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SOR JUANA'S "SILENCIO SONORO:" MUSICAL RESPONSES TO HER POETRY

Abstract

The image of Sor Juana as tragic heroine, based on her renunciation of secular letters in the last years of her life, has dominated biographical re-creations in novels and film. They follow the classic operatic plot, in which the destruction of queens and courtesans seems an inevitable result of their transgressive desires. As Catherina Clément has observed, "the emotion is never as poignant as when [the voice] is lifted to die." In the case of Sor Juana, her desires have been represented as sexual as well as intellectual challenges to authority. By focusing on her silence as patriarchal retribution, we risk losing the eloquence and diverse registers of her voice. There are, however, other songs, even in contemporary operas like those by Daniel Crozier and Peter Krask (*With Blood, With Ink*, 1993) and by Carla Lucero and Alicia Gaspar de Alba (*Juana*, in progress). Music, as the most abstract of the arts, offers us other interpretations of Sor Juana's achievement. This article analyzes music that responds to Sor Juana's poetry with voice and diverse instrumental combinations: Marcela Rodríguez's *Funesta: Seis arias sobre textos de sor Juana*; John Eaton's *Sor Juana's Dreams, Sor Juana Songs*, and *Tocotín*; John Adams's Nativity Cantata, *El Niño*, which includes two villancicos; as well as the two contemporary operas.

Keywords: Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz; Biography, Twentieth-Century Music, Twentieth- and Twenty-First Century Opera; John Adams: *El Niño*, Marcela Rodríguez, Jesusa Rodríguez, John Eaton, Peter Krask, Daniel Crozier, Alicia Gaspar de Alba, Carla Lucero, Gender Studies, Colonial Mexican Literatura, Octavio Paz; Rosario Castellanos; Estela Portillo Trambley.

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Resumen

La imagen de Sor Juana como heroína trágica, basada en la renuncia a las letras seculares en los últimos años de su vida, ha dominado las recreaciones biográficas en novelas y cine. Esta narrativa sigue la trama clásica de la ópera en la cual la derrota de reinas y cortesanas parece inevitable, por causa de sus deseos transgresores. Como ha observado Catherine Clément, la voz tiene su mayor encanto en el momento antes de ser silenciada por la muerte. En el caso de Sor Juana estos deseos han sido representados como desafío sexual, además de intelectual, a la autoridad. Al enfocarnos en su silencio como resultado del castigo patriarcal, podemos perder la elocuencia y los diversos registros de su voz. Sin embargo, hay otras canciones, hasta en óperas contemporáneas como las de Peter Krask y Daniel Crozier (*With Blood, With Ink*, 1993) y de Carla Lucero y Alicia Gaspar de Alba (*Juana*, en preparación). La música, siendo el arte más abstracto, nos brinda otras interpretaciones de la vida y obra de Sor Juana. Este artículo analiza algunos ejemplos de música que responde a la poesía de Sor Juana con diversos instrumentos musicales y voz: *Funesta: Seis arias sobre textos de sor Juana* de Marcela Rodríguez; las composiciones de John Eaton, *Sor Juana's Dreams*, *Sor Juana Songs* y *Tocotín*; y la cantata de John Adams, *El Niño*, que incluye dos villancicos; además de las dos óperas contemporáneas.

Palabras clave: Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz: biografía, música contemporánea, ópera de los siglos XX y XXI, John Adams: *El Niño*, Marcela Rodríguez, Jesusa Rodríguez, John Eaton, Peter Krask, Daniel Crozier, Alicia Gaspar de Alba, Carla Lucero, estudios de género, literatura colonial mexicana, Octavio Paz, Rosario Castellanos, Estela Portillo Trambley.

In the past ten years, Sor Juana has become as visible a cultural icon of Mexican femininity as Frida Kahlo. In addition to the circulation of her image on Mexican currency, Sor Juana is clearly in circulation as "cultural capital;" she has even appeared as a "lucha libre" character in an advertising campaign for the Universidad del Claustro de Sor Juana.¹ While her earliest biographer depicted her as saintly, she has more recently been claimed by Mexican gays and lesbians as a different kind of patron saint. Sor Juana was aware of her image as a commodity in her own time. As Frederick Luciani has pointed out in *Literary Self-Fashioning*, Sor Juana contributed substantially to the creation of her public persona, using the daring but doomed, quintessentially baroque figures of Icarus and Phaëton. Her ironic references to the Phoenix can be read as a lively rejection

of attempts to market her as an icon of sterile self-destruction (quien quiere encenizarme, / o enfenizarme) in the *Romance epistolar* 49 "¡Válgate Apolo por hombre!" (Epistolary ballad 49 'Apollo help you, as you're a man!')² She ridicules the marketing of her image: "Qué dieran los saltimbancos, / a poder, por agarrarme / y llevarme, como Monstruo, / por esos andurriales / de Italia y Francia . . . diciendo: "Quien ver el Fénix / quisiere, dos cuartos pague."" (What would the mountebanks not give / to seize me and display me, / taking me round like a Monster, through / byroads and lonely places / in Italy and France . . . crying: / 'If the Phoenix you would view, / step up and pay two farthings.')³ Sor Juana's poem closes by mocking the absurd arrogance of those who claim intellectual property rights to the image of her they have created, "por modo de privilegio de inventor." (By way of the privilege that is shown / any esteemed inventor.)⁴ The present-day marketing of the "Fénix" is symptomatic not only of twenty-first-century mass culture, but also of the accessibility of Sor Juana as icon, potentially obscuring the formidable complexities and ambiguities of her writing. Ironically, what cannot be known: the poet's character, desires, and motivation, has upstaged what can be known: the vocal registers, intertexts and historical context of her poetry.

The image of Sor Juana as a tragic heroine has dominated critical and creative responses to her work, with some significant exceptions. In *Sor Juana o las trampas de la fe* (Sor Juana or The Traps of Faith), Octavio Paz uses the term "seduction" to explain why scholars have struggled with a multitude of "enigmas,"⁵ foremost among them the relative silence of her final years. This apparent renunciation of humanistic studies has been linked inextricably to her death, inscribing her in a melodramatic narrative of the brilliant and daring woman who is destined for destruction, following the pattern of doomed literary and operatic heroines whose courage, beauty, strength of spirit, and passionate desire flashes briefly onstage and is inevitably extinguished. As Catherine Clément observes regarding nineteenth-century opera, "The emotion is never more poignant than at the moment when the voice is lifted to die."⁶ The image of Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz as a larger-than-life figure destined to be "undone," to paraphrase the English title of Clément's study of operatic heroines, has attracted the attention of artists in diverse creative media. Currently, the best-known example of this narrative

is María Luisa Bemberg's *Yo, la peor de todas* (1990, *I, the Worst of All*), which attempts to explain Sor Juana's fall from "tenth muse" to abject penitent in terms of secular and ecclesiastical authorities' opposition to her purported lesbian attachment to her patron María Luisa Manrique de Lara, Condesa de Paredes.⁷

It is all too tempting to read Sor Juana's supposed renunciation of humanistic letters as a prelude to her death. In discussing the documents signed in her last years, however, Marie-Cécile Bénassy-Berling cautions: "Parece que estamos presenciando un empate, un *modus vivendi*, más bien que una derrota" (It would seem that we are witnessing a pact, a *modus vivendi*, rather than a defeat), citing as evidence "la ausencia de cualquier acto público de retractación de su actividad intelectual por parte de Sor Juana, la compra de la celda con visto bueno del arzobispo en el año crítico de 1692" (the absence of any public act of renunciation of her intellectual activity on the part of Sor Juana, the purchase of her cell with the approval of the archbishop in the critical year 1692), the evidence that she continued writing, albeit sporadically, and the continuing negotiations for support from a complex network of secular and ecclesiastical allies.⁸ The familiar narrative of a brilliant, daring woman suppressed by patriarchal authorities imposes upon Sor Juana's obvious accomplishments the perspective of failure, occluding the baroque richness and complexity of her texts. Geoff Guevara-Geer points out, "As Sor Juana recedes into the far distance of her own withdrawal, her pages run the double risk—for today's readers—of becoming the martyr's testimony or the cautionary tale."⁹ Instead, he argues that, since silence is the condition of writing, it is possible, and necessary, to find in Sor Juana's silence, and her references to silence, an approach to her writing.

After the appearance of Bemberg's film, novels in English by Alicia Gaspar de Alba (*Sor Juana's Second Dream*) and Paul Anderson (*Hunger's Brides* and *Breath of Heaven*) have drawn upon extensive research to locate the poet's embodied experience, imagination, and desire in the geography and politics of colonial New Spain. Both novels release the fictional Sor Juana from the limiting model of the "self-destructive heroine"¹⁰ by focusing on her corporeal as well as her intellectual experience. Gaspar de Alba recreates the passionate, daring, and conflictive relationships with her patron the Condesa

de Paredes and a *cimarrona* (escaped slave), among other figures, while Anderson traces the development of Sor Juana's relationship with her powerful, politically astute confessor Antonio Núñez de Miranda. This essay is an attempt to find other re-creations of Sor Juana's poetic consciousness in contemporary music: Daniel Crozier and Peter Krask's opera, *With Blood, With Ink* (1993); Marcela Rodríguez's *Funesta: Seis arias sobre textos de sor Juana* (1996; Mournful: Six Arias on Texts by Sor Juana); John Eaton's settings of her poems for voice, instruments, and electronics, *Sor Juana Songs* (1998), *Tocotín* (1998; a song in Nahuatl), *El divino Narciso* (1998; The Divine Narcissus); and *Sor Juana's Dreams* (1999); John Adams's Nativity oratorio *El Niño* (2000), and composer Carla Lucero and librettist Alicia Gaspar de Alba's opera in progress, *Juana*.

It is ironically fitting that Sor Juana's treatise on music, *El caracol* (The Snail), is the missing text whose title is known but not its *fortuna*. She mentions its title in the *Romance* (ballad) to the Condesa de Paredes, "Después de estimar mi amor" (After you esteemed my love)¹¹ and her discussion of harmony as a spiral rather than a circle, among her other references to music, has given scholars a tantalizing glimpse of her musical expertise and her development of a theory of music through geometry. The poet's interest in musical theory and her connections with composers and musicians of her own time have been discussed in significant scholarly articles by Mario Ortiz, Aurelio Tello, and Robert Stevenson. Mario Ortiz has demonstrated the sophisticated knowledge of music theory evidenced in *Loa* 384, "Encomiástico poema a los años de la Excma. Sra. Condesa de Galve" (Encomiastic Poem for the Birthday of her Excellency, the Countess of Galve)¹² written to be performed by allegorical characters representing musical notes. The detailed research of Aurelio Tello and Robert Stevenson has uncovered Sor Juana's collaborations with the chapelmasters who composed music for her villancicos (carols). Musicologists are still in the process of reconstructing her musical knowledge and theories, although with a firmer grounding than some biographical fictions that have proliferated in the past fifteen years. Sor Juana's thoughts on music as system bridge the aesthetic and the scientific; their loss frustrates scholars, but it also reminds us that her secrets are not limited to the biographical.

Instrumental and vocal compositions based on Sor Juana's poetry have the potential to allow her writing to resonate without the damping effects of biographical narratives, verisimilitude, and causality, however fictionalized. Sor Juana's profoundly musical sensibility is audible throughout the *silvas* (randomly rhymed seven- and eleven-syllable lines) of the *Sueño* and the diverse metrical forms in which sor Juana displayed her lyric virtuosity. This lyricism is displayed in Marcela Rodríguez's *Funesta: Seis arias sobre textos de sor Juana*. Rodríguez's work with texts was already well recognized, from her opera *La sunamita* (1991), based on a short story by Inés Arredondo. She composed *Funesta* for soprano (Lourdes Ambríz on the compact disk recording), piano, string quartet, string bass, and percussion. Her taste for the ironic humor and wit of the Baroque is evidenced in another series on the same compact disk, *Adúltera enemiga* (Adulterous enemy), music for eight *canciones* (Italianate poems) from the plays of Juan Ruiz de Alarcón. The high-pitched nervous activity of violins in *Funesta* contrasts with sustained low notes throughout the six arias, conveying the anxieties of the Baroque through melodic lines whose intervals suggest a minor-key atmosphere. Rodríguez acknowledges stylistic traces of Spanish, Italian, and English renaissance and baroque composers in her work, and admits to "flirting" with tonality: "Me gusta el discurso claro y dramático. Al orquestar juego con la repetición de temas en los diferentes instrumentos al estilo barroco: una suerte de preguntas y respuestas aunque utilizando, claro está, texturas modernas y las nuevas técnicas de los instrumentos, en un lenguaje atonal pero al mismo tiempo 'coqueteando', en ciertos momentos, con algunos centros tonales." (I like clear and dramatic discourse. When I orchestrate I play with the repetition of themes among the different instruments in the baroque style: a kind of question and response although I also use, of course, modern textures and new instrumental techniques, in an atonal language while at the same time flirting, at certain moments, with tonal centers.)¹³

The sonorities of the opening lines of the *Primero sueño* and the silence to which it refers (with typically baroque profusions of words) are the basis for the fourth and sixth of Rodríguez's *Arias*, but the composer was inspired by sonnets and *romances* as well. The first of the six is a setting of lines 29–32 from Sor Juana's Romance 22, dedicated to the viceroy Tomás Antonio de la Cerda,

Marqués de la Laguna: "vos, de quien se teme el Sol / que cuando su luz envía, / o la encubréis con las alas / o la agotéis con la vista . . ." (You by whom the sun fears its light may be overshadowed by your wings or exhausted by your [eagle-like] vision . . .).¹⁴ It begins with high, birdlike phrases played by the two violins while the soprano sings in an rhythmic pattern that is used often to isolate single syllables throughout the six arias. This aria ends with the piano's melodic line silenced between the single, drawn-out notes in two distinct voices, the "wing" of the cello's line, joined by a violin. The following aria is a highly dramatic setting of *Soneto* 164. The poetic depiction of love's suffering is dramatized with slow ascents, and melody confined to a tightly restricted chromatic range; gossipy high violins; and low, threatening activity on cello, punctuated by dramatically exclamations of "Baste ya de rigores, mi bien, baste" (Enough of harshness, beloved, enough)¹⁵ and the single shouted word "¡Baste!" to end the aria.

Rodríguez's music could be described as baroque in its dramatization of conflict represented in the briefest of poetic images: competition between natural and human power, or the sadomasochistic suffering of courtly love. These passages also comment on the poetic conventions and mythological traditions with which Sor Juana's readers were well acquainted. The text of the third aria is drawn from *Romance* 19, "Lo atrevido de un pincel" (Phyllis, a brush's boldness)¹⁶ one of Sor Juana's passionate poems to her viceregal patron, María Luisa Manrique de Lara, Condesa de Paredes. It is not clear whether it was Sor Juana or an editor who added the title "Puro amor, que ausente y sin deseo de indecencias, puede sentir lo que el más profano." (A Pure love, however distant, eschewing all unseemliness, may feel whatever the most profane might feel.)¹⁷ Rodríguez chose lines 53–68 for this aria, in which the speaker represents the spiritual purity of her love: "solamente del alma / en religiosos incendios / arde sacrificio puro / de adoración y silencio." (only when the soul / is afire with holiness / does sacrifice glow pure, / is adoration mute.)¹⁸ The lyric speaker denounces those whose adoration is a pretext for conquest: ". . . siendo / indignos aun del castigo, / mal aspiran al premio!" (Not even worthy of punishment, they aspire to the reward!).¹⁹ In other words, love that expects to be reciprocated debases the beloved to an "indigno, bajo trofeo" (debased trophy) of sexual conquest that characterized early

modern poetic representations of masculine desire for women. This and similar poems by Sor Juana to the vicereines Leonor Carreto and María Luisa Manrique de Lara address them as aristocratic superiors and, as Dugaw and Powell point out, employ “erotically charged, not just affectionate, language that often plays with the reader’s possible discomfort at such woman-to-woman ardor” while also drawing its power from the role of the Virgin Mary and female purity in the early modern imaginary.²⁰ By asserting that this love does not seek recompense from the beloved, Sor Juana parodies petrarchist commonplaces while exalting her female patrons as classical deities embodying the highest spiritual qualities.

In the fourth aria, “De primero sueño” (From the *First Dream*) the syllables enunciated by the soprano are punctuated by slightly exaggerated pauses and echoed by single, isolated notes played on steel drum²¹ to give an unearthly, metallic aura to the silence of the night creatures in *Primero sueño*, lines 19–24:

y en la quietud contenta
de imperio silencioso,
sumisas sólo voces consentía
de las nocturnas aves,
tan obscuras, tan graves,
que aun el silencio no se interrumpía.²²
(Within which soundless purview
of its silent realm,
it brooked none but the muted voices
of the birds of darkness,
sounds so deep and dim
as not to break the silence.)²³

The cello and bass provide a dark background of sustained notes, progressing toward the alien, scratchy textures of strings played close to the bridge. The critic José Antonio Alcaraz uses paradox and tactile imagery to describe the fourth aria as “redactado con sibarítico ascetismo” (composed with sybaritic asceticism) and praises its “hermosa vocalización culminante, que contrasta con el tejido instrumental—se disocia y simultáneamente acompaña—hecho de hirientes filamentos. Las trayectorias del canto ora reptan sinuosas, y se dirigen con firmeza hacia el centro de su espacio,

en una intrincada geometría sonora de vigorosa elocuencia." (A beautiful final vocalization that contrasts with the instrumental texture—dissociated and simultaneously accompanying—woven with piercing filaments. The trajectories of song move sinuously and firmly toward the center of balance, in an intricate sonorous geometry of vigorous eloquence.)²⁴

Using lines from the second of Sor Juana's "Tres letras para cantar" (Three song-texts) the fifth aria addresses paradoxes of suffering: "Afuera ansias mías; / no el respeto os embarace: / que es lisonja de la pena / perder el miedo a los males." (Away, my cares; don't be burdened by respect: for it flatters pain to lose fear of misfortune.)²⁵ The instrumental accompaniment begins with agitation in strings and piano, and proceeds to arcs of glistening slides and punctuation by gong and tympani. The sixth aria, titled "Funesta," despite the brevity of its poetic text, is the most dramatic, bringing the first two lines of the *Sueño* together with the title of Bemberg's film, a melding of the closings of two distinct documents signed by Sor Juana: "Piramidal, funesta, / de la tierra nacida sombra / yo, la peor de todas." (Pyramidal, lugubrious, / a shadow born of earth / I, the worst of all.) As in the fifth aria, the sinuous melodic lines of the soprano voice are punctuated with long pauses. The timbre of strings played on the bridge sound distant in contrast with the immediacy of the sinuous melodic vocal lines. Rodríguez's arias evoke fluidity of images, transformation, and evanescence.

The premiere of *Funesta* in 1995 was staged as a dramatic interpretation by Jesusa Rodríguez, performed ten times between December 1995 and March 1996 at the Centro Cultural Universitario. Luz Aurora Pimentel's liner notes to the CD note the plasticity of the music and its precise coordination with Jesusa Rodríguez's *mise-en-scène*: Sor Juana approaches a bed that opens like a tomb. "A sus pies, un pozo, terrible abismo que luego se revelará espejo para reflejar las alturas; un abismo especular al que se tendrá que arrojar para poder elevarse, para ir al encuentro de su propia alma." (At her feet, a well, a dreadful abyss that will later reveal itself as a mirror that reflects the sky; a specular abyss into which she must leap in order to rise and encounter her own soul.)²⁶ The performer's movements embody those of the soul freeing itself: she removes twelve oppressively heavy layers of an elaborate habit: "capas

y tocados, chaquetillas, faldas, hopalandas y refajos, perfecto en su jerarquización, exquisito en su confección, doce estratos, verdaderas capas geológicas de las que la monja enclaustrada tiene que desvestirse para poder volar."²⁷ In the second aria, Sor Juana is in bed, dreaming of love and pain, while the Soul unwinds the last of the "ataduras," a long bandage (or shroud) that suggests, as it unfolds, visual signs to the cadences of the music. The rhythms of Jesusa Rodríguez's choreography and lighting effects create what Luz Aurora Pimentel describes as "spatial scansion." Jesusa Rodríguez's use of mirrors and the vertical dimension of the performance space, as well as a Sor Juana concealed and stifled by layers of clothing and then visibly freed to pursue her vision, offered to the audience a visual, theatrical interpretation of the soul's flight and its transcendent oneiric experience in the *Sueño* as well as the anguished suffering encoded in the petrarchism of other poems. Without the theatrical performance, *Funesta* nonetheless conveys great expressive intensity and a spatial sense of musical lines and textures.

Two major U.S. opera composers, John Eaton and John Adams, have created vocal, choral, and instrumental settings for Sor Juana's poetry. In an interview Adams refers to Sor Juana as "a combination of Emily Dickinson and Hildegard of Bingen—a very spiritual figure, but her work has a truly radical intensity. I think of Olivier Messiaen when I read her poetry. It's religious, ecstatic, and not very accessible."²⁸ Making complex musical compositions accessible is clearly a concern of his: "With a difficult piece of painting or sculpture, you can walk away from it. . . . Feeling stuck in a concert with a difficult piece can be a very hostile experience."²⁹ Adams observes that, in part because of the complexity of his music, his audience is relatively small: "It will maybe grow a little bit as I grow older and after I'm no longer around."³⁰ John Eaton is also concerned with the audience for his music. He points out that it is the listeners' experience of the "sweep" of the music that interests him, rather than the electronics, tuning, or microtones in themselves. In an interview, Eaton recounts the excitement of working with musicians in creating performances of his innovative music, although he also acknowledges the necessity of finding dedicated performers willing to work with very demanding scores.³¹

Well known for his expressive microtonal music, Eaton draws upon a background in jazz to compose operas and musical settings for poetic texts by a wide range of poets including John Donne, Emily Dickinson, Charles Baudelaire, Rainer Maria Rilke, William Butler Yeats, Federico García Lorca, Wallace Stevens, Leopoldo Lugones, and Hart Crane. Among his best known operas are *Myshkin* (1971); *Danton and Robespierre* (1978); *Cry of Clytemnaestra* (1980); *The Tempest* (1985); and *Don Quixote* (1994). Eaton's collaboration in the development of synthesizers in the 1960s was directly linked to his search for techniques to produce a greater range of emotional expression with vocal and instrumental resonances. Thus, he is uniquely suited to compose musical settings for Sor Juana's poetry, and a dramatic cantata based on *El divino Narciso* that includes "live electronics ad libitum" in its orchestration.³² Eaton's settings of "Sor Juana's Dreams" premiered at the Mexican Fine Arts Museum in Chicago during the Sor Juana Festival in 1998, together with settings of "Tocotín" and three sonnets, and was performed by the Pocket Opera Players in New York, August 17, 2005, at Symphony Space's Leonard Nimoy Thalia Theater.

Eaton's enthusiasm for the rich potential of music that is unusually difficult to perform makes him an apt composer to match the baroque complexity of Sor Juana's texts. Despite the challenges for performers, however, he is confident that they and their audiences can hear the microtones without lengthy technical explanations, and that microtonality has become not just a possibility for composers to explore, but a necessity for musical expression.³³ Eaton's phenomenally gifted wife Nelda Nelson-Eaton has the ideal voice for Eaton's music, and sings on all the recordings. *Tocotín* is written for mezzo-soprano and guitar. It begins meditatively and ends ecstatically, dancing and flowing with the rhythms of Sor Juana's Nahuatl text. "Sor Juana Songs," comprised of musical settings for three sonnets, "Deténte, sombra de mi bien esquivo" (Semblance of my elusive love, hold still),³⁴ "Si los riesgos del mar considerara" (If men weighed the hazards of the sea),³⁵ and "De un funesto moral la negra sombra" (A dismal mulberry tree's black shade)³⁶ employ quarter tones and 3/8 and 5/4 time signatures. Among other resonance-producing techniques, the soloist is instructed to whisper into the piano strings. The first syllables of "Deténte, sombra de mi bien esquivo" are punctuated with dramatically long rests between

clusters of notes. In "Si los riesgos del mar considerara," the pianist accompanying the mezzo-soprano plays agitated chromatic leaps, imitating the daring of the poem. In the last line, the lower pitch and slowing of the voice with long pauses between phrases conveys the process of stepping slowly, first with caution and then decisively in the last line, "toda la vida," while the piano continues *molto agitato*. "De un funesto moral la negra sombra," a sonnet on the myth of Pyramus and Thisbe, begins and ends with dramatic cries of "Tisbe! Tisbe!" as the singer directs her voice into the piano strings for greater resonance. The shouts are reduced to sobbing in the last iteration of "Tisbe!"

Eaton's musical setting of selected passages from the *Sueño* is written for mezzo-soprano (again, Nelda Nelson-Eaton sings magnificently on the CD), guitar, and piano, using quarter and sixth tones, 9/16 and 10/16 time signatures, note clusters, and electronic enhancements. The guitarist is instructed to shake the instrument, bend notes, play dissonant harmonics and quarter tones, and pull an extra, resonating string braided between the metal strings of the guitar. In the opening line of the poem, the singer's voice rises more than an octave, and then falls dramatically, with a long trill on the "r" in "Piramidal" that resembles the sound of a rigid object falling down the stepped sides of a pyramid. Ethereal effects and shimmering tremolos are produced on the guitar by false harmonics and a glass cylinder, and on the piano by using the performer's fingernails and an electric brush on different parts of the strings. The singer is instructed to whisper into the piano, as in "Sor Juana Songs," to produce another haunting sound. Beginning with the description of dawn and awakening in line 937, "A recoger los negros escuadrones" (to gather her swarthy squadrons in)³⁷ the notation indicates a speaking voice, with the instruction, "Low shout!" The effect is of a harsh military command. This passage contrasts sharply with the luminous fluidity of the voice in the rest of the poem. With the last line, "y yo despierta," the voice leaps two octaves, dizzily airborne, supported only by a light arpeggio of harmonics on guitar. Both "Songs" and "Dreams" demand a nearly impossible intensity and range in the voice as well as constant modifications of the accompanying instruments,³⁸ difficult to reproduce in a recording; however, even the experience of hearing a recorded performance conveys a gripping immediacy.

John Adams is well known as a minimalist; his compositional style is characterized by repetition, steady pulse, and consonant harmony, but in each work Adams explores new textures and musical traditions. He speaks of creating "big architectural spaces in music through the manipulation of patterns and repetition," achieving "a real sense of space in music."³⁹ His influences range from Charles Ives, Aaron Copland, Steve Reich, and Lou Harrison to jazz and pop.⁴⁰ Adams's collaboration with Peter Sellars, beginning in 1983, has produced operas that respond to controversial political events with large, compassionate gestures: *Nixon in China* (1987); *The Death of Klinghoffer* (1991); *I Was Looking at the Ceiling and Then I Saw the Sky* (1995); and *Doctor Atomic* (about J. Robert Oppenheimer) (2005).

Adams describes *El Niño* as the fulfillment of a desire "to write a *Messiah*. . . . But [he] had always wanted to write a work about birth . . . the miracle of birth itself," not only the birth of a holy child, but the female experience of pregnancy and labor, with women's voices in the foreground.⁴¹ Sellars's role as collaborator was to draw Adams's attention to poetry by Hispanic women: Gabriela Mistral, Rosario Castellanos, and Sor Juana. Other poetic texts are by Hildegard of Bingen, Rubén Darío, and Vicente Huidobro. Part I of *El Niño* is focused on the Virgin Mary, including a memorable "Magnificat" sung by soprano Dawn Upshaw; and Rosario Castellanos's poems "La anunciación" (The Annunciation) and "Se habla de Gabriel" (Talking About Gabriel). Part Two shifts the emotional atmosphere from joyful anticipation to fear and suffering, widening the scope to Biblical accounts of the Slaughter of the Innocents and the massacres at Tlatelolco in 1521 and 1968. Sor Juana's *villancico*, "Pues mi Dios ha nacido a penar" (Because my Lord was born to suffer)⁴² opens Part Two of the oratorio, with the late mezzo-soprano Lorraine Hunt Lieberson as soloist in the 2001 recording. Adams orchestrated the *villancico* with harp and strings forming a shimmering, feathery background whose texture shifts to chorus, flute, and violin. Baritone Willard White begins the second *villancico* in Part Two, "Pues está tiritando" (Since Love is shivering)⁴³ followed by soaring melodic arcs sung by the mezzo-soprano while sections of the chorus sing the antiphonal *letra*, "1—¿Quién le acude? / 2—¡El agua! / 3 ¡La tierra! / 4 ¡El aire! / 1—¡No, sino el fuego!" (1—Who will come to his aid? / 1—Water! / 3 Earth! / 4 Air! / 1—No, fire will!)"⁴⁴ Near the end of the

villancico, the orchestral background faintly suggests strumming on a lute, guitar, or vihuela. Dawn Upshaw recalls her involvement with *El Niño* as “life-changing,” and “a real sacred experience” that enabled her to expand her emotional range,” particularly in the outraged lines of Castellanos’s “Memorial de Tlatelolco.”⁴⁵ Part Two concludes with Sor Juana’s *villancico* “Pues está tiritando,”⁴⁶ verses from the apocryphal gospel of Matthew, and Castellanos’s “Una palmera” (A Palm Tree). The oratorio ends, appropriately, with the word “poesía” (poetry).

Sung or recited, the passion, theatricality, defiance, and irreverent mockery in Sor Juana’s poetry is irrepressible. This aspect of her writing is seldom seen in scholarly publications or on stage, with the delightful exception of the Royal Shakespeare Company’s 2004 production of *House of Desires*, which used Catherine Boyle’s translation of *Los empeños de una casa*. It is also in evidence in the now out-of-print recording “Sor Juana Hoy” (Sor Juana Today), an audio version of Mexican actor Ofelia Medina’s captivating performances of Sor Juana’s poetry with music, dancing, masks, and puppets.⁴⁷

Although Adams and Eaton, influential opera composers, have opted for settings of Sor Juana’s poetry rather than recreating her life as opera, two other composers have taken up the challenge of staging multi-media performances requiring extraordinary resources for performers and performance spaces: Daniel Crozier, with librettist Peter Krask, and Carla Lucero, with poet and novelist Alicia Gaspar de Alba. Before discussing these two works, it will be useful to note for the purpose of comparison the diverse strategies of recreating Sor Juana’s consciousness in three plays that were written before Paz’s study and Bemberg’s film: Rosario Castellanos’s *El eterno femenino* (1973, *The Eternal Feminine*), Electa Arenal’s *This Life Within Me Won’t Keep Still* (1975), and Estela Portillo Trambley’s *Sor Juana* (1981). These plays, like the two operas, take significant liberties with character as well as plot, to convey distinct aesthetic, cultural, and ideological interpretations.

Rosario Castellanos’s feminist rewriting of Mexican history, *El eterno femenino*, endows Sor Juana with the playful and unsettling eroticism of sexual ambiguity. The character tantalizes the onstage and offstage audience with the announcement, “Sólo en una ocasión

estuve a punto de romper mi aislamiento. Pero, claro, todo se volvió agua de borrajas, comedia de enredo." (Only on one occasion was I on the point of ending my isolation. But, of course, everything came to nothing, a comedy of intrigues.)⁴⁸ Sor Juana as female-to-male transvestite is irresistible to writers, filmmakers, and students of her writing; in Castellanos's brief *comedia de enredo*, Juana disguises herself as the faithless lover of a pregnant young woman at the viceregal court, who tartly dismisses Juana's beauty and intellect as sterile and unfeminine: "Bajo las faldas, nada más que silogismos." (Beneath her petticoat / are naught but syllogisms.)⁴⁹ As she crops her hair and changes to a page's costume, Juana anticipates her own poetic gesture of concealing what is under the skirts, or the nun's habit: "Sólo sé que aquí me vine / para que, si soy mujer, / ninguno lo verifique . . ." (I only know that I came here / so that if I be woman, / no one can truly say . . .)⁵⁰ Castellanos's theatrical fiction playfully circumvents Paz's struggles with the conundrum of the female subject in an exclusively male intellectual environment. After Sor Juana reveals her identity, Castellanos's stage directions emphasize the ambivalence of desire between her and Celia: "Se contemplan un momento las dos, paralizadas por imanes contrarios: el que las atrae—lo que debe ser sugerido muy delicadamente—y el que las separa. . . . Las espectadoras de la escena anterior parecen confusas y no saben de qué manera reaccionar. . . . JUANA: (Tomando las cosas a la ligera): Pero esto que acaban ustedes de ver no es siquiera una diversión. Es, si acaso, una mera versión." (The two contemplate each other for a moment, both paralyzed by contrary forces: one that attracts them—which must be suggested very delicately—and one that separates them. . . . The spectators of the previous scene seem confused and do not know which way to react. . . . JUANA (taking things lightly). But what you have seen is only an entertainment. It's, perhaps, just one version.)⁵¹ Rather than attempt to recreate the moral perception of seventeenth-century New Spain, Castellanos holds the mirror up to a twentieth-century audience.

Electa Arenal's *This Life Within Me Won't Keep Still*, a one-woman play whose scenes alternate between Anne Bradstreet and Sor Juana, premiered at the 1979 Modern Language Association meeting in San Francisco. The staging of the two writers' careers uses only the poets' words and presents them as parallel until Act II, in which

Bradstreet's scene is titled "Crisis / The Fire and Affirmation," while Sor Juana's is "Crisis / The Flames of Persecution and Betrayal."⁵² By using Sor Juana's references to the self-immolation and rebirth of the phoenix in the final scene, Arenal emphasizes Sor Juana's self-conscious confrontation with her contemporaries and with posterity. As noted above, the poet herself, wary of the dangers of exaggerated admiration and antagonism toward her anomalous intellect, ironically confronted the label of "Phoenix" (etiquetas de Fénix) in *Romance epistolar* 49.⁵³ Arenal envisions the transformation of the two American "Tenth Muses" through crisis in parallel scenes, both titled "Fame/Woman/Lineage and Tradition." Sor Juana's final scene affirms her immortality through her writing, using images of flight from *Primero sueño* and ends with the *estribillo* of the *villancico* to Catherine of Alexandria: "Victory! Victory!"⁵⁴

As Marie-Cécile Bénassy-Berling points out, drawing on Elías Trabulse's research on Sor Juana's final years, the argument that Sor Juana's renunciation arose from a genuine spiritual conversion has been discredited.⁵⁵ It is outweighed by the evidence of pressure from her superiors, including her confessor's reluctance to meet with her and the confiscation of her books and her musical and scientific instruments, but the religious explanation has continuing value for a narrative that attributes of agency in place of capitulation. Estela Portillo Trambley's *Sor Juana*, written the year before Paz's study was published,⁵⁶ changes several key historical facts to decolonize Sor Juana. She constructs the narrative of a brilliant *mestiza* (rather than the historical *criolla*) torn between European high culture and her awareness of the oppression of slaves and indigenous communities in New Spain. Her renunciation is framed by the wisdom offered her by a slave with whom she grew up as a sibling, as she departs for the capital: brilliant though she may be, she is only a "dancing bear" for the viceregal court. Her confessor, Antonio Núñez de Miranda, is a *mestizo* priest, rather than the powerful *criollo* Jesuit book-censor who was feared by the Viceroy himself.⁵⁷ Trambley depicts him as preaching a kind of liberation theology: "I am a Mexican, so I fight! . . . because their hunger, their pain, their enslavement, their deaths wound me, consume me . . ."⁵⁸ This Sor Juana does not retreat; rather, she joins her confessor in ministering to the poor. The playwright reinforces the identification of Juana with indigenous culture through music, ending scenes with the sound of a small

indigenous reed flute played first by the slave and then by Juana. These three plays present a spirited Sor Juana: in Castellanos, her sly playfulness; in Arenal, the celebration of brilliant intellect and determination to pursue knowledge; and in Trambley, a decolonized subjectivity.

Crozier and Krask's *With Blood, With Ink* premiered at the Peabody Conservatory in Baltimore, Maryland in 1993. It won the 1994 Chamber Opera Competition of the National Opera Association, and has been successful enough to be revived twice, in 2000 at the Peabody and again in 2004 at the Boston Conservatory. Its title echoes Sor Juana's *villancico* praising the intellectual achievements, now lost, of the martyred St. Catherine of Alexandria. Two singers perform the dream in which Sor Juana, in her final illness, recalls her younger self together with her nurturing patron the Condesa de Paredes, and the process through which her ecclesiastical superiors increasingly became her antagonists. The opera consists of ten scenes, structured on a dual perspective: "Dying Juana's deathbed knowledge of her life and young Juana's discovery of her life is the opera's central drama" as she recalls her youth and intellectual maturity but is unable to warn her younger self of what is to come.⁵⁹ The opera is scored for voices with a chamber orchestra; the sound is dramatic and lyrical, with the luminous Gregorian chanting of a women's chorus opening each scene. Percussion and occasional syncopation mark the vocal expression of outrage and condemnation by Sor Juana's male superiors, while the complex texture of the duets between Sor Juana and the Condesa reflects the constraints of their circumstances. Their relationship is first depicted as one of mother and daughter; the libretto emphasizes Sor Juana's sense of abandonment, having no known father and being sent away by her mother. Their love is declared in the simplest possible terms in Scene Five, neither implying nor disavowing the physicality of the erotic. Although María Luisa embraces Sor Juana earlier in the opera, it is in order to comfort her, maternally rocking her as if she were her child.

In the introduction to the libretto, Krask and Crozier highlight the "cruel and monumental injustice" of Sor Juana's knowledge of "who she was in a world that found that knowledge unacceptable,"⁶⁰ but they also warn prospective directors against political interpretations.

One of the nuns who watches over Sor Juana's deathbed in Scene One speculates that Sor Juana wants to die "to meet her Father in heaven [Mother in the recorded performance]" but the other nun replies. "No! To escape her silence!"⁶¹ Despite the deathbed setting of the opera, the librettist chose the most intense images of light from her poetry, notably the lines first sung in Scene One: "I was born where sunrays stared straight at me, / not slanted as they do elsewhere. / I was a reflection of that blazing sun," a translation of "nací, / donde los rayos Solares / me mirasen de hito en hito, / no bizcos, como a otras partes."⁶² The same lines are echoed in at the end of Scene 7: "I was born where sunrays stared straight at me. / Where sunrays . . . / Where sunrays . . . / Blinded me alone." Crozier describes the following scene: as the dying Sor Juana fades, "with arms outstretched through the haze of years and memories, she embraces her younger self with the words, 'Enough of suffering, my love. Enough,'"⁶³ Each of the nine scenes is introduced by the choral chanting of the Gregorian *Requiem*, with an emphasis on light and direct references to the onstage action within the Latin texts: "Et Lux Perpetua" (And Perpetual Light), "Inter Oves Locum Praesta" (Among [Your] Sheep Offer [Me] a Place—the protagonist expects to be protected among the "sheep" in the Jeronymite convent), "Oro Supplex" (Kneeling I Pray—Sor Juana takes her vow of humility), "Lux Aeterna" (Eternal Light—the poet reveals her luminous vision of God), "Te Decet Hymnus" (Thou Shalt Have Praise—planning for publication of Sor Juana's poetry), "Liber Scriptus" (A Book [Will Be Brought Forth]—the poet sends her poems to the viceregal palace), "Dies Irae" (Day of Wrath—the Archbishop banishes Sor Juana from the convent), "Confutatis Maledictis" (When the Accused are Confounded—Sor Juana's contrition wins over her estranged confessor and she renews her vows), and "Requiem Aeterna" (Eternal Rest—ending with her deathbed pronouncement: "Never fear to be destroyed").⁶⁴ This prose description of Krask and Crozier's use of Latin chant in dialogue with English translations of her poetry might imply weightiness, but the musical, textual, and visual dramatization of friendship, love, and conflict infuse the scenes with luminosity and a baroque sense of the lightness of temporality.

While Bemberg's film used Sor Juana's witty examinations of courtly love as stand-ins for her passionate poems to her patron the Condesa de Paredes,⁶⁵ Krask uses Sor Juana's poetry to recreate her

intellectual quest as a quasi-visionary. In Scene Four, "Lux Aeterna," Sor Juana's geometric concept of God as "a circle, / Whose center lies in all things," is drawn from an impeccably orthodox patristic source, St. Augustine, but her sister nuns are not learned enough to recognize it. Whether or not Padre Antonio knows the source, he is incensed by Sor Juana's affirmation of her worth based on that premise: "His center lives in me, / Granting my dignity."⁶⁶ As he flies into a rage over Young Juana's "vanity," Dying Juana describes the confining, sadistic deity she has known in the convent: "God is a box, / With a lid that's nailed shut . . ."⁶⁷

While Núñez openly condemns Sor Juana's theology, he reveals his outright deceptions in asides. He works his seduction, not for sexual satisfaction but for his own vanity, making false promises in order to persuade Sor Juana to join the convent. He declares in an aside sung with broad gestures of arrogance: "You are the slave of your success— / Soiled and unclean / . . . / I will be your savior / . . . / You will be my victory. / My genius. / My saint."⁶⁸ While such sentiments cannot be attributed to Antonio Núñez de Miranda, they reflect the hagiographic model for Calleja's biography, and give psychological shape and verisimilitude to the opera's plot. The choral commentary of Scene Five is particularly apt: "Te decet hymnus, Deus in Sion, / Et Tibi reddetur votum in Jerusalem . . ." (Thou shalt have praise in Zion, O God: and homage shall be paid in Jerusalem . . .). As the chant predicts, there will be praise for Sor Juana's poetry in Madrid when María Luisa publishes it upon her return, but Padre Antonio will condemn her for her vanity in pursuing such worldly fame.⁶⁹ Young Juana and María Luisa exchange expressions of deep affection in this scene, while Dying Juana sings lines that reveal the depth of her passion: "Hear me with your eyes, / When distant ears cannot attend. / And in absent sighs, / Hear love crying from my pen."⁷⁰ Finally, Young Juana declares "(simply, and with great feeling) You are the soul of this body," and the Vicereine replies "(equally plain) You are the body of this soul."⁷¹ Once again, it is useful to keep in mind Dugaw's and Powell's analysis of passionate poetry by women to women, which locates this apparently simple exchange in the early modern context of religious devotion, neoplatonism, and the restrictive circumstances of both women. Padre Antonio watches, unseen by the women, but what exactly does he see as María Luisa presents an item of jewelry in what the stage directions describe as

"a pledge, almost a betrothal"? Interrupting them, he berates Sor Juana for her writing, and for her "betrayal," but, like Castellanos's ambivalent representation in *El eterno femenino*, the libretto leaves the women's relationship open to the audience's interpretation. The passage could be acted with complete innocence on the part of Young Juana, unaware of the cause of Padre Antonio's rage, or guilefully, abruptly changing the subject to the publication of her poetry. In Scene Seven, the Archbishop banishes Sor Juana from her convent. She will be abandoned as she was by her mother, "Unless, of course, you renounce . . ."72 His condition is left unfinished, but Sor Juana understands that she must give up her books and her scientific and musical instruments. As the famine and rioting outside the convent make it impossible for her to leave, Sor Juana signals to Padre Antonio her contrition and her intention to renew her vows.

In order to address the "unanswered questions, contradictions, and ambiguities," the librettist explains that "historical characters and literal truth had to be dispensed with altogether" (Krisk, "Ten Years On"),⁷³ but this disclaimer is an exaggeration. The plot adheres to the general facts known about Sor Juana's life, and does not depart from the overall history of the period. The libretto conflates the two vicereines Leonor Carreto and María Luisa Manrique de Lara into a single character, for an economy of scale and a stronger dramatic focus. Like Arenal's play *This Voice Within Me Won't Keep Still*, the opera ends with an affirmation of the poet's immortality through her lyric voice, as Young Juana places her published collection of poems on her dying counterpart's breast. Key phrases from Sor Juana's work shape the libretto, meaningful to any listener, but especially eloquent for audience members with some knowledge of Sor Juana's poetry. It is not easy to create art, particularly in contemporary music, that can reach multiple audiences; the expressive beauty of Crozier's music and the intense emotion conveyed in Krask's libretto explain the number of revivals of their opera.

Although Carla Lucero and Alicia Gaspar de Alba's opera *Juana* is still a work in progress, it is a promising musical and dramatic project. Lucero, whose first opera, *Wuornos*, premiered in 2001, began writing *Juana* in 2002. The libretto is based on Gaspar de Alba's *Sor Juana's Second Dream*, and the transition from narrative to dramatic form was achieved with the expertise of Prof. Peter

Novak, a specialist in liturgical drama. The opera closely follows Gaspar de Alba's representation of Juana: she is as human as she is brilliant and defiant, and, as in the novel, she consummates her relationship with the Condesa de Paredes. The figure of Sor Juana as "Phoenix," emblematic for Arenal's play, reappears in *Juana*, rising from the ashes to recognize her legacy. As in Krask and Crozier's opera, *Juana* casts the figure of Sor Juana as multiple characters. However, Lucero and Gaspar de Alba imagine the child Juana in the last scene of their opera, rather than Krask and Crozier's young Juana as novice throughout the opera, and they brilliantly cast a countertenor as a third persona, the ethereal, androgynous "Alma." Both operas also share an insistence on staging Sor Juana's triumphs and her confrontations with authority, rather than an identification of her death with defeat.

Prof. Susana Hernández-Araico, known for her work in early modern Spanish and Colonial Spanish American theater, translated Gaspar de Alba's libretto into a distinctly baroque Spanish to match the Mexican baroque and Moorish roots of the music, orchestrated for period instruments, such as vihuela and harpsichord, along with a string quartet, flute, guitar, harp, and percussion instruments of colonial New Spain. Lucero's score "shifts to more modern territory when the character of Juana splits off into her 'third sex' character, el Alma, and in flashbacks to her famous childhood moment with the forty learned men and scholars."⁷⁴ Selections from the opera have been performed in Mexico City, and performances of three scenes from the opera at Project Artaud Theater in San Francisco sold out on October 12 and 13, 2007. Similar concerts were scheduled for Madrid and Almagro in November 2007. Given the difficulty of bringing together performers, resources, and spaces for opera, in addition to the rarity and marginalization of women composers, it is not surprising that plans for the premiere of Lucero's *Juana* in its entirety have been postponed until late 2008 or early 2009.

While creative artists are free to create their poet as nun, feminist, *mestiza*, lesbian, or visionary, Sor Juana scholars are obliged to adhere to professional criteria in arguments regarding Sor Juana's motivations, her beliefs, or her sexuality. Continuing scholarly dialogue is obviously preferable to claims of ownership of a single "truth" about the poet's character—Sor Juana herself

objected to being dressed in the “plumas” of the *rara avis* imagined by others. In my research I have become aware that the intensity of current interest in Sor Juana makes it likely that more voices will have joined the musical conversation before this reaches print. When contemporary musical compositions, dramatizations, or scholarly debate attract readers and listeners, there is the potential for wider and richer dialogue with the powerful voice of a woman who defied her subordination as colonized and female, and sang the adventure of reason in early modernity.

NOTES

¹ Emily Hind, “Sor Juana, an Official Habit.” *Approaches to Teaching Sor Juana*. Ed. Emilie L. Bergmann and Stacey Schlau. (New York: MLA, 2007) 247–55.

² Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz, *Obras completas*. Ed. Alfonso Méndez Plancarte. (México: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1951) 1.143–48. Trans. Amanda Powell in Electa Arenal and Amanda Powell. *The Answer/La Respuesta*. (New York: Feminist Press, 1994) 173.

³ Sor Juana, *Obras completas* 1.147. Emphasis in original. Trans. Powell 179.

⁴ Sor Juana, *Obras completas* 1.148. Trans. Powell 179.

⁵ Octavio Paz, *Sor Juana o las trampas de la fe*. (México: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1982) 2.

⁶ Catherine Clément, *Opera, or the Undoing of Women*. (Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 1988) 5.

⁷ Since publication of my article “Abjection and Ambiguity in María Luisa Bemberg’s *Yo, la peor de todas*” *Hispanisms and Homosexualities: Plural Perspectives*. Ed. Sylvia Molloy. (Durham, NC: Duke UP, 1998), several articles have appeared on sexuality, colonial subjectivity, and visual culture in *Yo, la peor de todas*. María Claudia André argues that Bemberg’s cinematic techniques “dismantle codified constructs of women in pursuit of a polysemic figure with which identity and gender limitations may be expanded or transformed,” in “Empowering the Feminine/Feminist/Lesbian Subject Through the Lens: The Representation of Women in María Luisa Bemberg’s *Yo, la peor de todas*.” *Tortilleras: Hispanic and U. S. Latina Lesbian Expression*. Ed. Lourdes Torres and Inma Pertusa. (Philadelphia, PA: Temple UP, 2003) 160. Cynthia Stone endorses André’s argument in “Beyond the Female Gaze: María Luisa Bemberg’s Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz.” *CiberLetras* 13 (2005). Stone discusses criticism published since Lourdes Vázquez’s online “De identidades:

María Luisa Bemberg, filmografía y bibliografía." Latin American Information Series, no. 6. Ed. Laura D. Shedenhelm. (Athens, G.A.: Seminar on the Acquisition of Latin American Library Materials, 1999).

⁸ Marie-Cécile Bénassy-Berling, "Actualidad del sorjuanismo (1994-1999)." *Colonial Latin American Review* 9 (2000) 284. Translations mine unless otherwise indicated.

⁹ Geoff Guevara-Geer, "The Final Silence of Sor Juana: The Abysmal Remove of her Closing Night." *Approaches to Teaching Sor Juana*. Ed. Emilie L. Bergmann and Stacey Schlau. (New York: MLA, 2007) 201-208.

¹⁰ Jean Franco discusses works by contemporary Spanish-American women writers in which female characters aspire to "the power known as art," to liberate themselves from sado-masochistic performance, "only to find all other forms of expression closed." Jean Franco, "Self-Destructing Heroines." *The Minnesota Review: A Journal of Committed Writing* 22 (1984) 110.

¹¹ Sor Juana, *Obras completas* 1.61-65.

¹² Sor Juana, *Obras completas* 3.462-82. Trans. Trueblood, *A Sor Juana Anthology*. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1988). 83. Mario Ortiz, "Musical Settings of Sor Juana's Works and Music in Works of Sor Juana." *Approaches to Teaching Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz*. Ed. Emilie L. Bergmann and Stacey Schlau. (New York: MLA, 2007) 238-46.

¹³ Consuelo Carredano, "Marcela Rodríguez." *Diccionario de la música española e hispanoamericana*. Vol. 9. Ed. Emilio Casares Rodicio. (Madrid: Sociedad General de autores y Editores, 2002) 272.

¹⁴ Sor Juana, *Obras completas* 1.66.

¹⁵ Sor Juana, *Obras completas* 1.287. Trans. Trueblood, *A Sor Juana Anthology* 80.

¹⁶ Sor Juana, *Obras completas* 1.54-59. Trans. Trueblood, *A Sor Juana Anthology* 37.

¹⁷ Sor Juana, *Obras completas* 1.54. Trans. Trueblood, *A Sor Juana Anthology* 37.

¹⁸ Sor Juana, *Obras completas* 1.55. Trans. Trueblood, *A Sor Juana Anthology* 37.

¹⁹ Sor Juana, *Obras completas* 1.56. Not included in selections translated by Trueblood.

²⁰ Dian Dugaw and Amanda Powell, "Baroque Sapphic Poetry: A Feminist Road Not Taken." *Reason and its Others: Italy, Spain, and the New World*. Ed. David Castillo and Massimo Lollini. (Nashville, TN: Vanderbilt UP, 2006) 124.

²¹ I thank Mario Ortiz for identifying the instrument.

²² Sor Juana, *Obras completas* 1.335.

²³ Trueblood, *A Sor Juana Anthology* 171.

²⁴ Liner notes, *Funesta* n.p. Translation mine, based on English translation by Christian Gerszo.

- ²⁵ Sor Juana, *Obras completas* 1.31.
- ²⁶ Luz María Pimentel. "En torno a 'Funesta.'" Liner notes, *Funesta* (n.p.).
- ²⁷ José Antonio Alcaraz. "De las nocturnas aves." Liner notes, *Funesta* (n.p.).
- ²⁸ Ken Ueno, "John Adams on *El Niño* and Vernacular Elements." *The John Adams Reader: Essential Writings on an American Composer*. Ed. Thomas May. (Pompton Plains, NJ: Amadeus, 2006) 185.
- ²⁹ Ueno, "John Adams" 188.
- ³⁰ Ueno, "John Adams" 188.
- ³¹ John Eaton, "Writing Microtonal Music and Practical Realities." *Involving Audiences in the Sweep of the Music. New Music Box*. American Music Center. <<http://www.newmusicbox.org/page.nmbx?id=17fp14>>. (1.31).
- ³² I thank John Eaton for his generosity in sharing the librettos and recordings of performances of these works.
- ³³ John Eaton, "A Non-Theoretical Approach to Microtonality." *Involving Audiences*.
- ³⁴ Sor Juana, *Obras completas* 1.287. Trans. Trueblood, *A Sor Juana Anthology* 81.
- ³⁵ Sor Juana, *Obras completas* 1.279. Trans. Trueblood, *A Sor Juana Anthology* 96.
- ³⁶ Sor Juana, *Obras completas* 1.283. Trans. Trueblood, *A Sor Juana Anthology* 101.
- ³⁷ Sor Juana, *Obras completas* 1.358. Trans. Trueblood, *A Sor Juana Anthology* 194.
- ³⁸ One notation specifies the moment when the pianist should remove a sheet of paper from the strings.
- ³⁹ Alex Ross, "The Harmonist." *The New Yorker*. January 8, 2001. rpt. in May, *A John Adams Reader* 36.
- ⁴⁰ Ross, "The Harmonist" 30.
- ⁴¹ Michael Steinberg. "*El Niño*: A Nativity Oratorio (1999–2000)." Liner notes for compact disk recording of *El Niño*. Rpt. in May 173.
- ⁴² Sor Juana, *Obras completas* 2.119–21.
- ⁴³ Sor Juana, *Obras completas* 2. 111–12. Trans. Trueblood, *A Sor Juana Anthology* 135.
- ⁴⁴ Trueblood, *A Sor Juana Anthology* 135.
- ⁴⁵ Thomas May, "Dawn Upshaw on Singing in *El Niño*" in May 276–77.
- ⁴⁶ Sor Juana, *Obras completas* 2.112.
- ⁴⁷ These recitations with musical background are available online at Biblioteca Virtual Miguel de Cervantes.
- ⁴⁸ Rosario Castellanos, *El eterno femenino*. (México: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1975) 99. Trans. *The Eternal Feminine*. Trans. Diane E. Marting and Betty Tyree Osiek. *A Rosario Castellanos Reader*. Ed. Maureen Ahern. Austin: U of Texas P, 1989. 310.
- ⁴⁹ Castellanos, *El eterno femenino* 104. Trans. Castellanos, *The Eternal Feminine* 312.

- ⁵⁰ Castellanos, *El eterno femenino* 101. Trans. Castellanos, *The Eternal Feminine* 311.
- ⁵¹ Castellanos, *El eterno femenino* 107–108. Trans. Castellanos, *The Eternal Feminine* 315. Emphasis in original.
- ⁵² Electa Arenal, *This Life Within Me Won't Keep Still. Reinventing the Americas: Comparative Studies of Literature of the United States and Spanish America*. Ed. Bell Gale Chevigny and Gari Laguardia. (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1986) 165.
- ⁵³ Sor Juana, *Obras completas* 1.143–48.
- ⁵⁴ Sor Juana, *Obras completas* 199–201.
- ⁵⁵ Bénassy–Berling, "Actualidad del sorjuanismo (1994–1999)." *Colonial Latin American Review* 9 (2000) 277.
- ⁵⁶ Faye Nell Vowell, "An Interview with Estela Portillo Trambley." *MELUS*. (1982) 62.
- ⁵⁷ Octavio Paz, *Las trampas de la fe* (México: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1982) 588.
- ⁵⁸ Estela Portillo Trambley, *Sor Juana and Other Plays*. (Ypsilanti, Michigan: Bilingual Press/Editorial Bilingüe, 1983) 178.
- ⁵⁹ I am deeply grateful to Peter Krask and Dan Crozier for sharing with me the libretto, a sound recording from the Peabody Conservatory performance in 2000, and a DVD of the 2004 performance of the opera.
- ⁶⁰ Peter Krask, Libretto. *With Blood, With Ink. An Opera in One Act*. Music by Daniel Crozier. (Baltimore, Maryland, 1990) iii.
- ⁶¹ Krask and Crozier, *With Blood, With Ink* 2–3.
- ⁶² *Romance* 49 "¡Válgate Apolo por hombre!" Sor Juana, *Obras completas* 1.146 lines 125–28.
- ⁶³ Peter Krask. "Ten Years On: A Return to *With Blood, With Ink*." *Opera at Peabody*. Program notes, 1999–2000 Season. Baltimore, Maryland: Peabody Conservatory, 1999. <<http://peabodyopera.org/essays/wbwi00/index.php3>>.
- ⁶⁴ Krask and Crozier, *With Blood, With Ink* 60.
- ⁶⁵ Bergmann, "Abjection" 235–38.
- ⁶⁶ Krask and Crozier, *With Blood, With Ink* 25.
- ⁶⁷ Krask and Crozier, *With Blood, With Ink* 26.
- ⁶⁸ Krask and Crozier, *With Blood, With Ink* 15.
- ⁶⁹ Krask and Crozier, *With Blood, With Ink* 41.
- ⁷⁰ Krask and Crozier, *With Blood, With Ink* 36.
- ⁷¹ Krask and Crozier, *With Blood, With Ink* 38.
- ⁷² Krask and Crozier, *With Blood, With Ink* 50.
- ⁷³ Krask, "Ten Years On: A Return to *With Blood, With Ink*."
- ⁷⁴ Carla Lucero. "Re: Sor Juana." E-mail to Emilie L. Bergmann. 9 May 2007. The composer's update and description of the project provides a more accurate, detailed account of the project than the brief online announcement of a staged reading at the SomArts Theater, June 19, 2005, as part of the National Queer Arts Festival in San Francisco, which characterized Sor Juana

as "Mexico's (in)famous poet, proto-feminist and philosopher, 17th Century lesbian nun," and *Juana* as a "lyrical and tragic opera on the destruction of a (lesbian) genius at the hands of the Spanish inquisition." <<http://www.queerculturalcenter.org/Pages/QFest05/SorJuana.html>>.

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