca, Luis de Molina wrote his masterwork in 1588, *Concordia libero arbitrii cum gratiae donis divina praecientiae,* in which he detailed his theory of future contingents in order to reconcile grace with freedom. The *Concordia* continues to employ the Suarezian idea of countering the providentialist determinism of Luther by an affirmation of the participation of free will. This is an old theological problem, dating back to St. Augustine, and which had blossomed anew with the *De servo arbitrio* of Luther, in which the German denies the participation of human freedom in salvation.

Molina's *De Concordia* is divided into seven parts, each of which is divided into numbered *disputations*. He begins the first part, *Disputation* 1, with the topic of "On the Capacity of Free Will to Do Good," where he states the methodology he will use, the principle he begins from and the objective he has in mind. He establishes his method by saying he will analyze "how the freedom of our will and the contingency of future things in one or another sense, can be composed and made to agree with prescience, providence, predestination and divine retribution." He lays out the starting place of his arguments, saying that "we must see that in us there is freedom of will." Lastly he provides the goal of the treaty: "we must establish how and in what degree we have freedom of will," passing next to give the state of the question,[391] stating that he relies on the authority of Thomas Aquinas in *S.Th.*, I, q 83, and cites Augustine in *De Civ. Dei*, LV chap. 1 and *Confessions* 12-4, ch. 3. Then, Molina says some had claimed that Marcus Tullius Cicero did not understand how to reconcile human freedom with future contingent propositions and the immutable character of God. The point is relevant since Molina includes the dispute with Luther and his refutation in a problem that had been worked over by the tradition of the holy Fathers, who from the time of Stoicism had fought against the proposal that it was the stars that had influence on human will.[392]

Molina says that certain philosophers and astrologers dedicated to judicial astrology thought that everything that happens in the sublunar realm—which includes both good human actions and bad— "should be attributed to a necessity that would arise from the place, the configuration and the influence of the stars." In his opinion, this idea annulled the freedom of the human being at the same time that it moved God away from his providence, with his opponents thinking that it was "fate" that connect-

ed the heavens and the planets. Radicalizing their interpretation, these philosophers and astrologers argued that, if all effects were ordered by "fate" and came from God, even vices and sins would have to be attributed to God, since he would be the one that had created this ordering of things.[393]

Facing this kind of error, Molina says there arose a Christian tradition that defended freedom, but there was a problem with their view, in that they praised freedom excessively; this was also the case with Pelagius and his followers. Molina discusses and interprets the errors of his time on the basis of these two traditions, for he held that Luther harmed human freedom by enlarging divine providence, and ended up considering freedom from a strictly nominalistic point of view. In contrast, the opposing party, in order to save freedom, ended up granting it absolute autonomy.

From that point on, the treaty is an attempt to demonstrate that God does not act by necessity, that human beings are responsible for their actions, that the will is not passive—as Luther thought—, because, should this be true, God would be the cause of evil. Indeed, the efficacious production of actions does not make the human being independent from the Creator. With this point the itinerary of the treaty is laid out: the problem for Molina consists in affirming the human will without at the same time compromising the participation of God in the order of the world. The reasoning with which he initially unlocks the problem was philosophical and, although he does not cite it, Molina is following the ethics of Aristotle when he says

> *the act through which the will wants something or the understanding understands something, is a vital operation that proceeds from the vital powers themselves, since these powers, or whatever underlies them, cannot receive a denomination on the basis of these appetitive acts, unless they proceed in an efficient manner from these powers.*[394]

This being established, in the second disputation of the treaty Molina asks: "What should be understood by the name 'free will'?" He defines freedom as what is opposed to necessity: "that person is free who, with all the requisites for acting being fulfilled, can act or not act, can do one thing or its contrary." And he says the agent can act thusly if the will and the judgment of reason precedes him or her. Molina mentions certain cases where moral responsibility is not imputable or guilt-acquiring in human beings: he cites the case of children and the demented, who have free will because it is in their power to do or not do things, but those who do not have full use of their reason cannot be held responsible for the morality of their acts. He mentions, for instance, the case of people who are mature and fully rational, but who, when they pass from sleep to waking lack the full use of their reason. Since they are either "fearful or sleeping," their acts cannot be considered culpable. After analyzing this case, to which

he dedicates ample space, we are able to see how the science of his time deals with dreams. He holds that those who are sleeping have a perfect use of reason when they are awake and that, upon sleeping, they preserve in their memory "all the species of objects" necessary for using reason. As a result, if they do not use it while asleep, this is due to "[...] the moistness of the brain obstruct[ing] the pathways through which the sensitive spirits flow towards the organs of the senses," and he says that when the organ again becomes moist, the human body awakes and recuperates reason. In his interpretation of the dream state, which he holds to be "supported by experience," he adds that in its recuperation the moistness suddenly bursts in, occupying the organs of the senses, and this is why sleepers awaken suddenly.[395]

The connection between *De Concordia*, the Primero Sueño, and Sor Juana's prose

Turning to the issue at hand, namely Sor Juana's prose work and her poem *Primero Sueño*, the first element to consider in Molina is his understanding of freedom. Due to the Ignatian emphasis on the Incarnation, Jesuits such as Suárez and Molina treated the issue of freedom in a different way from Spanish Scholasticism. Molina's treatment gave rise to a more radical humanism: upon Christ's withdrawal, the full freedom of the human person reveals itself. The proposal connects with Sor Juana's prose work: in her *Carta Atenagórica* she analyzed the *Sermon of the Mandate* by the Portuguese Jesuit Vieira, on the question of what was the greatest legacy that Christ gave to humanity. Let us remember that in *Carta Atenagórica* she writes that

> *God gave us free will, the power to desire or not to desire to do good or evil. When we do not exercise it we do ourselves harm, because it is a tribute that God has granted to us and a deed of authentic liberty that he has awarded us. So, this liberty is why it is not enough for God to desire to be ours, if we do not desire to be God's.*[396]

In *De Concordia,* Molina had defined human freedom as what is opposed to necessity, and as the possibility for the agent to act or not act, given the conditions for choosing whether will and reason would prevail. It is also noteworthy that the principal argument of the *Carta Atenagórica* consists of analyzing the proposals of Vieira, Augustine of Hippo, John Chrysostom and Thomas Aquinas regarding the greatest legacy that Christ gave to humankind, then it shows that Sor Juana argues the greatest *fineza* that Christ left to humankind was not having left any *fineza* whatsoever. This is how Sor Juana introduces her own philosophical proposal on the topic of freedom.

Sor Juana defends the autonomy of intellectual freedom against her confessor in both the *Respuesta a Sor Filotea de la Cruz* and in the *Letter from Monterrey*, as well as in two others recently discovered letters. The binomial of *free understanding* appears frequently, incorporating the operative vitality of the higher faculties as well as the reciprocity and efficacy between the operations carried out and the act of decision. For the moment, I will not focus on this point; rather, I want to point out that the guiding thread of freedom that appears in her prose works. Beyond her prose, I believe the central core of the issue of free understanding is found in her philosophical poem *Primero Sueño*, where it appears together with the topic of the intellect. In addition, she references the issue of the intellect and components of judiciary astrology, thus supporting the hypothesis of the influence of *De Concordia.* In her poem Sor Juana relates the intellectual journey of the soul towards full autonomy and the light of the intellect, connecting the phases of the moon and the occlusion and rising of the sun with the movement of the intellect. She also mentions a contemporary solar eclipse, an issue in judiciary astrology that Luis de Molina had also discussed.

As I have stated above, in the *De Concordia* Molina holds that during dreams—because of the dullness produced in reason both when falling asleep and awakening—human acts lack full moral responsibility due to an impeded functioning of the faculty of choice and of the faculty of judgment, both of which are needed in order to act efficiently. The hypothesis to be tested here is that in *Primero Sueño* Sor Juana used Molina's theory as a justification for expressing what she wanted to say about the stars and about the free intellectual ascent of the soul. She finds protection in a theory of freedom that exempts from moral responsibility those who are sleeping or who enter the dream state. In my opinion, the teaching of *De Concordia* allowed Sor Juana to develop her defense of freedom by focusing on profane things.

The *Cartas* and *Primero Sueño* have parts that coincide with the treaty by Luis de Molina. In the first part of *De Concordia*, one encounters a notion of freedom resembling features in *Carta Atenagórica* and *Respuesta Sor Filotea de la Cruz*. In the second part of Molina's treaty, there is a description of the passage from the awakened state to sleeping and dreaming that is similar to what is found in *Primero Sueño*: a slow suspension of the sense faculties and a separation of the humors despite maintaining the intelligible species. The poem also says that awakening from a dream is sudden. Later I will return to the connections between *De Concordia* and the *Primero Sueño* of Sor Juana. For the time being, however, I will explain the use of judiciary astrology, a fundamental topic in *De Concordia* and in *Primero Sueño*.

Some authors, such as Américo Larralde Rangel,[397] have shown that Sor Juana connects the sun's movements in the sky—together with the prediction of a specific eclipse—with the journey of reason in *Primero Sueño*. Starting in the final years of the 17th century, judiciary astrology was in common use by the professors of the Royal

and Pontifical University of Mexico. Sigüenza y Góngora developed this line of thought, which he worked on in parallel to his demonstrations regarding comets. Furthermore, he used contributions from the indigenous peoples, such as the measurements of the Aztec calendar, which he combined with astral data and celestial entities that have a determining influence on human humors. In a book on games of chance attributed to Sor Juana, José Pascual Buxó[398] says that either Enrico Martínez or Heinrich Martin was the author of the first book of "healthy astrology" written in the colonies: *Repertorio de los tiempos and Historia Natural desta Nueva España* (*Repertory of the Times and Natural History of this New Spain*), published in Mexico by Heinrich Martin himself in 1606. Even though Martínez shows that he has read—in New Spain—the *De revolutionibus orbum caelestium* (1543) of Copernicus, where the Pole demonstrates his heliocentric theory, it is clear that to a large extent New Spain in the 17th century was still holding on to the geocentric theories of Plato, Aristotle, and Ptolemy. Martínez' text reveals people still believed the celestial region and the various orbs, planets and movements had the capacity to produce numerous differing effects in the world of the four elements (the sublunar domain).[399]

Buxó analyzed Martínez's treaty, and said despite the fact that the scientific treaty of the era revealed knowledge of the works of Copernicus, this treaty is proof that Martínez still distinguishes the supralunar world from the sublunar. Indeed, he writes

> *that human beings receive their natural complexion and temperament at the time of their conception, [and he] accepts an occult celestial influence that partially determines the luck or bad fortune of human beings, beginning with the moment of their conception, according to the alignment of the planets."*[400]

Thus, those who were born under the sign of Aries have a "complexion" and characteristics that are different from those who were born under the influence of Pisces or Cancer. In 1586, Pope Sixtus prohibited all the judiciary sects in Europe, but the Novohispanic Inquisition had to issue a new decree in 1616. In Spain in 1547 there was an *auto* in which the functionaries were ordered to rigorously apply the *Index of Forbidden Books* to works about astrology, predictions of births and the creation of astrological charts. In addition, in New Spain, Buxó documents that even Melchor Pérez de Soto, the Master of Works of the cathedral, practiced judiciary astrology. Indeed, in 1664 he wound up in jail, accused of heresy by the Holy Office.

Sor Juana's confessor, Nuñez de Miranda, was at the same time a *calificador* (qualifier) for the Holy Office or Inquisition on these issues, and it was he who accused Carlos de Sigüenza y Góngora of practicing judiciary astrology. In his *Manifesto Against Comets*, Sigüenza y Góngora refuted the idea of bad omens while at the same time

he mocked the timid and generated horoscopes and sold *lunarios* (astrological predictions by the moon). For Núñez de Miranda, Sigüenza's *Lunarios* usually embraced the vices of judicial astronomy. In his introduction to the *Almanac of 1690*, Sigüenza connected the planetary conjunctions and the phases of the Moon with the natural virtue that resides in the liver and which can produce epilepsy when the moon is found cold in the three degrees and wet in the four degrees.[401] Buxó says that:

> *Despite the sustained efforts of the Holy Office to impede the circulation of all the texts susceptible to 'sinister suspicion' and despite the attempts by an Enrico Martínez or a Carlos de Sigüenza y Góngora to convert ancient astrology into a scientific discipline, the image of the human being and of the world that prevailed in the mind of the Novohispanics at the end of the 17th century [...] remained an amalgam of the organicist thought of Aristotle, Ptolemy and Galen with Neoplatonic esotericism.*[402]

In reality, the Novohispanic mentality of this epoch was one of transition; scientists like Sigüenza, in his *Libra astronómica y filosófica*, knew how to describe the trajectory of comets, but at the same time they accepted and played with judicial beliefs, provided they were not opposed to the truths of their religion.

A culminating point in this transition was found in certain games of chance and in the handling of dreams, because in the dream state there is no moral evaluation of what "happens." On this point, the text of Luis de Molina is relevant for the analysis proposed in this chapter, for Molina sees judiciary astrology as "a case where one falls into culpable wrongdoing, but this sin is not attributed to those who sleep."[403] Molina accepted providentialism opposing the Pelagians who extol freedom too greatly, ever since St. Augustine wrote *De libero arbitrio*.[404] But, at the same time, when defending freedom, Molina discussed Martin Luther's perspective on the problem, saying that for the protestant leader "free will lacks efficacy in relation to internal volitions, "[405] that means that he considered Luther limited free will as to emphasize providentialism. Molina, in turn, begins his treaty by refuting Luther's position in *De servo arbitrio*: the point served him as an introduction for presenting his own theory of freedom. According to Molina, the efficacious production of volitions does not depend just on God, since the human will does not remain passive when it desires a good. His argument about the exercise of the will is as follows:

> *when the will wants something or the understanding wants something, it is a vital operation that precedes the vital potencies themselves. These potencies, or whatever underlies them, cannot be named in accordance with appetitive acts, unless they proceed in an efficacious manner from those potencies.*

Molina reinforced his argument, saying that it was corroborated by the natural law, by the authority of the Church and by philosophy. He held that freedom could be understood as what is opposed to service, or, as what pleases, and that the second sense gives rise to two dimensions of freedom: 1) freedom as opposed to impulses and to coercion, and 2) freedom as opposed to necessity. For him, the latter's meaning was what really had to do with human freedom, and "the free agent is that person who, when given all the requirements for acting, can act or not act, can do something or its contrary."[406]

In distinguishing what occurs when children act in this way, as opposed to adults or those who dream or who have recently awakened from a dream, Molina indicates that the transition from sleep to the waking state was like a trance, a midway point, undergone by those who migrate from dormant reason to the state of those who act freely:

> *[...] in no way can those who pass from sleep to waking be held to be culpable for the acts they perform—at least while their use of reason has not been totally rid of a certain dullness that invades the internal senses and the members of the body, impeding action. The acts would, in that case, only be carried out in response to their enjoyable aspect, in the absence of all knowledge of the act's moral good or evil, or else in the face of the fear that the goodness or evil of these acts might contravene the law of God.*[407]

This passage is relevant to *Primero Sueño* since it sheds light on the purpose the nun had for writing the poem. We know the poem was written in 1691, precisely one year after the frontal collision between Sor Juana and her confessor. Thanks to the *Respuesta a Sor Filotea de la Cruz*, and to the *Letter of Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz to her confessor. Spiritual self-defense*, we know that the nun broke with Núñez de Miranda, claiming that he failed to respect her freedom and that he would constantly recriminate her for using her intellect on things that he considered to be vain. The *Letter of Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz to her confessor* deals with this issue at length: "[...] the greater his authority is the more my credit is prejudiced [...] why is it a sin to write verses? [...] this is why I beg that you not remember me ever again."[408] Sor Juana previously had problems with her confessor beginning in 1683, although from *Respuesta a Sor Filotea de la Cruz* we know that the definitive breakdown in their relationship came in 1690. The *Respuesta a Sor Filotea de la Cruz* makes it clear that Núñez de Mirada held that the use of reason to investigate profane issues was culpable. Because of her rational capacity, said Núñez, Sor Juana was capable of discerning between good and evil, and if she did not obey her reason, she was going against the will of God. But Sor Juana discovered a way out in the text of Luis de Molina: during the dream state and the passage to the waking state, the journey of reason remained exempt from moral imputation.

The person who dreams cannot act efficaciously, and as a result being in a dream state exempts one from moral culpability. This also occurs with people who are entering the sleep state or who have recently awakened, since in both cases the dulling that invades the senses and the members of the body impedes action. The result of the poem and of de Molina's arguments about freedom is that there is no culpability when one's reason has consented to doing something wrong during the dream—thinking about profane things, allowing the reason to wander among myths, pagan ideas and philosophical concepts, playing with judicial astrology—since when one is in a dream state or partial awakening, when one enters into a dream state or is just beginning to leave sleep. Molina states

> *it is evident that these acts are not culpable, because the same people that have consented to the realization of an evil act while in a dream state, later, when they enter into possession of freedom and a perfect use of reason, are totally certain that, had they not been in that state, but rather had been awake, they would not have consented to carrying out the culpable act.*[409]

Primero Sueño, seen from this perspective, becomes a moral triumph over Sor Juana's confessor, both regarding judicial astrology and her delight in science as profane things in general.

The parting of Sor Juana from her confessor was justified partially by the concept of personal freedom in Molina, who defended the autonomy of the will in free acts proceeding from their respective operations during the waking state. Indeed, Molina teaches that it is licit to think with freedom and fulfill the innate capacity of human beings to be free, provided that their voluntary acts are inclined to the good. For Sor Juana, her inclination towards profane topics was good: science, measurements, literature and reflections on the human body and the heavens were all legitimate areas of knowledge deriving from a rational inclination. The escape route that Sor Juana discovered in order to justify her investigation of the good things of the world without moral imputability was found in Molina: he had concluded that, while one sleeps, one lacks moral responsibility despite delighting in one's actions.[410]

It is then through dreams that Sor Juana discovers how to enter without culpability into the study of pagan ideas, poetic metaphors, philosophy and the questions of astrology that her contemporaries reflected—and wrote—upon. Therefore, the poem descends from its apex in its second part: there is a slow waking of the bodily humors, and then every possibility of rational investigation ceases at the moment when the final verse arrives: "the world illuminated, and I awake." There, Sor Juana comes to the perfect state of wakefulness. Molina says:

> *[T]hose who sleep have a perfect use of reason before starting to sleep, and conserve in their memory all the species of objects necessary for reasoning; further, they are only deprived of the use of reason by the moistness of the brain, which obstructs the paths by which the sensitive spirits direct themselves towards the sense organs, thereby enabling the human body to recuperate. Therefore, those who sleep tend to migrate from sleep to waking and to the perfect use of reason suddenly, when the sensitive spirits burst in suddenly and occupy the sense organs.*[411]

The influence of Molina is proven by the final phrase in *Primero Sueño*, "the world illuminated, and I awake": there, Sor Juana arrives at the state of wakefulness at the same time as she puts an end to the journey of reason in the poem. It is then that Sor Juana breaks cleanly with the argument of culpability pressed upon her by her confessor. Instead she follows the criterion of Molina, who says:

> *once those who sleep have come to a perfect state of wakefulness, they are tormented by the worry that they might have offended God, consenting to impulses arising as a response to an enjoyable attraction or any other passion, thanks to the innate freedom of their will. They fear that perhaps they had the possibility of not consenting in their power, by suppressing the passion and the act.*[412]

However, Molina calms those who suffer anxiety as a result of this situation, saying it is evident that these acts are not subject to guilt. He closes his argumentation by saying that "God remains totally hidden in us while we live in the body's dark prison," that is, in the dream state.[413]

The Quest for Freedom by the Concept of the Dream State in Sor Juana's Work

What is the dream state for Sor Juana? From where does she obtain the idea? For Sor Juana, the literary figure of the dream state serves as an escape hatch for those aiming at intellectual freedom: the triumph of free understanding that she proclaims in the poem.

Baroque literature used the figure of the dream frequently; we know from specialists in Baroque literature Sor Juana was influenced by Calderón de la Barca in *La vida es sueño* (*Life is a Dream*), by Francisco Quevedo in *Sueños y discursos* (*Dreams and Discourses*), by Cervantes en *Viajes del Parnaso* (*Journeys to Parnassus*) and by Baltasar Gracián in

El criticón (*The Critic* I- II). Gracián, even though he is a novelist and not a poet, deals with all the topics that Sor Juana's poem featured: night, the labyrinth of stars, silence, humors, the heavens, the journey to wisdom. Sor Juana feeds off all these influences in her own work and uses each one with a distinct purpose: from the *Soledades* (*Solitudes*) of Góngora, which do not deal with the issue of dreams, she takes the elements of the Baroque style: pagan ideas and mythologies, elements that help her introduce the dream; from Quevedo she takes the poetic genre of the *silva* and certain formal elements; but it is Gracián who influences her the most, despite being so different. Gracián is a balanced writer, while Sor Juana overflows; in her the technique of the Baroque and the fusion of literary currents and subject areas complicate the plot. What in Baltasar Gracián is stability and pause, Sor Juana accelerates and overlaps; these superpositions comprise the key to understanding the dream in her poem. In *The Critic*, the story has colors, while in the poem by Sor Juana there is only light and darkness: it is a conceptual poem in black and white. In addition, the *Primero Sueño* of Sor Juana is bulkier, since her strategy consists in intermixing planes, a technique she finds employed in Virgil, Cicero and Statius. Nonetheless, in my opinion, the life and work of Baltasar Gracián are the most relevant influences in Sor Juana's poem: Gracián is a Jesuit, as is her confessor Núñez de Miranda and Suárez and Molina. In addition, Gracián employs the idea of a hidden God that distances him from human reality, and he employs conceptist literary style and laconic language with aphorisms, as Sor Juana also does. The focus on the profane, the Baroque gaze and the idea of the world as a machine are all essential elements in *The Critic*, and Sor Juana introduces them into the poem *Primero Sueño.*

Undoubtedly, as Paz holds, Statius provides poetic resources from the Greco-Roman tradition: he is the author of *silvas* that hark back to the Hellenism of Virgil and Cicero, among many other authors that I am not analyzing here, such as Ovid, Macrobius, etc. However, I believe that it was Virgil, Cicero, and Statius who wrote the poems about dreams that most influenced Sor Juana.[414]

Statius is said to have had the strongest formal influence on her because of the *silvas* he composed, a poetic genre that was inherited through the medieval tradition. The *silva* of Statius was written with dactylic hexameter and is characterized by the apostrophe, a poetic figure that is directed to someone who is absent. Statius, a poet from the 1st century CE (45-96), entitles his poem *Somnus* (*Dream*). He speaks of the pain of Orpheus and tells of how the stars view the tears of the unsleeping. In her poem, Sor Juana follows the Roman poet by opening with a scenario wherein everything is sleeping and in silence. Statius defines the moon as that which eclipses the earth when it interposes. The character in the poem suffers insomnia because of pain, spending nights without sleeping while gazing at the sky. Sor Juana disrupts the order of Statius's poem, narrating instead the drama of the journey of reason towards the light and the impossibility of achieving full understanding due to the fall of the intellect.

But it is not just Statius who employs the technique of connecting the topic of the dream to the presence of the stars and their movements: this poetic tool came from Virgil, who inspired him. However, specialists in Statius[415] say that his greater popularity in Medieval times—in contrast to Virgil—resulted from Statius having converted to Christianity, which Medieval writers saw as an attractive feature. Another reason for his greater popularity is that Dante, in his *Divine Comedy*, employs him as a guide through purgatory. However, Dante does not permit him to enter Heaven: although Statius had converted to Christianity, he maintained a pagan façade in public for fear of persecution. Virgil, in contrast, does reach Heaven in the *Divine Comedy* because it seemed to Dante that he was a precursor to Christianity. Another philosopher who influenced the literature of dreams was Cicero, who relates the dream of Scipio in his treaty *De re publica*,[416] when Scipio's grandfather makes an appearance. The elder man speaks of the future of his country, while also touching on astrology, the soul, numbers and music. Curiously, as with colors, music is another reality that does not appear in the *Dream* of Sor Juana, in which even the fish are said to be mute. The key to the drama is found in remaining silent, a topic that connects with her prose[417]; Góngora's *Solitudes* is the source for another trait of her poem, where she draws an analogy to the cell in which her confessor sought to imprison her.[418]

The *silva* of Statius stands out due to the influence that it had on later literature — "the planets trace their orbits in the sky, thereby marking the passage of time in a subject that remains impassible in his pain,"—an influence that was very strong in Europe, especially in Spanish literature.[419]

Statius established the recurring topics in his *silva*; it is thanks to Paz's wit and literary erudition that it is possible to note the importance of Statius in *Primero Sueño,* even though the stronger poet influencing themes is Cicero. It is due to Scipio's dream that Sor Juana is able to construct the key overlap of her poem: instead of the planets contemplating the weeping of the sleeper, she, from her cell, can contemplate the planets, a view that cannot be taken from her. In her *Respuesta a Sor Filotea de la Cruz*, Sor Juana narrates that even when they took away her books she was able to continue using her imagination and eyes for observing the sky. The inversion of Scipio's dream finds a common point in the stars and in the gaze. It is here that Sor Juana's idea of science and the issue of her cell become intertwined in another interjection.

In conclusion, for Sor Juana the heavens were not just a figure from the literary Baroque; rather, she used Baroque conventions regarding dreams in order to discuss her astral observations and the need for intellectual freedom in the process of gaining knowledge. Nor is her poem a mere game of judicial astrology; it was instead an opportunity that permitted Sor Juana to make scientific observations from the convent without committing a sin. With this peculiar fusion of science and versification the nun discovered a way out of her cell, making it possible for her to unleash the impressive

force of her intellect. In so doing, she proved that fundamental freedom resists even the greatest efforts to suppress it. This was her idea of intellectual freedom.

In the scientific realm, as with Sigüenza y Góngora, in *Primero Sueño* Sor Juana represents the transition that science in the Americas was undergoing: a review of the scientific topics found in *Primero Sueño* shows her recognition of the mechanical processes of nature, as well as her knowledge of the movement of the planets. This latter issue would later give rise to a frontal collision between traditional Scholasticism and the transition to modernity, a transition that would not fully take place in New Spain until after the expulsion of the Jesuits in 1767. This does not mean that the colony failed to undergo a process of intellectual opening and modernization. Rather, its enlightenment would come via other routes and would be formulated from a different point of view. The science of the 17th century in New Spain could dialog on the same level as many European scientists, but was completely different. It responded to a different situation and different choices, and connected with political problems of the Colonial government, where traditional Scholasticism had joined forces with official Catholicism and the Spanish Crown. People of the stature of Sigüenza and Sor Juana had committed themselves to the observation of the heavens as well as to the philosophical advances that authors like Descartes had achieved: a concrete example of the scientific value of Sor Juana's *Primero Sueño* is found in her mechanical conception of the human body. The Englishman Harvey had recently discovered the circulatory movement of blood, which was key to Cartesian mechanicism, and Sor Juana employed this conception of the movements of the body without questioning it. In addition, the reference in *Primero Sueño* to a specific eclipse proves the precision of her measurements; she connects the journey of reason to the advance of the moon towards the quiet part of the night and the eclipse of the earth.

The result of this philosophical melting pot was an eclectic and heterodox theory, something typical of the new style of Mexican philosophizing born from Sor Juana and Sigüenza. Sor Juana is thus the protagonist of a new philosophical advance, coming from New Spain, *i.e.* her proposal of intellectual freedom. However, we ought not to jump for joy about the contribution of the nun and praise her exaggeratedly. Her vision of the heavens and of the earth retains an organicist stamp that is typical of her time, coming as it does from an Aristotelianism that had just been replanted in the Americas. She is the creator of an eclectic style of thought[420] that brings with it cultural consequences that would eventually overcome the conventionality of the old philosophical-theological tradition.

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