



At the Limits of (Trans)Gender: Jesus, Mary, and the Angels in the Visionary Sermons of Juana de la Cruz (1481–1534)

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After the 1492 Reconquest of Muslim Granada and expulsion of the Jews from the Iberian peninsula, the leaders of Castile exhibited an unprecedented and unexpected openness to Christian innovation. In the same decades that saw the establishment of the Spanish Inquisition as a powerful bureaucratic tool to police heresy, especially “judaizing” (converts from Judaism reverting to their original practices), the Christian reforms instituted by Queen Isabel and King Fernando made available to New and Old Christians alike a much greater variety of practices and texts than had been accessible previously in the kingdom of Castile.¹ For example, at the behest of the “Most Catholic” monarchs and their reform-minded Archbishop and Cardinal Francisco de Cisneros, multiple classic works by Latin church fathers as well as mystical and spiritual texts by authors such as Ludolph of Saxony, Catherine of Siena, and Angela of Foligno were commissioned for translation. In addition, Castilians began composing a range of new devotional works, from catechisms to Passion-centered meditation treatises to mystical texts, which enjoyed great popularity until the 1559 Index of Prohibited Books placed limitations on access to religious works in the vernacular.² In other words, the early decades of the sixteenth century in Castile were characterized by the widespread repression of non-Christian traditions and, inversely, a remarkable proliferation of Christian spiritual practices.

Perhaps the most unusual example of religious innovation in this complex era was the support given by Cardinal Cisneros to Mother Juana de la Cruz (1481–1534), who led her small tertiary house outside of Madrid in its conversion to a Clarissan convent.³ Starting in 1508 and continuing for thirteen years, Juana gave public “sermones” while in ecstatic trance, during which Christ’s voice was reported to issue from her inert body for hours at a time, commenting on ideas ranging from the fall of Adam and Eve to the Crucifixion and the Immaculate Conception.⁴ Thus, for a number of

Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies 48:2, May 2018
DOI 10.1215/10829636-4402227 © 2018 by Duke University Press

years, a congregation of nuns, local ecclesiastics, military leaders, and even Emperor Charles V regularly viewed an apparently unconscious nun speaking in a low-register voice and using the first person to retell the biblical narrative and expand on theological doctrine.⁵ To add to the impact of these visionary sermons, the sermons included wildly dramatic descriptions of the events taking place in heaven on key days in the liturgical calendar. Rebeca Sanmartín Bastida has categorized both Juana and her direct contemporary, the visionary María de Santo Domingo, as creating a kind of “trance theater” [teatro del trance].⁶ Juana did not participate in the theatrical episodes, unlike María; instead, Jesus spoke through her concerning episodes in which Christ, Mary, the angels, and the saints enacted the festive version of heaven that many late medieval Christians imagined—eating, drinking, playing games, dancing—with the novel addition of elaborate allegorical pageants (*figuras*) intended to present and reinforce theological and moral precepts.⁷

Ecclesiastical support for a woman preacher presenting innovative theology in public during the early decades of the Inquisition is even more surprising since Juana’s “semi-autobiography” claims that she experienced a sex change before birth and indicates that she had bodily signs of gender ambiguity, including an Adam’s apple. The appearance of secondary sex characteristics of both types seems at first reading to indicate either androgyny or hermaphroditism, which in the sixteenth century evoked on the one hand the monstrously incomplete (neither male nor female) or, on the other, absolute plenitude (both male and female).⁸ The principal scholars of Juana’s work have all analyzed Juana’s gender ambiguity as formative for her theology. Ronald Surtz suggests that Juana’s androgyne experience led her to consistently emphasize the feminine aspects of male authority figures such as Jesus or St. Francis.⁹ María del Mar Graña Cid, in a carefully argued and extensive article on the “femininity” of Jesus in Juana’s writing, proposes that Juana’s repeated “mixing of genders” [mezcla de géneros] served a proto-feminist purpose of “making visible the feminine” in Christianity.¹⁰ It may have been possible for a visionary to exert a kind of androgynous authority based on medieval assumptions that the soul itself was androgynous; that is, spiritual authority could quite logically be lived out in androgynous corporeality, as the body would then match the soul.¹¹

However, I argue in this article that “androgyny” and “mixing of genders,” while important aspects of Juana’s gender presentation, are not sufficient explanations for her lived experience, nor fully representative of the nonbinary yet highly gendered portrait of heaven presented through-

out her work.¹² Careful attention to Juana's visionary sermons, particularly the allegorical pageants and heavenly feasts that Jesus describes through the rapt Juana, indicates that gender play was at the heart of the festive events attributed to the denizens of heaven, and that much of the gender complexity that can be extrapolated about Juana's own life is reproduced as central to the nature of Jesus, Mary, and even the angels. Rather than attempt to fix a gender identity for Juana herself, a problematic approach given the paucity of documentation for her life (and a problematic question that depends on theories of gender identity as stable rather than processual), I examine how Juana's gender continuum patterned her visions of heaven and deeply influenced her theology.¹³

Given the extraordinary variety of gender experience and presentation found in Juana's descriptions of her own life and the life of heaven, the contemporary expansion of gender terminology is a useful tool with which to track the parallels between Juana's self-understanding and her exploration of saintly, angelic, and divine nature. Although Juana identified publicly as a nun and therefore as female, such rubrics as "trans" or "intersex," for example, can help parse the nuances of the distinctive narratives on which Juana rests her authority.¹⁴ In turn, the precision of contemporary terminology can aid in identifying certain subcategories within the gender performances attributed at various moments to all the denizens of heaven in Juana's visions, such that consideration of "trans," "bigender," or "gender-queer" representations of Jesus, Mary, and the angels permits connections between episodes in different sermons that together shed light on Juana's theological interventions.¹⁵

In the first half of this article, I consider the autobiographical details of Juana's nonbinary gender in light of Renaissance scientific understandings of gender, sex, and fetal development, as well as medieval and early modern mystical expressions that depend on regendering the devotee or the divine. This cultural context helps isolate what was unique to Juana's case, and therefore which details might be elucidated through contemporary terminology from trans studies and queer theory. In the second half, I explore the ramifications of Juana's embrace of a gender continuum for her theology. I will turn first to angelology, for Juana explores not only the materiality of angels who feast, dance, and fight, but also their role as feminized males or even as a third gender in heaven. Most importantly, the specifics of Juana's gender are echoed in a celestial episode that takes place between Mary and the angels in which Mary blends angelic secondary sex characteristics with her own. This example, I suggest, paves the way for considering other types

of unusual gendered interactions between Jesus and the saints throughout Juana's visionary sermons, helping to parse some of the most astonishing pronouncements she makes concerning gender and sexuality in heaven.

Key moments in Juana's gender experience

Little is known about Juana's life history beyond the bare outlines: she was born into a family of modest means, joined the religious house (*beaterio*) María de la Cruz in Cubas (outside Toledo) around age fifteen to avoid an arranged marriage, and was appointed abbess once the *beaterio* was incorporated into the Clarissan order in 1509.¹⁶ She had begun her sermons the year before her election as abbess, and several amanuenses transcribed what was claimed as a liturgical year's worth of sermons in a manuscript, *El libro del conorte*, conserved in manuscript form until its first print publication in 1999. Juana received letters of support from Cardinal Cisneros for her exercise of forms of authority rarely granted to women, including the right to appoint the convent's chaplain herself.¹⁷ Although at one point her authority was challenged by her assistant superior in a dispute over nepotism and mismanagement of funds, her accuser recanted and Juana was restored to her position as abbess, a post she held until her death in 1534.

Beyond the few archival documents that support the information given above, there are two primary sources for information about her life history. Juana's semi-autobiography, *Vida y fin*, was supposedly dictated by Juana, but was clearly terminated by others since it ends with her death and miraculous preservation as a corpse. A conventual book of records, *Libro de la casa*, from the late sixteenth century repeats a number of the miracles and visions from the semi-autobiography, adds others, and conserves a play based on her Annunciation sermon.¹⁸ All three manuscripts attributed to Juana—the lengthy sermon collection, the semi-autobiography, and the book of records—are collaborative documents, transcribed in part or full by other nuns, one of whom, María Evangelista, putatively received the gift of literacy as a miracle to aid her in this task.¹⁹ Juana's seventy-two sermons were also redacted by the confessor to the convent in two different manuscripts, and marginal annotations survive from several generations of readers. These are the principal, and fascinating, documents by which to access Juana's claims to authority and innovative theology.

The *Vida y fin* begins with two crucial episodes concerning Juana's gender and authority to be abbess. First, the semi-autobiography presents a birth miracle meant to establish that her role as abbess was ordained for her

by God at the behest of the Virgin Mary. In Juana's account, Mary had asked God to restore a failing Marian *beatario* to prominence; God responded by changing the gender of the fetus in the womb of Juana's mother, so that the fetus would be born in the correct gender in order to enter the convent and lead it out of its decline:

And the all-powerful God responded very lovingly [to Mary]:
“My mother, [there is] at this moment a male that I have begun to make, in whom I wanted to put a great part of my grace . . . and for love of you, Lady, I will change him into woman [to accomplish] this work that you ask [of me] . . . and the blessed Juana de la Cruz was at that moment in the womb of her mother starting to be made male, [and God] made her woman as [an] all-powerful [God] could and can do. And his Divine Majesty did not want to take away the knot that she had in her throat so that it would be a testament to the miracle. And when [God] changed her into a woman she did not yet have the spirit of life, and the powerful God protected her from the dangers that other creatures often have happen to them in the wombs of their mothers. (*Vida y fin*, fol. 2v)²⁰

Juana's prominent Adam's apple is adduced as a sign that this gender change was “made” by God; Surtz describes it as an “emblem of a divinely determined androgyny.”²¹ This episode, coming as it does at the beginning of Juana's semi-autobiography, confirms female authority in heaven by depicting Mary as an interlocutor with God, but also reinforces Juana's authority by demonstrating that the abbess's rank, and concomitantly her public sermons, were a result of God's intentional intervention.

A mere two chapters after this remarkable miracle of regendering, Juana continues on to another episode of gender variation, this time according to the cultural construction of gender beyond just its bodily basis. Juana recounts her decision to flee her childhood home in male clothing in order to reach the convent of Santa María de Cubas in safety and enter as a novitiate. This sequence evokes various medieval hagiographic accounts of cross-dressing female saints who usually resorted to male clothing in order to maintain a vow of abstinence rather than enter an arranged marriage, as well as the secular “portraits of women” books popular in the early sixteenth century around Europe that often presented cross-dressing women as “virile, courageous, and magnanimous.”²² Notably, this episode was also

included in the first biography of Mother Juana, written and revised by an influential Franciscan, Antonio de Daza, in the early seventeenth century.²³ As described in the *Vida y fin*, Juana changed back into female clothing as soon as she arrived at the convent, sheltering next to its towering walls while she put on her dress. When she walked up to the door in her “proper” apparel, the Marian image on the door of the convent welcomed her with a direct salutation, saying, “Congratulations, welcome to my house. Enter in happily, as you were raised for this.”²⁴ This initial moment of direct contact between Juana and Mary—when the Marian image affirmed Juana’s entrance into the religious house after changing costume—likewise confirmed that Juana’s choice to take on or put off societal gender markers was an acceptable spiritual tactic if restoring Mary’s convent was the result.²⁵

According to her semi-autobiography, then, Juana comfortably inhabited multiple gender dynamics, ranging from being transgendered as a fetus while retaining a male secondary sex characteristic, to cross-dressing, to voice register changes when Jesus gave sermons through her enraptured body, all of which experiences she claimed to be authorized by the Virgin Mary and enabled by God. These gender dynamics were central to the construction of Juana’s authority in her Marian convent—she was born female to be its abbess—while also giving Juana a platform from which she could preach, or rather by which Jesus could speak through her.

It is notable that the last of these dynamics, speaking as Jesus, produced the highest claim to authority in her time, that is, public preaching by a woman. In her era in Italy and Spain, some women known as “living saints” were granted a certain public authority for prophetic preaching, yet Juana is unique for claiming to channel Jesus over the course of thirteen years.²⁶ As a claim, it has strong parallels with a variety of religions from around the world in which women regularly seek out “spirit possession.” In these religions, women often channel male divinities or spirits and speak with low voices, achieving a level of male authority while embodying the divinity in the form of a female.²⁷ Medieval Christians, however, faced the conundrum as to whether such an experience should be categorized as an enraptured experience given by God, or possession by a demon; evidently, Juana’s audience, not to mention the Inquisition, would have rejected her visions had they believed her to be possessed.²⁸ Since Juana’s case might seem to evoke a broad category in the study of religion yet her fellow Castilians would have considered such a term highly suspect, it is thus essential to probe carefully how such a nonbinary set of gendered claims to channel the divine would have been evaluated and recognized by Juana’s

audience in sixteenth-century Castile, in particular the unique claim to gender transformation in the womb that left a mark of the original gender on Juana's body.

“Born this way”: Contextualizing Juana's gender in premodern medicine and culture

To aid us in understanding Juana's authority as a woman preacher voicing a male divine, I turn to two crucial contexts: medical and cultural understandings of gender variance in Renaissance Castile, and the ways in which medieval and Renaissance mystical authors used gender-fluid language to express direct contact with the divine. Careful attention to how Juana both correlates with—yet inverts—her era's most common forms of “gender transformations” both secular and sacred will serve not simply to mark her as a distinctive case study, but also to highlight certain questions concerning gender and sexuality that then pervade her visions.²⁹

First, it is worth considering what a change of sex in the womb would have meant according to the reigning medical constructs of the era, for Juana's prenatal transformation is not the case of a miraculous change in DNA from XY to XX.³⁰ For that matter, it differs from cases of hermaphroditism and changes in gender at the age of puberty (through the testicles dropping) that were rare but periodically assessed by theologians and Inquisitorial courts in the medieval and early modern era.³¹ Instead, fetal development as it was understood not only by medieval doctors but more generally in cultural assumptions is a critical source for understanding how Juana's fellow religious might have understood her birth miracle, that is, how Juana was “born this way.”³²

Medieval physicians and scientists followed Galenic humoral theory, defining all living creatures as combinations balanced between certain amounts of cold and heat, dryness and moisture. In this medical theory, all human fetuses began as collection of fluids which, if properly heated, would form (or harden) within forty-five days into a male, at which point the soul would be joined to the body. Otherwise the body would remain more moist and cool, only being organized into a female between fifty-five and eighty days after conception.³³ As Joan Cadden has noted:

Heat . . . was the most fundamental physical difference between the sexes. . . . It is their greater heat that allows men to make their nutritive superfluities into hair and beards. . . . Indeed, from the

very beginning, males are warmer than females, which is one of the reasons male embryos grow more quickly in the womb.³⁴

In addition, certain aspects of the environment were assumed to contribute to gendering the fetus, including where in the uterus it developed (the right side is warmer, aiding digestion that nourishes males), and the quantity and quality of male sperm (stronger sperm heats the fetus more quickly).³⁵ In other words, *pace* Simone de Beauvoir, in the Middle Ages being female (cool/moist) was the baseline; being male was something one becomes with sufficient heat.³⁶

As we saw in the dialogue quoted above between God and Mary, God promised to intervene in Juana's mother's womb where a male was being "made" before the process was finalized and the "spirit of life" was added, that is, before the soul was joined to the body at forty-five days. The medical result of this divine decision would have been to undo the heating sequence and return the fetus to a cooler, more fluid, and disorganized state. And in fact, as a mark of the miracle, God intentionally left intact a male secondary sex characteristic, yet it is of note that the marker was a "knot in the throat" rather than a beard, which according to humoral theory would have disappeared with the reduction of heat in the womb.³⁷ In fact, Juana's masculine-of-center gender presentation, while clearly unusual enough to require justification for her Adam's apple in the first folios of her semi-autobiography, distinguishes her from other medieval examples of women with masculine traits, such as bearded female saints like Wilgefortis or Santa Librada, whose hagiographies describe the miraculous growth of beards that served to preserve their vows of virginity at the advent of arranged marriages.³⁸ In this birth miracle, Juana claims a unique origin for her life as a female with a male Adam's apple, an origin which ultimately goes beyond the "gender mixing" terminology proposed by Graña Cid to a complete "gender reversal." Indeed, this birth miracle could usefully be considered a "divinely ordained sexual reassignment surgery," one more holistic than twenty-first century surgical interventions, for this alteration would not only have affected her genitals but indeed qualitatively shifted Juana's entire body into a cooler, fluid formation that would impact her for the rest of her days.³⁹

To consider this gender reversal more carefully, in premodern thinking, not only did an overall combination of heat/dryness or cold/moisture pertain to whether a fetus remained female or turned male, but all persons throughout their lives fell within a range of variations in exactly how hot/dry or cold/moist they were.⁴⁰ These variations affected overall personality

and character: Women who were midrange rather than extremely cold or moist exhibited more masculine characteristics, ranging from higher intelligence to secondary sex characteristics such as facial hair.⁴¹ It is true that nonfemininity was considered unattractive, and indeed, in the case of overly hairy women, hilarious or monstrous, and Hispanists have explored various instances of what queer theorist Halberstam terms “female masculinity” and Renaissance Castilians termed “*mujer varonil*” found in Inquisition casefiles and sixteenth-century literature.⁴² However, in this era, a less overtly feminine gender presentation was not primarily a choice that could be critiqued for nonconformity but rather was an innate characteristic based on humoral balance from the fetal stage throughout life, often associated with the astrological sign the woman was born under or the weather patterns in her home region, south or north.⁴³ In other words, during Juana’s era, gender identity, secondary sex characteristics, and intellect *all* fit under the rubric of nature, not nurture.⁴⁴

While scholars have generally used this birth miracle to designate Juana as androgynous, I suggest that the gender-reversing miracle in which she is “unmade” from male into female but retains a visible male secondary sex characteristic produced what could be either termed a “trans” or “intersex” body.⁴⁵ When intersex was introduced as a term in the early twentieth century, it was basically synonymous with the premodern understanding of hermaphroditism. Now, however, intersex is applied to many cases beyond the medieval definition of dual genitalia, including the question of ambiguous genitalia that, starting in the mid-twentieth century in the West, were operated on surgically in order to produce genitalia that conformed to one or another binary gender. Intersex also can refer to nonvisible bodily sources that might produce ambiguous genitalia, such as nonresponsiveness to certain hormones or a genotype of XXY.⁴⁶ In the case of Juana, the reorganization of her body from hot and dry to moist and cool in the womb could evoke some of these contemporary medical aspects of intersex, while the presence of a secondary sex characteristic of the initial gender might produce the ambiguity that has led to controversial surgical interventions to assign gender to intersex persons.

Turning to the term “transgender,” some contemporary theorists distinguish between transgender as those who seek surgical reassignment and intersex as those with ambiguous genitalia who reject having their sex chosen for them by the medical establishment after birth.⁴⁷ However, many theorists use “trans” as a term for a far wider range of individuals than simply those who seek surgical reassignment, and in my view it is the most capa-

cious rubric to express Juana's experience of gender change while retaining a trace of the initial gender.⁴⁸ For example, Gayle Salamon proposes a definition of "transgenderism or transsexuality" as "a region of being in which the subject is not quite unitary and not quite the combination of two different things. . . . It can be thought by itself, yet has been unnameable."⁴⁹ A nun whose original gender was tailored by God in order to achieve a particular devotional end and whose miraculous transformation is marked on her body through a mixing of secondary sex characteristics is surely neither unitary nor fully combined. Nor, however, is she simply androgynous.

Mystical transgendering

It is clear that Juana's leadership, due to rather than despite her masculine attributes and deep preaching voice, would have registered on a gender continuum that, while not lauded, was at least recognizable in Renaissance Spain. Another critical context for Juana's authority is the way in which medieval and Renaissance Christians made use of a functional rather than biological understanding of gender in their mystical and spiritual texts. Marian Rothstein has recently proposed "functional gender" as a useful term for the oft-analyzed medieval tendency to describe gender as a constellation of qualities in which any given individual can participate more or less fully:

Functional gendering may ascribe qualities to a given person generally associated with, or as in the case of nursing [lactating], seemingly physically grounded in, a body with the opposite sex. Again, such gendering is not embodied, and its classification is neither totalizing nor permanent.⁵⁰

The cultural understanding of gender as functional rather than innate in the Middle Ages opened up the possibility of a gender continuum in mystical and visionary texts, particularly in relation to the active/passive binary assigned to men/women. Many scholars have analyzed the frequency with which medieval mystics resorted to a kind of "mystical transgendering," in which they voiced their experience of the divine through language that situates the mystic, and sometimes even God, in a different gender.

For example, the abbot and mystic Bernard of Clairvaux posited himself under the guise of the feminine, waiting passively for God to actively pursue contact with him.⁵¹ Inversely, Hadewijch of Antwerp and other female Beguines of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries wrote

prose and poetry imagining themselves as knights ardently pursuing the attention of God, their lady love.⁵² Hispanist Anne J. Cruz has identified this mystical transgendering as an important strand of Golden Age Spanish mysticism in the writings of Teresa of Avila and John of the Cross, tracing its source to the medieval Italian mystic Angela of Foligno, whose *Memoriale* was translated into Spanish at the behest of Cisneros in 1510, early in Juana's career.⁵³ The justification for these mystical gender dynamics is that individuals in their quotidian life are too dependent on limited categories of human thinking and imagining—only by inverting those categories most crucial to identity could the mystic get beyond the framework of daily life and be open to an encounter with a divine infinitely more grand than any human could imagine.

The flexibility of gender in relation to the divine, then, was not only extensively supported throughout medieval Europe, but was specifically available in Juana's era. I argue, however, that a strategy of linguistic transgendering as a mystical method to move outside normal categories of life and thought in order to be more open to divine interaction is qualitatively different from a divine male taking over the voice of a nun who displayed secondary sex characteristics of both genders. Likewise, the questions that arise as a result of Juana's gender experience are different from a woman mystic poetically taking on the role of a knight or naming God as a lady of the court, and in fact these questions point to the need for a dramatic rethinking of our common conceptions of gender dynamics, based on Juana as a case study.

To wit, if Jesus takes over Juana's voice while she is unconscious, how bodily an experience is this, and what sort of binary or nonbinary gender experience is at work? Is Jesus making Juana male, as indicated by the low register voice? Is a female body the vessel for the male divine, or is the divine at this moment female? Is the audience "seeing God" in an unconscious female, or only hearing Jesus? And what about the fact that we only have records of these sermons because several female amanuenses were designated as her scribes (since Juana spoke but did not write during her sermons)? Is Jesus female by being written by women? Further, as discussed above, the principal amanuensis, María Evangelista, was reportedly illiterate until miraculously given the power to write, specifically in order to transcribe these sermons which were later organized by a male Franciscan advisor or priest to the convent. If the male divine has empowered an illiterate woman to write down the male divine's speech uttered through the masculine-of-center nun's low voice, what kind of gendering is at work

here? Indeed, what can one ultimately say about an author whose gender expression not only transgresses binaries but relies on a collectivity of female scribes and male editors to effectively channel a male divine—a “mystical assemblage,” as it were?⁵⁴

I present the above in the form of questions to indicate the radical repositioning concerning definitions of gender that can occur when Juana’s biography is probed. However, rather than attempting to define Juana herself as a particular gender, in this article I am interested in using what one might call her “gender continuum performance” (*pace* Butler) as a cue for considering the gender performance not of other humans, but of the divine. In short, the twelve hundred pages of *El libro del conorte* are filled with glorious heavenly festivities that indicate that Juana herself was far more fascinated with divine nature as manifestly and diversely gendered than with probing her own identity. Given how rooted the topoi of classical theology (Christology, definitions of sin, anthropology) are in notions of gender and sexuality, the fact that Juana seems to have problematized gender binaries in her own life would have had considerable implications for her theological proposals.

Having proposed the categories trans and intersex in order to parse the miracles and episodes presented as justification in the *Vida y fin* for Juana’s role as abbess and visionary preacher, the rest of my discussion takes Juana’s gender variance as a cue to consider how such terms as trans, intersex, genderqueer, and bigender can help assess the gender fluidity found in the divine and in heaven in *Conorte*.⁵⁵ To start with a perhaps unexpected topic, throughout the medieval period, angelology had been an important theological topic affording theologians a way to fix more precisely the boundary between human and divine. In my view, Juana subverts this tradition of boundary-making through angelology by identifying slippage within the gender expression usually attributed to angels, a slippage that ultimately parallels and indeed vindicates the extraordinary episodes of nonbinary gender within her own life.

Radicalizing the gender of angels and Mary

The theorist and historian of early modern mysticism Michel de Certeau notes that the figure of “The angel . . . bypasse[d] at once the difference of time (the past and the future), of species (the bestial and the celestial), and of sex (he is bisexual, androgynous).”⁵⁶ De Certeau drew many of his insights from the Spanish mystics who published during the half century after Juana’s death; I suggest that in the case of Juana, angels provide a counter-

point to the personages of Jesus (fully human, fully divine) and Mary (fully human, assumed body and soul into heaven) that enables theological reflection on the genderqueer nature of heaven.

Angels were important intercessory figures in the Middle Ages, as was Mary, Juana's principal champion.⁵⁷ Juana's own mysticism was interwoven with interactions with angels, following in the footsteps of other pre-modern mystics and spiritual leaders, as well as Castilian Franciscans who led the reform movement of the fifteenth century.⁵⁸ In addition to receiving apparitions of Mary and voicing Jesus, Juana regularly interacted with her guardian angel Laruel (or Laurel).⁵⁹ Laruel is a crucial figure in the semi-autobiography and the conventual record book: according to them, Juana first preached at Laruel's behest, and received certain teachings and visions directly from Laruel, not Mary or Jesus.⁶⁰ Although Laruel does not appear by name in the sermons collected in *Conorte*, angels take leading roles: they appear in every single sermon, often in groups, whether participating with the saints and beatified in the heavenly pageants, or distinguished by rank according to Pseudo-Dionysius's classic hierarchy.⁶¹

Angels as intercessors were of great interest in theological speculation—how could an angel appear to, engage with, or act on behalf of humans? Scholastics such as Aquinas and Bonaventure (titled the Angelic and Seraphic Doctors, respectively) pondered the many ramifications of angelic nature, including both their corporeality generally speaking and their gender more specifically. So too did one of the popular books of medieval Catalan spirituality circulating in translation in medieval Castile and then printed shortly after the introduction of the printing press, Francesc Eiximenis's lengthy *Book of the Holy Angels* (*Libro de los santos angeles*).⁶² Bonaventure, Eiximenis, and others concluded that angels, created at the first moment when heaven, matter, and time appeared, were noncorporeal beings.⁶³ They therefore existed in space only because it was a proper ordering of creation for them to do so, not because of their intrinsic nature.⁶⁴ Once angelic incorporeality was assumed, scholars began probing the possibility that, although incorporeal, angels were nevertheless material.⁶⁵ For our purposes it is important to note that Bonaventure (and therefore the Franciscan tradition of which Juana was a part) advocated hylemorphism, arguing that “angels are made of both form and some kind of [spiritual] matter.”⁶⁶ Eiximenis, for example, suggested that angels “make” bones, nerves, etc., by condensing air. The condensed air when mixed with other elements (fire, water, earth) then provides various “accidental” forms, such as color of wings, gender, and age.⁶⁷

Of considerable interest to our theme, most medieval Christians imagined angels in (problematic) relation to a binary gender scheme. The Bible had described angels as male, and many medieval Christians followed this lead; for example, boys were cast in the parts of angels in an Easter play in Segovia, Spain in the early sixteenth century.⁶⁸ Medieval artists were more ambiguous on this point, however, in an echo of the “mixing of genders” attributed to Juana by one scholar. Altarpieces tended to represent angels as male with small, feminized facial features, such as small chins, and with colorful wings, yet angels were also often clothed in highly masculine warrior raiment.⁶⁹ These representations would have been familiar to Juana’s audience: as we see in figure 1, the altarpiece commissioned in the 1440s for the Old Cathedral in Salamanca features images of angels of indeterminate gender ministering to Jesus. Finally, medieval theologians considered angels the ideal of beauty, a point often associated with women on a human level but idealized in relation to the category of feminized male angels.⁷⁰

I argue that Juana’s sermons provide a dramatic forum for assessing these theological issues about angelic corporeality. In one sermon, she affirms directly that angels do not have bones or flesh, but do have wings, thus indicating that wings are the crucial marker of what it is to be an angel (*Conorte* no. 57, 1231).⁷¹ Juana’s angels in fact seem to be corporeal on some level, as they are described as kissing each other on the cheek or chest, even daring to kiss Jesus directly on the mouth (no. 9, 461).⁷² A corollary medieval question concerning corporeality was whether angels could eat; Juana proposes that they do, repeatedly, at the feasts described in every sermon, whether from the munificent platters set out on groaning tables or Eucharistically taking food directly from Jesus’s wounds (e.g., no. 21, 740; no. 27, 283; see also fig. 1).⁷³ Juana’s representation of angels gorging themselves and fortifying themselves with strong liquor before dancing and kissing, which from a contemporary viewpoint might seem to be an inordinately sexualized view of heaven, would according to medieval angelology have been within the range of acceptable angelic behavior despite the fact that Juana’s representation of angelic behavior is far more carnivalesque than was typical.⁷⁴

Given Juana’s focus on angelic bodies in physicalized relation to one another and to Jesus, it is not surprising that she further explores a gender continuum as part of her representations of angelic interactions. In one case, she incorporates angels into a gendered schema such that they might even be classified as a “third gender,” a term medievalists normally reserve for chaste monks, eunuchs, or women who transcend their societal gender roles.⁷⁵ In the final sermon of *Conorte*, Juana ruminates on a third gender in heaven

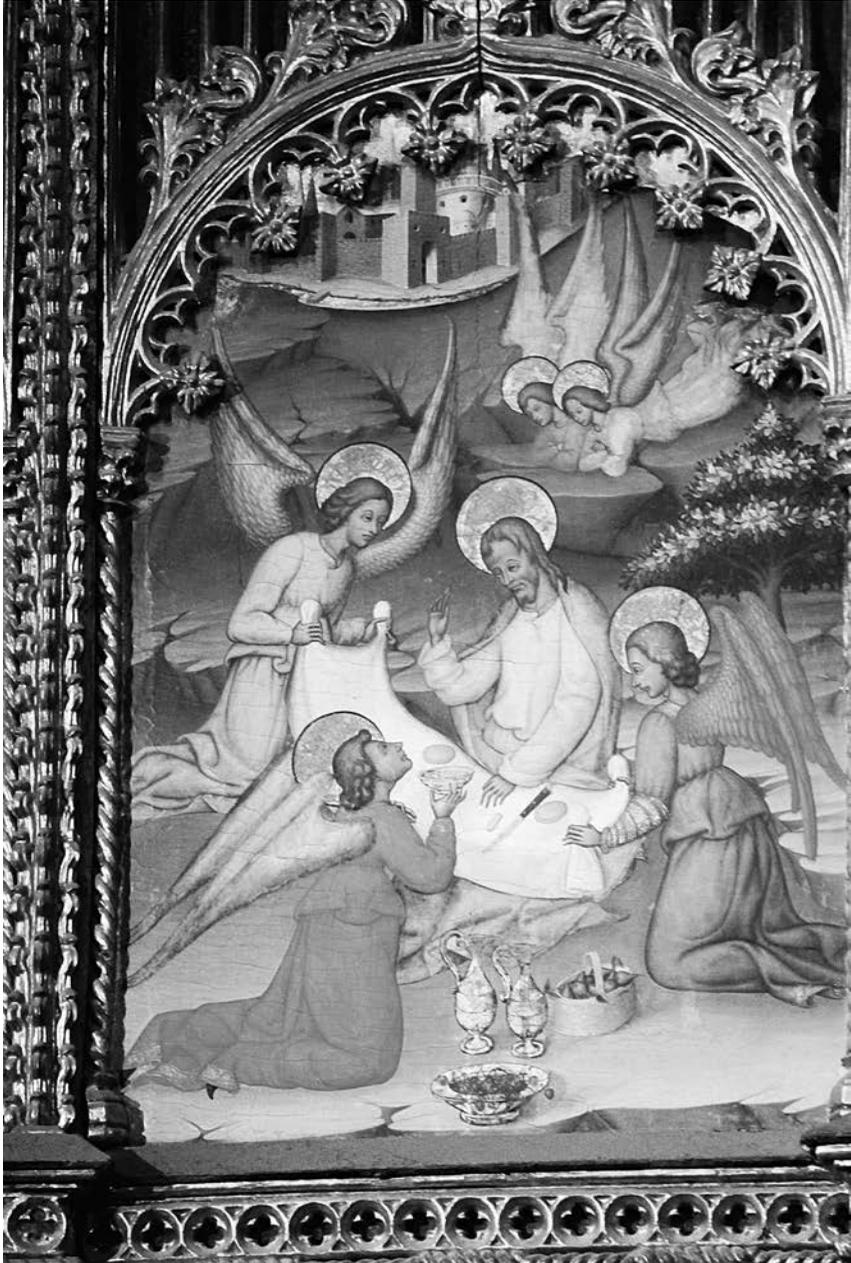


Figure 1.
*Delli Brothers, main altarpiece (1445) in the Old Cathedral,
Salamanca. Detail of ambiguously gendered angels ministering
to Jesus. Author photo.*

rather than earth: she proposes that males are a symbol for God the Father, females for Jesus, and angels for the Holy Spirit. According to her, these celestial interactions between male, female, and angel in fact pattern the Triune God: “Man and woman and angel can never stop living and being permanently forever . . . in heaven, all three yoked together . . . in one love and yoke (union) and charity (love) and will, praising . . . God three and one . . . who created them alive and similar to him” (no. 72, 1457).⁷⁶ In Juana’s creation narrative, angelic nature plus two human genders create a tripartite image of a tripartite divine, and thus are in permanent association with each other.

Juana dramatically extends her interest in angelic materiality and angelic gender through considering their defining characteristic, wings, in a provocative scene in sermon 57. Here she returns to the more traditional gendering of angels as male but transgresses binary gender assumptions in order to posit the existence of trans or intersex figures in the heavenly world. The sermon, entitled “The Angels Went before Jesus,” begins with Jesus and Mary flying through heaven together, a tender mother-and-son scene that the angels abruptly interrupt to ask Jesus to give them access to Mary in order to adore her during her feast day (no. 57, 1232).⁷⁷ When Jesus refuses their request, the angels initiate an extended fight with the devils over the souls held in hell (knowing that they cannot win on their own) in the hopes of forcing Jesus to send Mary to help them out (1233).⁷⁸ After the battle between the angels and demons rages on for numerous years, God the Father turns to Jesus, reprimands him for his selfishness in not sharing Mary when asked, and orders him to release Mary so that she can intervene (1237).⁷⁹ Mary arrives at the fight scene by flying from heaven with angel’s wings, and it is here that the genderqueer nature of the afterlife becomes apparent.⁸⁰ When Mary arrives, the souls in hell see her wings and assume she is an angel: “they saw her coming flying, in the guise of a resplendent angel” (1238).⁸¹ Following the typical medieval assumption that angels are male, the souls call out to her saying “sir” [Señor]. Mary has to clarify to them that she is a woman: “Don’t call me Sir, I am a woman and not an angel, and the Mother of God” (1238).⁸² When the souls ask how, as a human, she could have angelic wings, Mary responds that she is an “Angelina” [little female angel], thus complicating any clear distinction between angel and human, much less placing the angels on one side of a binary gender system.⁸³

In other words, in this extensive episode in sermon 57, a female saint, the mother of God, insists on her femaleness despite displaying the secondary sex characteristics, the wings, of angelic beings who were often

represented as feminized males or, in Juana's sermon 72, as a third gender, in order to perform the function usually reserved for the divine, the salvation of souls that the angels cannot accomplish on their own.⁸⁴ In this sermon's account of the drama of heaven and hell, the angels and Mary are apparently gendered more strongly along binary lines than in the previous sermon discussed, but in such a manner that the physical markings of one side of the binary can be added and taken off by a member of the other side of the binary. This results in a trans or intersex figure, the Virgin Mary, who transcends the capacities normally ascribed to one gender—and even to human nature, such as taking on Jesus's salvific role. Medieval traditions concerning Mary's dormition and assumption posited her as unique among humans as the only one assumed body and soul into heaven at her death, yet here she seems unique in heaven for the ability to utilize the secondary sex characteristics of a heavenly being that by definition does not fall within dual genders. In Juana's sermon, this expansive gender continuum becomes a tool to permit a human to enact a divine role. Interestingly, however, the apparent mutability of Mary's body does not seem to raise concern for Juana's audience, as it was transcribed in the manuscript without additional justification.

Caroline Walker Bynum has repeatedly emphasized in her scholarship that change in material substance, including bodies, was a central concern in the Middle Ages into the early modern era, as substantial change or partible bodies at once evoked the hope of salvation and the fear of degeneration.⁸⁵ In Juana's genderqueer heaven, it is notable that the additive body parts expand gender and aid in salvation, rather than causing distress. In fact, Juana's portrayal of Mary as putting on and taking off a secondary sex characteristic echoes the idea of bodily extension found in Merleau-Ponty's theory of embodied phenomenology, drawn on in turn by Salamon in her trans theory, in which objects such as a walking stick or a tie can help create or extend the gender of a body.⁸⁶ Contemporary theorists generally consider biological primary sex characteristics to be immutable yet unseen, while secondary sex characteristics are often more visible, and in combination with clothing choices and other "accessories," make gender legible to others.⁸⁷ Mary's adding or removing an angelic sex characteristic as one might a pair of suspenders or a gender-specific riding costume plays with how gender is socially constructed (and, I would argue, challenges some of the differences identified by twenty-first-century activists between cross-dressing and trans).

Crucially, this episode of Mary as "Angelina" echoes Juana's own transgender miracle. According to Juana's semi-autobiography, Mary's request inspired the divine gender change in the womb, while Mary's author-

ity confirmed the validity of the cross-dressed flight to the convent. In this sermon, Mary saves the day for the angels and the souls they are rescuing from hell in a manner that might seem more likely to be attributed to Jesus, and she does so by putting on the trappings of be-winged angelic masculinity. For that matter, Mary's role in saving souls through the acquisition of secondary sex characteristics of another (or third) gender might have served to justify another of Juana's claims in her semi-autobiography, that she had directly interceded for souls in purgatory by taking on their suffering in her body.⁸⁸ While Juana's description does not involve flying down into the depths of purgatory as Mary had to hell, there are extraordinary similarities between "Señor" Mary's saving power and Juana's ability to use her female body with its male Adam's apple on behalf of souls in pain.

Attention to the role of angels in Juana's allegorical pageants thus helps to identify a continuum between female humanity, angelic feminized masculinity, and the divine that must direct our attention to a continuum, rather than an abyss, between purely human and purely divine.⁸⁹ Not only does this move affirm that gender fluidity is possible in the afterlife, but it also provocatively proposes that, if Mary could do it, other humans might be able to travel along the grayscale and transcend their own human nature to become a wee bit angelic, that is, "angelin@s" or "angelinx."⁹⁰

Jesus: Reshaping the gender binary

While Juana's spiritual authority within her convent was predicated on her regular interaction with the Virgin Mary, her authority to preach sermons was based on the general belief that it was not she who was speaking, but rather Jesus through her. It is thus particularly intriguing that it is Juana's presentation of Jesus (or Jesus's self-presentation through the voice of the rapt Juana) in which the gender fluidity at the heart of Juana's celestial court is most evident. While Graña Cid has focused in particular on the "femininity of Jesus" in Juana's sermons, some of Graña Cid's argument is based on contemporary essentialized views that associate discussions of beauty and delicacy with the female gender.⁹¹ However, medieval theologians associated beauty and delicacy with the idealized body whether male or female, and, as we saw above, classified beauty as a central characteristic of angelic nature, not of human bodies.⁹² I provide here the episodes that, although reviewed by Graña Cid in support of her discussion of Juana's intervention in the fifteenth-century "Querella de las mujeres," can also point beyond the "revindication" of women to a more general queering of gender.⁹³

One of the first indications that Juana's Jesus might be particularly concerned with questions of gender occurs in sermon 3 on the episode of his circumcision. Here, Jesus argues that baptism supersedes circumcision because it is more egalitarian since both men and women undergo it. He follows this by an unexpected assertion, which may well be an evocation of the "Querrela de las mujeres" debate: Jesus wants equality for women, which he proved by being born male but of a woman only, thus privileging each gender in a separate way (no. 3, 305). While Jesus's protofeminist comment at first glance appears simply to be about his parentage, not his gender, we find in sermon 6 on the Flight to Egypt a strong connection between his unique parentage and his gender identity.

In this sermon, the angels in heaven present an allegorical pageant concerning the biblical episode of the "holy innocents," when Herod ordered all male children the age of Jesus killed in order to eliminate him as a potential political threat.⁹⁴ The pageant features a disconcerting scene in which slaughtered babies dance in a ring; the dead infants point to their wounds whenever they execute a dance move directly in front of Jesus.⁹⁵ In each case, Jesus responds that he too had been wounded and killed in just the same way, spilling his blood to save his people. Among the dancing babies are some who are female, which Jesus explains by asserting that some girls who had been dressed like boys had been killed by mistake by Herod's soldiers. This evocation of historical tomboys serves a crucial purpose, as it allows Jesus to say that he shed his blood to save women as well as men. Speaking directly to the dead girls, Jesus states:

Enjoy yourselves and be merry with me, my sisters, for if you died for me, I also died for you, and I love you greatly and I am fond of you. *And I am also a girl like you all, because I'm the son of woman.* (no. 6, 401, my emphasis)⁹⁶

This astonishing statement—Jesus asserting his gender as female, based on the unique circumstances of his conception—would have had considerable ramifications in Castile in particular, given that in the late fifteenth century *conversos* (converts from Judaism) were believed to promote the heretical belief that God was both male and female.⁹⁷ On the other hand, the gendering of Jesus as female while alive would have provided some justification for Jesus's choice of Juana as his voice.⁹⁸

However, I suggest that this brief claim may have been heard by Juana's contemporaries as Jesus commenting on contemporaneous medico-

theological debates: how exactly Jesus could have been born of a woman without the participation of a man was in fact the subject of much speculation by medieval theologians trained in medical theory, that is, natural theology. These debates revolved around the role of Mary's menstrual blood in generating Jesus. According to Aristotle, the mother's menstrual blood provided the fetal body and the male sperm animated it, giving it form. Yet in the case of Jesus's conception, in which there was no male semen, some theologians suggested that the form came from Mary as well, which would have made her both father and mother of the child.⁹⁹ Juana's view poses the logical inverse of such questions—if the mother provides the form as well as the matter, the child would end up with a female form.

In addition to the medico-theological context, it is likely that Jesus's claim that he is a girl would have evoked the minor but continuing medieval theological discourse on Jesus as mother found in works ranging from Bernard of Clairvaux through Julian of Norwich, especially since Juana herself espouses it.¹⁰⁰ In Juana's sermon 72, in which she proposes angels as a third gender, Jesus declares, "I who am your true and benevolent and pious and deeply attached mother, I taught you a law [that was] most firm and strong and good" (*Conorte* no. 72, 1472).¹⁰¹ Elsewhere Juana plays with this idea, for Jesus calls himself "Our Lady Jesus Christ" [*Nuestro Señora Jesucristo*], and the text is careful to insist that it was Jesus himself who provided this dual-gender nomenclature. In this case, Jesus uses this title to discuss his role in the Trinity as that aspect of divinity which is "more tender and delicate than all the angels and celestial creatures" (no. 16, 579).¹⁰² However, Jesus's assertion to the dead dancing female babies that he is a girl because he was "born of a woman" draws on a different context for the consideration of gender than that found in the pan-European discourse of Jesus as mother, because it does not refer to an infinite divinity fulfilling the feminine side of a set of gender binaries. Rather, if Jesus is a girl because he was born of a woman, then his claim roots his gender in his human life, not his divine nature, as Graña Cid has also noted.¹⁰³

It would seem that in this scenario Juana is more intrigued by the soteriological consequences of Jesus as a girl than by determining a medical origin for Jesus's gender despite having only one human parent or by Jesus's feminine actions within the Trinity. If, in Juana's vision, Jesus asserts in the same breath that he not only died for the salvation of the massacred girls but is a girl just like them, then the implication is that for salvation to be extended to women, Jesus had to be a woman. The Council of Chalcedon in 451 had established the orthodox definition of Jesus's nature as fully human,

fully divine; through Juana, Jesus clarifies that “fully human” means fully male, fully female.¹⁰⁴

Given this assertion in sermon 6, there is no vocabulary from the Renaissance that can effectively express Jesus’s announcement of his salvific female gender, for Juana is not presenting Jesus as a hermaphrodite with dual genitalia, nor is Jesus claiming androgyny. Contemporary trans studies, however, does provide a palette of terms that can more closely approximate these visionary claims. One scholar notes that

genderqueer, genderless, and bigender are newer terms that are used to describe a gender identity of individuals who do not conform to the traditional gender binary . . . and reject being associated with either gender. . . . [T]hey . . . create . . . a self-identified gender identity that, too often, may not fit with conventional ways of gender identity conceptualization.¹⁰⁵

I suggest that among these contemporary terms, “bigender” is a particularly useful option to apply to this scenario, because it signals how Jesus describes himself as providing salvation in gendered ways—male to save males, female to save females—even while not inhabiting “one” gender only.

This theological possibility of a bigender Jesus significantly complicates and enriches what can be said about gender in Juana’s sermons, for here is a case of a putatively male savior who not only professes a female identity in order to redeem women but also is speaking through the enraptured or unconscious body of a woman whose female gender and mix of secondary sex characteristics were divinely mandated, not naturally developed. Not surprisingly, the bigender Jesus of Juana’s sermons explains biblical narratives and describes heavenly feasts and pageants in a wide range of scenarios during which gender binaries are constantly being broken down and gender continuums introduced. However, despite this fluidity around gender itself, the gendered interactions in Juana’s view of heaven were often insistently heterosexual, though, as we will see below, hardly heteronormative in any contemporary sense of the term.

Gender-fluid humanity and divinity

In her studies of queer theology, Marcella Althaus-Reid claims that Christian theology depends on “the presence of a sexual religious imaginary” which has too often focused entirely on regulating nonnormative sexuality.¹⁰⁶ She

further names the “omnisexuality of God,” and calls for theologians to be attentive to the “hermeneutical lessons . . . drawn from the metaphor of the orgy.”¹⁰⁷ Althaus-Reid’s enthusiastic smorgasbord of all possible sexualities and genders for God is evocative, particularly when considering an author such as Juana who describes eternal feasts with saints in heaven who periodically dance, kiss, and, at various points, sit on marriage beds (*talamos*) in all sorts of gender pairings (e.g., *Conorte* no. 64, 1325–26). Given Juana’s reliance on a “gender continuum performance” in heaven, I conclude with a brief exploration of the necessarily related question of sexuality, since such a continuum has implications for the frequent scenarios during the heavenly feasts of physical or romantic interaction between the saints, the beatified, and a bigender Jesus.¹⁰⁸

In a sermon on baptism, Juana explains the ritual of making three crosses with oil on the infant’s body as the Father receiving the newly baptized as “sons,” Jesus receiving them as “wives,” and the Holy Spirit receiving them as “friends,” specifically “female friends” [*amigas*].¹⁰⁹ Thus souls are male in relation to God, but female in relation to Jesus and the Holy Spirit. Yet if souls are wives of Jesus, this image also introduces sexuality into our gender narrative. Nuns were understood throughout the medieval era as “brides of Christ,” and recent work exposes how this term was periodically applied to monks as well.¹¹⁰ In Juana’s sermons, this trope is all the more intriguing when taken into conjunction with understanding Jesus as bigender, that he himself was born female to make salvation available to women. The souls of the newly baptized, at once sons of God and female friends of the Holy Spirit, are married to a bigender Jesus, a point which carries important implication for how sanctified souls such as the saints relate to the Trinity once in heaven. If all the saints have experienced different gender positions in relation to God while alive as a result of their baptisms, it is not surprising that those variations occur in the afterlife, as well. Throughout Juana’s sermons, Jesus repeatedly kisses, fondles, dances with, sits on the lap of, and goes into marriage-beds with saints of both genders, but those saints are differently gendered depending on whether they are relating to God as sons, Jesus as wives, or the Holy Spirit as female friends.¹¹¹

Elsewhere in *Conorte*, in a novel rendition of Saint Francis as a bride of Christ in sermon 58, Jesus provocatively requests that Francis bare his chest before asking for his hand in marriage.¹¹² Francis responds not only by displaying his “nipples” [*tetas*] but also by affirming he will be a submissive wife, possibly reenvisioning his breasts as secondary characteristics of the female rather than the male gender:

And the Lord said that when Saint Francis ascended in front of him, that he called him, saying, “Come here, my seraphic friend and my sub-lieutenant, show me your nipples.” And that he responded, saying with much joy, “Here are my nipples, Lord, may those that I have with me be the nipples of my desires.” . . . [And the Lord said,] “Tell me, friend Francis, if you would like to be my wife and if you would like to unite and join with me.” And Saint Francis responded to him, “Yes, my Lord God, with good will would I be subject and obedient to all which you would want and order, just as does the wife who is subject and obedient to her husband. And with good will will I join with you, just as the wife joins with her spouse. (no. 58, 1245).¹¹³

Jesus then pierces Francis with the stigmata, causing him to faint, in a clear evocation of sexual penetration, as Surtz has pointed out.¹¹⁴ Yet Francis does not remain female in relation to Jesus, or even his wife. In the next lines, Jesus calls Francis his “male friend” [amigo] and then Jesus asks to be his “son-in-law” [yerno]. Jesus notes that his marriage to Francis had actually occurred long ago when the mendicant order was established and the reenactment in heaven during this sermon would allow Jesus to then marry the entire Franciscan order, both male and female.¹¹⁵ I argue that in this scenario, Francis’s own gender fluidity reifies the heterosexuality of marriage, yet his transition from wife to father-in-law implies he himself is bigender, just as the polygamist Jesus is.¹¹⁶ Thus Jesus’s bigender experience is not unique to him (and therefore potentially only a divine way of being human), but rather is a possible—saintly—human experience.

With scenarios such as these, this case study of Juana’s sermons serves to support and even go beyond the general medieval discourse identified by Rabia Gregory as rejecting the fixity of male and female gender roles in the trope of marrying Jesus:

The bride and Christ’s unfixed, nondualistic gender and identities are emphatically not heteronormative, but, as shall become clear in subsequent chapters, the modern concept of “queer” is not synonymous with the complex theological meanings medieval and early modern Christians found in the spouses’ unstable genders.¹¹⁷

I would suggest instead that queer and trans theory, while not useful in identifying exact parallels between medieval and contemporary identities,

can provide precise terminology to help sift through the “complex theological meanings . . . in the spouses’ unstable genders” in which, at least in this instance, bigender is revealed as a norm of human and divine nature. Ultimately, in *El libro del conorte*, the celestial bodily performances that transgress gender normativity do not simply provide authority for Juana to communicate theology as an uneducated woman, much less a woman with divinely ordained male secondary sex characteristics and thus potentially masculine-of-center. Juana’s life and sermons in fact propose a new mystical language of bigender, genderqueer, trans, and intersex, culminating in a gender performance continuum that transgresses and transmutes all boundaries between heaven and earth.

Indeed, Juana formulates a remarkable Renaissance theological imperative to consider how gender dimorphism profoundly limits theological language concerning Jesus’s nature, angelic nature, and human nature, a limitation that, it turns out, has not always been a prerequisite in the Catholic religious imaginary. Since Juana counted not only the nuns of her convent but archbishops and royalty among her audience, the heavenly gender panorama that Juana articulated was one that had popular appeal. Yet Juana’s portrait of gender fluidity, bigender experience, and sexuality in heaven was not only aspirational—an idealized afterlife—but was also a justification for her nonbinary gender presentation as a popular female preacher who voiced the male divine in early sixteenth-century Castile.



Notes

This article forms a part of “The Emergence of Spiritual Female Authority,” a research project funded by MINECO/FEDER (Ref. FFI2015-63625-C2-2-P, 2016–2019) and directed by Rebeca Sanmartín Bastida. Portions of this article were presented at the American Academy of Religion in 2012 and the International Medieval Congress in 2015. My thanks to Emily Francomano for her invitation to expand this work in a public talk at Georgetown in 2015, and to Sarah J. Bloesch, Gregory Hutcheson, Rebeca Sanmartín Bastida, Ronald E. Surtz, and the anonymous *JMEMS* reviewers for incisive comments on earlier drafts.

- 1 For discussion of the distinctive nature of Castilian devotion in the high and later Middle Ages in comparison to the rest of Europe, particularly the late entry of Passion devotion and the heightened concern with inter-religious interaction, see among others Cynthia Robinson, *Imagining the Passion in a Multiconfessional Castile: The Virgin, Christ, Devotions, and Images in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries* (University Park: Pennsylvania State Press, 2013); and Felipe Pereda, *Las imágenes de la discor-*

dia: Política y poética de la imagen sagrada en la España del 400 (Madrid: Marcel Pons, 2007).

- 2 For a recent overview of this transition period in Castilian Christianity under Isabel and Fernando, see Daniel de Pablo Maroto, *Espiritualidad española del siglo XVI*, vol. 1, *Los Reyes Católicos* (Madrid: Editorial de Espiritualidad, 2012), 46–57, 71–100.
- 3 The most recent overview in English of Juana's biography and sermons is Jessica A. Boon, "Introduction," in *Mother Juana de la Cruz, 1481–1534: Visionary Sermons*, ed. Jessica A. Boon and Ronald E. Surtz, trans. Surtz and Nora Weinerth (Toronto: Iter Academic Press; Tempe: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2016), 1–33.
- 4 A liturgical year's worth of these sermons were recorded by scribes and collected in manuscript form, remaining unpublished until 1999. The surviving manuscripts of *El libro del conorte* (hereafter *Conorte*) include Madrid, Real Biblioteca del Monasterio, El Escorial, MS J-II-18 (early 1520s); and a second copy, Archivo Segreto Vaticano, Congregazione Riti, MS 3074. All quotations are from Juana de la Cruz, *El Conhorte: Sermones de una mujer; La Santa Juana (1481–1534)*, ed. Inocente García de Andrés, 2 vols. (Madrid: Fundación Universitaria Española, 1999). Further citations refer to this work as *Conorte* according to the title used in the Escorial manuscript, citing sermon number followed by volume and page numbers. Six of the seventy-two sermons were recently translated in *Mother Juana de la Cruz, 1481–1534: Visionary Sermons*, ed. and trans. Boon, Surtz, and Weinerth. The other writings attributed to Juana include her semi-autobiography, *Vida y fin de la bienaventurada virgen sancta Juana de la Cruz* (Escorial MS K-III-13, ca. 1525–50), hereafter *Vida y fin* (cited by folios refs.), recently transcribed in María Luengo Bálbos, "Sor Juana de la Cruz: Vida y obra de una visionaria del siglo XVI" (Ph.D. diss., Universidad Complutense de Madrid, 2016), appendix; and a conventual book of records, *Libro de la casa y monasterio de Nuestra Señora de la Cruz* (Biblioteca Nacional de Madrid, MS 9661, late sixteenth century), hereafter *Libro de la casa*, recently transcribed by María Victoria Curto on the *visionarias.es* website in the "Vida impresa" section of "Catálogo de santas vivas," at catalogodesantasvivas.visionarias.es/index.php/Juana_de_la_Cruz#LIBRO_DE_LA_CASA_Y_MONASTERIO_DE_SANTA_MAR.C3.8DA_DE_LA_CRUZ. All translations from Juana's works are my own unless from Surtz and Weinerth in *Visionary Sermons*, cited by page number.
- 5 The first page of the manuscript of Juana's sermons asserts: "Here begins the book called *Conorte*, which was made through the voice of the Holy Spirit who spoke through a woman religious as she was enraptured in contemplation. This speech was made in the person of Our Lord Jesus Christ, who is he who enlightens our hearts and is wont to speak in parables and similes" [Comienza el libro que es llamado Conhorte, el cual es hecho por boca del Espíritu Santo que hablaba en una religiosa elevada en contemplación, la cual habla se hacía en persona de Nuestro Señor Jesucristo, el cual es el que alumbrá los corazones y acostumbra a hablar en figuras] (*Conorte*, prologue, 1:227; *Visionary Sermons*, 35). The next paragraphs offer the book for correction by devout Christians, and affirm that Juana herself had seen the pageants described through her by Jesus. Her semi-autobiography explains how long the raptures lasted and who was in attendance (*Vida y fin*, fols. 27v–28r).

- 6 Rebeca Sanmartín Bastida, *La representación de las místicas: Sor María de Santo Domingo en su contexto europeo* (Santander, Sp.: Propileo, 2012), 271–89, at 284.
- 7 Colleen McDannell and Bernhard Lang, *Heaven: A History*, 2nd ed. (New Haven, Conn.: Yale Nota Bene, 2001), 78: “The popular medieval image of heaven included an urban and courtly leisured class preoccupied with splendor, from beautiful clothes to magnificent architecture to splendid festivities. Worldly splendor was enhanced, glorified, and made permanent.”
- 8 In a recent study, *The Androgyne in Early Modern France: Contextualizing the Power of Gender* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), Marian Rothstein proposes to distinguish these two terms: “[T]he androgyne . . . for the purpose of this study . . . never puts the laws of nature into question. Rather than being monstrous, insufficient, indecisive, or excessive [as was the hermaphrodite], the combined form denoted by the word *androgyne* . . . is a figure of the completion, perfection, or plenitude, of originary and ultimate human possibilities and strengths” (2–3). Rothstein recognizes that the terms themselves were synonymous at the time; she intentionally creates an anachronistic distinction between the two to more properly label and analyze the two distinct sets of associations connected to the synonyms.
- 9 Ronald E. Surtz, *The Guitar of God: Gender, Power, and Authority in the Visionary World of Mother Juana de la Cruz (1481–1534)* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1990), 7, 51. Mary Baldrige also uses this term, elevating “spiritual androgyny” to a rubric for four case studies, including Juana; see *Spiritual Androgyny: The Creation of a New Orthodoxy by Medieval Christian Women* (San Juan, Puerto Rico: Penelope Academic Press, 2012).
- 10 María del Mar Graña Cid, “La feminidad de Jesucristo y sus implicaciones eclesiales en la predicación mística de Juana de la Cruz (Sobre la Prerreforma y la Querrela de las Mujeres en Castilla),” *Estudios Eclesiásticos* 84, no. 330 (2009): 477–513, at 490, 503. For the protofeminism of the “querrela de las mujeres” in late medieval Castile, see Susana Molina Domínguez, *Conventos de monjas franciscanas en Madrid en la Baja Edad Media*, vol. 5, *La querrela de las mujeres y las fundaciones religiosas femeninas* (Madrid: Almadayna, 2011).
- 11 My thanks to Barbara Mujica for bringing this theory of the soul to my attention. Philosophically speaking, inheritors of the Platonic tradition understood the soul to be genderless, while inheritors of the Aristotelian tradition understood souls to match the gender of the bodies, with female souls having a less rational soul than those of males. Augustine, followed by later theologians, ultimately rejected the idea that a soul had a gender, as that would imply a soul possessing “sexual characteristics.” Elizabeth Robertson, “Souls That Matter: The Gendering of the Soul in *Piers Plowman*,” in *Mindful Spirit in Late Medieval Literature: Essays in Honor of Elizabeth D. Kirk*, ed. Bonnie Wheeler (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), 165–86, at 168. On the other hand, Bynum describes Aquinas as arguing that the “The blueprint of all we are—our shape and size, our gender and intellectual capacity, our status and merit—may be carried in soul, but it is realized in body. Without bodily expression, there is no human being (*homo*), no person, no self.” Caroline Walker Bynum, *The Resurrection of the Body in Western Christianity, 200–1336* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995), 269. In late medieval Spain, the presumption of the androgynous

- soul may have been explicitly theorized due to its articulation by Catherine of Siena, whose work was translated into Castilian during Juana's lifetime, and in commentary on the theory of androgynous souls by later early modern figures such as Maria de Zayas in Spain and Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz in Mexico. Karen Scott, "St. Catherine of Siena, 'Apostola,'" *Church History* 61, no. 1 (1992): 34–46, at 45; Mercedes Maroto Camino, "Spindles for Swords: The Re/Dis-Covery of María de Zayas' Presence," *Hispanic Review* 62, no. 4 (1994): 519–36, at 525; and Susan M. McKenna, "Rational Thought and Female Poetics in Sor Juana's 'Primer sueño': The Circumvention of Two Traditions," *Hispanic Review* 68, no. 1 (2000): 37–52, at 48.
- 12 The first and still principal collection to apply queer theory to medieval and early modern Spanish studies is Josiah Blackmore and Gregory H. Hutcheson, eds., *Queer Iberia: Sexualities, Cultures, and Crossings from the Middle Ages to the Renaissance* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1999). There has been no application of trans theory to medieval Iberian studies, to my knowledge, though work on nonbinary gender does exist for early modern Spain (i.e., after mid-16th century). For example, a recent book on hermaphroditism addresses the medical discussions concerning non-binary genitalia. It takes as its point of departure the views of the medical establishment, the Inquisition, and theologians interested in demonology from 1540 onwards. Richard Cleminson and Francisco Vázquez García, *Sex, Identity, and Hermaphrodites in Iberia, 1500–1800* (London: Routledge, 2016). See also the important work of François Soyer, *Ambiguous Gender in Early Modern Spain and Portugal* (Leiden: Brill, 2012).
 - 13 Among many scholars who argue for processual notions of gender, see Marcella Althaus-Reid, *Indecent Theology: Theological Perversions in Sex, Gender, and Politics* (New York: Routledge, 2000), 52.
 - 14 I will therefore use female pronouns for Juana throughout this article. Note that "trans" and "intersex" are not synonymous, but as we will see below, each is applicable to part of Juana's claimed life experiences. Another term that is proposed in contemporary Christian feminist work is "omnigender," representing a gender continuum beyond binaries or transition between sides of a binary, even approaching a unisex model. See Virginia Ramsay Mollenkott, *Omnigender: A Trans-Religious Approach* (Cleveland: Pilgrim Press, 2001), who was, notably, a Milton specialist before (and while) she was a feminist theologian.
 - 15 For a brief overview of these rapidly shifting terms such as "genderqueer" and "bigender" in queer and trans theory, see Varunee Faii Sangganjanavanich, "Trans Identities," in *The Wiley Blackwell Encyclopedia of Gender and Sexuality Studies*, ed. Nancy A. Naples (Malden, Mass.: John Wiley and Sons, 2015), 1–3.
 - 16 For a brief biography, see Surtz, *Guitar of God*, 1–7. An annotated bibliography of scholarship on Juana first published in 2014 and updated in 2017 can be found in Jessica A. Boon, "Mother Juana de la Cruz," in *Oxford Bibliographies in Renaissance and Reformation*, ed. Margaret L. King (New York: Oxford University Press), doi.org/10.1093/OBO/9780195399301-0197.
 - 17 This privilege had also been granted to the abbess of Las Huelgas, a significant Cistercian convent in Burgos, Spain (Surtz, *Guitar of God*, 4–5).
 - 18 This play has been discussed numerous times in scholarship on Juana, including Ron-

- ald E. Surtz, *“El libro del conorte” (1509) and the Early Castilian Theater* (Barcelona: Puvill, 1982); and recently in Rebeca Sanmartín Bastida, “La puesta en escena de la historia sagrada a comienzos del siglo XVI: La batalla de los Ángeles en la dramaturgia visionaria de Juana de la Cruz,” *Renaissanceforum* (forthcoming).
- 19 Evangelista’s miraculous literacy is attested to in witness documents collected in the seventeenth-century petition for beatification. Archivo Vaticano, C. de Ritos, MS 3.072–3.076, quoted in Inocente García Andrés, “Introduction,” in *El Conhorte*, ed. García Andrés, 24.
 - 20 “Y el poderoso Dios le respondió con mucho amor: ‘Madre mía, un varón tengo empeçado a hazer en esta ora en el qual querría poner mucha parte de mi gracia . . . y por amor de vos señora yo le tornaré mujer para esa obra que vos pedís. . . y la bienaventurada Juana de la Cruz estaba entonces en el vientre de su madre empezada a fazer varón, tornola muger como pudo y puede fazer como todopoderoso. Y no quiso su Divina Magestad deshazerle una nuez que tenía en la garganta porque fuese testigo del milagro y quando la tornó muger aún no tenía espíritu de vida y, guardándola el poderoso Dios de los peligros que a otras criaturas les suelen acaezzer en el vientre de sus madres.’” My transcription and translation, checked against the transcription in the doctoral thesis by Luengo Bálbos, “Sor Juana,” 2:3–4.
 - 21 Surtz, *Guitar of God*, 7. I will problematize “androgyny” as an appropriate term below.
 - 22 Vern L. Bullough, “Cross Dressing and Gender Role Change in the Middle Ages,” in *Handbook of Medieval Sexuality*, ed. Vern L. Bullough and James Brundage (New York: Taylor and Francis, 2000), 223–42; Marjorie Garber, *Vested Interests: Cross-Dressing and Cultural Anxiety* (New York: Routledge, 1997), 213–17; and Rothstein, *Androgyne*, 100. While cross-dressing was understood as a strategy, being “manly” was not necessarily authoritative. For example, Soyer suggests that the ascription of manliness to Queen Isabel was a rejection of her (lesser) female qualities, i.e., a form of misogyny rather than an elevation of indeterminate gender roles (*Ambiguous Gender*, 18).
 - 23 The revised edition of the biography is Antonio Daza, *Historia, vida y milagros, éxtasis, y revelaciones de la bienaventurada virgen Sor Juana de la Cruz* (Madrid, 1613); translated by Francis Bell as *The Historie, Life, and Miracles, Extasies and Revelations of the blessed virgin, sister Ioane, of the Crosse, of the Third Order of Ovr Holy Father S. Francis* (St. Omer, 1625), repr. as *The Historie . . . of the Blessed Virgin, Sister Joane* (Ilkley, West Yorkshire: Scholar Press, 1977). Daza’s narrative captured the attention of dramatists such as Tirso de Molina, who composed a trilogy of plays about Juana’s life and sermons; see Tirso de Molina, *La Santa Juana, trilogía hagiográfica, 1613–14*, ed. Agustín de Campo (Madrid: Editorial Castilla, 1948). For a consideration of Juana as a dramatic persona in Tirso’s plays and in her own writings, see Blanca Oteiza, ed., *La santa Juana y el mundo de lo sagrado* (New York: IGAS/IDEA, 2016).
 - 24 “Ennorabuena seays venida hija a esta mi casa entra en ella alegremente pues para ella fuystes criada” (*Vida y fin*, fol. 12r). For the rest of Juana’s life, Mary continued to intervene miraculously by means of other speaking images, apparitions, and responses to Marian devotions, first to affirm Juana’s rapid rise through the ranks to abbess and then to aid her in her leadership. See Jessica A. Boon, “Mother Juana de la Cruz: Mar-

- ian Visions and Female Preaching,” in *A New Companion to Hispanic Mysticism*, ed. Hilaire Kallendorf (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 127–48, at 138–42.
- 25 It is worth noting that Graña Cid characterizes the various episodes in Juana’s sermons of women saints dressing as men and male saints with feminine aspects as collectively androgynous, rather than using more specific terms such as “cross-dressing” or “transgendering” (“Feminidad de Jesucristo,” 507).
 - 26 María de Santo Domingo was her immediate contemporary as a living saint in Castile. María de Santo Domingo, *The Book of Prayer of Sor Maria of Santo Domingo: A Study and Translation*, trans. Mary E. Giles (Albany: SUNY Press, 1990). For the Italian context for this phenomenon, see Gabriella Zarri, “Places and Gestures of Women’s Preaching in Quattro- and Cinquecento Italy,” in *Charisma and Religious Authority: Jewish, Christian, and Muslim Preaching, 1200–1500*, ed. Katherine L. Jansen and Miri Rubin (Turnhout, Belg.: Brepols, 2010), 177–93.
 - 27 Susan Starr Sered, *Priestess, Mother, Sacred Sister: Religions Dominated by Women* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 183–85. Sered catalogues a trend toward women claiming spirit possession and men claiming “ecstatic flights of the soul” or shamanism (186). Since Juana was taken over by Jesus but saw the heavenly episodes Jesus was describing, she fulfills both sides of this binary as she does others. There are various studies of female trance speakers in modern Christian history; see, for example, Ann Braude, *Radical Spirits: Spiritualism and Women’s Rights in Nineteenth-Century America* (Bloomington: University of Indiana Press, 2001).
 - 28 As Newman points out, “Preaching thus emerges as yet another way female demoniacs might imitate saints, the initiative and supernatural knowledge of the (male) spirit in each case overriding gender taboos.” Barbara Newman, “Possessed by the Spirit: Devout Women, Demoniacs, and the Apostolic Life in the Thirteenth Century Author(s),” *Speculum* 73, no. 3 (1998): 733–70, at 754.
 - 29 For the term “gender transformations,” see Lewis Wallace, “Bearded Woman, Female Christ: Gendered Transformations in the Legends and Cult of Saint Wilgefortis,” *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion* 30, no. 1 (2014): 43–63, at 50.
 - 30 Some medieval miracle narratives relate a change in gender at baptism after prayer for a son, but none of which I am aware describe God intervening in fetal development. My thanks to an anonymous reviewer for this observation.
 - 31 In premodern medical thinking about hermaphroditism, it was logically possible that, although normally male genitalia emerged in the heat of the womb between twenty-seven and forty-five days after conception, unusually high amounts of heat generated in childhood through excessive exercise might well bring about testicular descent at puberty. Occasional scandals about women who passed as men were justified or punished in court based on medical evidence concerning external genitalia, including various famous Spanish cases such as Eleno/a de Cespedes in the sixteenth century and Catalina de Erauso, the Lieutenant Nun, in the seventeenth century. For both figures, see Sherry Velasco, *Lesbians in Early Modern Spain* (Nashville, Tenn.: Nashville University Press, 2011), 68–89; for Inquisition cases dealing with a gender continuum, see Soyer, *Ambiguous Gender*; for a broader context for Eleno/a, see Patricia Simons, *The Sex of Men in Premodern Europe: A Cultural History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 34. In the Middle Ages, there had also been significant

- theological reflection on the subject, less concerned with how cases of hermaphroditism might cause external genitalia to alter and more concerned with establishing a singular gender identity in order to determine what the “proper” opposite-gender pairing would be. In the twelfth century, Peter the Chanter was insistent that a hermaphrodite’s relative heat be determined in order to assign a gender, as sexual “alternation is a sign of sodomy.” Quoted in Miri Rubin, “The Person in the Form: Medieval Challenges to Bodily ‘Order,’” in *Framing Medieval Bodies*, ed. Sarah Kay and Miri Rubin (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1994), 100–22, at 104. In other words, being a hermaphrodite was not a sin, but sex with the same gender was.
- 32 “Born This Way” is the title of a Lady Gaga song released in 2011.
- 33 Most theologians combined medical theories from Galen, Aristotle, and Avicenna with Augustine’s timeline for development: the fetus is a milky mass for six days, blood for nine, turning into flesh for thirteen, and its members formed for the next eighteen. See M. Anthony Hewson, *Giles of Rome and the Medieval Theory of Conception: A Study of the “De formatione corporis humani in utero”* (London: Athlone Press, 1975), 167; and a more recent discussion in Maaïke Van der Lugt, *Le ver, le démon, et la vierge: Les théories médiévales de la génération extraordinaire* (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 2004), 399. This sequence of fetal development was also included in a popular gynecological tract; see Helen Rodnite Lemay, *Women’s Secrets: A Translation of Pseudo-Albertus Magnus’ “De Secretis Mulierum” with Commentaries* (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 1992), 79.
- 34 Joan Cadden, *Meanings of Sex Difference in the Middle Ages: Medicine, Science, and Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 171.
- 35 Hewson, *Giles of Rome and the Medieval Theory of Conception*, 174–75; Van der Lugt, *Le ver, le démon, et la vierge*, 408–9.
- 36 The sole exception is Jesus, created fully formed—and fully male—in Mary’s womb at the moment of the Annunciation, at least according to the majority of scholastic theologians. For discussion and charts visualizing the range of views on this topic, see Van der Lugt, *Le ver, le démon, et la vierge*, 398–414.
- 37 Cadden notes that beards are the principal sign of masculinity, as they are composed of the “residu[e] of the nutritive and generative processes” expelled from the body by heat (*Meanings of Sex Difference*, 182–83).
- 38 For Wilgefortis, see Wallace, “Bearded Woman, Female Christ,” 43–63. Wallace proposes “gender crossing” as a term for changes attributed to gender and “gender blending” for “the simultaneity of features in one symbol that are gendered masculine and feminine, as in an image or statue” (44). Given that Juana experienced a sex change but retained a secondary sex characteristic of the original, the “gender blending” here is literal rather than symbolic.
- 39 Thanks to Megan Goodwin for the phrase. Personal communication, March 15, 2015. Very recently, the phrase “gender affirming surgery” has replaced “gender-reassignment surgery” as the preferred term, but Juana’s case seems to me to merit the older terminology. For that matter, the natural effects of the miracle, that is, reorganization of Juana’s body as more cool and moist and the impact of that humoral balance throughout her life, are perhaps comparable to the effect of contemporary hormone treatments over time.

- 40 Slightly confusingly, scholars call this a “caloric model of sexuality,” although it seems more accurate to call it a caloric model of gender. Simons, *The Sex of Men*, 129, citing Stephen Greenblatt for the term “caloric.”
- 41 Sherry Velasco, “Hairy Women on Display in Textual and Visual Culture in Early Modern Spain,” *South Atlantic Review* 72, no. 1 (2007): 62–75, at 65–66.
- 42 For premodern Castilian examples that mock hirsute women, see Jean Dangler, *Making Difference in Medieval and Early Modern Iberia* (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 2005), 85; Velasco, “Hairy Women,” 62–75; and Adrienne Laskier Martín, *An Erotic Philology of Golden Age Spain* (Nashville, Tenn.: Vanderbilt University Press, 2008), 88–92. Queer theorists of the Middle Ages have reclaimed “monstrous,” as have disability theorists. See various essays in Bettina Bildhauer and Robert Mills, eds., *The Monstrous Middle Ages* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2003); and David Williams, *Deformed Discourse: The Function of the Monster in Medieval Thought and Literature* (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1996). For contemporary theory on female masculinity, see Judith (Jack) Halberstam, *Female Masculinity* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1998), and for a review of Hispanist studies of sex and gender through 2009, including the category of “mujer varonil,” see Edward Behrend-Martinez, “Making Sense of the History of Sex and Gender in Early Modern Spain,” *History Compass* 7, no. 5 (2009): 1303–16.
- 43 See, among others, Jacqueline Murray, “One Flesh, Two Sexes, Three Genders?,” in *Gender and Christianity in Medieval Europe: New Perspectives*, ed. Lisa M. Bitel and Felice Lischitz (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008), 34–51, at 38, 44. Indeed, medical experts recommended some types of men seek masculine women in order to provide a balance of temperaments in their marriages. Velasco, “Hairy Women,” 70; and Dangler, *Making Difference*, 95.
- 44 The medical views began to change in the eighteenth century; see Soyer, *Ambiguous Gender*, 26.
- 45 Juana’s fetal body was “unmade” in the sense that in Aristotelian and Galenic theory male was considered the ideal body heated to perfection, while the female body was incomplete (and indeed, undercooked).
- 46 Iain Morland, “Intersex,” *TSQ: Transgender Studies Quarterly* 1, no. 1–2 (2014): 111–12. For careful analysis of the history of surgical interventions to “rectify” intersex presentation, see Anne Fausto-Sterling, *Sexing the Body: Gender Politics and the Construction of Sexuality* (New York: Basic Books, 2000).
- 47 See, for example, Abby L. Wilkerson, “Normate Sex and Its Discontents,” in *Sex and Disability*, ed. Robert McRuer and Anna Mollow (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2012), 183–207, at 193.
- 48 Note that some advocate the term “trans*” instead of “trans,” as they consider the asterisk to be helpful in indicating a range of identities including genderqueer and intersex. Its origin is in the Internet search function in which typing a partial word followed by an asterisk brings up a range of endings for that word. Avery Tompkins, “Asterisk,” *TSQ: Transgender Studies Quarterly* 1, no. 1–2 (2014): 27–28.
- 49 Gayle Salamon, *Assuming a Body: Transgender and Rhetorics of Materiality* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010), 65. Others who expand the definition include Kate Bornstein, *Gender Outlaw: On Men, Women, and the Rest of Us* (New York:

- Routledge, 1994); and Judith Butler, *Undoing Gender* (New York: Routledge, 2004), 1–16.
- 50 Rothstein, *Androgyne*, 32. The term “functional gender” sums up what many scholars have noted about medieval gender categories versus medieval gender physiology; see, for example, Caroline Walker Bynum, *Jesus as Mother: Studies in the Spirituality of the High Middle Ages* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982); and Cadden, *Meanings of Sex Difference*, 204–9. For analysis of this concept in Juana, see Graña Cid, “Feminidad de Jesucristo,” 511.
- 51 Bynum, *Jesus as Mother*, 115–18.
- 52 Barbara Newman, *From Virile Woman to WomanChrist: Studies in Medieval Religion and Literature* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1995), 137–67.
- 53 Anne J. Cruz, “Transgendering the Mystical Voice: Angela de Foligno, San Juan, Santa Teresa, Luisa de Carvajal,” in *Echoes and Inscriptions: Comparative Approaches to Early Modern Spanish Literatures*, ed. Barbara Simerka and Christopher B. Weimer (Lewistown, Pa.: Bucknell University Press, 2000), 127–41.
- 54 The relevance of Deleuze and Guattari on assemblage to this type of collective mystical authorship was brought to my attention by Michael Knight, “Muhammed’s Body: Prophetic Assemblages and the Baraka Machine” (Ph.D. diss., University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 2016), 44–45, citing Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1980). Christine Marie Libby, “Mystic Assemblages and the Translation of Affect” (Ph.D. diss., Indiana University, 2016), has recently proposed a variant of this term for the study of medieval women’s mysticism.
- 55 I should note here that my article thus goes against the grain of the majority of theological work using queer theory to address Christology. Contemporary theologians who foreground sexuality and gender seem in the main interested in recuperating a female Christ, an androgynous Christ (Rosemary Radford Ruether), or a transvestite Christ (Eleanor MacLoughlin) in order to undercut the presumption that a male Christ figure authorizes only a male priesthood. For discussion, see Karen Trimble Alliaume, “Disturbingly Catholic: Thinking the Inordinate Body,” in *Bodily Citations: Religion and Judith Butler*, ed. Ellen T. Armour and Susan M. St. Ville (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006), 93–119, at 99–101, 109–13. My concern is the inverse—what does the visionary’s trans experience lead her to propose concerning the gendered nature of Christ, or, for that matter, concerning the nature of angels, of Jesus, of Mary? Queer theologians who do complicate the gender experience and sexuality of Jesus and Mary include Althaus-Reid, *Indecent Theology*; and Robert E. Goss, *Queering Christ: Beyond Jesus Acted Up* (Eugene, Ore.: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2007).
- 56 Michel de Certeau, *The Mystic Fable, Volume 2: The Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*, ed. Luce Giard, trans. Michael B. Smith (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2015), 180.
- 57 Anne F. Sutton and Livia Visser-Fuchs, “The Cult of Angels in Late Fifteenth-Century England: An Hours of the Guardian Angel Presented to Queen Elizabeth Woodville,” in *Women and the Book: Assessing the Visual Evidence*, ed. Lesley Smith and Jane H. M. Taylor (London: British Library Press, 1997), 230–64, at 233.

- 58 Hildegard of Bingen, Mechthild of Magdeburg, and Bridget of Sweden are perhaps the best-known female mystics who had angelic visitations, while Giralomo Savonarola would have been the most influential in Juana's time period. An Italian contemporary of Juana, Jacopa de' Rondinelli, specifically cited her guardian angel as the source of her visions. Tamar Herzig, *Savonarola's Women: Visions and Reform in Renaissance Italy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008), 32–33. On the peninsula, the Franciscan Lope de Salazar recorded an angelic vision in the fifteenth century. Lope de Salazar, "La Revelación a Lope de Salazar," trans. Juan Miguel Valero Moreno, *Estudios Humanísticos: Filología* 32 (2010): 105–39.
- 59 The name is transcribed as "Laurel" in *Vida y fin* and "Laruel" in the later *Libro de la casa*. I use Laruel, following the choice of Ronald E. Surtz, the first to bring Juana to scholarly attention. Although to my knowledge neither name appears as a standard guardian angel appellation before Juana's era, Laruel tells Juana that previously he had been appointed guardian angel to such luminaries as King David and Pope Gregory the Great (*Libro de la casa*, fol. 25r). Guardian angels were popular in Spain in the late fifteenth century and had their own feast days. Sutton and Visser-Fuchs, "Cult of Angels," 232. For further information see Gabriel Llompart, "El Angel Custodio en la Corona de Aragon en la Baja Edad Media (fiesta, teatro, iconografía)," in *Fiestas y liturgia: Actas del coloquio celebrado en la Casa de Velázquez 12-14-1985*, ed. Alfonso Esteban and Jean-Pierre Étienne (Pamplona: Casa de Velázquez, 1988), 249–70.
- 60 *Libro de la casa*, fol. 20v.
- 61 Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite, "The Celestial Hierarchy," in *Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite: The Complete Works*, ed. Colm Luibheid (New York: Paulist Press, 1987), 143–92. This important treatise on angelology for the Middle Ages received numerous commentaries throughout the era; for an overview, see Meredith J. Gill, *Angels and the Order of Heaven in Medieval and Renaissance Italy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 18. The nine orders of angels are extensively discussed in the Catalan Franciscan Francesc Eiximenis's influential treatise circulating in at least four Castilian translations throughout the late Middle Ages. Francesc Eiximenis, *Libro de los santos angeles* (Burgos, Sp., 1490), part II. Further citations are to part, chapter, and folio numbers.
- 62 All university theology students studied angelology because it appeared at the beginning of book 2 of Lombard's *Sentences*. David Keck, *Angels and Angelology in the Middle Ages* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 73. For information on the popularity of Eiximenis's treatise across the Iberian peninsula and in Europe, see David J. Viera, "The Presence of Francesc Eiximenis in Fifteenth- and Sixteenth-Century Castilian Literature," *Hispanófila* 57 (1976): 1–5, at 2–3; and Robinson, *Imagining The Passion*.
- 63 Eiximenis, *Libro de los santos angeles*, pt. II, chap. 2, fol. 1r: "Angel es natura y substancia spiritual no corporal, racional, y intellectual." Note that angelology was particularly popular with Franciscans, including Bonaventure and Eiximenis, both due to the famous vision of the seraph that appeared to Francis and their understanding of mendicancy as modeled on angelic contemplation and asexuality. Gill, *Angels and the Order of Heaven*, 25.
- 64 Keck, *Angels and Angelology*, 23, 110; Gill, *Angels and the Order of Heaven*, 2. Eixi-

- menis points out that if legions of demons can enter a demoniac, they do not have bodies as we understand them, but nevertheless angels can appear as though corporeal when having a body would serve a mechanical or material purpose. Eiximenis, *Libro de los santos angeles*, pt. I, chap. 5, fol. 3r.
- 65 Here are the stakes of the argument: “For Aquinas, matter is equivalent to corporeality; he considers matter as it is already in existence in the world. For Bonaventure, matter is a metaphysical construct that is equivalent to indeterminate potency, something capable of being either spiritual (if joined to a spiritual form) or corporeal (if joined to a corporeal form), whereas for Aquinas ‘matter’ is always corporeal” (Keck, *Angels and Angelology*, 99).
- 66 Bonaventure, as quoted in Keck, *Angels and Angelology*, 32.
- 67 Eiximenis, *Libro de los santos angeles*, pt. I, chap. 6, fol. 3v. The Italian philosopher Ficino likewise considered angelic form to be compressed air; see Bruce Gordon, “The Renaissance Angel,” in *Angels in the Early Modern World*, ed. Peter Marshall and Alexandra Walsham (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 41–63, at 49. In addition to Eiximenis’s extensive commentary on angelic bodies, that angels could assume a human body was part of common lore. For example, it was cited in the highly popular overview of Christian beliefs published just after the Reconquest: Pedro Jiménez de Prejano, *Lucero de la vida cristiana* (Burgos, Sp., 1495), chap. 37, fol. 35v.
- 68 Richard B. Donovan, *The Liturgical Drama in Medieval Spain* (Toronto: Institute of Medieval Studies, 1958), 60.
- 69 Keck, *Angels and Angelology*, 30. Note that angels with feminized facial features provide a near inverse of a nun with a masculine throat. This ascription of feminized masculinity to angels was not universal in the Renaissance, as Botticelli portrayed angels as female (see Gill, *Angels and the Order of Heaven*, 49). For clothing and colorful wings, see Sutton and Visser-Fuchs, “Cult of Angels,” 257 n. 19, citing Bartholomaeus Anglicus’s *De natura rerum*, who in turn cited Pseudo-Dionysius’s *Celestial Hierarchy*. For discussion of wings, particularly the medieval tendency to portray angelic wings as colorful rather than the modern insistence on plain white, see Sandra Gorgievski, *Face to Face with Angels* (Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland and Company, 2010), 6.
- 70 A few decades before Juana, Lope de Salazar describes his guardian angel as “vn ángel claro, hermoso, cuyo jesto en hermosura s’estrema; su semblante, cuerpo y cara muy gentil” (“Revelación,” 105).
- 71 On this point, see also Eiximenis, *Libro de los santos angeles*, pt. I, chap. 6, fol. 3v.
- 72 Interestingly, in a 1504 text on heaven, the glorified saints can kiss each other, but quite specifically the angels cannot. Celso Maffei, *Delitiosa explicatio de sensibilibus deliciis paradisi* (Verona, 1504), cited in McDannell and Lang, *Heaven: A History*, 136.
- 73 Franciscan scholastics had emphasized that while angels are nourished, they cannot actually eat; instances when they appear to eat are not false since angels by nature cannot deceive, but instead the appearance must serve some revelatory rather than literal purpose (Keck, *Angels and Angelology*, 33). For medieval Spain specifically, see Eiximenis, *Libro de los santos angeles*, pt. I, chap. 6, fol. 3v; pt. I, chap. 5, fol. 3r.
- 74 Eiximenis, for example, when writing about the duties of angels in the heavens, pro-

- vides a more contemplative set of scenes, in which the angels are simply praying to, loving, and glorifying God, even when talking amongst themselves (*Libro de los santos angeles*, pt. V, chap. 3, fol. 67r and chap. 11, fol. 71r).
- 75 For discussion of the term “third gender” for medieval contexts, see Murray, “One Flesh,” 34–51.
- 76 “El hombre y la mujer y el angel nunca pueden dejar de vivir y ser permanentes para siempre . . . en el cielo, ayuntados todos tres . . . en un amor y ayuntamiento y caridad y voluntad, loando . . . a Dios Trino y Uno . . . que los crió vivientes y semejantes a él.” For further discussion of this passage in terms of its definition of human nature, see Angela Muñoz Fernández, “Las mujeres como ‘criaturas permanentes’: Género y diferencia sexual a la luz de las narrativas de la creación en la obra de Juana de la Cruz (1481–1534),” in *Letras en la celda: Cultura escrita de los conventos femeninos en la España moderna*, ed. Nieves Baranda Leturio and María Carmen Marín Pina (Madrid: Iberoamericana, 2014), 207–20, at 215.
- 77 Mary was often considered the mistress or leader of the angels. Keck, *Angels and Angelology*, 40, citing Bonaventure. Several scholars have suggested that the emotions of angels are an important entry into understanding medieval affect; see Keck, 105–9; and Gill, *Angels and the Order of Heaven*, 8.
- 78 This pageant seems to be a logical extension of descriptions of demons and angels fighting over a soul just after death (Keck, *Angels and Angelology*, 205), but I know of no other visionary report of an extensive battle between angels and demons after the initial fall of Lucifer yet before the Last Judgment. For discussion of medieval representation of warring angels, see Gorgievski, *Face to Face with Angels*, 40–41, 44–45, though the emphasis is on Archangel Michael. For analysis of the ongoing battles between demons and angels in Juana’s sermons and the Annunciation play in *Libro de la casa*, see Sanmartín Bastida, “La puesta en escena.”
- 79 Angels were certainly understood as tools to carry out God’s wrath against sinning humans, as described at length in Eiximenis, *Libro de los santos angeles*, pt. IV, chap. 50, fols. 56v–57v. Rather than rescuing souls entirely, angelic intervention in purgatory and hell usually reduced the amount of pain inflicted, reduced the time it endured, or sought out prayers by living humans on the behalf of damned souls. See *Libro de los santos angeles*, pt. IV, chap. 52, fol. 58r; Keck, *Angels and Angelology*, 206.
- 80 This episode is mentioned briefly in Graña Cid, “Feminidad de Jesucristo,” 508, but under the category of androgyny, not transgender, intersex, or even genderqueer. Note that Mary also claims in this paragraph that she has arrived as a great “medicine-bearer and healer of wounds” to save souls [medicinadora y sanadora de llagas] (*Conorte*, no. 57, 1238), a metaphor deployed in medieval texts to describe Mary as a miracle-worker but also to evoke Christ the physician or surgeon as healer of wounded souls. Useful literature on this topic, though focused on medieval England rather than Castile, includes Virginia Langum, “‘The Wounded Surgeon’: Devotion, Compassion, and Metaphor in Medieval England,” in *Wounds and Wound Repair in Medieval Culture*, ed. Larissa Tracy and Kelly DeVries (Leiden: Brill, 2015), 269–90, at 277; and Diane Watt, “Mary the Physician: Women, Religion, and Medicine in the Middle Ages,” in *Medicine, Religion, and Gender in Medieval Culture*, ed. Naoë Kukita Yoshikawa (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2015), 27–44.

- 81 “[L]a vieron venir volando, así como angel resplandeciente.”
- 82 “[N]o me llaméis Señor, que mujer soy que no angel, y soy la Madre de Dios.”
- 83 In an intriguing parallel, Savonarola’s vision of the nine hierarchies of angels with Mary above them all uses the male pronoun for the angels but describes Mary as manly. Girolamo Savonarola, “The Compendium of Revelations,” in *Apocalyptic Spirituality: Treatises and Letters of Lactantius, Adso of Montier-en-Der, Joachim of Fiore, The Franciscan Spirituals, Savonarola*, ed. Bernard McGinn (New York: Paulist Press, 1979), 192–275, at 265.
- 84 The most important function, arguably, of angels was as “psychopomps,” i.e., those charged with transporting souls to heaven. While the archangel Michael was most often associated with this role, it did fall to all angels in general. Keck, *Angels and Angelology*, 44; Richard F. Johnson, *Saint Michael the Archangel in Medieval English Legend* (Woodbridge, Suffolk: Boydell Press, 2005), 27, 87, 91. Mary’s role in this scene may refer to a medieval Carmelite belief that Mary descends into purgatory on Saturdays to save souls, supported by a mythical “Sabbatine bull” issued by Pope John XXII in 1322, deemed heretical in 1617. Joaquín Zambrano González, “Animas benditas del Purgatorio: Culto, cofradías y manifestaciones artísticas en la provincia de Granada,” in *El mundo de los difuntos: Culto, cofradías, y tradiciones*, ed. Francisco Javier Campos y Fernández de Sevilla, 2 vols. (El Escorial, Sp.: R.C.U. Escorial-M^a Cristina, Servicio de Publicaciones, 2014), 2:1071–88, at 1075; and Joseph Hilgers, “Sabbatine Privilege,” in *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, vol. 13 (New York: Robert Appleton Company, 1912), available at *New Advent*, www.newadvent.org/cathen/13289b.htm.
- 85 Her most recent discussion of the paradox that matter is both desirable and terrifying in its capacity for change is found in Caroline Walker Bynum, *Christian Materiality: An Essay on Religion in Late Medieval Europe* (New York: Zone Books, 2011), 24–25, 285.
- 86 Salamon, *Assuming a Body*, 151: “My body schema might be so fluid as to include the feather in my hat or the stick I hold. Whatever apparatus I take up and use with or as my body *becomes* my body” (original emphasis). For Merleau-Ponty’s discussion of bodily extension through a blind man’s walking-stick, see Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception* (New York: Routledge, 2002), 164–66.
- 87 Primary sex characteristics were evidently not immutable in the Inquisition cases concerning hermaphrodites cited above, who developed external genitalia at puberty. For a broad definition of secondary sex characteristics that includes a variety of “bodily indicators” such as haircuts or dieting, see Butler, *Undoing Gender*, 87.
- 88 *Vida y fin*, fols. 99v–102v; discussed in Surtz, *Guitar of God*, 38–41; Boon, “Introduction,” 26–27.
- 89 For an argument for a gender continuum between Mary and Jesus, therefore between human and divine, that draws on a different set of sermons in Juana’s *Conorte*, see Jessica A. Boon, “Christ at Heavenly Play: Christology through Mary’s Eyes in the Sermons of Juana de la Cruz (1481–1534),” *Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte* 102, no. 1 (2011): 243–66.
- 90 This is an homage to the feminist tradition of using the term “latin@s” to avoid the

- gendering required by “latinos” or “latinas,” though recently it has been replaced by “latinx” in order to include genderqueer persons.
- 91 Graña Cid, “Feminidad de Jesucristo,” 494–95, 501. It is worth remembering that, although since Caroline Walker Bynum’s early work the “feminization of Jesus” has been a standard scholarly category, the term “feminization” is entirely anachronistic to medieval terminology (*Jesus as Mother*, 110–69). I argue in turn that terms such as “bigender” can, if used with care and specificity, allow us to unpack what is, at least according to Juana’s visions, a densely woven and apparently highly sexualized set of interactions in the afterlife.
 - 92 Keck, *Angels and Angelology*, 68–70; Gill, *Angels and the Order of Heaven*, 27.
 - 93 In addition to Graña Cid’s article, “Feminidad de Jesucristo,” Pablo Maroto situates Juana in relation to the “dispute over women” in this era. Daniel de Pablo Maroto, “La ‘Santa Juana,’ mística franciscana del siglo XVI español: Significación histórica,” *Revista de espiritualidad* 60, no. 241 (2001): 577–601.
 - 94 A contemporary of Juana, the Italian laywoman mystic Lucia Brocadelli, also had a vision of this scene. See discussion in Herzig, *Savonarola’s Women*, 181.
 - 95 Angelic ring dancing was a common Christian belief by the fourth century, applying the idea of the heavenly realms dancing in a circle found in Plotinus among others to angelic movement. See Françoise Syson Carter, “Celestial Dance: A Search for Perfection,” *Dance Research* 5, no. 2 (1987): 3–17, at 5, 9. The Hispanist Mary Giles has suggested that the dancing in Juana’s heavenly pageants should be considered liturgical. Mary E. Giles, “Spanish Visionary Women and the Paradox of Performance,” in *Performance and Transformation: New Approaches to Late Medieval Spirituality*, ed. Mary A. Suydam and Joanna E. Ziegler (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1999), 273–97, at 281. For comparison, the nearly contemporaneous popular Italian preacher and apocalyptic prophet Girolamo Savonarola had a vision of heaven that includes many infants singing and holding flowers; the holy innocents hold red flowers to symbolize their wounds, rather than having real marks on their bodies. Savonarola, “Compendium,” 249–50.
 - 96 “Gozáos y alegráos connmigo, mis hermanas, que si vosotras morísteis por mí, también morí yo por vosotras, y mucho os amo y os quiero. *Y también soy niña como vosotras, pues soy hijo de mujer.*” Graña Cid mentions this episode in “Feminidad de Jesucristo,” 499.
 - 97 Geraldine McKendrick, “The Franciscan Order in Castile, c. 1440–c. 1560” (Ph.D. thesis, University of Edinburgh, 1987), 159. Note that this accusation actually evokes Kabbalistic discussions of divine androgyny or the existence of both male and female within the Sefirotic emanations of God.
 - 98 For Juana’s use of Jesus as mother, see Rebeca Sanmartín Bastida, *La comida visionaria: Formas de alimentación en el discurso carismático femenino del siglo XVI* (London: Critical, Cultural and Communications Press, 2015), 42–94. For discussion of women as “God’s mouthpiece” in several Mediterranean cases, including Juana, see Baldrige, *Spiritual Androgyny*, 96–109.
 - 99 This is a theory posited by Roland de Crémone (thirteenth century); see Van der Lugt, *Le ver, le démon, et la vierge*, 420. Note that various Castilian theologians and

authors of spiritual guides debated a related question concerning what type of matter Mary contributed to Jesus's body—was he formed from her menstrual blood, or a pure form of blood particular to her? For details, see Alfonso Fernández de Madrigal, *Las cinco figuratas paradoxas*, ed. Carmen Parrilla (Alcalá de Henares, Sp.: Universidad de Alcalá, 1998), First Paradox, chap. 24, p. 96; Juan López de Salamanca, *Libro de las historias de Nuestra Señora* (1460s), ed. Arturo Jiménez Moreno (San Millán de la Cogolla, Sp.: Cilengua, 2009), pt. II, chap. 4, p. 304; and Prejano, *Lucero*, chap. 5, fol. 9r–v.

- 100 For discussion of this trope, see the seminal work, Bynum, *Jesus as Mother*, 110–69. Julian of Norwich is best known for her mystical formulation of God and Jesus as mother, but there is no evidence Julian's *Showings* were known in medieval Castile.
- 101 “Yo que soy tu verdadera y benigna y piadosa y entrañal madre, te enseñé una ley la más firme y fuerte y buena.” For brief discussion of Juana's views on Jesus as mother, see Baldridge, *Spiritual Androgyny*, 95–96.
- 102 The full passage reads “Nuestro Señora Jesucristo—dijo él mismo—como de parte del Padre celestial, esto es, cuanto a la divinidad, era el más tierno y delicado de todos los Ángeles y criaturas celestiales.” Graña Cid mentions only the title of “Our Lady Jesus Christ”; see “Feminidad de Jesucristo,” 498; and María del Mar Graña Cid, “¿Una memoria femenina de escritura espiritual? La recepción de las místicas medievales en el convento de Santa María de la Cruz de Cubas,” in *Letras en la celda: Cultura escrita de los conventos femeninos en la España moderna*, ed. Nieves Baranda Leturio and María Carmen Marín Pina (Madrid: Iberoamericana, 2014), 189–206, at 195.
- 103 Graña Cid mentions that after Jesus's resurrection, he seems to re-masculinize, i.e., his femininity is crucial on earth but not in heaven (“Feminidad de Jesucristo,” 501).
- 104 Some medieval alchemists viewed Jesus as the “ultimate hermaphrodite, a unity of contrary parts—the human and the divine, the male and the female”; see Leah DeVun, “The Jesus Hermaphrodite: Science and Sex Difference in Premodern Europe,” *Journal of the History of Ideas* 69, no. 2 (2008): 193–218, at 209. This is however different from Jesus as a girl, linked with the language of sacrifice and salvation.
- 105 Sangganjanavanich, “Trans Identities,” 2.
- 106 Althaus-Reid, *Indecent Theology*, 61.
- 107 Marcella Althaus-Reid, *The Queer God* (New York: Routledge, 2003), 32, 53. Althaus-Reid discusses the image of the “bi/Christ,” which she uses rather misleadingly for an intersex Christ (*Indecent Theology*, 112–18). See also Robert E. Goss, “Marcella Althaus-Reid's ‘Obscenity no. 1: Bi/Christ’: Expanding Christ's Wardrobe of Dresses,” *Feminist Theology* 11, no. 2 (2003): 157–66.
- 108 While little medievalist scholarship exists on sexuality in heaven, see the discussion of Dante's erotic love for Beatrice in F. Regina Psaki, “The Sexual Body in Dante's Celestial Paradise,” in *Imagining Heaven in the Middle Ages*, ed. Jan Swango Emerson and Hugh Feiss (New York: Garland Publishing, 2000), 47–62.
- 109 Juana is generally very careful to include both genders when she is referencing a collective, repeating the long form of “santos y santas, amigos y amigas,” etc. Graña Cid, “Feminidad de Jesucristo,” 504; Angela Muñoz Fernández, “Del masculino genérico al desdoblamiento de voces: Estrategias léxicas en el *Conorte* de Juana de la Cruz

- (1481–1534),” in *Impulsando la historia desde la historia de las mujeres: La estela de Cristina Segura*, ed. Pilar Díaz Sánchez, Gloria Franco Rubio, and María Jesús Fuente Pérez (Huelva, Sp.: Universidad de Huelva, 2012), 261–68. Juana’s choice of “amigas” here is thus intentionally limiting the category to the female gender.
- 110 Note that this image contradicts both medieval understandings of Matthew 22:30 that there will be no marriage in the afterlife and the association of this asexual state with angels in particular (Keck, *Angels and Angelology*, 117). However, Andreas Capellanus did describe bridal beds in his heaven of secular love in his twelfth-century *The Art of Courtly Love* (McDannell and Lang, *Heaven: A History*, 95).
- 111 These various forms of gender-bending in fact militate against any use of contemporary terminology such as homosexuality, heterosexuality, or bisexuality, if all humans and God Godself slide so easily through a gender continuum. I should note that the terms “skolioromantic” and “skoliosexual” have recently been proposed for those attracted to nongender-binary individuals. The terminology has appeared in multiple blogs dating back to at least 2013, for example, in Inda Lauryn’s *For Harriet*, at www.forharriet.com/2015/03/a-beginners-guide-to-understanding.html#axzz3UN5wqrPV. The source of the term may be from the posting on Tumblr “Sexual Attraction,” at 25.media.tumblr.com/tumblr_mby9cspeljdlrgjunyo1_1280.png.
- 112 Several scholars argue strongly for understanding marriage to Jesus as a literal and legal concept that pervaded European culture. For women’s legal marriage to Jesus, see Sarah McNamer, *Affective Meditation and the Invention of Medieval Compassion* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 2010), 32–43. Recent work has unveiled that the term “bride of Christ” was not limited in medieval Europe to nuns, but was used at times by religious men and understood physically, not spiritually. Rabia Gregory, *Marrying Jesus in Medieval and Early Modern Northern Europe: Popular Culture and Religious Reform* (New York: Routledge, 2016).
- 113 “Y dijo el Señor, que como san Francisco subió delante de él, que le llamó diciéndole: —Ven acá, mi amigo seráfico y alférez mío, muéstrame tus tetas. Y que él le respondió diciendo con mucho gozo: —Mis tetas, Señor, hélas aquí, que estos que aquí traigo conmigo fueron las tetas de mis deseos. . . . [Y el Señor dijo] —Dime, amigo Francisco, si quieres ser mi mujer y si te quieres unir y ayuntar conmigo. Y san Francisco le respondió: —Sí, Señor Dios mío, de buena voluntad estaré yo sujeto y obediente a todo lo que tú quisieres y mandares, así como hace la mujer que está sujeta y obediente a su marido. Y de buena voluntad me ayuntaré contigo, así como la esposa se ayunta con el esposo.” My thanks to an anonymous reviewer for discussion of the translation of *tetas* as “nipples,” whereas *senos* or *pechos* would translate as “breasts.” Baldridge, *Spiritual Androgyny*, 148, discusses this scene as an androgynization of Francis.
- 114 *Conorte* no. 58, 1246. For further analysis of this scene, see Surtz, *Guitar of God*, 45–50.
- 115 This is a transmutation made all the more complicated by the fact that some Franciscan authors described Jesus not as Francis’s spouse but as his mother. See Sara Ritchey, *Holy Matter: Changing Perceptions of the Material World in Late Medieval Christianity* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2014), 143. Francis would then

effectively be father-in-law to his mother, a particularly unusual form of alternative kinship affiliation.

- 116 One wonders, since Juana does not specify, if Jesus saves women as a woman and men as a man, if he also marries women as a man and men as a woman, and if so, whether Jesus as bigender preserves or complicates heteronormativity.
- 117 Gregory, *Marrying Jesus*, 6, 17.