The Language of Mysticism and the Language of Law in Early Modern Spain

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After the Reformation, Catholics developed new ways to express interior religious experiences, including mystic visions. This article considers the epistemological impasse that arose when the Spanish Inquisition, created to prosecute covert Judaizers, was charged with discernment of mystical experiences. Close linguistic study of interrogations shows how a nondialogue between mystical and legal discourse pointed to a broader conflict between a newly interiorized religion and the public space of the law. Practically, these cases weakened the Inquisition; conceptually, they undermined the idea of an Inquisition. If Enlightenment reformers were able to argue for a secularization of the law, it was because a group of mystics and Inquisitors had made such thought possible.

INTRODUCTION

IT WAS NOT just at Pentecost: men and women have always spoken about God, or God has spoken through them, in different tongues. Contexts of enunciation are not, of course, stable over time, and perhaps no realm of discourse has been redistributed more since the Renaissance than that of religion; in fact, this redistribution has been considered the defining movement of modernity. The complexities and specificities of this transition are lost in the blanket term *secularization*, which when it posits that religion shifted away from the center of public life toward private, individual, and invisible experience, implies that religion, public, private, and individual are all stable categories. In truth, neither the concept of God, nor the individual, nor the divisions of public space have ever been a stable backdrop against which any of the other concepts shifted. Changes in institutions changed ideas of God; changes in ideas of God changed ideas of the individual; changes in the individual changed institutions; and so on, in a never-ending (and never-beginning) cycle. One could say, borrowing from Foucault, that between the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries, what might have seemed to be a unified discourse — speech about God — was

I would like to thank Andrew Keitt for providing me with his notes and partial transcriptions of the *procesos* for Mateo Rodríguez, María de la Encarnación, Isabel de Briñas, and María Bautista. All translations are my own, except where noted. Punctuation has been added to unpunctuated manuscript sources for the sake of readability.

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fractured and redistributed among various spaces of enunciation.[1] It is overly simplistic to state, as the Habermasian narrative would have it, that religious discourse moved from the public to the private sphere[2] — this article itself is evidence that a certain type of speech about God and religious experience flourishes even today in the public space of academia. What changed were the types of knowledge sought and the specific articulations deemed meaningful in various public spaces.

This article will examine one particular turn of this cycle: a turn between approximately 1550 and 1680 that saw the introduction and eventually the withdrawal of a newly interiorized spirituality from the jurisdiction of the law in Spain. While the Inquisition — the tribunal charged with policing this interior space — continued to operate into the nineteenth century, its role and power were greatly reduced by the turn of the eighteenth century.[3] It is typically supposed that this decline came from the efforts of secular liberal reformers.[4] However, a closer look at Inquisition trial proceedings suggests that the Inquisition declined from within: the incompatibility of legal discourse and a post-Reformation language of mystic spirituality forced a separation of God and law, the withdrawal of God to private spaces, and the atrophying of an institution created to treat religious practice as a matter for public control.

This study does not seek to establish a clear narrative of cause and effect or a chronology of the secularization of Spanish courts, but instead highlights the circulation of discourses about that most private of spheres, the soul before God, between the church and the courtroom. The records of Inquisition interrogations of would-be mystics reveal a moment when two disparate

[1]In *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, Foucault defines a discursive formation as a set of linguistic representations governed by a common set of rules that dictate what can be said and how each enunciation is to be understood.

[2]According to Habermas and most liberal political thought, the retreat of religion to the private sphere is the necessary precursor for rational political debate in the public sphere.

[3]The traditional view is expressed by Kamen, 273: "By the end of Felipe V's reign, the Spanish Inquisition was openly decadent, both in terms of its wealth and the number of its members." Subsequent historians have added nuance to this narrative. Still, if the Inquisition was not dormant in the eighteenth century, it had been repurposed, focusing mostly on superstition and, above all, ideological control. See Pérez, 237–38.

[4]Pérez, 237–38, notes accurately that "it was not the Enlightenment reformers who abolished the Inquisition, but rather Napoleon Bonaparte." The constitutional delegates at Cádiz in 1812 were divided on the issue (the vote was ninety to sixty in favor of abolition), and many opposed the tribunal because they wanted inquisitorial powers returned to the bishops, rather than out of a belief in religious freedom. Still, the terms of opposition quickly shifted after the restoration of the monarchy. See Moreno Martínez, 109–24, for the role of liberal reformers in the abolition of the Inquisition; and Escudero, 371–410, for the debates at the Cortes.

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discourses about God were forced into an uncomfortable confrontation. The resulting nondialogue makes evident the dispersion and incompatibility of a discourse that had, a century earlier, seemed unified, and it is this conflict that reveals a nascent incompatibility of God and court, of faith and law. Ironically, then, this essential element of the secularization process emerges not from the public *tertulias* (salons) of Enlightenment lawyers, but in the secret *salas* (chambers or courtrooms) of the Inquisition, from the confrontation between *beatas* and Inquisitors.[5]

MYSTICISM AND *LO MÍSTICO*

Even in a study focused on circular networks of discourse, one must inevitably mark off a narrative frame by choosing an originary moment and identifying a first shift away from that moment. Despite the importance of medieval mysticism and the existence of a medieval Inquisition, there are reasons to identify the originary moment of an interiorization of religious faith and practice in Spain with the early sixteenth century.[6] More or less at the turn of the sixteenth century, there emerged a variety of movements seeking to reform the Catholic Church by turning to a more personal, spiritualized experience of God. Eventually, some of these would be embraced, some classified as Catholic heterodoxies (Erasmianism, *alumbradismo*, etc.), and some condemned entirely as heresy (Lutheranism, and later Calvinism). It is not important to parse the distinctions between these movements here; the Church itself was inconsistent in its designations, and labels varied across regions, over time, and from case to case.[7] What is important is that the difficulty of distinguishing renewal, reform, and rupture created a crisis within the Catholic Church, one that led to the creation and imposition of new forms of observation and control of interior religious experience.

[5]*Beatas* were women who, without taking formal vows, dedicated their lives to either charitable works or prayer. The proliferation of *beatas* corresponds with the mystic movement in Spain, and many *beatas* practiced contemplative prayer and professed mystical experiences. See Sarrión Mora, 45–47.

[6]The legacy of medieval mysticism was minimal in Spain: "A tradition of visionary women similar to the one that is widely documented throughout medieval Europe and England does not appear in the religious and historical literature of Spain until the latter part of the fifteenth century and the first decades of the sixteenth": Giles, 1999a, 273. While the medieval Inquisition did have a tribunal in Aragon, it was largely inactive after the thirteenth century. See also Suárez Fernández, esp. 261–65.

[7]*Alumbradismo* was a vague term applied in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Spain to a variety of interiorized spiritual practices. See Andrés for an account of the "common denominator" between *alumbrados*, Erasmians, Lutherans, and mystics, as well as the inconsistencies in categorization.

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The most obvious of these was the Inquisition, but the Inquisition was only the extreme form of a system of observation and control. In order to monitor interior experiences, it was necessary for them to be made exterior, through words and the body. Frequent and public affirmations of belief were certainly a part of the strategy of enforced orthodoxy, but the newer religious forms entailed an interior religious experience that transcended rational Scholastic categories of belief. For the followers of these new religious forms (for the remainder of this article, they will be referred to as mystics, regardless of the Inquisition's or society's final designation as to the veracity of their supposed mystic experiences), belief was only the beginning: they sought a personal experience of God. In order to share and monitor these experiences, believers and clergy developed vocabularies of interiority, both in words and bodily signs, and spaces for their enunciation. From a distance of almost half a millennium, it is possible to recognize a generic codification of the different ways in which interiority was spoken: mystic poetry, guides to mental prayer, spiritual autobiography, the rites of exorcisms, and treatises on discernment of spirits. However, it is important to insist on the fluidity of these genres and the phenomena they make legible. They are, as Moshe Sluhovsky writes, "facets of the same religious experience,"[8] and often the same individuals wrote, or were written about, in multiple categories.

The mid-sixteenth century was a period of a knowledge in flux, a moment when a new experience of the supernatural had not yet settled into established theological, legal, and literary categories. Rather than focus on that truly mystic moment,[9] this article is concerned with the period in the seventeenth century when these genres were well known and partially codified. It is precisely because the Inquisitors and would-be mystics already had an idea of the proper language with which to represent their experience of God, and their respective ideas had become relatively impermeable to innovation and disruption, that their dialogue fails. They are using the same words, but speaking different languages.

The debate over the mystic's use of language has repercussions for the constitution of the mystics as an object of scholarly study. Mystic poetry has

[8]Sluhovsky, 7. Kallendorf, 2003, 200–06, makes a similar point in the epilogue.

[9]For de Certeau, 2006, 83–86, once mystic discourse "passes under the control" of a discipline and an institution, as occurred in seventeenth-century France and Spain, it ceases to be truly mystic. Durán López, 76–77, traces a similar narrative with reference to spiritual autobiographies: "If in the sixteenth century . . . the texts of which I am speaking could be sources of conflict, soon the discursive model crystallized to the point that the Counter-Reformation Church itself and the religious autobiographies became a new way to affirm othordoxy. . . . The repetition of the model functions to confirm the validity of the system of beliefs that generates it, rather than to question it."

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long been the subject of literary criticism,[10] while recent decades have seen an abundance of important historical investigations of *alumbrados* and would-be mystics.[11] This disciplinary split retroactively imposes precisely the matter to be determined in these trials: the contours of discourse dividing the literary, the theological, and the juridical. While many historians work with the Inquisition transcripts, few (the notable exception here being de Certeau) have focused specifically on the use of language(s) in these texts and transcriptions, preferring to summarize or cite isolated excerpts of testimony.[12] However, to excise the poetry from the testimony of would-be mystics is to beg the question, since it is precisely the status of figurative language that is, in some sense, on trial here.

The complete Inquisition *proceso* (case file) of a would-be mystic may contain examples of her own spiritual autobiography or mystic poetry, learned Scholastic analyses of that same autobiography, and the testimony or account of an exorcist who sought to liberate her from jealous demons. The *proceso* does not have its own discourse, but is instead the sum of all the discourses that it admits as evidence. However, the conversion of these texts into evidence implies a conflict between their own internal rules and those of the Inquisitors regarding authority and verisimilitude. Those *procesos* that contain complete transcriptions of interrogations are privileged sources for studying the effects of such a conversion because they give some idea of the mediation between these

[10]The bibliography for individual mystic poets — in the Spanish case, most notably San Juan de la Cruz, Santa Teresa de Ávila, and Fray Luis de León — is vast. Most studies either focus on the theological or the literary aspects of the works, rather than exploring the theological connotations of poetic forms or the poetical implications of theological ideas. For recent literary analysis on the Spanish mystic poets, see Byrne; Concha; Egido; López Baralt; O'Reilly; Orozco Díaz; Thompson, 1977 and 1988. The most sustained literary study of mystic poets beyond these best-known figures can be found in anthologies and studies of early modern women's poetry (often religious and sometimes mystic): see Arenal and Schlau; Olivares and Boyce.

[11]For an excellent general bibliography, see Kallendorf, 2010, 437–62. Important works from the last two decades on Spanish *alumbradismo* and would-be mysticism include Bilinkoff; Haliczer; Hamilton; Huerga; Keitt; Pastore; Sarrión Mora; Sluhovsky; Weber. For works focusing on colonial Latin America, see Giles, 1999b; Greer and Bilinkoff; Jaffary; Van Deusen.

[12]This is not to say that these historians use their sources without questioning their partial and constructed nature. However, the majority of historians consider the biased or partial historical context of the sources, not the use of language itself. In *Archive Fever*, Derrida takes the reading of archival material as pure language to its extreme, essentially rejecting the sources as historical material. Such a radical stance, rather than opening up an interdisciplinary space, forecloses dialogue between literature and history. The blossoming field of law and literature has centered on narrative and rhetoric in legal documents and casuistry in literature, but has paid little attention to the status of the poetic.

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different codes.[13] They are not, of course, records of a pure linguistic encounter between accuser and accused; the available documents are, precisely, documents, products of a single quill and a written culture. Yet to lament the lost voice of the accused, to posit its subsumption into the voice of power, is to ignore the complexity and superposition of multiple power structures in early modern Spain, as well as the circular flow of languages at all levels of discourse.

STANDARDS OF EVIDENCE

In order to understand the source and repercussions of the conflict between judicial and mystic language, it is important to reflect back briefly on the origins of the Spanish Inquisition and the way that its initial mission of prosecuting covert Judaizers affected its constructions of proof. From its beginnings, the Spanish Inquisition was known as a tribunal of faith, but *faith* here was a synonym for *practice*. It was not until the Reformation that faith and practice become oppositional for Christians, and, in any event, the pre-Reformation Inquisition was not concerned with Christian heterodoxy. The Inquisition was a religious tribunal because the crime over which it had jurisdiction was the practice of a forbidden religion, and not because of any sort of faith-based juridical procedure. In fact, as various historians have noted, the inquisitional judicial procedure (which is different from the Inquisition) was born from the elimination of the trial by ordeal.[14] In an earlier, and in many ways parallel, moment to the one being examined here (a time that saw a rise in rationalism, a centralization of power, and an increased threat of heresy), the end of the belief that God would intervene to prove innocence or guilt led to the creation of a legal process based on investigation, argument, and evidence. A change in how God was seen to speak in the space of the law led to a change in judicial structures.

When, in the late fifteenth century, the Spanish Inquisition was formed to seek out covert Judaizers, its mechanisms were well suited to the task. Judaism was associated with a finite set of rituals, such as not eating pork and observing the Sabbath on Saturday, and the Inquisition, like any modern secular court, took depositions from witnesses and judged them according to their internal coherence, their confirmation or contradiction by other testimonies, and the

[13]There is a wide range in the types of documentation contained in extant Inquisition files. For many cases there remain only the summaries provided for the Suprema, the central governing body that coordinated the activity of the local tribunals. While some of these may go into great detail about the progress of the case, they do not contain direct transcriptions of interrogations. For more on Inquisition archives, see the section "Fondos manuscritos" in Pérez Villanueva and Escandell Bonet, 58–105.

[14]See Langbein, 131–38; Berman, 151–59, 187–89; van Caenegem, 85.

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character of the witnesses themselves, as evidenced by their social standing and the reports of other witnesses. The question of social status brought in a body of evidence that, like faith, has experienced a resignification since the Enlightenment, from something exterior to something interior. For fifteenth-century Inquisitors, blood was not a substance coursing through the hidden recesses of the human heart, but the immutable and verifiable chain of ancestry that linked individuals to their forefathers. Jewish or converso ancestry, along with the practice of Judaic rituals, were the main forms of evidence used to convict Judaizers. Two eyewitnesses and a suspect genealogy were sufficient for conviction and made investigation of a defendant's thoughts and feelings unnecessary. The Inquisitors asked defendants to affirm their belief in Catholic doctrine, but it was a simple yes or no question, and it was synonymous with a promise to comply with Catholic ritual. There was no perceived schism between "to believe," "to do," and "to be." Physical acts and genealogical history determined guilt; physical punishment and control would ensure compliance.

The Reformation, and the new threat of Lutheran heresy, made this model of prosecution untenable. External acts became insufficient as evidence, since there were no clearly reliable external signs that pointed toward Lutheran heresies or to the Catholic heterodoxies that, after Trent, made up the bulk of the Inquisitors' docket. In fact, many of the same practices — an intense spiritual relationship with God, supernatural or prophetic visions and miracles, extreme self-mortification and piety — could be indicative of Protestant heresy (a crime of faith), demonic possession (not a crime, unless it could be shown that an explicit pact had been made), illness, or true holiness. Thus the responses of supposed mystics to their interrogations feature an unprecedented dynamic: the accused's affirmation of each of the individual *capítulos* (charges), despite a plea of innocence to the main charge of *alumbradismo* or complicity in a demonic pact.

For example, one can contrast the responses of Pedro Villegas, accused in 1483 of covert Judaizing,[15] with that of María Pizarro, accused as "ilusa e iludente" in 1635–39.[16] Both Villegas and Pizarro adamantly denied the charge of heresy, but the relation between the general plea and the response to individual charges was quite different. Villegas denied having eaten unleavened bread, one of the known ritual markers of Judaism, declaring that "unleavened bread is such a foreign thing to me, it's as likely I ate it as it is that Muhammed ate pork." Even where his responses conceded some basis to the accusation, such

[15]The case is excerpted and translated in Homza, 16–25.

[16]Archivo Histórico Nacional (hereafter AHN) Inq., Leg. 115, Exp. 2. (Her name is also given as María Pizarra in the *proceso*). Although the use of the terms was hardly consistent, in general an *iluso* was someone "passively misled by the devil's illusions," while an *iludente* "designated someone who had actively misled others into believing her illusions": Jaffary, 35–36.

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as his recognition that he might have rested on occasional Saturdays ("two or three times over the year . . . at a time when my job of cloth making wasn't flourishing; there happened to be a month or two during which I did not work at all"), the nuance could be verified by outside sources, such as individuals who had seen him idle during the week or attended to him with charity, or documents confirming the termination of contracts or payments.[17] No such verification was possible for María Pizarro's basis for fighting the charges of false sanctity. María responded to the main charge by categorically denying complicity: "she has neither done nor committed any of the frauds contained in the given chapter nor does she have a pact with the devil nor does she know what a pact is."[18] However, in the very same sentence she affirmed having been possessed, explaining that "the devil has frequently mistreated her since she was nine years old,"[19] and she added details of her own first demonic vision. The responses to the eighty-six charges follow this pattern: to the charges of creating public scandal with her public episodes of *arrobamiento* and possession,[20] she replied that "it is true,"[21] but where the Inquisitors qualify such episodes as "frauds,"[22] she amended that "she did it without the power [to stop], with the fervor her love of God gave her."[23]

In these cases the evidence that could be verified using the traditional procedures of gathering and comparing witness testimony and personal accounts was not in question, only the invisible, supernatural, and extrarational forces (not just God or the devil, but all of the subtle gradations of possible assent to demonic visions) behind these external signs. The emergence of the treatise for discernment of spirits, far from indicating resolution, is further evidence of the newly pressing problem of ascertaining subtle gradations of interior states. As can be seen in the transcriptions of audiencias with defendants accused of new interior crimes, the criteria and process of discernment were more suited to a theological than a judicial setting. The legal system assumes a rational subject

[17]Homza, 19.

[18]AHN Inq., Leg. 115, Exp. 2: "no ha hecho ni cometido ningunos embustes de los contenidos en dicho capítulo ni tiene pacto con el demonio ni sabe qué es pacto." I have modernized spelling and punctuation for all primary-source quotations.

[19]Ibid.: "el demonio la maltrata muchas veces desde de edad de nueve años."

[20]There is a complex lexicon of suspended states that is not easily translated into English. The authors of manuals of contemplative prayer systematize these states, but most defendants and nontheologians use the terms *suspensión*, *arrebatemiento*, *arrobamiento*, and *extasis* all to refer to a state of religious ecstasy. For more on the varied significations of ecstasy in early modern Spain, see Weber.

[21]AHN Inq., Leg. 115, Exp. 2: "es verdad."

[22]Ibid.: "embustes."

[23]Ibid.: "lo hacía sin poder más, con el fervor que la daba de amor de Dios."

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using language to represent facts; the language of mysticism and that of discernment allow for the absence of the rational subject, and/or for a nontransparent use of language. The Inquisition was in a bind. As a religious tribunal, its task was to diagnose subjects using such discourses, but as a legal body, it was unable to do so.

INTERROGATING VISIONS

Precisely because of the problems posed by the discernment of interiority, the trials of mystics always include an attempt to locate evidence on the body, principally through the identification of sexual transgressions and, if the accused claimed to subsist on communion wafers or was renowned for rigorous fasting, the analysis of ingestion and excretion.[24] These were the old categories of physical evidence and proof with which the Inquisitors were comfortable. Yet in a substantial number of cases, the accused completely conformed to external norms, and the trial rested solely on events occurring in an interior space accessible only through language. For example, Mateo Rodríguez, the leader of a group of mystics in Madrid in the 1630s, led an external life seemingly beyond reproach. He rose at four, practiced self-mortification, attended Mass, confessed and took communion daily, and worked a full day at his trade.[25] The problem lay in the six hours he spent daily "gathered in mental prayer."[26] This was a space that could not be witnessed by third persons, could not be analyzed using typical juridical categories of agency and will, and could not be expressed using a language of facts and concrete images. The Inquisitors could not condemn his spiritual practices outright, as contemplative prayer was, within certain spaces and hierarchies, a sanctioned practice; and Rodríguez had come to spiritual prayer through authorized channels, initiated by a priest and then through study of approved devotional books, such as collections of saints' lives and the works of Santa Teresa. The problem was that he had sought to extend his experiences

[24]This can lead to almost surreal conversations between Inquisitors, functionaries, and priests about stool quantity and quality, as in the case of María Pizarro, AHN Inq., Leg. 115, Exp. 2. Here, the *comisario* asked her "if she defecated when she did not eat or drink. She responded, no. Another day she told me that when she drank she passed urine. And another day she told me that when she drank, something turned in her stomach and she expelled something like a humor." And later, in the audiencia, she reported that "by drinking a lot, her stomach turned and she defecated although it was all water." Another case with extensive discussions of excrements is that of Francisca Ruiz, Archivo Diócesano de Cuenca (ADC), Leg. 446, Exp. 6245 and Leg. 450, Exp. 6265. For a discussion of Ruíz's case, see Sarrión Mora, 293–304.

[25]AHN Inq., Leg. 106, Exp. 2. Mateo Rodríguez's case, along with several others cited in this essay, is treated extensively in Keitt.

[26]AHN Inq., Leg. 106, Exp. 2: "recogido [en] oración mental."

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beyond the space of the confessional or the privacy of his home, leading his own prayer groups and circulating his raptures and visions in a spiritual autobiography. The Inquisitors needed to return him to his proper place in the hierarchy, either by sanctioning his visions as legitimate or debunking them as delusion or deception. Yet the categories into which they sought to place his experiences — wakefulness versus sleep, external versus internal, body versus mind — were precisely those that mystic language destabilizes. They wanted proof of a reality, and he drew on a discourse that sought principally to transmit the sheer unreality, or at least the lack of correspondence with any earthly reality, of the divine vision.

The interrogations of would-be mystics represent a prolonged intention to dissociate mystic experience from mystic language, and to get the accused to represent mystic visions in the language of evidence and proof. As Stuart Clark notes, the relation between vision and knowledge was "particularly unsettled" in late Renaissance Europe and the status of apparitions "became vastly more complex and precarious during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries than ever before."[27] In earlier centuries, he argues, spirits presented a theological quandary, but by the sixteenth century they "had also turned into visual puzzles."[28] Clark's study hints at, but fails to note, the degree to which they also became linguistic puzzles. Indeed, the linguistic impasse is present in the charge itself, the investigation of visions. The Inquisitors understood vision according to contemporary theories of sight, memory, and understanding; they wanted *seeing* to be a synonym for *witnessing*. The mystics understood visions as experiences that transcend reason, that make do with earthly linguistic and scientific categories only as concessions of failure.[29]

This difference with respect to the literalness of sight extends to every aspect of the interrogation of the visions. By inquisitorial logic, the things seen should obey the properties of things; in mystic logic, the essences perceived may be recognized by their similarities with things, but they fundamentally do not belong to that order. For example, when Mateo Rodríguez claimed that he has "seen" a celestial choir, they pushed for details: "When he says . . . that he saw Our Lady, Saint Joseph, the baby Jesus, and the angels and they danced, what dance did they do and what were the instruments?"[30] By their logic, when one sees a choir, one necessarily sees the instruments being played, and when one sees a person, one sees his clothes and adornment. But Rodríguez's vision has been

[27]Clark, 2, 205.

[28]Ibid., 209.

[29]As the medieval mystic Meister Eckhart (1260–1327) famously put it, "If I have spoken of it, I have not spoken, for it is ineffable." Quoted in Katz, 3.

[30]AHN Inq., Leg. 106, Exp. 2: "Cuando dice . . . que vio a Nuestra Señora, San Joseph, el niño Jesús, y los ángeles, y danzaron, ¿qué es lo que danzaron y de qué era[n] los instrumentos?"

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a revelation, as he explains using the language of contemplative prayer: "He said that what they have asked him about occurred in his interior and he does not know nor could he distinguish what the angels, Our Lady, the baby Jesus, or the instruments looked like."[31] Interrogating two separate visions Rodríguez claimed to have had of Christ, the Inquisitors fixated on his inability to say what Christ was wearing. They were not satisfied when he was able to specify that in one vision experienced while "gathered in interior prayer," Christ "had white roses for garters, made of gold and very luxurious."[32] The Inquisitors wanted imaginary matter to obey the laws of material matter. Noting that in his autobiography Rodríguez had said Jesus wore a long tunic, they ask "if he was wearing a long tunic as it says in the book, how could he see his garters: did Christ lift his tunic so he could see them?"[33] A similar exchange can be found in the questioning of Juan de Yegros,[34] who recounted seeing Saint Gregory surrounded by angels and presiding over an altar with "the hosts . . . within a very beautiful gold cup."[35] How, the Inquisitors interrupted, could he know that there were hosts inside: "given that he says that the hosts were in a golden cup, it would seem he should not have been able to see them, given that gold is not transparent."[36] In each case, the accused responded by appealing to a different kind of vision. Yegros, for example, responded that "he saw everything in his interior and thus there was nothing left in the vision that he did not see."[37]

A related point of divergence between the mystic and the juridical concept of vision is its relation to knowledge. According to contemporary scientific theories of sight, there was a necessary step between the perception of images and their identification and analysis. The process is often instantaneous and unconscious, but can be recovered and represented in language. "I saw X" can, if necessary, be elaborated to, "I saw components X_1, X_2, and X_3, which, based on my previous encounters or education about X, led me to propose that what I had seen was, indeed X." The Inquisitors, as jurists, did not accept a logic of knowledge that could not be broken down into these steps. This explains the insistence on specific visual details in the interrogation of visions. They asked María Pizarro

[31]Ibid.: "Dijo que lo que se le ha preguntado le sucedió interiormente y no sabe ni pudo distinguir cómo eran los ángeles, nuestra señora, y niño Jesús y los instrumentos."

[32]Ibid.: "recogido en oración interiormente"; "tenía unas rosas blancas por ligas compuestas de oro muy ricas."

[33]Ibid.: "si tenía una túnica larga puesta como dice en el libro, ¿cómo vio las ligas? si levantó Cristo la túnica para que las viese."

[34]AHN Inq., Leg. 7, Exp. 8.

[35]Ibid.: "las formas . . . en un vaso de oro muy hermoso"

[36]Ibid.: "supuesto que dice que las formas estaban en un vaso de oro parece que no las pudo ver, supuesto que el oro no es transparente."

[37]Ibid.: "todo lo vio interiormente y así no quedó nada de la visión que éste no lo viera."

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about the signs with which she recognized individual souls in purgatory ("how the souls of men were different from those of women"[38]). They wanted to know how María de la Encarnación came to know someone was dying in sin ("was it by seeing something corporeal, for example if she saw a man walking and she could see he was sick, or in what way was it represented to her so that she received the news — through hearing or through one of the senses — in such a way that she can explain the said notification"[39]). They insisted on pinning down how Isabel Briñas identified a particular guardian angel ("if one angel has different markings than another"[40]) or soul in purgatory ("if it was clothed or naked or in what way and if it bore some sign that it was a soul in purgatory or in some other place"[41]).

The replies read like a catalogue of attempts to convey, via metaphor, negation, and neologism, a different relationship between seeing and knowing. María Pizarro said that her knowledge "was only in her thoughts and it came to her without her knowing how . . . [she was] awake and with her eyes closed and it seems to her that she has on the inside other eyes with which she sees everything that is represented to her as if it were with her corporeal eyes but it [the soul in purgatory] does not speak to her with words nor does she hear it."[42] The subjunctive, reserved for counterfactual situations and nonexistent subjects, abounds (e.g., "as if it were," "without her hearing or understanding anything through her bodily senses"[43]). Language turns in circles, as when María de la Encarnación sputtered that, "it's just that she was made to understand what she has said and this intelligence was not in a different way from the one she has said in her confessions, in which she was made to understand all the rest of what she has said and said intelligence was in such a way that she cannot say what they are like nor can she explain except in the way she has said."[44] Ultimately,

[38]AHN Inq., Leg. 115, Exp. 2: "en qué se diferenciaban las ánimas de los hombres a las de las mujeres."

[39]AHN Inq., Leg. 104, Exp. 2: "si fue viendo cosa corpórea, como verbigracia ver [a] un hombre que caminaba éste que estuviese enfermo, o de qué suerte se le representó para que tuviese noticia — por el oído o por alguno de los sentidos — de suerte que lo pueda explicar la dicha noticia."

[40]AHN Inq., Leg. 102, Exp. 5: "si tiene diferentes señas el un ángel del otro."

[41]Ibid.: "si estaba vestido o desnudo o de qué suerte y si traía alguna seña de que estaba en el purgatorio o en otra parte."

[42]AHN Inq., Leg. 115, Exp. 2: "no fue sino que en su pensamiento se le ofreció sin saber cómo . . . despierta y cerrados los ojos y le parece tiene allá dentro otros ojos con que ve todo lo que se le representa como si fuera con los ojos corporales pero no la habla con palabras ni lo oye."

[43]Ibid.; AHN Inq., Leg. 104, Exp. 2: "sin que ella viese ni entendiese por algún sentido corporal cosa."

[44]AHN Inq., Leg. 104, Exp. 2: "solo que le dieron a entender lo que ha dicho y esta inteligencia no fue con diferente modo del que tiene dicho en sus confesiones de que la daban a entender lo demás que tiene dicho y dichas inteligencias eran de suerte que ésta no puede decir cómo son ni las puede explicar mas de la suerte que ha dicho."

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communication is frustrated, and the accused can only explain that "a certainty that it is like that came to her. . . . In her interior she is made to know with clear signs that it is the angel of the person in need, in such a way that she cannot explain it in words."[45]

The questioning can read like a cat-and-mouse game, with the mystics searching for vocabulary that might convey a new relationship between seeing and knowing, between signifiers and signifieds, and the Inquisitors attempting to pin it down in old frameworks. Ribera, the *comisario* in María Pizarro's case,[46] asked María to elaborate on a vision she had of the entire cosmos: "She told me that just like in a mirror that you have by the bed you can see in it everything that is there, and if something passes in front of it, it goes *colando* by it, similarly you see in God, as in the purest mirror, everything that goes before, and it goes *colando* by (she uses this word for *passing*) . . . and asking her again what this *colar* was she answered that *no colaban* but rather that everything was there in the notification."[47] The linguistic struggle is evident in the confusion over the meaning of *colar*, which in typical usage would have meant "to filter" or "squeeze through." Pizarro introduces the word in this new context to express the otherness of her vision, and then rejects it when her interrogator attempts to pin it down to a certain meaning. Ribera returns to the body, asking "if she saw God with eyes and hands and body parts in the mirror,"[48] but she replies with the spirit ("no, like the purest spirit"). When Ribera asks her "to tell me more about this pure spirit and mirror business, she always responded that she doesn't have anything more to say and that I shouldn't ask her any more."[49] This evocation of the inexpressible, which forms the backbone of so much mystic poetry or theology, was, in the courtroom, seen as evasion. For theology and poetry, there is a truth that is beyond expression, while the law could only conceive of withheld information as falsehood.

[45]AHN Inq., Leg. 102, Exp. 5: "le vino una certeza de que aquello fue así . . . interiormente la dan a conocer con señas muy claras que es el angel de la persona necesitada de tal modo que con palabras no lo puede explicar."

[46]A *comisario* was a local functionary contracted by the Inquisition to investigate charges of heresy and determine if a denunciation merited prosecution.

[47]AHN Inq., Leg. 115, Exp. 2: "me dijo que así como en un espejo que tenemos de cama se ve todo cuanto hay en él, y si pasa delante, va colando por él, así en Dios como en un espejo purísimo se ve todo cuanto hay delante de él, y va colando por él (este vocablo usa por pasar) . . . y represguntándola qué era aquello de colar me respondió que no colaban, sino que se estaba todo allá por la noticia."

[48]Ibid.: "si veía a Dios en el espejo con ojos y manos y partes corporales."

[49]Ibid.: "que no, sino como a espíritu purísimo"; "que me declare más esto del espíritu puro, y espejo, y siempre me ha respondido que no tiene más que decir ni sabe cómo declararlo más y que no la pregunte más."

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The metaphors are not necessarily new; in fact, the idea of spiritual vision dates back to Augustine (354–430), and the concept of *ojos interiores* (interior eyes) is central to mystic discourse. Its frequent and widespread use surely qualify it as a term that, using de Certeau's distinction, had by the seventeenth century passed from the transgressive mystic-as-adjective to the formulaic mystic-as-noun.[50] Yet the struggle over *ojos interiores* in seventeenth-century interrogations shows that such words, if perhaps they lost their radical potential within theology or poetry, retained the power to disrupt in other contexts. The ocular metaphor seems to be the source of particular contention within the inquisitional records, even more so than other mystic commonplaces, because of its ambiguous relationship to the body. The Inquisition, as has been noted, operated essentially on and through the body: they sought evidence of blood and circumcision, and eyewitness (and ear witness) testimony, and when it was absent, they exacted truth through the torture of the body. Thus they wanted *ojos interiores* to be a precise description of eyes, in every way like *ojos corporales*, except for their location on/in the body. However, for the mystics, *ojos interiores* and *visión interior* exist only in metaphorical relationship with earthly concepts of sight, and, indeed, the terms are meant to be oxymorons as much as they are descriptors. After all, eyes are fundamentally external; their form is even more essential to their identity than their function. Blind people still have eyes. The mystic phrase *ojos interiores* is both a metaphor (like eyes, but interior) and an oxymoron: like a metaphor, it proposes a point of identification (the perception of visual input), and like an oxymoron, it negates the possibility of identification. Furthermore, unlike a typical oxymoron, it can suggest a space where the limitations that make the relationship oxymoronic no longer exist. Before God, internal and external, body and spirit, are all meaningless dichotomies. The proper weight of these literal, metaphoric, apophagic, and transcendent interpretations is determined by context, by the expectations of speaker and auditors. When speakers and auditors have different codes of interpretation, they might as well be speaking different languages.

As with any context of interlinguistic encounter, there did emerge attempts at translation. It seems probable that Santa Teresa's and San Juan de la Cruz's (1542–91) success — their eventual ability, despite initial attitudes that ranged from skepticism to persecution, to achieve the Church's stamp of approval[51] — stems from their willingness and ability to translate their own lexicon between registers. San Juan de la Cruz wrote a prose exposition of his *Cántico espiritual* that demystifies each of the poetic metaphors and images.[52] Many of the phrases

[50]See de Certeau, 2006, 83–86.

[51]For the history of Teresa's and Juan de la Cruz's struggles with figures in the Church hierarchy, see, respectively, Ahlgren; Thompson, 1977.

[52]See Juan de la Cruz.

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used by the would-be mystics come from the Teresian lexicon, but when she employs them in her writings, she takes care to specify how they should be understood. For example, speaking in her *Libro de la vida* of the second stage of mental prayer, she begins a section exhorting her reader to return "to our garden, or orchard, and see how these trees begin to take new life, before putting forth flowers and afterwards giving fruit, and the flowers — carnations and so forth — begin to give out their fragrance."[53] However, the swerve into metaphor is immediately explained: "I am pleased with this comparison, for often, when I was a beginner . . . it used to give me great delight to think of my soul as a garden and of the Lord as walking in it. I would beg him to increase the fragrance of the little buds of virtue which seemed to be beginning to appear."[54] If she uses a paradox — for example, describing the process of writing her mystic visions, she notes that "I see clearly that it is not I who am saying this"[55] — she immediately explains the apparent contradiction: "I am not putting it together with my own understanding and afterwards I cannot tell how I have managed to say it at all."[56] This sort of simultaneous exegesis is what is lacking in the inquisitional interrogations.

Precisely because the Teresian lexicon had, by the seventeenth century, been given the stamp of orthodoxy, the Inquisition found itself pulled in two directions when dealing with Teresa's spiritual descendants. Theological orthodoxy became incompatible with legal efficacy. The Inquisitors certainly suspected that defendants' use of mystic language was an evasion tactic. After María Bautista replied to hours of questions with the same response that she had seen her visions "in spirit," the Inquisitors frustratedly replied that "it's very easy to respond that she saw everything in spirit" and that it was clear that, caught in her lies, she was using this "as a way out."[57] Yet they could not completely condemn such discourse because powerful theologians advocated precisely this "way out" — not from the truth, but to the truth, out from the limitations of

[53]Teresa de Ávila, 1960, 104; Teresa de Ávila, 1979, 222–23: "a nuestra huerta vergel, y veamos cómo comienzan estos árboles a empreñarse para florecer y dar después fruto; y las flores y los claveles lo mesmo para dar olor."

[54]Teresa de Ávila, 1960, 104–05; Teresa de Ávila, 1979, 222–23: "Regálame esta comparación, porque muchas veces en mis principios . . . me era gran deleite considerar ser mi alma un huerto y al Señor se paseaba en él. Suplicábale aumentarse el olor de las florecitas de virtudes que comenzaban."

[55]Teresa de Ávila, 1960, 104; Teresa de Ávila, 1979, 221: "veo claro no soy yo quien lo dice." Peers has the more idiomatic "realize" for "veo."

[56]Teresa de Ávila, 1960, 104; Teresa de Ávila, 1979, 221: "ni lo ordeno con el entendimiento ni sé después como lo acerté a decir."

[57]AHN Inq., Leg. 102, Exp. 2: "que es acudir a una respuesta muy fácil el decir que todo lo vio en espíritu." Ibid.: "ha tomado esa escapatoria."

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earthly concepts. The *calificador* of María Pizarro's beatific vision seen "as in a mirror" could not impeach its content, as he himself noted that it was the very image used by Saint Augustine. Yet the doctrinality of the image, rather than confirming the truth of the vision or the miracle of its appearance to an illiterate woman, prompted the *calificador* to suppose an entirely rational explanation: that María had stolen the words: "I don't know where she took the mirror example from, the same one that Saint Augustine used."[58] He noted his frustration that when he pressed her to describe the mirror vision further, "she shut down by saying she withdrew to her interior and to the mirror and there is no other reason."[59] The use of *razón* (logical discourse, rational explanation) here is intriguing; the absence of *razón* must inevitably frustrate the investigation into an experience defined by its extrarationality, its transcendence of logical discourse. It is both tempting and ultimately impossible to determine how the defendants understood these phrases or their intentions in using them before the Inquisition. What is clear is the degree to which identical discourses, when employed in different institutional settings, serve distinct purposes and have different effects.

The problem was not that in answering with figurative, poetic language the would-be mystics were answering the wrong way. The problem was that in these cases, just as a not guilty and a guilty plea converged except in the eye of God (the plea of innocence based on the affirmation of all the charges), the wrong answer was the right answer (and vice versa). For example, although the Inquisitors saw the inability to cite details of visions as proof that they were invented, the guide to discernment of spirits specified that true mystic experience would transcend materiality, and added that their failure to do so was a sure sign that the visions were human or demonic counterfeits. When Mateo Rodríguez gave a precise account of a vision, complete with details of adornment and affect, the prosecutor challenged that "if he [was] so absorbed in the favors that Christ was granting him, why did he pay such close attention to the colors of the angels, towels, and decorations?"[60] When the Inquisitors asked Maria Pizarro if she had been sleeping or awake when she was abused by the devil and she responded, "it seemed to her that she was sleeping because . . . she fell asleep, although when they [the devils] took her

[58]AHN Inq., Leg. 115, Exp. 2: "no sé de dónde tomó el ejemplo del espejo, que es [el] que San Agustín usó."

[59]Ibid.: "se cerraba con decir que se recogía a lo interior y al espejo y no hay más razón." At another point in her file, a *calificador* noted that "she told her confessor that it seemed to her that they cut off her head and cut her body into pieces and then put them back together, which is beyond reason."

[60]AHN Inq., Leg. 106, Exp. 2: "si tan embebido [estaba] en los favores que Cristo le hacía, ¿por qué reparaba tan menudamente en los colores de los ángeles, toallas, y guarniciones?"

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she was awake,"[61] they seized on this as evidence that the vision had been a meaningless dream rather than a true possession: "She was told that since it was a dream, why did she relate it as if it had been real? . . . In this it can be seen that everything she has said has been dreams and fictions."[62] Juan de Yegros's affirmation that during his periods of *arrebatamiento* it was with his *oídos corporales* (bodily ears) that he heard "voices [that] dictate to him, without it being under his control," prompted a similar response: "He was told that since he says he heard them, it is a sign that he was not deprived of his senses and thus that what he replies when they ask him something it is voluntarily and he knows what he replies."[63] The doctrinally correct answers to these questions — that the visions occurred in a space that was neither waking or sleep, but *suspendidos* (suspended) or *recogidos* (withdrawn) and that the visions were seen with the *ojos interiores*, or "eyes of the spirit" — were also the answers that rendered all further interrogation and discernment impossible.

DEVILS IN THE COURTROOM

The vision narratives discussed thus far have in common that the speaker attempts to represent a past experience of the ineffable. It is the representation in the present of a presence in the past, or, as de Certeau would have it, of an absence in the past, since it is man's separation from God and from God's language of essences that makes human speech about God necessary, desirable, and at the same time impossible.[64] This is the struggle at the heart of the spiritual autobiography, the mystic poem, and the vision narrative. But there is another genre of mystic discourse in which the temporal separation between language and experience is erased and the supernatural agent himself speaks through the subject. In cases of divine possession, the signs are almost always physical. Sweet smells, levitation, stigmata: this is how the divine speaks from within. Demons, on the other hand, prefer to chat, the fallen status of language being uniquely suited to fallen angels. Again, the need to inscribe this transgressive speech into a system gives rise to a series of practices and

[61]AHN Inq., Leg. 115, Exp. 2: "que le parece que estaba durmiendo porque . . . se quedó dormida, aunque cuando la llevaron iba despierta."

[62]Ibid.: "Fuéle dicho que pues fue sueño, ¿para qué lo contó como cosa verdadera? . . . en esto se conoce que todo lo que ha dicho ha sido sueños y ficciones."

[63]AHN Inq., Leg. 7, Exp. 8: "hablas [que] le dictan sin que sea en su mano." Ibid.: "Fuéle dicho que pues dice que oye, es señal que no está privado de sus sentidos y así que lo que responde cuando le preguntan algo es voluntariamente y sabe lo que responde."

[64]De Certeau, 2007, 58–61.

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a literary genre: the narrative of exorcism.[65] Because the human subject is ostensibly absent in the transcription of the exorcist's dialogue with the demon(s), there is no fallen human who must struggle with language to re-create the ineffable. The demon's speech then in no way resembles the mystic discourse. The demon speaks directly, in language full of proper names and action verbs. He writes manifestos, not poems.

Within the Inquisition archive, there are hundreds of cases of the interrogation of the past mystic experience. Much less common are records of a mystic experience itself in the courtroom. It would seem that God and the devil were for some reason reluctant to make themselves present during an Inquisition trial. A few cases suggest that the problem lay more in the Inquisitors' unwillingness to pay attention to supernatural beings when it was claimed that they appeared. The Inquisitors certainly took seriously the possibility of demonic possession, voluntary and involuntary. They interviewed exorcists as expert witnesses, charged individuals with making satanic pacts, and suggested to self-proclaimed visionaries that their experiences were delusions imposed by the devil. Yet while in theory they admitted the possibility of the sudden and involuntary substitution of a subject with a demonic or divine presence, records of possessions during the proceedings show that in practice, they were not willing to allow for the possibility that defendants' spirits could leave the courtroom while their bodies remained present. A note in María Bautista's case reports that, after months of interrogations, the accused "began to give tremendous yells and she put her body in the form of the cross with her eyes closed and her head trembling . . . and the Inquisitor, having yelled at her and told her that this was all an invention and that she should try to speak the truth and discharge her conscience, she returned to her senses apparently in perfect sanity and she was asked why she used these tricks, and told that she should not seek to trick the tribunal, that they already knew about her

[65]It is important here to distinguish between the exorcists' manual and the narrative of exorcism. The former is a fixed template: "a highly codified, formulaic discourse" used by the exorcist to summon forth demons: Kallendorf, 2005, 210. It leaves spaces for demons to respond and contains reactions to common demonic responses, but it does not contain the demon's voice. When exorcists, consulting or reading directly from the manual, performed an exorcism, the replies of the possessed individual and his/her demons were transcribed (although, as with any act of transcription, some notarial intervention can be assumed). The two texts, while complementary, are formally quite distinct: as Kallendorf has shown, the manual is a fixed, formally sophisticated text of authority, with a carefully scripted narrative that draws on biblical and classical rhetoric; the transcriptions, as de Certeau has shown, are heterogeneous, with multiple voices, languages, and linguistic registers, and include details specific to the time and place of the particular exorcism: see de Certeau, 1988, 244–68.

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tricks."[66] Ironically, María Bautista's sentence — she was gravely reprimanded in the courtroom and advised of the "deceptions she has been under regarding her revelations"[67] — allows for the possibility of demonic intervention that the Inquisitors denied during the proceedings. They admitted in theory (in theology) what they could not prove, and therefore could not accept, in practice.

Hilaire Kallendorf has shown that the exorcist's role, as scripted in the manuals of exorcism, has formal similarities with that of the prosecuting attorney in a classical trial. She argues that the exorcism "thus becomes a trial, a *tribunal domini nostri* [a tribunal before our Lord]" but María Bautista's case shows that by the seventeenth century, the Inquisition, despite being nominally a tribunal of faith, proceeded strictly as a tribunal of men.[68] The juridical process depended on the ability to compel testimony from a rational subject, one whose faculties of memory, will, and speech all coincided and were consistent over time. The accused must have been aware of right and wrong at the time of the possible crime, capable of acting according to that knowledge, and, crucially, the subject present in the courtroom must be able to access that moment via memory and relate it via speech. A true mystic experience in the past — the possession by the devil or an infusion of divine grace — made the first assumptions untenable. As Juan de Yegros, like many others, asserted in his response to charges of public scandal and blasphemy, he had blasphemed in public but "it isn't within his power nor is there anything more he can do and he doesn't know what it is."[69] That is, he had neither control over his acts nor knowledge of his own culpability. The subject who underwent an episode of possession or revelation in the courtroom violated the latter assumption. The Inquisitors could not interrogate a subject who was not there, and, unlike exorcists, they were not invested with the authority to interrogate supernatural beings.

Nowhere is the distinction between exorcists and jurists more starkly illustrated than in the case of Agustina Salgado, accused of hypocritical sanctity and a pact with Satan.[70] Over a year into her trial, during which she had consistently affirmed her confidence that her supernatural experiences had come from God, in the midst of an interrogation her hand began to tremble. When the Inquisitor asked her what was causing this,

[66]AHN Inq., Leg. 102, Exp. 2: "comenzó a dar voces muy tremendas y se puso en cruz, los ojos cerrados y temblando la cabeza . . . y habiéndola dado voces el dicho Señor Inquisidor y dicho que todo aquello era invención, que tratase de decir verdad y descargar su conciencia, tornó en sí, al parecer con mucho juicio, y le fue dicho que ¿para qué hacía aquellos embustes? que no pensase engañar al Tribunal, que ya estaban conocidos sus embelecos."

[67]Ibid.: "los engaños que ha tenido de sus revelaciones."

[68]Kallendorf, 2005, 214.

[69]AHN Inq., Leg. 102, Exp. 2: "no está en su mano ni puede más y que no sabe lo que es."

[70]AHN Inq., Leg. 115, Exp. 3.

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> she responded, laughing, nothing. . . . Nevertheless, after various instances, the Inquisitor, recognizing her lack of words and that her face began to change, called the warden and ordered him to hold her down (because it seemed that some accident had clouded her senses related to her poor health), but when he went to hold her, she threw down her cane, rose from her seat, and threw herself at the warden, punching him and at the same time, her face becoming so horrible, especially her eyes and mouth, this latter all black on the inside, causing the Inquisitors, secretary, and warden notable fear. . . . And despite the fact that she was lame, the not insubstantial forces of the warden, secretary, and doorman were insufficient to restrain her . . . the Inquisitor began to invoke the precept of the Holy Trinity . . . (believing that these were effects of the devil), and although she resisted obeying, the Inquisitor took out a rosary and, repeating the invocations and precepts, she calmed down . . . and returning like someone who has had any other accident, sobbing and looking at those gathered, she exclaimed, "what is this?," repeating Jesus's name.[71]

The Inquisitors began the next audiencia as if nothing unusual had occurred; since the devil could not be incorporated into the human judicial process, the only way to deal with his possible entrance was to deny it entirely. They had to pretend it had not happened because it was not until the verdict that it could be decided whether it had truly happened. And yet it happened again: the scribe recorded the breakdown of the *sala* into absolute chaos, with Agustina responding to the Inquisitor's calls for obedience to the rosary by shouting that she would obey no one, throwing off the warden attempting to restrain her, and tearing the rosary out of the Inquisitor's hand. Unlike in María Bautista's case, the Inquisitor here clearly fully believed in the possession: his response was not that of the rationalist lawyer but that of the exorcist. Yet the final sentence

[71]Ibid.: "respondió riéndose que nada . . . reconociendo dicho Señor Inquisidor la falta de palabras de la declarante y que iba demudándosela de rostro, llamó al alcalde y habiéndole mandado la tuviese (por parecer sería accidente que la turbase los sentidos respecto de su corta salud), al ir a tenerla con excesiva violencia arrojó la muleta; se levantó del asiento, y se tiró al dicho alcalde dándole puñadas y a un mismo tiempo, poniendo el rostro tan horroroso especialmente de ojos y boca, teniendo ésta sumamente negra por la parte de adentro, que causaba notable pavor . . . y sin embargo de hallarse tullida, y de ser algunas las fuerzas del dicho alcalde, portero y secretario que la tenían, no podían sujetarla, y echó al suelo al dicho alcalde, con lo cual, dicho Señor Inquisidor empezó a ponerla preceptos invocando la Santísima Trinidad, y diciendo algunas palabras concernientes (por creer eran efectos del demonio) y aunque tuvo resistencia para obedecer, sacó dicho Señor Inquisidor un rosario, y volviendo a repetir los preceptos e invocaciones, se le echó al cuello, e inmediatamente se serenó, cesando en ejecutar los expresados extremos, y volviendo como quien ha tenido cualquier otro accidente, sollozando y mirando a los circunstantes, exclamó diciendo '¿qué es esto?' repitiendo el nombre de Jesús."

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from the Suprema shows that in 1715, these two roles and spaces could not coexist. Agustina was reprimanded, sentenced to abjure *de levi* and to seclusion and instruction in a hospital for two years,[72] but the Inquisitors on the case were "gravely reprimanded for having proceeded judicially against the devil that Agustina was said to have."[73] The Suprema's sentence reestablishes Agustina as the only legitimate subject, grammatically and judicially. The devil is reduced to a status of object, and then further relegated to judicial irrelevance by the use of impersonal, indirect discourse ("was said to have"). Even the Inquisition did not accept as evidence hearsay with no identified sayer. Furthermore, the Suprema ordered that all records of the proceedings be burned, "so that no memory remains of these proceedings."[74]

CONCLUSION

It is historians' good fortune that in this instance not only was the act of destruction not fulfilled, but the order itself was preserved. One wonders how many similar cases there were in which such an order was carried out. The Suprema's fear of a perceived complicity of the tribunal in a nonrational discourse gives a clue to the real impact of the encounter between the rational and the supernatural as it played out in early modern Spain. The lengthy trials for those accused of interior crimes generally ended in relatively light sentences that, as has been shown, resulted less from an agreed-upon narrative of limited guilt than from a surrender in the face of a process incapable of providing any definitive conclusion. These revealed the Holy Office to be anachronistic, not because its methods were too brutal, but because its methodology was too rational to meet its stated aim of "protecting the faith" when that faith had moved beyond the realm of judicial proof. A docket of suspended cases and behind-closed-doors reprimands could not sustain the pedagogy of fear that had been the Inquisition's strongest weapon.

It is undeniable that a generation of liberal reformers mounted the final campaign that ended the Inquisition, but historians may have simplified the relationship of cause and effect in this narrative. The rationalism that the liberal reformers espoused and that they used to argue against a holy tribunal could well

[72]The Inquisitors could sentence those accused to one of two classes of abjuration: *de levi* or *de vehementi*. The criteria between light or vehement suspicion was quite subjective, but only the latter sentence required that any further convictions be treated as a relapse (with the consequent augmentation of punishment). See Lea, 121–35, for an overview of Inquisition punishments.

[73]AHN Inq., Leg. 115, Exp. 3: "gravemente reprendidos por haber procedido judicialmente contra el diablo que se dijo tenía Agustina."

[74]Ibid.: "para que no quede memoria de tal procedimiento."

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be said to have come from that tribunal itself, or at least from the breach that opened between the tribunal of faith and the faith that, from the later sixteenth century onward, was on trial before the tribunal. Perhaps the light in the Enlightenment was as much a supernatural ray as it was a spark of reason.

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