

University of Nevada, Reno

The Insidious Case of Ignacia Gertrudis de Ochoa: Gender, Personal Relationships, Ethnicity, and Diabolism in the late Eighteenth-Century Diocese of Guadalajara

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Abstract

The Inquisition case between María Gregoria de Herrera and Ignacia Gertrudis de Ochoa provides an entry point for discussion of broader social issues involving rural women of Jalisco in the late colonial period. In my thesis, I discuss the events that transpired between these women and charges of folk magic and pacts with the devil as they pertain to the economic and social pressures that were unique to this time and place. This case is an example of how gendered issues facing the rural poor population of this region differed from those of more elite urban populations. I consider the complications of mixed-race experiences of lower-caste individuals who came before the Inquisition. Finally, I press to complicate how religious practices tied to pre-Columbian belief systems continues to appear in the late colonial period in charges of witchcraft and diabolism before the Inquisition. The time and location of this case are of particular import for Inquisition studies for the attention they bring to the Inquisitorial shift from heretical concerns of witchcraft in favor of more modern problems facing the Church, and for highlighting the gap in the transmission of ideas from the elite class to the lower classes who continued to use language of witchcraft to alleviate social issues.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

In October of 1770, María Gregoria de Herrera denounced Ignacia Gertrudis de Ochoa, a young *loba* (mixed African and Indigenous descent) to her town lay priest, Brother Don Francisco Xavier de Alcaraz, for the crimes of *hechicería* and *brujería*. María accused her sister-in-law Ignacia of using magic powers to control her behavior, summon and make an illicit pact with the Devil, and seduce María's husband, Joseph Flores. The case began approximately one year after Ignacia left town, where the women had lived in close friendship for several years prior. It ended approximately one year later when both women were taken into custody and placed in the secret cells of the Holy Office of the Inquisition in México City, the seat of power for the Church and Crown in New Spain. What transpired during that year was an intricate drama of magic and diabolism, gender roles challenged, seduction, and economic class interactions calling into question the intentions of a community outsider. The events raised doubts about whether Ignacia was in fact a *bruja* in league with the Devil, or simply a migrating woman of a lower caste from a rural area who threatened another woman's marriage and security.

Ignacia's case raises questions about how popular magic and diabolism were understood in the late Eighteenth-Century; how women handled interpersonal relationships and conflicts threatening their economic, familial, or social status; and, the role of race in cases of magic. How did the Church come to distinguish folk religion from magic or illicit diabolism, and how did Inquisitors and priests treat cases of magic and pacts with the Devil in the late colonial period? Why did María turn to the Inquisition in this case, and how did she use her knowledge of practical magic against Ignacia? How

were jealousy and female competition apparent in this case, and how did sexual relationships affect María in her day-to-day life? What was the role of men in this case, especially the husband, Joseph Flores? And how did race influence Ignacia's treatment, the questioning of *indios* as witnesses, and the way Ignacia was perceived as a woman and a member of the *loba* caste? Ignacia's behavior rests outside of the normative gender expectations for urban or elite women, and draws our attention to the lived experience of a lesser studied audience. By identifying herself as a restless women, and with her reputation as a traveler, an outsider, and a practitioner of *hechicería*, Ignacia's case highlights the perception of young, single women of the lower castes, the threat they posed to the security of recognized familial and social structures established by the Church in New Spain, and the interactions of racial and religious minorities in the outlying areas of the Diocese of Guadalajara and Archdiocese of México City in the late Eighteenth Century. It also illuminates the waning power and authority of the Inquisition in the late colonial period and to what extent certain heresies were prioritized under the Inquisitorial gaze.

In the Eighteenth Century, there was a high number of Inquisition cases involving the Devil in northern Mexico. In her book, *Defiance and Deference in Mexico's Colonial North*, historian Susan Deeds addresses several cases of women who made pacts with the Devil in northern Mexico throughout the colonial period. She considers the connections between social and political instability, the more transient nature of the population, and the type of work available in the north to women's propensity towards witchcraft and demonic pacts as a means for securing male power in order to provide more stability. The combination of folk practices of diverse ethnic groups contributed to the common

practice of women's magic as well. Deeds argues for the importance of a sparse, diverse, and mobile population for the increased numbers of cases of witchcraft and diabolism. She draws from her own case examinations, and those of Ruth Behar, claiming it was one of the accessible tools for creating a destabilizing power on the part of the otherwise powerless.¹ Her work is useful for understanding the prevalence of these cases of women and diabolism in northern Mexico through the colonial period when these same charges were declining everywhere else in the colony. Expanding on her claims, I consider how these conditions contributed to these cases, as did the unstable economic situation that women faced in the growth of the hacienda system. Unstable economic concerns were at the heart of María's accusation and provide another layer of consideration for why she would construct a charge of diabolism and witchcraft against Ignacia in order to restore her previous peaceful household.

María's case against Ignacia provides insight into the broader social trends on racial and religious clashes in late Eighteenth-Century México, and is particularly interesting for the attention it brings to this outlying and little-studied region south of Guadalajara. It also illuminates the way in which women used the Inquisition and discourses on *hechicería*, *brujería*, and diabolism to control dire situations like an unfaithful spouse and the potential loss of home, social standing, and economic security. It was expected that women of Spanish descent behaved within a specific code of honor; yet, conversely, it was expected that women of lower castes, in this case the mixed-race caste *lobo* of native and African descent, were more likely to be treacherous, wield

¹ Susan Deeds. *Defiance and Deference in Mexico's Colonial North: Indians under Spanish Rule in Nueva Vizcaya*. (Austin: University of Texas Press. 2010.) 84-5.

magic, and make illicit pacts with the Devil. Ignacia's caste association and her outsider status and reputation as a restless woman knowledgeable in *hechicería* were markers of her vulnerable social position as she was charged and brought before the Inquisition.

María's denunciation shows, through language about race, gender and sexuality, magic, the Devil, and the power of Catholic icons and faith in practical use, that it was believed that the discourse on magic was an effective tool to remedy the loss of social capital and familial stability, as she expressed her very real concerns about her tenuous grasp on her spouse and lifestyle, her family and home, and her social position when she was faced with competition.

New Spain in the Eighteenth Century

By the Eighteenth Century, New Spain had a large and diverse population with a complex *sistema de castas* comprised of over forty hierarchical classifications based upon race. Pinpointing population demographics is no easy task for this period, as the concept of census was relatively new and much of the population was unwilling to participate for fear of extra taxation. While there were nineteen population reports sent to Spain during the colonial period, the first which could be referred to as an official census was not compiled until 1793 by Viceroy Juan Vicente de Güemes, 2nd Count of Revillagigedo which estimated the total population of New Spain at 5,200,000. Yet, this report had numerous errors regarding indigenous and wandering populations and thus is considered a low estimate at best.² Nonetheless, Revillagigedo opened the door to future census studies which are invaluable to understanding population breakdowns.

² Robert Denhardt, "Mexican Demography". *Pacific Historical Review* vol. 7 no. 2 (1938): 150.

Revillagigedo estimated the population of Guadalajara at 485,000, comprised of roughly 31.7% European descended, 33.3% Indigenous, and 34.7% Mestizo, which is of course limiting in its lack of diversity and consideration of the presence of other ethnic groups, most important to this study being *negro* and *lobo*.

To delve deeper into the population breakdowns, court documents from the Inquisition and parish records of birth, death, and marriage prove most valuable for there we find the presence of those often absent from census records. The *sistema de castas* was meant to classify people into a hierarchical framework by means of their color and ethnicity as a tool of control by the State which glorified pure-blooded Spanishness in a position of political control and wealth above all other groups. However, examinations find there was much *casta* inter-relation across class and ethnic lines throughout New Spain. *Casta* identification and reporting were often manipulated according to the occasion or the ends sought by the individual in their interactions with State and Church authorities. Reporting was also affected by how authorities perceived an individual. Records from this period show a settling of ethnic division across New Spain by the late Seventeenth Century, with most of the population fitting into the major classification groups of *castizo*, *mestizo*, *mulatto*, *negro*, *indio*, or with “other” being a distant minority.³ Multiracial housing and familial pairings were common, as were friendships and professional relationships. Among lower classes, overt displays of prejudice were highly uncommon. Based on perceived appearance, there was much movement between *casta* designations, and related upward class mobility was possible for much of the

³ R. Douglas Cope, *The Limits of Racial Domination: Plebeian society in colonial México city, 1660-1720*. (Madison, Wis: University of Wisconsin Press. 1994) 73-5.

population who enjoyed a passing privilege of higher *castas*.⁴ Overall, the population of New Spain in the Eighteenth Century was remarkably ethnically diverse and adept at navigating the complex *sistema de castas*, with high rates of interaction across race and class lines, which by this time was increasingly blurred.

The mid-to-late Eighteenth Century was a time of rapid demographic, political, and economic change for México leading up to the War for Independence in 1820. In Guadalajara, turnovers in land ownership creating the growth of the hacienda system contributed to important stresses in rural and urban life. These developments altered the face of the countryside and created many of the conditions which led to the end of the colonial period. The agricultural region surrounding Guadalajara produced cotton, dyes, and luxury food items for much of western México and was the primary supply area of the mundane necessities for everyday life as well, namely meat and grains. The pre-Conquest Indian culture particular to Guadalajara lay in the south of the region, which shared the Nahua culture of the Mexicas and Tarascans. The region was sparsely populated with little to no monumental architecture or urbanism but did have sedentary agricultural settlements.⁵ The city of Guadalajara, along with the greater region in general, was founded during the mid-Conquest period by Nuño de Guzman as he attempted to establish his own empire independent of Hernán Cortés. Here he absorbed several Indian settlements into his larger city which he designated as his capital. The city grew and declined economically and demographically for a time in accordance with the silver mines of the Zacatecas to the north; yet it soon settled as a stable agricultural hub

⁴ Cope, *The Limits*, 76-7.

⁵ Eric Van Young, *Hacienda and Market in Eighteenth-Century México: The Rural Economy of the Guadalajara Region, 1675-1820*. (Berkeley: University of California Press. 1981.) 16.

with close ties to central México and the capital.⁶ From 1600 through 1800, Guadalajara grew into a commercial, financial, political, and cultural broker for the region, but remained rural and culturally rooted in a *vaquero* culture as the importance of livestock raising on cattle *estancias* moved to the economic foreground. The largest and wealthiest populations were merchants, there were few Spanish (approximately 500 in 1600) who were mainly political or judicial officials. By 1800, it was preeminently an administrative and mercantile center, dominated by the high court (*audencia*) and driven by commerce buffered with a new textile industry of cotton and wool, and had grown into a lovely sprawling urban center.⁷

The Diocese of Guadalajara encompassed the regions of Jalisco, Zacatecas, Nayarit, Colima, and northwest San Luis Potosí. Guadalajara was and remains the principal city of west México and an agricultural market hub which functioned as the urban capital and seat of the *audencia*. The city's region of influence extended from Los Altos de Jalisco in the east, Ameca-Cocula Valley in the west, Lake Chapala in the south, on the southern shore of which sits the town of Tizapán el Alto where the events of this case occurred, and the Rio Grande de Santiago in the north.⁸ The region had similar resources, geographies, and colonial experience documented in central México. Despite being relatively flat compared to the Archdiocese of México, there were poor road and bridge systems that limited travel. There were, however, expansive ranches developed for cattle and maize in the plateaus of the Altos de Jalisco, a region of high plateaus reaching an elevation of 5-7,000ft in the area from Lake Chapala along the Rio Santiago. There

⁶ Van Young, *Hacienda*, 18-9.

⁷ Van Young, *Hacienda*, 23-5.

⁸ Van Young, *Hacienda*, 7.

were also lucrative silver mines in the mountain regions, particularly in the Zacatecas region to the north. The Altos were dominated by *ranchos* and had the highest quality farmland, yet was considered a poor region which accounted for most of the Indian population in the diocese.⁹

The population of the Diocese of Guadalajara in late Eighteenth Century was reported at 550,000 people who lived in 250 settled farming and fishing villages across the region. Approximately two-thirds of population were “non-indian” and most Indian villages were surrounded by Spanish estates.¹⁰ The market boom of the 18th Century bolstered by the development of more stable road and bridge systems spurred a rapid urbanization and growth in Guadalajara, including a merchant guild and university. This attracted new residents and a growing market and created a relationship and economic network among the surrounding towns. Guadalajara’s rural economy and society consisted of complex symbiotic relationships: landlord/laborer, producer/market, Indian villagers/haciendas/non-Indian peasants.¹¹ Prominent ranching and market families intermarried to consolidate their property holdings and increase profits. Power consolidation allowed these families to divert more water to improving their ranches at the expense of smaller ranches.¹² Consequently, the peasant sector, particularly Indians, suffered because of the growth of the great rural *haciendas*. In the Sayula region, the population’s ethnicity was approximately half Indian and half *casta* or *creole*. For assimilation and mobility purposes, the Indians of Guadalajara were more inclined to

⁹ William B Taylor, *Magistrates of the Sacred: Priests and Parishioners in Eighteenth-Century México*. (Stanford, Calif: Stanford University Press. 1996.) 39.

¹⁰ Taylor, *Magistrates*, 36.

¹¹ Van Young, *Hacienda*, 2.

¹² Taylor, *Magistrates*, 39.

imitate the Spanish in their dress and personal tastes for food and spirits, trade, travel, and horses. There was a high amount of transiency due to the market nature of the region and *casta* designations were more muddled as a result. Indians moved among pueblos, freed slaves claimed Indian status and lived among them, all *castas* were intermarrying, and pueblos encouraged *castas*, *mulattos*, and *mestizos* to register as Indian to share their lands and responsibilities. As a result there was not much segregation. Spaniards oversaw district courts and politics, however, in addition to owning the markets and estates. On the other hand, the pueblos did not have much money or political power and settled most disputes in the colonial courts, but handled land exchanges informally. There was a marked unequal distribution of wealth and much political conflict among the pueblos.¹³ While neighboring pueblos were not necessarily close-knit and varied greatly from each other, each one had a distinct land-based community with pride in their identities and connections to their patron saints and holy days and rituals. Each pueblo maintained their own church and local priest.

Religiosity in late-colonial New Spain reflected the complexity of cultures and their practices which had converged in the region over the previous three hundred years. The vast political majority considered themselves Catholic, though Catholicism as it developed in México was vastly different from the Orthodox practices of Europe. Folk Catholicism in New Spain was a vibrant blending of European doctrine and saintly pantheon with the lore and practices familiar to the indigenous populations and Africans. In their efforts to evangelize the indigenous populations whose cosmogony, origin beliefs, and entire worldview was drastically different from their own, early Franciscans

¹³ Taylor, *Magistrates*, 41.

had come to make certain concessions on Orthodox practice in order to make Christianity appealing and to aid the conversion process. For many concepts, there was a common ground in belief where connections could be made. Here the friars were able to superimpose Biblical stories, characters and Catholic practice over existing indigenous ones, encouraging a hybrid form of folk Catholicism.¹⁴ Alongside this, the historic record is rich with incidents of indigenous dissent, individuals and groups who held onto their traditional beliefs and rituals and handed them down orally or through the written word over generations. Particularly prominent the further from the capital and urban centers where friars and lay priests were less likely to travel, these pocket communities appeared to practice Christianity in public but held to indigenous religion in private. The most common response colony-wide was an incomplete conversion with most rural populations being able to retain their cultural heritage which validated the survivors of the Conquest.¹⁵ Additionally, slave populations from West Africa brought their religious beliefs and practices with them. Subjected to forced conversions in slavery and being denied permission to observe their native cultures and religions, many Afro-Mexicans came to understand Catholicism and learned to live and work within its systems. Many urban centers even saw numbers of African confraternities associated with churches and developed for the protection, care, and betterment of their devout Catholic members under Church supervision. Folk practice among *castas* often looked like a blending of Catholicism with indigenous Mesoamerican and African practice. Private practice included belief in not only saints but spirits, ancestors, and deities which could be called

¹⁴ Louise M. Burkhart, *The Slippery Earth: Nahuatl-Christian Moral Dialogue in Sixteenth-Century México*. (Tucson: University of Arizona Press. 1989. 13-4.

¹⁵ Burkhart, *The Slippery Earth*, 185.

upon to aid as needed, often involving rituals that appear more like the Nahua or West African practice than Catholicism, and was often labelled as witchcraft by the Inquisition.¹⁶

William Taylor describes in detail the effects of Bourbon reforms on local religious authorities and their relationships with parishioners in *Magistrates of the Sacred*. Local parish and pueblo priests sat at the intersection between religious authority and their heterogeneous parishioners. They oversaw both public morality and behavior and reported serious offences to higher offices while acting as patrons of the people when they needed healing or aid and mediated between Christians and God as well. During 1700-1821, authority was shifted from priests to local governors under a “rule of law” concept. The Habsburgs had no distinction between church and state and distrusted priests as though they were in league with Indians, while the Bourbons were more interested in establishing law over custom, reason over emotion, and progressivism over traditionalism. The reforms made priests a professional class and removed their special exemptions from prosecution. Priests had to set a standard schedule of fees for their services and form secularized parishes independent of the Diocese. Royal decrees gave responsibility for moral governance, both judicial and fiscal roles, to the governors; for example the controlling of drunkenness. Priests could not criticize government, had to promote the use of Spanish language over indigenous, and had to limit fiestas and interruptions to schools and business operations. They could not leave their parish without permission, and had limited asylum granting. Much of this had to do with

¹⁶ Joan Cameron Bristol. *Christians, Blasphemers, and Witches: Afro-Mexican Ritual Practice in the Seventeenth Century*. (Albuquerque: University of New México Press. 2007.) 3-7.

increasing the cash flow back to Spain, increasing government power and decreasing church power.¹⁷

In the 1770s, conflicts arose between judges and priests. Judges had been disinterested in personal disputes, but, by the 1770s, became more involved in administration and extending judiciary influence. Bishops warned priests to stay out of secular affairs. While conflict was not necessarily evident, there were growing tensions between parish priests and parishioners and district governors. Priests who became embroiled in intraclerical disputes were instead aligned against royal initiatives. Worries that Indians were returning to idolatry had all but disappeared from court records and priests writings. Indians were no longer seen as pagan but as superstitious and ignorant children.¹⁸ Bishops promoted gentle teacher priests and a good pupil indians concept which emphasized a softened loving faith, less reference to the Devil and sins, moving away from the teachings of St Augustine which were perceived as more negative. Conversely a growing veneration of Mary for protection evil and town patron saints indicates a continued fear of God persisted; the veneration of Mary/Guadalupe became for many the greatest intercessor contributed to the humanization of colonial hierarchy as she offered protection from illness, personal enemies, or the colonial government.¹⁹ These changing conditions under Bourbon reforms contributed to not only the way local priests and their parishioners practiced and related, but also the way that the Holy Office of the Inquisition operated. Bourbon reforms influenced how denunciations were viewed and the cases the Inquisitors tried.

¹⁷ Taylor, *Magistrates*, 13-17.

¹⁸ Taylor, *Magistrates*, 19.

¹⁹ Taylor, *Magistrates*, 19.

The Devil and the Inquisition in the History of New Spain through the Eighteenth Century

During the late Eighteenth Century, the Inquisition's handling of denunciations for *hechicería* and *brujería* among *indias*, *lobas*, and other lower castes in New Spain was markedly different than previous centuries. The Episcopal Inquisitions of 1535-1571, led by Fr. Juan de Zumarraga, had sought to discipline the Nahuas for heresy and for undermining the political power of the Spanish Church when they retained their traditional religious practices, which Zumarraga considered rebellious idolatry. The Spanish Crown became concerned with his harsh approach and stripped him of his title and authority. The following Indian Inquisitions of 1544-1547, led by Francisco Tello de Sandoval, in turn, exercised extreme caution in dealing with pagan Nahuas, whose leaders were still engaging in traditional religion. Instead of trying the Indigenous populations for heretical crimes, Tello de Sandoval investigated and questioned them as witnesses, becoming interested in paganism and ceremonies, particularly those connected to the god Tlaloc. Through his trials, Inquisitors became familiar with indigenous pagan rituals and worship, the importance of mountaintop and cave locations, and became acquainted with religious leaders, advisors to nobles and community members, who cast spells and invoked gods and spirits whom the Inquisition labeled demons.²⁰ However, as a result of these severe early Inquisitions, when the Holy Office arrived in the capital of New Spain in 1571 it did not have the authority to try the Indigenous population for

²⁰ Richard Greenleaf, *The Mexican Inquisition of the Sixteenth Century*. (Albuquerque: University of New México Press, 1969.) 105-111.

heresies. Native Americans do appear in the Inquisition records, but as witnesses, not defendants. This early history informs how the Inquisition developed its approach to and understanding of indigenous cultures and religions, and how it began to keep such highly detailed records of Indian interactions as witnesses instead of defendants.

By the Eighteenth-Century, the Holy Office of the Inquisition in México City had adjudicated many cases of women, particularly lower-caste women, who used idols, malicious witchcraft, or popular magic. The declining seriousness with which these cases were treated and with which these women and their actions were viewed, paired with the waning political power of the Holy Office, influenced the lax handling of cases of witchcraft and diabolism. The political power of the Inquisition was waning due to infighting among the Dominicans and the rise of political rivalries, situations which were compounded by Bourbon reforms. The Church was also faced with issues of the moral turpitude of the friars and a morally deficient clergy that had become disillusioned with the religious establishment, sympathized with the native populations, and were more tolerant of sexual sins. The lack of discipline among priests was absorbing increasing amounts of Inquisitorial time and focus because it appeared to the Inquisitors that the clergy had come to position ambition over piety.²¹

Inquisitors of the early Eighteenth Century found their attempts to extirpate sorcery were ineffective and to little avail, that the incidents and actions detailed in accusations were generally harmless and only occurred among the lowest echelons of society with little education who lived in distant rural areas. They tolerated this form of

²¹ Richard Greenleaf, "The Inquisition in Eighteenth-Century New México" *New México Historical Review* Vol 60, (1985). 32-42.

frontier paganism as they shifted the Inquisitorial gaze to the more manageable problems of bigamy and sexual morality.²² In this period in New Spain, the Devil appeared as an anecdotal appropriation of Indigenous spirits superimposed by the hegemonic idea of the European religious antagonist. His use in these cases was largely to control the subordinate groups who had come to believe in him.²³ By the Eighteenth Century, the Devil was more a prominent idea for rural populations than urban ones, and particularly so for Indigenous and *casta* communities, more relegated to the realm of popular culture than actual religious concern.²⁴ Summoning of the Devil and acquiring magical powers with the intention to do harm was not considered an offense against God and nature, but was discounted as the superstitions of the uneducated. While the Inquisition was no longer looking for diabolic practitioners, the common folk and pueblo priests still believed in demonic power and influence and sought to convince Inquisitors of its existence. Those who still sought to make pacts with the Devil then later repented, or who found themselves victims of a neighbor's pact, found it increasingly difficult to find relief from the Inquisitors, who did not believe their claims or recognize their need for penance.²⁵ Inquisitors found the charges of demonic pacts to be easy to make, yet difficult to prove, often motivated by gossip and malice. Thus, the notion of demonic pacts had become farcical over time, to the point they were deemed fantasies, hypocrisies, and the vulgarity of the lowly bred. Considered more a symbol than a force of evil, and widely received with skepticism, the connection between the Devil and

²² Greenleaf, "The Inquisition", 32-42.

²³ Fernando Cervantes, *The Devil in the New World: The Impact of Diabolism in New Spain*. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994.) 2.

²⁴ Sonya Lipsett-Rivera, "Mira Lo Que Hace El Diablo: The Devil In Mexican Popular Culture, 1750-1856*". *The Americas*, Volume 59, Number 2, (October 2002). i135-7.

²⁵ Cervantes, *The Devil*, 127.

human misdeed had been severed, solidified by the treatises written by Dr Don Juan Anselmo del Moral y Castillo de Altra and Fray Félix de Alamín in the later part of the Century, criticizing those who blamed the Devil for their sins and calling for an increased personal responsibility among the population.²⁶ By and large, the effects of these criticisms and prejudices affected non-Spanish women, who through the course of Spanish colonialism had seen their social and economic status decline in conjunction with the overshadowing and superseding of their culture and religion. To better understand these effects, we must look at the intersections of gender and caste for women who came before the Inquisition.

Gender, Caste, and the Inquisition

The original Nahua inhabitants of Mesoamerica had a system of gender complementarity which appeared foreign and strange to the newly arrived Spanish Catholics. The introduction of Christianity, with its gender hierarchy and good-vs-evil ideology, upset the traditions of gender complementarity among the Nahua, resulting in a severe drop in women's status over several centuries. In *Law and the Transformation of Aztec Culture, 1500-1700*, Susan Kellogg outlines this system of gender complementarity where the genders occupied separate but equal spheres in work and home life. The Nahua emphasized the importance of women's work in market, religion, and daily life and how men and women's work complemented each other. Women had access to authority roles in the household and in the public sphere as well as in temples, markets, and schools and as administrators, or they could even speak for men in court. This system was based in the Nahua belief in complementary duality which merged contrasts and differences into a

²⁶ Lipsett-Rivera, "Mira Lo Que", 208.

larger unity both socially and cosmologically.²⁷ Lust and sexual playfulness were acceptable behaviors celebrated by the Nahua and were a valuable part of life as long as they were moderate. However, the friars sought to teach them to avoid pleasure and sought to constrict women's lives, behavior, and presence in public. They tried unsuccessfully to force Christian virtue on them, allowing women no fashionable embellishment, prohibiting them from looking at or flirting with men, having them instead focus on honor and purity.²⁸ Catholic doctrine taught that a good woman was pure and chaste, and to have interest in sex and pleasure was the mark of a bad woman. Over time, women's sexuality and their bodies came to be connected to outdated and primitive Nahua baseness, with the use of witchcraft and sorcery, and the instability of the Nahua's wandering Chichimec ancestors, in the minds of priests.²⁹

By the Eighteenth-Century, women occupied a socially and politically subordinate position. Women were generally denied certain legal and social powers. In certain cases, what power they had was considered negative, disruptive, or polluting and was viewed as an inversion of the regular social order, thus women had to exercise their power within set parameters.³⁰ Heresy, idolatry, and witchcraft charges were markers of this secondary concern to the Inquisitorial Gaze but they provide important insight on

²⁷ Susan Kellogg, *Law and the Transformation of Aztec Culture, 1500-1700*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1995. And Rebecca Overmyer-Velazquez, "Christian Morality Revealed in New Spain: The Inimical Nahua Woman in Book Ten of the Florentine Code." *Journal of Women's History* 10, no. 2 (1998). 9.

²⁸ Overmyer-Velazquez, "Christian Morality", 30.

²⁹ Overmyer-Velazquez, "Christian Morality", 30.

³⁰ Ruth Behar, "Sexual Witchcraft, Colonialism, and Women's Powers," *American Ethnologist*. Vol 14, No 1. (Feb 1987): 34-54.

gender and sexual relations.³¹ On the colonial frontier, women who came before the Inquisition on these charges were guilty of a common sin, that of reversing male dominance to subordination and turning the hierarchical power structures on their heads. These accusations can be seen as a symptom of the state of constant war between the Spanish and Indians of the region, particularly the Indian women. Far from the capital city, in the rural areas, fear of Indians by colonists through the Seventeenth Century led to accusations in higher numbers against Indian and *Mestiza* women for witchcraft, specifically for love magic or calling upon the aid of the Devil in order to control Spanish men. Witchcraft denunciations were a Spanish mechanism to police racial and gender boundaries of colonial society. Witchcraft was perceived to be a diabolical means for female domination, both sexually and societally, over men. Large numbers of rural and frontier cases in the Eighteenth Century against Indian and mixed-race women for witchcraft, particularly for the black arts (not just love and healing magic) and pacts with the devil, depict these women as “Sexually provocative, sinful, and aggressive...shameless women who gained their supernatural powers because they had slept with the devil.”³² Women, particularly of the lower castes, were guilty of using magic to subvert the gender hierarchy, honor code, and moral order given the genders by God and enforced by the Church.

Women’s bodies were imagined to have a unique alignment to magic and sexuality; they were believed to have the ability to render men impotent, control an

³¹ Ramon Gutierrez. “Women on Top: The Love Magic of the Indian Witches of New México” *Journal of the History of Sexuality*, (September 2007): 1-5.

³² Gutierrez, “Women on Top” 2.

unfaithful lover, or attract new lovers and thus needed to be controlled.³³ Witchcraft was a practical tool for women to claim power for themselves over men and each other using the tools of their own work and physical manifestations of female sexuality, like food, textiles, wash water, and their own body fluids, within a system which otherwise usually required their docility.³⁴ By the late Eighteenth Century, the typical woman practitioner of witchcraft who came before the Inquisition tended to be young, attractive, a sole practitioner, sexualized in the accusation against her, using her attractiveness and access to folk magic to control men. Ruth Behar explains these subtle forms of retaliation carried out by women, “Since women were left with few domains in which to assert themselves, they developed, in México and elsewhere in Latin America, a rich symbolic language of beliefs and acts for resisting, punishing, and even controlling the men who dominated them.”³⁵ Women were caught between their religious indoctrination of sin, guilt, and devotion and their knowledge of and access to magical resources in their retaliations against their husbands. Thus, it was not uncommon for them to denounce themselves. Adversely, their accusers were sincere in their fear of the woman’s powers, but the Inquisitors tended to not take them seriously. They viewed women as incapable of power, thus delegitimizing them and the discourse on women’s magical power. In turn, women used this Inquisitorial leniency to build networks of alternatives to the Church’s oversight of domestic affairs.

Women had little legal autonomy and were expected to practice total obedience to their fathers or husbands, who held a legal right to physically punish them for straying

³³ Martha Few, *Women Who Live Evil Lives*. (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2002), 53.

³⁴ Few, *Women Who Live Evil Lives*, 52.

³⁵ Behar, “Sexual Witchcraft” 186.

from the strict behavioral norms expected for their gender. At the same time, men of every caste and social rank were free to have illicit affairs.³⁶ The Church played a major role in controlling women's behaviors by mediating domestic and sexual matters, controlling rites of marriage, and defining sexual and domestic sins, the terms of discourse of which were set by the religious elite.³⁷ Single women faced much difficulty in supporting themselves after spousal abandonment or widowhood. The struggle of living alone was a particularly troubling condition for the unmarried spinster, but, it was also a concern for the young and as yet unmarried woman who still hoped to secure a husband.³⁸ Witchcraft not only became a way for them to control the men in their lives, but it also gave them a market value as they sold their skills in folk magic and healing to other women. These were particularly sought after skills for women of indigenous and African descent. As market providers and purveyors through their social connections, women became central to social networks and community relations, but their central role prompted fear and anxiety. Women came to be viewed as the primary disseminators of unsanctioned social discourse. Gossip and rumor played key parts in exposing women's activities and reflected how women's powers were perceived publicly and shaped the discourse around social relations and (supernatural or magical) events and women's roles in them.³⁹ Inquisitors sought to root out their social networks, particularly for non-Spanish women who were believed to practice magic or lead cults.

³⁶ Ruth Behar, "Sex, Sin, Witchcraft, and the Devil in Late-Colonial México." *American Ethnologist*, Vol 14, No 1 (February 1987), 34-54.

³⁷ Behar, "Sexual Witchcraft" 180.

³⁸ Few, *Women Who Live Evil Lives*, 100.

³⁹ Few, *Women Who Live Evil Lives*, 115-6.

In New Spain, caste was used to refer to a more modern, if not exact, notion of race and descent, whose distinctions were carried in blood, ancestry, and color. Catholicism, orthodoxy, legitimacy, and Spanish lineage became associated with purity, or *limpieza de sangre*.⁴⁰ In a similar manner to how the Inquisition sought out post-reconquest Jews and Moors in Spain in an attempt to enforce orthodox practice, Africans and Indians in New Spain became associated with evil and witchcraft due to non-orthodox Catholic practises.⁴¹ While other races and castes were known to be essential to Spanish prosperity in New Spain, they were also seen as a threat. This resulted in a complex race-based system of inclusion and exclusion as the colonial state attempted to make Christians of all of the non-Spanish castes. The State placed great importance on blood purity, well documented proof of ties to Old-World Spanishness, creating a social system in which lower caste individuals would assimilate each others attributes, be it culturally through the use of symbols and social affiliations or with the ability to pass as a lighter color and thus a different race or race mixture. As Laura Lewis established in *Hall of Mirrors*, “In European thought, blackness was associated with cursed descent from biblical Canaanites, which condemned blacks to perpetual bondage. Religious discourse also turned slavery into a kind of penance for black’s former savagery” and made Africans inherently guilty of savagery and closeness to the devil, thus unfit for freedom.⁴²

In a linguistic comparison of caste designations, *mestizo/mezcla* comes from a root word meaning “mixed”, given to those of native-Spanish descent, while *mulatto*,

⁴⁰ Bristol, *Christians*, 7.

⁴¹ Laura Lewis, *Hall of Mirrors: Power, Witchcraft, and Caste in Colonial México*, (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003), 23.

⁴² Lewis, *Hall of Mirrors*, 29.

given to those of African-Spanish descent, comes from the word for mule; the *caste* titles are demonstrative of the Spanish designation of Africans as less-human and their offspring as without lineage or not worth replicating.⁴³ African-born blacks were stereotyped by Spanish as naturally belligerent and untameable, and oft guilty of illicit cohabitation instead of legitimate marriage, known to rob, assault, and murder, and liberate owned blacks and mulattoes to resume their former free state. Afro-Mexicans became the victims of Spanish rumors and witchcraft accusations as Spaniards struggled to maintain authority over the complex caste system.⁴⁴ As such, those of African lineage occupied very liminal positions in colonial society and were not always permitted space, property, community or kinship, or bodily autonomy. This led Africans to try to attach themselves to Spanishness, the benefits of which were written into law, to negotiate the caste system and elevate their status. Afro-Mexicans, as full colonial residents, understood these Spanish institutions which had power over them, and the social processes and cultural assumptions that structured the colonial environment in which they lived. They shared values and community not only with each other, but members of all other castes as well.⁴⁵ Thus, when considering the experiences of Indian and Afro-Mexican castes, we cannot look at caste as a stratified system but more like a fluid pyramid because Indians were legally set apart from non-indians and Africans occupied the bottom rung of the Spanish hierarchy. Africans were, to an extent, Hispanicized in a way Indians were not. Yet, they also had much contact and integration. Thus, castes were a series of distinct stations but must recognize the many overlapping statuses of Spanish,

⁴³ Lewis, *Hall of Mirrors*, 30.

⁴⁴ Bristol, *Christians*, 3.

⁴⁵ Bristol, *Christians*, 5.

African, and Indian and recognize that it is impossible to study any caste in isolation of the others.⁴⁶

Methodology and Theoretical Frameworks

This study seeks to examine how a case like that against Ignacia demonstrates the experiences and social power dynamics affecting lower caste women within the State and religious apparatus of the Inquisition. The case records left by Inquisitorial notaries provide exceptionally detailed information about the words used to describe and condemn or defend women who were seen as outsiders or who subverted the gendered social dynamic of the colonial period by living independent of male caretakers, or by wielding magic to control their own lives or the people around them. Ignacia's case resides among many other readily available and well-preserved documents, in the Bancroft Library of the University of California, Berkeley. Her case totals 76 pages and spans the course of a year from Maria Gregoria's denunciation of Ignacia in June 1770 to her priest, Br. Francisco Xavier de Alcaraz in Tizapán el Alto, through the trial before don Joseph de Overo Habago in Guadalajara, to the sentencing of both women by the Holy Office of the Inquisition in México City in September 1771. The events discussed began two years earlier when Ignacia moved to the town of Tizapán el Alto from her home in Zapotlan and became neighbors with Maria Gregoria and Joseph Alexo Flores, at which time the three became friends, shared dinners and parties, and engaged in a drama of infidelity and *brujería* before Ignacia moved away. The accusations involve magical coercion, seduction and infidelity, the use of ritual items, and the summoning of the Devil to aid in magical practice. In total the case covers nearly half a decade of

⁴⁶ Lewis, *Hall of Mirrors*, 33 and Bristol, *Christians*, 2.

relationships across gender, race, and *casta* lines in two outlying towns of west-central México.

Inquisition cases provide a unique glimpse into the interactions of the common person and the religious elite, the events and verbal exchanges which occurred during trials were meticulously detailed by notaries. These remarkably detailed records allow scholars to examine and understand thought and dialogue, not only of the elite who oversaw the cases, but also for the common person who came before the courts. Within their pages, average people divulge the most personal details of daily life, religious practice, and personal concerns. More specifically, these cases yield information about how women navigated life under strict male control, how they interacted with men and each other, how they took power when and where they could get it, and how they were affected by the strict social codes of honor, yet also used them to their own benefit. Additionally case records often depict a unique perspective for examining relationships and cultural understandings, or misunderstandings, between racial and religious groups within the complex *casta* hierarchy of colonial México. This case was selected for the extensive and detailed commentary chronicled within. The close examination of linguistic exchange provides the historian access to the religious and community cultural systems which shaped the life and concerns of the common individual. In the manner with which Carlo Ginzburg approached the case of Menocchio, with its abundant documentation detailing his thought and fears, his hopes and despairs, which he used to create understanding with a man from a very different time and experience, microhistorical examinations are a useful tool to balance the full context of the larger cultural systems with the issues of the individual. It is a tool in which the historian may

use the example of a single case to demonstrate the larger cultural experiences and issues facing a group. Since Ginzburg began his microhistorical examinations detailed in *The Cheese and the Worms* in 1970, many scholars have used this tool to varying degrees to apply Inquisition cases to larger historical examinations of gender and race, particularly in studying women's experiences and for understanding the lives of *indios*, *mulattos*, and *mestizos* in colonial México. Using Ignacia's case, it is my intention to add to this field of microhistorical cultural examination, to add to the study of gender, race, and religion with the additional study of a lesser known *casta*, a *loba*, and the life, practices, beliefs and experiences of women living in the outlying areas of central western México, particularly the region of Jalisco, which is a markedly different lived experience from that of the capital of Mexico City.

Inquisition studies often examine the use of language and the way in which narratives were constructed in denunciations as people sought to denounce heretical behavior and perhaps seek a remedy from the Inquisition for their personal struggles. Examinations of cases yield a prevalent use of these narratives by accusers which served to attract the attention of Inquisitors. In many cases, these narratives demonstrate an understanding on the part of the common parishioner of the way Inquisitors understood crimes of faith, and the realization that an accusation was a powerful and common means to removing an enemy or rival. Javier Villa-Flores demonstrates how this action was used by men in displays of masculinity, such as in drinking and gambling halls or in enforcing male dominance in the household. Importantly, he also demonstrates how slaves learned how to use blasphemy as a tool to draw the attention of the Inquisition to the brutal conditions they lived and worked in through cultural brokers. Blasphemous language

became a tool for slaves to achieve liberation from cruel masters as they were made aware of what to do or say by these brokers. I am drawing from the much-used understanding of this constructed discourse in my analysis of María's accusation, in which I theorize that María constructed this case. Maria could have seen the Inquisition as a last resort to force her husband to return home, perhaps with the assistance of Brother Alcaraz, aware of common ideas of women's use of magic that were recognized by Inquisitors in the colonial period, in order to remove her romantic rival and force her husband to return home.

Literature Review

In examining an Inquisition case in which a woman of mixed race is charged with *hechicería* and *brujería*, this study will contribute to the scholarship which highlights the impact of religion, power, honor, and caste on the women of late colonial México. In doing so, it will explore aspects of the late Eighteenth-Century, a period less examined by Inquisition historians due to the waning power of this long standing institution, as most tend to focus on the Inquisition at the height of its power and influence. While it is most valuable to understand the metropolitan uses of this powerful institution, to see how elite men and women wielded it for their own betterment, or how even the lay person interacted with it to remove threats to life and soul, there is still much more scholars can learn from examining later cases and those coming from outlying regions, particularly the Jalisco region which would feature prominently in the War for Independence. Such works which examine the earlier Inquisition do not address the continuing religious belief and practice of the person living in the perhaps less-glamorous outlying areas, who are

still navigating the world with many pre-Conquest ideas and hybrid religious practices, and an understanding that Inquisitors are deeply concerned with saving the soul from the evil temptations of the Devil. Nor were the late colonial citizens able to use the Inquisitorial gaze to aid in perilous social situations with denunciations of witchcraft and diabolism as they had been in earlier decades. Scholars have long used the framework of Inquisition microhistory to discern how *peninsulares*, *criollos*, *indios*, *mestizos*, *negros*, and *mulattos* coexisted for better or worse in a colonial and metropolitan scenario, and particularly so for examining women's interactions with each other across caste lines and with the use of popular magic for healing, divining, or aiding in romantic endeavors. Continued examination is still needed of the rural, often mixed-race women, the communal outsider, she who belonged to a hybrid racial caste with a unique blend of culture and belief, accused of witchcraft in these cases to understand how they viewed their practices or their own social standings and lives in a way which is certainly different than their accusers or the Inquisitors would view them, and to understand how they fit within the rapidly changing culture of the Jalisco region in the waning stages of colonial New Spain.

Pivotal studies of Central Mexican religion in the Eighteenth-Century have sought to explain the complexities of the meeting of Nahua belief, practice, and cosmogony with that of the Spanish Catholic, and how these two systems unevenly fused to create a new and unique Mexican Catholicism while recognizing the remaining prevalence of covert indigenous practices. Louise Burkhart's *The Slippery Earth* introduced the ways friars learned the culture and language of the Nahua and adapted their teachings to make sense for conversion, demonstrating that divergence from orthodoxy was necessary in Mexican

Catholicism. It was no small task for the early friars and Nahuas to find a religious common ground, and Burkhart did justice to the struggle with her explanations of commonality and difference in calendar, deities, doctrine, purity, morals, and sins. She left us with a changed Catholicism and an intact Nahua belief system, challenging the entire notion of an evangelical conquest. Richard Greenleaf also addressed this continuation of untouched Nahua practice in his article *The Inquisition in Eighteenth-Century New México*. Here he examined how lower caste women's continued use of magic and love spells, the role of women's gossip, and their passing of blame to the sacrosanct Indian women, led to the Inquisition abandoning cases of witchcraft and diabolism and allowing frontier pagan belief to exist unabated. Fernando Cervantes in *The Devil in the New World* also covered the topic of diabolism cases before the Inquisition across the breadth of the colonial period. He considered the connections to the European construction of the image of the devil, the Indian response and incorporation of him into the native pantheon, to consider how the Nahua called to him to aid them in unfavorable circumstances as opposed to God. His examination of the crisis and decline of the Inquisition in the Eighteenth-Century brings important attention to the way the common person still not only called upon the Devil in illicit pacts to better their lives, but also how the Inquisitorial gaze had shifted to see them as unimportant cases of the uneducated and fooled, and not worth the time of such an in-depth trial. Cervantes's work influenced future examinations of rural México's relationship with the Devil, exemplified in Sonya Lipsett-Rivera's "Miro lo que Hace el Diablo" which connected existing indigenous belief with the introduction of the Devil, becoming part of the language of the Nahua and other remote indigenous groups. She addressed the shifting

perceptions of the religious elite about the Devil as a religious and cultural symbol and how interest waned with the Enlightenment and Reformation, yet connections remained real for the control of women's behavior by connecting his to gossip, vanity, and lust. Central to the study of the Church in colonial México is William Taylor's *Magistrates of the Sacred*, which focused on the dioceses of México and Guadalajara, and the issues of local religion and popular insurgencies with an eye on the role of priests as intermediaries between their communities and authorities. Additionally, Brian Larkin's *The Very Nature of God* provides an important analysis of change over time of the religious practices of the Catholic Church as it moved from Baroque grandeur to an Enlightened Bourbon personal piety. He demonstrated the deep personal meanings often behind the more grand practices associated with the Baroque Church and that their root meanings and actions carried on through the Nineteenth Century, even through a series of Enlightenment-era reforms, to show that religious change is far from straightforward and total.

More recent trends in the cultural study of religion have considered how practice and people's experiences with the Inquisition are informed by gender, race, and class. Ruth Behar's articles "Sex, Sin, Witchcraft, and the Devil in Late-Colonial México" and "Sexual Witchcraft, Colonialism, and Women's Powers: Views from the Mexican Inquisition." changed the way in which scholars studied women's experiences before the Inquisition. She complicated the analytical structure of looking at accusations against women for witchcraft by situating the women into places of power, demonstrating how despite the low social position they occupied due to their gender and race, they used the popular discourse connecting women, and particularly mixed race and indigenous

women, to the magical arts to turn power on its head and take it for their own. Laura Lewis in *Hall of Mirrors: Power, Witchcraft, and Caste in Colonial Mexico* built further upon new analytical methods to demonstrate how scholars can examine day-to-day beliefs and actions through the language of the case to find what was important to people in regards to their gender or caste identities. She discussed how each category of caste represented different interlocking forms of power requiring strategies to negotiate, and camaraderie and resentment developed and were evident in cases involving subordinate *casta* groups like Indians and blacks, whose colonial histories differ greatly as imported slaves or conquered indigenes. These relationships were complicated by considerations of the roles of Spaniards, *mestizos*, and *mulattos* and kinships ties to Spaniards and Indians were strong and beneficial.

A growing field of historians have written important works specifically on the experiences of women and the Inquisition in México. Mary Giles's *Women in the Inquisition: Spain and the New World* was one of the first books to examine lesser known cases of women, encompassing a broad social spectrum of race, class, and backgrounds. The third part of her book was dedicated to cases in New Spain, including two heretics, a beata, and a slave, to depict the devastating effects of the Inquisition on the individual but also highlighting the active social roles of women. In *Public Lives, Private Secrets*, Ann Twinam provided a glimpse into the private lives and behaviors of the elite class, particularly their preoccupation with codes of honor, while also showing how people of lower classes were able to use this knowledge to pass as a higher class member and particularly how access to honor and its uses, expectations, and restrictions were very different for women than for men. Martha Few shifted the examination of women to

focus on non-elites and how they used their knowledge of religion, symbols, language, and ritual to their advantages when it came to dealings with the Inquisition. She did this with the important distinction of an intersectional analysis of not only gender, but noting the importance of race and class and how they inform women's knowledge, interactions, and rebellions. Her article "Women, Religion, and Power" introduced her ideas on Inquisitorial control over women and lower *castas* and its role in defining gender roles, and began the examination of gender subversion as a form of daily resistance by subordinate people against larger structures of domination. In *Women Who Live Evil Lives*, Few expanded on these concepts with examinations into the magical religious black market of women who were purveyors of spells, charms, and rituals, transcending racial and economic class lines in their market and alliances, while simultaneously threatening patriarchal control. In *Gender and the Negotiation of Daily Life in México*, Sonya Lipsett-Rivera delivered another important consideration, violence and passion in relationships and how women navigated social spaces through gender performativity and demonstrations of respectability. She moved away from studies of State level political power to that of the power dynamics of interpersonal relationships, and the role of the body and architectural space in demonstrations of gender and honorable or respectable behavior expected of women by men.

As has been alluded to in these works on gender and religion, no one aspect of human experience can be considered as though it exists in a vacuum. As such, it is important to examine how New Spain's complex race-based *casta* system played a role in cases of women brought before the Inquisition for charges relating to witchcraft and diabolism. Race was deeply connected to idolatry, magic, and devil worship in New

Spain as it was believed the Indigenous and slave populations were inherently tainted by demonic forces. In *The Limits of Racial Dominance*, Douglas Cope reexamined the importance of the *casta* system in colonial México when he explored social organization. Using a wide array of sources, Cope mapped the daily life of the urban poor, examining legal and economic barriers which the Spanish colonist put in place to enforce racial segregation and supremacy, and how other *casta* groups overcame those barriers. He examined material culture among the urban poor, racial divisions among the lower classes, how race was determined as a social construct and how the upper class Spanish used racial identifiers, lineage records, and the *casta* system against the lower classes in order to maintain socioeconomic dominance. In *Africans in Colonial Mexico*, Herman Bennett turned to Inquisition and church records to examine to what extent enslaved Africans and their offspring embraced Christianity, and used the Church as a tool for agency and cultural brokerage. Bennett tracked the development of fictive kinships among slave populations, in order to benefit from the growing power of church intervention over masters through marriage between *casta* groups, effectively showing how Africans learned to navigate the cultural terrain of their new home introducing intersecting concepts of gender, authority, power, and community. Frank Proctor in *Damn Notions of Liberty: Slavery, Culture, and Power in Colonial México* reconsidered the slaves ability to construct families and distinctive cultural community under the complex nature of Catholic New Spain rule and the implications of master-slave relations in his examination of México as a society with slaves as opposed to a slave society. He also introduced the connection of runaway slave communities to the ability of slaves to engage the State, make demands, and operate in colonial courts, and the relationship

between liberty and slavery in the minds of the enslaved themselves, removing the tools of understanding and discourse that we have developed since the time of emancipation.

Scholars have written complex and monumental works to bridge cross-cultural gaps in our understanding of race construction and relations in México and which tie together all of these major themes of the cultural histories of religion, gender, race, and class. In a brilliant transatlantic study, *Genealogical Fictions: Limpieza de Sangre and Gender in Colonial México*, Maria Elena Martinez charted the rise of categories of blood purity in Spain and how the associated laws traveled to the colonies in México where they changed and were adapted to a colonial context, becoming connected to expressions and controls of gender and sexuality. She examined the importance of the state-sponsored organization of colonial society into the two republics of Spanish and indigenous discourses on blood and lineage, linking race, religion, and patriotism. One long neglected field of study in Latin American ethnohistory and slave identity is the relationship between those of African descent and the Native population. Matthew Restall began to address this gap in study with *The Black Middle: Africans, Maya, and Spanish in Colonial Yucatan*. This work marked an important change in the study of Afro-Native relations by examining this instead of solely Afro-Spanish or Native-Spanish relations. Restall built upon previous examinations of colonial and slave identity, finding to what extent Africans operated as involuntary colonists and to what extent they remained culturally distinct from other Yucatan inhabitants by exploring interracial issues between Africans and Maya and how Africans and Maya interrelated in urban multiracial communities and found common grounds in magic and healing work and in racially constructed communities defined by their mutual oppressions. Javier Villa-Flores in

Dangerous Speech: A Social History of Blasphemy in Colonial Mexico analyzed Inquisition cases of blasphemy to draw out the conditions affecting people's lives that would lead them to publicly commit such a serious offense. He exposed codes of masculinity that made blasphemy expected of men as part of their gender performance, and conversely how enslaved men used blasphemy to remove themselves from slavery, and how the class of men who blasphemed, be they elite or lowly pirate, dictated whether they would be tried before the Inquisition. In *Christians, Blasphemers, and Witches*, Joan Cameron Bristol provided a nuanced analysis of religious life for Afro-Mexicans in regards to their acceptance and practice of Catholicism in the Seventeenth Century within the framework of Catholicism's tenuous relationship with slavery. She introduced important concepts in the hybridity of Afro-Mexican religious practice, which came to find a symbiosis between West African religion, Indigenous Mexican religion, and Catholicism and the reactions of the Inquisition to these unorthodox and dangerous practices.

As will be demonstrated, the denunciation of Ignacia Gertrudis for *hechicería* and *brujería* encompasses much more than a straightforward case against a heretical sorceress. This case sheds light on the clash between vastly different religious beliefs, gendered language, gender roles, and sexual competition, and the meeting of different *castas* to illuminate important interactions in rural Mexican society. As such this examination, contributes to and brings together the growing and necessary fields of inquiry into late colonial Inquisition studies, studies of women, race, and witchcraft, and the study of the colonial Guadalajara region. Topics of religion among late colonial Native and Afro-Mexican women is remarkably fascinating and there is a wealth of

information in the Inquisition records with which historians can piece together the nuanced uses of dialogues on religion, gender performance and sexuality, *casta*, and concerns about communal outsiders in a region with high transiency brought by mining and agricultural markets. This case opens to door for much more in depth studies of this topic, to understand the actions and concerns and the hybrid beliefs which play out within.

Chapter 2: The Language of Gender and Women's Relationships

In 1767, Ignacia Gertrudis de Ochoa left her husband Juan Flores, migrating from the town of Tizapán el Alto to the ranching area of Zapotlán. There she rented a room from her sister-in-law María Gregoria de Herrera and her brother-in-law Joseph Alexo Flores. After they had lived together for two years, María denounced Ignacia to Brother Don Francisco Xavier de Alcaraz in October of 1771 for the crimes of *hechicería* and *brujería*. In the statement given on her behalf by Brother Alcaraz, María described how the women's friendship developed as sisters-in-law, and deepened as a result of Ignacia providing her with a healing *atole* for her mother when she was ill. Over time, however, María felt that Ignacia came to despise her because she was happily married. She claimed that, in October of 1769, Ignacia began a plot to seduce Joseph Alexo into an illicit relationship, using her magical powers to curse a plate of beans in order to control María's thoughts and actions, forcing her to aid Ignacia's seduction plan.

María and Ignacia used gendered language to portray themselves as victims of each other. In her confession to Brother Alcaraz, María attempted to portray herself in a certain light, demonstrating sincere remorse for her actions while pointing to Ignacia as the sole culprit. She claimed that she recognized the sins of her actions, and that she was penitent and sought forgiveness. She voiced her concerns for her marriage, she repeatedly called upon the Virgin Mary to rescue her from the devil, and she fled the locations of the rituals in fear and remorse. The language of her confession, both when presented by Brother Alcaraz and when she was questioned in person, was worded to emphasize her status of victim, despite the fact that she admitted to summoning the Devil and wielding magical powers herself to preserve her relationship. María also deflected responsibility

for her own role in the rituals by emphasizing the original instance of the beans which took her sight; this was the ritual where by Ignacia began to control her thoughts and actions through witchcraft. This ritual thus absolved her of personal responsibility for all that occurred later. Free will, the freedom to make your own decision regarding one's actions was central to defining sin. Sin could be absolved and the soul redeemed through confession and penance. An involuntary action, however, could not lead to sin.⁴⁷ According to María, Ignacia betrayed her friendship and goodwill, and instigated all of the rituals. She removed María's free will and escalated the severity of the sins committed until Ignacia contracted her soul to the devil. All this was done to cause misery in María's home and obtain Joseph for herself.⁴⁸ Ignacia was only questioned once in the trial, and her response was notably short. Called to Guadalajara before Don Pedro Ignacio Ibarra to give her declaration on Oct 30, 1770, Ignacia claimed total ignorance of all of the events described. She stated that she knew María very well, but had only briefly been in her company. She only touched and took what she had permission to, referring to her newly-acquired relationship with Joseph, who had left María to live with her. She reported that her own husband Juan had said his brother Joseph would be able to better take care of her because she was a restless woman who did not feel at home anywhere. She maintained her innocence of practicing sorcery and making demonic pacts; and, she attempted to shift full blame to María by trivializing their friendship, expressing that the family had given permission for her to leave her

⁴⁷ Asunción Lavrin. "Sexuality in Colonial Mexico: A Church Dilemma" in *Sexuality and Marriage in Colonial Latin America*. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1989): 47.

⁴⁸ Inquisition Manuscript. "Mexico, 1770. Ignacia Gertrudis de Ochoa de Calidad Loba. Por el delito de hechicería, brujería, maleficio, superstición, y abuso de sacramentos." Mexican Inquisition Original Documents Organized by Collection and Bancroft Manuscript Classification, BANC MSS 96/95 m, v 9:9. Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley. 40-43.

husband to live with his brother, showing disinterest in Joseph, and expressing fear that María wanted to kill her for taking her husband.⁴⁹

Inquisitors were interested in pursuing cases of women who appeared to deviate from cultural and religious orthodoxy, making public examples of the most notorious women. As evidenced in the language describing Ignacia's caste and actions, "the overwhelming majority of these women were free mulattas, often acting together with Indian, casta, Black, and even Spanish women."⁵⁰ The rise in interest of *hechicería* cases against free mulattas coincided with secular concerns over the rising population of casta groups. Susan Socolow stated in *The Women of Colonial Latin America* that "a society's definition of normal female behavior is often best viewed by examining those individuals considered to be socially or culturally atypical or 'deviant'."⁵¹ Examining the socially deviant, often determined by caste and connection to magic, illuminates power relationships and relative control of the dominant society over others. Women appear in criminal records most often due to interpersonal crimes (not economic or political crimes as men did) and usually as victims, though sometimes as accomplices or perpetrators. Parish priests often pushed their parishioners to denounce others, especially women, for the practice of popular magic. Targeting cases of magic was one way to enforce colonial control over the population and keep order in communities because women's roles in healing, sorcery, and magic created a competing culture which challenged the Church's authority. This counter-culture enhanced by gossip networks which spread the fame of a woman's skills, implicated that the Inquisition was not as powerful as they insisted if the

⁴⁹ . "Mexico, 1770. Ignacia Gertrudis de Ochoa de Calidad Loba. Por el delito de hechicería, brujería, maleficio, superstición, y abuso de sacramentos.", 42-3.

⁵⁰ Few, *Women Who Live Evil Lives*, 29.

⁵¹ Socolow, *The Women of Colonial Latin America*, 147.

women held such powers on their own.⁵² According to records, “lower class women exercised a surprising degree of sexual freedom and were involved in sexual relations of their own volition” including adultery and concubinage and irregular unions were more commonly accepted among the lower classes. Occasionally, clergy would attempt to improve sexual morality through prolonged campaigns, because they believed that women regardless of race and class were weak, disorderly, prone to sexual excesses, and irrational in their sexual behavior.⁵³ A struggle for power is a struggle for control over rival public spaces or activities. Due to power dynamics in force at the time, testimonies were shaped by the bureaucratic procedures and practices of the Holy Office.

Reforms Around Gender and Women’s Changing Experiences

María and Ignacia’s interactions and self descriptions offers the opportunity to examine their daily lives and concerns as women living in the rural areas surrounding Guadalajara in the late Colonial period. Mid-to-late colonial Guadalajara was an urban environment surrounded by isolated rural areas of haciendas and small pueblos, populated mostly by creole, mestizo, and Afro-Mexican populations, which sat on the outer edge of New Spain.⁵⁴ The population constructed a unique family structure in that they married younger than the average age in the capital, but were less likely to have children. Parish records indicate low birth rates in colonial Guadalajara compared to the rest of New Spain, with one quarter of marriages not producing children. This is possibly due to the higher population of women than men in the city, leading to a higher rate of

⁵² Few, *Women Who Live Evil Lives*, 34.

⁵³ Socolow, *The Women of Colonial Latin America*, 155.

⁵⁴ Thomas Calvo, “The Warmth of the Hearth: Seventeenth-Century Guadalajara Families” in *Sexuality and Marriage in Colonial Latin America*. (Lincoln, University of Nebraska Press, 1989), 287.

polygamous men and abandoned wives, as we see in this case.⁵⁵ Illegitimate relationships were also common, in part due to this gender imbalance, yet also due to racial considerations of illegitimacy. Many women were slaves or freed blacks, descended from the high slave importation in the 1600s. Men saw these women as suitable for illicit friendship, but not for marriage due to their illegitimacy.⁵⁶ Men were encouraged to seek wives of their own class and abilities: “a good marriage was based on financial security” and a good wife helped a man attain this.⁵⁷ Women were encouraged to be good wives and mothers, and were told motherhood was the most important task they had through women’s journal articles and by medical, political, and religious leaders.⁵⁸ Young couples were likely to have premarital intercourse, which was seen as socially acceptable if a promise to wed had been made, but these unions were less likely to result in marriage unless they produced children.⁵⁹ The attitudes towards sex and marriage and marriage rates indicate that there was an increasing potential for personal choice in spouse, allowing young adults to search for greater compatibility in a partner. There was less moral condemnation of partners who enjoyed sexual relations outside of marriage.

These more relaxed relationships were influenced by changing material circumstances: unemployment, poverty, deteriorating social and economic conditions, and geographical mobility. Instances of unconventional sexual practices demonstrate that

⁵⁵ Calvo, “The Warmth of the Hearth”, 291.

⁵⁶ Calvo, “The Warmth of the Hearth”, 293.

⁵⁷ Susan Migden Socolow. *The Women of Colonial Latin America*. (Cambridge, UK;New York: Cambridge University Press. 2000), 170.

⁵⁸ Socolow, *The Women of Colonial Latin America*, 170.

⁵⁹ Ann Twinam. *Public Lives, Private Secrets: Gender, Honor, Sexuality, and Illegitimacy in Colonial Spanish America*. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999), 9.

common folk were likely more accepting of these behaviors than the Church, and the way the Church interacted with these people help us understand how effective their tools of social control were.⁶⁰ Sexual relationships which crossed caste boundaries generally occurred outside of matrimony.⁶¹ The reluctance to marry in this case connects to concerns about illegitimacy. The population composition in which women outnumbered men might have been a factor for why María struggled with her changing relationship while the others involved seem to adopt a more relaxed attitude. Ignacia may not have seen her actions with Joseph as sinful, if it was a fairly common practice for this region in this time period, while María would have been facing a social stigmatization and the threat of economic abandonment.

Lived experience affected by laws and social customs could be vastly different for colonial women of color, and therefor Ignacia. For women of African descent, their cultural origins and family histories ranged from tribal to merchant to class-based aristocracies.⁶² They knew a sexual division of labor in which women could own possessions and property, that were kept separate from their husbands holdings. African women in colonial New Spain accepted Hispanic norms while maintaining African heritage. Among those born in the “New World”, however, there was a marked weakening of African culture due to ethnic mixing and familial groups, and assimilation to Hispanic culture.⁶³ There are many examples of free black women accused of witchcraft, fortune telling, and superstitious practices, participation of which reflects a survival of African folk culture, but “Once Christianized, blacks, unlike indians, were

⁶⁰ Lavrin. “Sexuality in Colonial Mexico”, 48.

⁶¹ Twinam, *Public Lives*, 10.

⁶² Socolow, *The Women of Colonial Latin America*, 27.

⁶³ Socolow, *The Women of Colonial Latin America*, 132.

subject to the Inquisition.”⁶⁴ *Calidad*, or the ethnically-based quality of a person, was performed based on cultural practices like diet or dress. Later, physical differences such as skin color were used to justify persecution, Inquisition, colonial caste, and slavery projects. Ideas of difference formed New Spain’s social structure, a colonial system that required a huge underclass to economically sustain it which was defined by moral and cultural difference.

Much of Ignacia’s experience as a restless woman, the view of her as a seductress, the perception of her as inherently prone to making pacts with the devil, and her skills in witchcraft, are rooted in colonial beliefs that African-descended women were prone to moral failings. As Ignacia’s caste identification was described as *loba*, meaning African and Indian, it is important to also consider the changing conditions of the indigenous woman in the late colonial period. Pre-Columbian women in Mesoamerica “...believed that marriage was the ideal state for women beyond the age of puberty. Among the Aztecs...approximately 95% of women were married.”⁶⁵ Women generally married at an early age, between 16-19 years old. Elite men could have multiple wives but women remained monogamous and women were punished for illicit affairs, a legal precedent which set a standard. Across Latin America, female deities were universally associated with fertility, procreation, regeneration, and gender-specific occupation. Earth mothers and fertility goddesses were linked with food production, for example the Aztec goddess Toci was associated with earth-goddess and figure of discord, Xilonen with maize,

⁶⁴ Socolow, *The Women of Colonial Latin America*, 143.

⁶⁵ Socolow, *The Women of Colonial Latin America*, 20.

Xochiquetzal with mountains and the protection of prostitutes.⁶⁶ Aztec women were active in ceremonies to female deities, roles which were often extensions of household chores yet which mirrored the importance of male roles. The introduction of Spanish Catholic society brought a marked decline in the status of elite Aztec women through the colonial period. The existing system of gender complementarity which Aztec women enjoyed was replaced by the patriarchal hierarchy of Spanish culture, which over time saw women's status and autonomy depleted to a guardianship-type relationship.⁶⁷

Women's Increased Opportunities

Women's changed opportunities are evidenced with Ignacia's ability to leave her husband and pursue other options in her "restless" life. The late colonial period saw a shifting mentality about women's capabilities in education and labor, recognizing their competence as a positive development for Mexican society. Bourbon reforms promoted women's education and labor, encouraging them to take a more active role in civil society.⁶⁸ However, education and literacy were only promoted for elite urban women. Non-elite women were encouraged to enter the workforce in jobs appropriate for their sex.⁶⁹ The Eighteenth Century saw a growing interest in protecting 'poor but honest' women and introduced correction centers to reform women from living 'mala vida.' The Bourbon kings sought to develop a moral and obedient populace through the control of sexual mores and other civil behaviors (like drinking and gambling) that was difficult to control as rural women migrated to urban centers for economic opportunity. However

⁶⁶ Socolow, *The Women of Colonial Latin America*, 25.

⁶⁷ Susan Kellogg. *Law and the Transformation of Aztec Culture, 1500-1700*. (University of Oklahoma Press, 1995), 213-228.

⁶⁸ Silvia Marina Arrom. *The Women of Mexico City, 1790-185*. (Stanford: Stanford University Press. 1985), 14.

⁶⁹ Socolow, *The Women of Colonial Latin America*, 170.

many women found harder living conditions instead that required illegal or immoral activities as a survival strategy, as was the case with Ignacia.⁷⁰ The Eighteenth Century saw the growth of the Enlightenment ideals of personal happiness and women began to find ways to live independently of men.

Legal reforms made it possible for women like María and Ignacia to develop their own skills and support themselves outside of marriage, yet social change often came slower than legal change. Specifically referencing lower class and working poor women of the late colonial period, Bourbon reformers believed they should be a part of the workforce because a strong economy requires all hands.⁷¹ Women participated in many sectors of the colonial economy and “...the nature of female economic participation was closely tied to race and class.”⁷² Proprietary rules forbade public employment but women worked in commerce and business, these were usually widows with sizable assets, while less affluent women earned money by renting homes in their houses, as María did, teaching young girls womanly work, or took in sewing and weaving or sold food and woven goods in the marketplace- particularly the case of mixed, indian, and black women. In 1775, Pedro Rodriguez, Conde de Campomanes, in *Discourse on the Popular Education of Artisans*, recommended eliminating legal barriers to women’s work and giving them vocational training which the Crown implemented over the next 25 years. By January 12, 1799, women were able to engage in all labors and guilds were required to accept and educate them across New Spain. In 1784, Viceroy Miguel Joseph de Anzanza argued for allowing women of New Spain to work, claiming the indecency of a small

⁷⁰ Socolow, *The Women of Colonial Latin America*, 175.

⁷¹ Arrom, *The Women of Mexico City*, 26.

⁷² Socolow, *The Women of Colonial Latin America*, 113-5.

number of men hoarding and monopolizing skilled labor from those who needed work to support themselves and their families.⁷³ These changes were slow and did not affect all women equally, especially outside of Mexico City. Women in María and Ignacia's region and economic situation still did not receive regular or advanced educations, many were legally and ideologically blocked from entering the workforce or sociopolitical/community involvement.

María would be concerned about her ability to survive as a single and abandoned woman with little to no prospects for remarriage in the wake of her husband's departure despite the reforms passed intended to better her life. Her concerns demonstrated that encouraging women to participate in the economy was more intention than action at this moment. Conversely, Ignacia appeared to have had some means of supporting herself, either through the selling of her magical craft as evidenced in her healing *atoles*, or through familial and spousal support, to the point where travel and living a restless life were possible for her. This indicates that she was perhaps in a better situation to take advantage of these reforms, while still seeking a romantic partner. Together they are an example of the uneven way in which laws and reforms transmitted to the common rural person.

Terms of honor centered on the relationships between and ideas about the behavior of the genders: "For men honor was exemplified by assertiveness, courage, authority, and the domination of women; for women it lay in their possession of shame,

⁷³ Arrom, *The Women of Mexico City*, 27-8.

retained through discretion and sexual control.”⁷⁴ Honor was a public act, discretion was critically important, particularly when a private act could lead to a loss of honor. Most middle to upper-class people behaved with discretion, maintained secrecy, and used legal and social remedies to retain honor; and they minimized the damage caused by dishonorable behavior, indiscretion, and scandal.⁷⁵ Honor belonged to the elite classes, it “was the ethos which rationalized the existence of the colonial hierarchy. It included those self-conscious differences of birth and conduct that distinguished people who had it (*gente decente*) from those who did not (*gente baja*)...Honor was not only a heritage of racial and religious purity, but a family history of proper action, as signified by generations of sanctified marriages and of legitimate births.”⁷⁶ Illegitimate women (*gente baja*) found their options for marriage, occupation, and social mobility severely limited within this honor code. Women who engaged in adultery, like Ignacia, lost reputation and honor, as did their family members, but the same repercussions did not apply to men. Honor codes then did more to control female sexuality than male.⁷⁷ People of the lower castes or *mala sangre/raza* were by definition without honor according to the Spanish.⁷⁸ Liberated from the concerns of honor, Ignacia’s behavior and language in this case sit outside of the established ideas for women discussed in the existing historiography.

On the other hand, María appeared to operate in a ruralized version of the honor code. Despite the fact that these were working-class rural women, according to Richard

⁷⁴ Geoffrey Spurling, “Honor, Sexuality, and the Colonial Church: The Sins of Dr. Gonzalez, Cathedral Canon”, in *The Faces of Honor: Sex, Shame, and Violence in Colonial Latin America*. (Albuquerque, NM: University of New Mexico Press, 1998), 45.

⁷⁵ Spurling, “Honor, Sexuality, and the Colonial Church”, 61.

⁷⁶ Ann Twinam, “Honor, Sexuality, and Illegitimacy in Colonial Spanish America” in *Sexuality and Marriage in Colonial Latin America*. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1989), 123.

⁷⁷ Twinam, “Honor, Sexuality, and Illegitimacy”, 125.

⁷⁸ Richard Boyer, “Honor among Plebeians”, in *The Faces of Honor*, 155-6.

Boyer, “Honor was relative, so that in a small Mexican village, those belonging to the noble elite felt as imbued with honor as did the nobility of Mexico City (whose honor in turn overshadowed theirs);” even for inferior or rural classes, honor was based not only on birth and color but on public behavior, particularly for women.⁷⁹ Complex interactions existed between the lower castes, where individuals claimed membership across a range of classifications, and could achieve certain privileges based upon the darkness of their skin. Castas viewed themselves, despite how the Spanish viewed them, as having honor via reputation and character, if they were dependable, influential, or had wealth and social connections.⁸⁰ Spanish testimony outweighed that of lower castes. In these cases, truth could be less important than upholding the colonial racial order. Many people who sought paternalistic intervention failed to obtain it due to patriarchal and racial structures involved in the colonial order. Boyer states that, “Disputes over sexual transgressions...also turned on reputation and character, or on who people were or who they were trying to be in a community.”⁸¹ In this manner, María was, in her own way, using the tools of gossip, concepts of race and honor, and the discourse on magic before the Inquisition to reduce Ignacia’s honor while preserving her own.

The intersections of laws about women’s rights to power, property, and protection provide an important insight into María’s situation. Legal status determined how women were viewed, how they exercised authority, their rights to make decisions, their informal powers, and how they used the law to control behaviors of others⁸² Women were denied

⁷⁹ Sonya Lipsett-Rivera, “A Slap in the Face of Honor: Social Transgression and Women in Late-Colonial Mexico”, in *The Faces of Honor*, 180.

⁸⁰ Boyer, “Honor Among Plebeians”, 156.

⁸¹ Boyer, “Honor Among Plebeians”, 162, 171.

⁸² Arrom, *The Women of Mexico City*, 53.

many rights and were legally dependent upon men. The *Teatro de la Legislación*, a late colonial legal reference work, states that “women enjoyed the privilege of protection because they were weaker in mind, body, and character.”⁸³ Legal status demonstrates an interesting intersection of proprietary traditions and economic or social necessities. While some laws protected women’s economic status, for example dowries and *arras* (bridal gift from the husband) belonged to women, they still had to have their husbands permission to enter into contracts or conduct financial business, and only legitimate widows could inherit estates and incomes.⁸⁴ Being divorced or abandoned would prevent this legal protection from occurring, and there were laws in place to prevent her from remarrying if she wanted to inherit. Only decent wives and mothers were protected by law. Legal access was based upon good reputation in the role of wife and mother.⁸⁵ While María had income from a property, the law required her husband’s permission to use it or to contract it to a tenant. Abandonment left her in a precarious position where she may have lost her legal right to this property and the home in which she lived, putting more in jeopardy than the loss of her spouse; a wife’s full juridical capacity was only returned upon occasion of her husband’s death at which time she was released from guardianship.

Promiscuity and Divorce

Quasi-marriages, extended betrothals, and varying degrees of illicit friendships like Ignacia and Joseph’s were common and near impossible for the Church to control. Historical attitudes and practices around sexuality, discrimination, and civil legislation

⁸³ Arrom, *The Women of Mexico City*, 56.

⁸⁴ Arrom, *The Women of Mexico City*, 62.

⁸⁵ Arrom, *The Women of Mexico City*, 64.

influenced mentality and practice when it came to marriage, abandonment, divorce, and women's autonomy. The Council of Trent declared marriage by priest the only formal commitment between sexual partners and required marriage before intercourse, but this was not in line with social traditions and was never popularly accepted nor fully endorsed.⁸⁶ By the Eighteenth Century, a promise of matrimony could range between a secret pact between lovers the night they gave each other their virginity, to an informal ceremony among family where token gifts were exchanged. Either of these would be supported and recognized by the Church.⁸⁷ Be that as it may, the implications of entering these relationships was different for men than women,

The sexual promiscuity associated with machismo was typical of colonial men, who paid substantially lower prices for their sexual activity than did their female counterparts; ...for the Virgin Mary and the female chastity associated with marianismo were equally familiar to colonial women. Religious devotion was a prized attribute and virginity a material asset...Colonial codes disproportionately punished women who did not control their sexuality.⁸⁸

Patriarchal control insisted on female virginity and faithfulness and society condemned women who were subject to temptation. Gradual changes in attitudes towards honor from 1670-1730 included the increased marriages of African-descended and casta women such that their relationships and honorable public behaviors began to mirror those of Spanish women, breaking down the strict racial honor codes. "Word of honor" promises to marry no longer compelled men to marry, meaning men were more likely to not marry a woman with whom they were having sexual relations. With lack of proof of a promise, the Church was unable and unwilling to intervene. Instead of being imprisoned or forced to

⁸⁶ Twinam, *Public Lives*, 37.

⁸⁷ Twinam, *Public Lives*, 38.

⁸⁸ Twinam, *Public Lives*, 60.

marry, if a man was found guilty of going back on his word, he could just pay a fine to compensate the woman financially, making her economically attractive to future suitors.⁸⁹ This also lessened the consequences for women who lost their virginities and made the Church announce in the 1720s that questions of honor should be settled between the parties instead of bringing it to the Church. These changes “can be attributed to the progressive impoverishment of large segments of the population: the inability of young men to carry through on their marital promises deteriorated because of lack of means.”⁹⁰ Ignacia was born to a status of rural mixed-race poor where honor would have been unattainable for her. As such, she occupied a less-studied social position in which she was free to challenge existing controls over behavior, marriage, and honor by abandoning her home and marriage.

Sexual sins could be confessed and forgiven by the Church, but society was less forgiving. It was necessary to remain silent in public about what occurred in private, otherwise there would be a scandal and a loss of honor. This could indicate why María and Ignacia demonstrated a feeling of crisis in their situations. If Joseph and Ignacia’s relationship had become public knowledge, María would be facing a tremendous social stigma and a loss of what honor she had. It would demonstrate publicly that she had failed as a wife. While the relationships were complicated, it was unlikely an exchange the Church would have approved. There was more than religious and economic concerns at play. Turning to the Inquisition with an accusation of magic would be one way for María to publicly explain that she was not failing as a wife, and that Joseph was not a

⁸⁹ Patricia Seed, *To Love, Honor, and Obey in Colonial Mexico: Conflicts over Marriage Choice, 1574-1821*. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1988), 101.

⁹⁰ Seed, *To Love*, 107.

dishonorable husband, but there were other factors at play influencing them. It could also force him to return home by jailing his lover.

María went to the Inquisition with a discourse on magic against Ignacia instead of seeking penalty for adultery against Joseph because adultery and concubinage were sins of lust which moral theology was particularly stern about. Men who abandoned their wives for another woman were to pay an economic penalty, and women who disrupted families were considered “lascivious unbridled beasts” as deadly as poison and the epitome of evil.⁹¹ In this case, Ignacia is seen as more evil and responsible than Joseph. This is because adultery was difficult to prove, relied on circumstantial evidence, and involved “thorough and entailed depositions by several witnesses and involved parties.”⁹² With these considerations, we see a plausible reason for María’s course of actions in seeking this denunciation. Abandoned by her husband, María then occupied a precarious social and legal position. She was faced with stigma in her church and community, and also was unable to regain full legal autonomy as long as Joseph was alive. She would not have been easily able to seek another spouse to replace him. With divorce an unattractive option, she turned to her priest for assistance in ridding her relationship of the interloping Ignacia and having her husband pressured to return to his home and duties.

Divorce was not an attractive recourse for María because she and Joseph were legally bound through marriage in a way by the Church. Community property gave a wife legal leverage because they made a husband’s spending and behavior accountable if he jeopardized her wealth. However, the courts would not often step in to assist a women

⁹¹ Lavrin. “Sexuality in Colonial Mexico”, 67.

⁹² Lavrin. “Sexuality in Colonial Mexico”, 68.

with a deceitful lover or spouse; and, she had to rely on male relatives to take initiative for her or seek religious intervention. Women filed for divorce at much higher rates than men. The Church never recognized divorce as a full separation and a divorced spouse could never remarry until the other died. Ex-wives were expected to remain chaste in separation and should always be prepared to reunite. A full permanent divorce, as opposed to this ecclesiastical separation, was only granted in extreme and rare cases of abuse and spousal abandonment lasting many years and required an infallible case. The process was publicly humiliating, requiring a wife to file additional civil lawsuits to accompany the divorce. Women were also dissuaded from pursuing divorce by their economic dependency and poor job prospects and so turned to priests to help correct their husbands behavior instead of seeking divorce.⁹³

Maria's Personal Considerations

María's jealousy and the competition it created between the women played an important role in these personal relationships. The activities they performed together in the intimacy of a shared home and family relations, shared dinner and *fiestas*, and the frequency and locations of the rituals described in the case demonstrate that there was a trusted companionship between them, even if friendship is contradictory to the denunciation. Affairs, whether real or imagined, created enmity between women for spouses, who were increasingly sparse in this time and place. Women also had to compete for access to income, property, autonomy, and security. Denunciation and response, then, became valuable tools of women who had exhausted their social and legal routes to controlling competition and had to turn to the Church and Inquisition with a

⁹³ Arrom, *The Women of Mexico City*, 81, 208, 218.

moral plea or an accusation of sin to alleviate their dire circumstances. Individuals who transgressed social expectations were harshly punished, even by physical attacks from those they harmed. Social relations were defined by exercises of power in daily life. Women claimed noninstitutional power through gendered social roles which integrated indigenous, African, and Spanish ideas about religion and the supernatural. Inquisitions and other State institutions attempted to root out women's clandestine social networks, particularly those of women of color who worked in the magical arts.⁹⁴

María's denunciation shows signs of a woman who has internalized Inquisitorial ideas about the sin of witchcraft, and had devalued her own magical power and experience, becoming angry with herself for subverting the social order and taking power for herself in line with her friend. Her actions, using witchcraft for her own benefit, did not liberate hers from the internalization of her Catholic belief system and the moral fears which accompanied her socialization within her religion. There are many cases of Spanish Catholic women "unable to reconcile the contradictions between [proper catholic behavior] and [witchcraft] ended up by expressing disgust and self-hatred. They threw away the remedies they used, became angry with themselves for the violent emotions they had given vent to, and ran tearfully to confess to the parish priest and inquisitors."⁹⁵ Proper Christian women often chose the lesser of two evils, living the *mala vida* with a bad husband instead of turning to the black arts. Their confessions about almost using or temporarily using magic allowed them to clear their consciences, yet betrayed themselves and their fellow women by going to Inquisitors and reinforced male structures of control

⁹⁴ Few, *Women Who Live Evil Lives*, 115.

⁹⁵ Behar, "Sexual Witchcraft", 186.

over female behavior, much as we see in María's case. Other women actively chose to reject the religious system of male domination by actively seeking the dark arts and pacts with the devil as we see with Ignacia, because "[the devil] was kinder, more loyal, and more interested than their husbands."⁹⁶ The common uniting factor of women's networks for dealing with marital and sexual relationship problems was interethnic and interclass, even doñas sought the mentorship or aid of indigenous women.

In her declaration, María expressed concerns about her sexual validity and value as a woman. Many of her concerns were rooted in concepts of marriage as a source of security and honor, yet which were tied to her physical attractiveness and worth as a sexual partner. Repeatedly, María asked the goat if her husband had left her for the more attractive Ignacia, to which the goat assured her that she was not so ugly as to lose her husband. Alternatively, María gave the impression through her denunciation that even if Ignacia had not been making pacts with the Devil, she was attractive enough to provoke María's jealousy and create concern that she would seduce Joseph. As a source of security and honor, marriage was contingent on social expectation for women. Spousal choice was more than just a personal decision because the continuation of the species and home stability were tied to marriage, and it was so heavily regulated by religious and social mores that it became the nucleus of customs, order, and traditions.⁹⁷ Sexuality has been expressed outside of marriage throughout colonial period through premarital and extramarital relations, polygamy, clandestine affairs, and more. Modern historians have begun studying the circumstances, nature, legislation, and social consequences of

⁹⁶ Behar, "Sexual Witchcraft", 191.

⁹⁷ Lavrin, *Sexuality and Marriage*, 1.

sexuality outside the mores of Christian marriage in Latin America.⁹⁸ From 1700-1750 the same cultural attitudes that addressed women's sexual honor shaped attitudes about love and will in marriage.⁹⁹ Men and women were both reluctant to marry even after sexual relations, which destabilized the concept of love as an expression of settled will instead being viewed as an unstable emotion not to be trusted. "...Growing suspicion about the sincerity and stability of the intentions that had prompted marriage promises in the first place" leading to pleas upon men's consciences when they refused to carry out marriages.¹⁰⁰ In turn young men and women began to invent excuses for not fulfilling their marriage obligations, including immaturity and disturbed mental states. This undermined personal responsibility for behavior, so one would have to show how and why they were not responsible for their own actions, sometimes shifting blame to third parties.¹⁰¹ The changing attitude towards the importance of the marriage sacrament was evident in the relationships in this case, particularly when Joseph was so willing to leave his marriage to be with Ignacia. Witchcraft and demonic pacts were made to blame for all of the illicit affairs and ritual participations, allowing the participants to avoid responsibility for their actions described in the confessions, which were intended to show penance.

The changing social structures led to increased pressures around sexuality and marriage for women like María. Combined with the considerations of the unequal ratio of men to women in Guadalajara at this time, María would have been at a disadvantage to retain economic standing or to find a new romantic partner, particularly considering the

⁹⁸ Lavrin, *Sexuality and Marriage*, 2.

⁹⁹ Seed, *To Love, Honor, and Obey*, 109.

¹⁰⁰ Seed, *To Love, Honor, and Obey*, 100.

¹⁰¹ Seed, *To Love, Honor, and Obey*, 113.

Church's denial to allow full divorce and remarriage. She found herself in a precarious position around the loss of her marriage, the inability to control her own property and income, drastically changing laws and culture, and competition from another woman who had seemingly taken all of her comfort and stability along with manipulating their personal relationship. It seems then only natural that she would craft this denunciation against Ignacia, to bring the Inquisitorial gaze to rest on her situation in the hopes that she could make herself suitably look victimized and have the Church restore her former life and comfort. To do this, she had to draw on her knowledge of sins that would draw the attention of the Inquisition, and this included the popular practice of witchcraft, which was particularly suspected of African and indigenous women.

Fantastic accounts like Ignacia's pacts with the devil and witchcraft practice were intended to demonstrate women's deviance.¹⁰² These procedures and their vocabularies were intended to limit the vocabularies and discourses available to people who came before the Inquisition so they would operate within a prescribed pattern of stories. We can still use them to draw out María and Ignacia's accounts, through the unstructured verbal flows, to find the issues they confronted, finding "what they thought they could do, how they did it, and the reasons they did it...and women's broader survival norms."¹⁰³ Sorcery was one of very few viable economic options for poor rural colonial women, and was largely socially accepted with customers coming from every socio-economic class, gender, race, and region and it was combinable with other traditionally female services like market sales and domestic service. Those who sought a sorceress services often did

¹⁰² Few, *Women Who Live Evil Lives*, 8.

¹⁰³ Few, *Women Who Live Evil Lives*, 9.

so for economic reasons, to bring wealth or material gain, or to control a lover. The seeking of services created multi-ethnic social networks and community relationships, as well as close personal friendships.¹⁰⁴ It also created points of struggle within women's friendships as we see in this case. Women relied on many strategies of conflict resolution. Denouncing their rivals to the Inquisition, calling upon their aid in conflict even years after the events occurred, suggests that this was but one of many paths women pursued, including their own dabbling in popular magical practice.

María's denunciation serves as an example of women using the Inquisition to aid them. However, in the process, María implicated herself. While denouncing Ignacia and attempting to demonstrate her lack of free will and victimization, María in turn demonstrated her own guilt. Gender played a role in how Ignacia was depicted in the case, and how others related to her. This is due to the specifically gendered terms of existence in rural colonial Guadalajara where Ignacia lived her life as a restless woman, thus becoming a threat to María. These gendered terms of life caused María more anxiety than just a more attractive woman seducing her husband. They affected her ability to make a living, or live a life free of the social stigma of an abandoned woman. Yet gendered existence does not only apply to women.

The role of men in the case is brief but important. Brother Don Francisco Javier Alcaraz delivered María's testimony to the Inquisitors for her, speaking on her behalf. His role raises concerns about whether he was merely aiding her by delivering her testimony or if he constructed or influenced her account. This is important because it demonstrates the possibility for manipulation of the women by a man in a superior power

¹⁰⁴ Few, *Women Who Live Evil Lives*, 105.

position. While it is likely that he presented María's confession to the Inquisition at her own request, he is called in for a second time to confirm his previous statements as true. Here we get an important glimpse into his perception of the events, which may have led to the harsher sentencing for María. His second testimony portrays Ignacia as more devious than María's initial denunciation did. He stated that she came to María's with the intention to sleep with Joseph and that she also laid with the Devil on two occasions. It is worth considering the weight of his testimony, and that he gave the first testimony on behalf of María, when both women were imprisoned. It highlights the social importance of men's voice and perceptions and their jobs. Joseph Alexo Flores also gave a very brief testimony which vaguely confirmed what María said. It differs when he claimed his wife repeatedly asked him through their marriage if he would prefer to be married to Ignacia, to which he answered that he could not even tell one from the other at first. This confirms that María had anxieties around Ignacia. He also recounted events in a similar way to which María had, claiming that he too had witness some of it, though it differs from the woman's story. His depiction of events shows that he had little concern for the women's actions, that he found them almost trivial or bothersome and superstitious. He did not report them to the priest even though he saw them defile his image of the Virgin Mary. The lack of attention paid to the testimony of men, and that no punishment was given to Joseph Alexo Flores for his role in infidelity and witnessing heresy, supports the tradition that it was more socially and religiously acceptable for men to enjoy looser restrictions within the colonial honor system. That their testimonies may also have contributed to the harsh sentence both women received also speaks to male legal power, in dealings not only with state legal cases, but in Inquisition trials as well.

Conclusion

In the gendered considerations of this case, language around caste, honor, gender, sexuality, relationships, and personal perception have all played key roles. Discourses on ethnicity and magic contributed to the way the women were viewed by the Inquisitors, and the way they constructed their arguments about themselves and each other. Changing laws about women's roles in society and social customs around marriage and sex, resulting from Enlightenment ideas and Bourbon reforms, played an evident role in the concern the women have about their lives and security, as well as how they see themselves and each other situated in their own unique context. At the same time society was changing, these women were existing in an outlying area where they still found themselves negotiating older traditional religious beliefs, pleading to an Inquisitorial gaze which had begun to move on from concerns about women's magical practice. María would come to find that the racial and religious discourse she relied on was going to fail her due to these changing views and concerns of the men who occupied more powerful positions than she did.

Chapter 3: Ethnicity and Caste Influences on Ignacia's Experience

Ethnicity and caste have historically been key factors in the way individuals interact with each other and with systems of power. This is evidenced in Ignacia's experience before the Inquisition. From the denunciation against her, the witnesses called to testify against her, the filing of her case, and her conviction with little regard to her testimony or voice. Ignacia's caste identifier of *loba* is mentioned multiple times in the case, yet she is the only person whose caste is identified. *Loba* is a part of her description on the cover and in the case summaries, as well as in her initial identification during denunciation and any time she is referred to by a witness or in questioning. In highlighting her caste, the Inquisitors left behind clues that allow us to determine common held ideas and prejudices of the time which affected her experience.

Ignacia was questioned in Guadalajara before Don Pedro Ignacio Ibarra on October 30, 1770. Her questioning was brief, she was only to respond to whether or not María Gregoria's accusations were true. She claimed that she knew nothing of the sorcery she was accused of, that María and Juan (Ignacia's husband) had said that Joseph should care for her because she was restless. Most importantly Ignacia claimed that she had permission to have relations with Joseph and that she was living in fear of María. Only two witnesses were called to testify about Ignacia's character, Marcos and Nicolara, who were identified as *Indios*. Marcos was questioned in Zapotlán on November 30, 1770 by Br Joseph Francisco de Aguilar and notary Manuel Mendoza. He was asked if his wife, Nicolara, ever sold or used dolls with the purpose of controlling other people and if he agreed with the statements made by María Gregoria about Ignacia's character. Brother Francisco Javier de Alcaraz questioned Nicolara, María Gregoria's parish priest who

delivered her denunciation to the Inquisitors in Guadalajara. He questioned Nicolara in Zapotlán about the dolls Ignacia was accused of using. She was asked whether she knew about their usage in magical arts, and if the dolls held magical powers. In the questioning, Br. Alcaraz mentioned he had a letter written to her from María Gregoria requesting dolls and paper, to which she claimed she had no knowledge. At this, she was told to stop lying in Br Alcaraz's presence. We are never given the caste of María, Joseph, or Juan, although María's denunciation and testimony seem to carry the most impact for this case. Traditionally, the caste designation was given for all people involved in an Inquisition case. Why then do the Inquisitors and Br. Alcaraz make note of only Ignacia and the *indios* castes? And how do caste and ethnicity play a role in how Ignacia is perceived in denunciation, questioning, and sentencing?

Sistema de Castas and Casta Paintings

To understand how the caste system and *calidad loba* identifiers affected Ignacia in her trial, it is necessary to examine the history of the construction of the race-based caste system in New Spain. Blood purity in regards to Spanish Catholic lineage, known as *limpieza de sangre*, was crucial to the social hierarchy and access to power. *Casta* as a term was in use in Spain before the colonial period to refer to people of many races and socioeconomic status. There, it was more of an ordered hierarchy than a harmonious coexistence. Its use transferred to the colonies where "Indians, with the exception of their nobility, were largely associated with agriculture and unskilled labor and became tribute paying plebeians."¹⁰⁵ Yet Indians had their own republic and hierarchy within the colony

¹⁰⁵ Ilona Katzew. *Casta Painting: Images of Race in Eighteenth-Century Mexico*. (New Haven: Yale University Press. 2004), 39.

and had the protection of the crown. On the other hand, Africans were brought as slaves, were the lowest echelon of society, and worked on plantations, mines, or estates. They had few rights and privileges, and were only considered to be redeemable if they pledged themselves to their church and master.¹⁰⁶ A lack of Spanish women contributed to the earliest instances of race mixing in the colonies, between Spanish men and Indian women, creating the caste known as *mestizo*. While mestizos were somewhat recognized, they were considered illegitimate and barred from holding important positions. In this manner, social order came to rest upon racial differences. Controlled through forced conversion to and practice of Christianity, intense scrutiny of free and slave Africans began in the earliest periods of colonial law under Charles V and increased as the populations grew in New Spain. African slaves became assimilated into Christian culture through customs, and taboos, around the connection of the body, behavior, and soul, greater control of christian kinship and marriage. Early slaves learned to use marriage, particularly through cohabitation with Indians, as a path to freedom, manipulating the sacrament to acquire rights as Christian subjects. This was seen as a threat, thus canon law declared marriage did not free the enslaved.¹⁰⁷

African-descended women had variety of identities but the Spanish specifically classified them in a manner rooted in enslavement and the stigma of blackness. From *bozal* to *ladino* to *loba*, Afro-Mexican identity, despite Spanish classifications, moved between identity labels and women built relationships and married across caste lines, despite "...how attitudes about color, origin, status, and ritual became linked in Iberia

¹⁰⁶ Katzew, *Casta Painting*, 39.

¹⁰⁷ Herman L Bennett. *Africans in Colonial Mexico: Absolutism, Christianity, and Afro-Creole Consciousness, 1570-1640*. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press. 2003), 46.

long before the colonization of America, and how they operated in (colonial times) as well.”¹⁰⁸ Ignacia’s caste identification of *loba* refers to an ethnic origin of African and indigenous parentage. To this point, very little has been written on the *loba* caste, thus determining the way they lived and were perceived by other members of society and how they interacted with the Inquisition requires a piecing together of indigenous and Afro-Mexican experiences with the analysis of Ignacia’s experience in this trial. The series of *casta* paintings created in the Eighteenth Century provide some evidence for an initial understanding of perceptions of the *loba* caste in society. These paintings were pictorial souvenirs made for Spaniards, which stressed the affluence of the colony, the ethnic stratification of society and the main means of production and trade.

These works were not just exotic art, but also a means to analyze colonial identity formation and its representations, and intersections of vision and power. They attempted to explain why people differ in color and behavior in a progression of images depicting race mixing across roughly sixteen scenes, which include a man, a woman, their children, and food, objects, flora, and fauna.¹⁰⁹ One early example of these series comes from Juan Rodríguez Juárez’s 1715 painting, titled “De negro y de india, produce loba (Black and Indian produce a wolf).”¹¹⁰ This painting demonstrates the *calidad* of a *loba*. All *casta* paintings of *loba* depict a black father and indian mother, holding a baby. In Juárez’s paintings the father has a whip in his hand and is moving to grab the mother in a display of violence often attributed to persons of African descent in the colonial period. While these paintings do little to display the actual lived experience or identity of

¹⁰⁸ Bristol, *Christians, Blasphemers, and Witches*, 25.

¹⁰⁹ Katzew, *Casta Painting*, 4-5.

¹¹⁰ Image of this painting found in Katzew, *Casta Painting*, 15.

members of the *loba* caste, they do provide clues to how Spanish elite society perceived them in the Eighteenth Century. The painting highlights African male aggression in his posture and possession of the whip paired with female Indian victimization or timidity. This is generally in stark contrast to the surrounding image where their clothes are not as fine as the clothes given to Spaniards in the series. Their home or market in the images is that of a lower economic class which is void of decoration and with a dirt floor, often she is barefoot carrying a basket with only one tortilla. Other times, the only decoration that they have is of food and dishes, but no art, flora, or fauna. The child is always depicted with darker skin, in keeping with the concept that one could not marry into a better caste if they were of African descent.

Calidad and Segregation

It is clear from the paintings that Afro-Mexican experience as *loba* was treated more as an Afro-Mexican *calidad* than an Indian one. To address questions about Afro-Mexican experience, we must examine "...how attitudes about color, origin, status, and ritual became linked in Iberia long before the colonization of America, and how they operated in (colonial times) as well."¹¹¹ *Calidad* defined individuals in order to differentiate Spaniards from non-Spaniards based on an individual's skin color, clothing, occupation, personal relationships, cultural practices, status as slave or free, and *limpieza de sangre*.¹¹² *Calidad*, was performance expressed through both behavior and appearance. *Calidad* emphasized distinctions along the socioeconomic spectrum and the conflation of wealth with political privilege and social status and could vary depending

¹¹¹ Bristol, *Christians, Blasphemers, and Witches*, 25.

¹¹² Bristol, *Christians, Blasphemers, and Witches*, 6.

on a specific individual's perceived social circumstances.¹¹³ This classification method was used by officials to judge a person's merit for the acquisition of positions or privileges or to determine their character in legal and Inquisition cases. This is how we determine the ideas around caste which influenced Ignacia's experience.

Legislation was enacted which appropriated caste categories, endowing individuals with rights, responsibilities, or obligations in line with how their quality was perceived. But legislation was not the only enforcement of *calidad*; the system was upheld by local elites, conquistadors, settlers, and bureaucrats who all participated in enforcing these ideas and perceptions. The process developed organically as evidenced through correspondences and legal requests.¹¹⁴ Royal legislation regulating African slaves had lasting effects for all individuals of African descent through the colonial period. Concerns over control, particularly of the body, were evidenced in laws and instances of resistance and revolt.¹¹⁵ The Crown attempted to prevent inter-ethnic unions for Africans, promoting slave populations to marry within their own communities. Royal policies aided racial separation. They believed it would keep the slave populations calmer and less likely to revolt because their love for their wives would keep them tranquil.¹¹⁶ However, Afro-Indigenous *mulatos* moved comfortably between cultural spheres and had multi-generational ties with both Indian and African communities which perpetuated further unions, creating a great deal of cultural fluency among caste groups. According to Robert Schwaller, "individuals born of African-indigenous unions tended to become

¹¹³ Robert C Schwaller. *Géneros de Gente In Early Colonial Mexico: Defining Racial Difference*. (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2016), 27.

¹¹⁴ Schwaller, *Géneros de Gente*, 50.

¹¹⁵ Schwaller, *Géneros de Gente*, 58.

¹¹⁶ Schwaller, *Géneros de Gente*, 66.

acculturated to native cultural norms and fluent in native languages.”¹¹⁷ However, Afro-Mexicans and their descendants were considered members of the *república de españoles*, and not the *república de indios*. As such, they were denied the legal and religious protections afforded to Native Americans. If Ignacia came from a predominately indigenous community, it would have been necessary to use an African caste identifier when drawing the Inquisitorial gaze.

The State defined most people of African descent as “black” or “mulatto” regardless of their diverse backgrounds, ethnicities, and languages before coming to New Spain.¹¹⁸ Identifying terms used within the *casta* system often had little to do with the person’s identity or ethnicity, but they do tell us how the individual was perceived and defined by others and within the courts. Afro-Mexicans had opportunities or disadvantages relative to the labels given to them. These labels expressed what they were believed to be capable of doing or how they were expected to behave, and these individuals had to navigate within that definition. African *calidad* indicators were believed to be negative, meaning the person was corrupt, lewd, self-serving, and degenerate. These are the indicators attached to Ignacia every time her caste was mentioned, indicating her propensity to guilt before ever being questioned or heard.

Residential segregations were developed in the cities to ensure separation and laws were passed preventing Spaniards and Africans from inhabiting native villages and requiring urban indians to live in *barrios*. Mostly urban, and representing both labor and status for their owners, “by the mid sixteenth Century, people of African descent

¹¹⁷ Schwaller, *Géneros de Gente*, 137.

¹¹⁸ Bristol, *Christians, Blasphemers, and Witches*, 12.

outnumbered Spaniards in New Spain and comprised the second largest slave population in the Americas.”¹¹⁹ This population increased until the urban free black labor force outnumbered the slave population in the early Seventeenth Century, occupying a more diverse and important role in society than as chattel. Additionally, after the late Sixteenth Century, African populations began to blend physically and culturally with mestizo populations as they lived among the Spanish and indigenous populations.¹²⁰ Rural areas became important locations for interactions between African and indigenous populations who labored together on *ranchos* and *haciendas*. According to Herman Bennett, “colonial records rarely contain evidence of rural *mestizaje* since the clergy recorded interracial marriages only sporadically before the Eighteenth Century and in many instances defined those indigenous persons who tried to marry individuals of African descent as *mestizos*. However, it must be noted that most sexual contact did not lead to marriage.”¹²¹ Rural locations like Tizapán el Alto, then, make good case studies for how people of Indian and African descent came to coexist in a particularly interesting context. If priests did not travel to the outlying areas to perform the sacraments, it is only natural that unofficial unions still occurred outside of the confines of organized religion; yet, they were still susceptible to the scrutiny of orthodox Catholics with their own learned expectations about marriage and proper behavior. People like Ignacia would find themselves in an in-between existence where they became perceived as self-serving, and degenerate in line with *lobo* identifiers due to the circumstances of their location and birth. This became a form of self-fulfilling prophecy for these individuals, not easily escaped.

¹¹⁹ Bennett, *Africans in Colonial Mexico*, 18.

¹²⁰ Bennett, *Africans in Colonial Mexico*, 27.

¹²¹ Bennett, *Africans in Colonial Mexico*, 29.

When deploying the *sistema de castas*, the Spanish placed themselves at the top, Africans and Indians at the bottom, and mixed groups in middle tiers. As discussed, laws were not the only thing keeping the caste system functioning; ordinary individuals in their daily actions performed their caste roles, contributing to stereotypes and upholding prejudices. Lower ranking groups shaped their behaviors according to how they were socialized. Ambitious persons sought to “marry up” into lighter skinned groups to gain power and liberate themselves. Racial ideology functioned as a tool of social control which used difference to get groups to control each other.¹²² But we should not assume that groups were passive in the distribution of Spanish ideology because there are many records of resistance and rebellion. Castas formed social networks across groups in solidarity, and greater gaps existed between rich and poor than along ethnic lines.¹²³ Spanish settlers saw Indians and Africans in terms of labor, the distinction between them being that Indians were protected from colonists after their early persecutions and rapid population declines, whereas the plight of African slave was largely ignored.¹²⁴ Both groups were seen as culturally and morally inferior to Spanish, with Afro-Mexicans, particularly mulatos, being eroticized and associated with love magic, and were forced to convert to Christianity. With this consideration, difference was rarely an ethnic prejudice inflicted upon the individual by State systems, but was a socioeconomic competition upheld by individuals who came into daily contact with each other. María Gregoria’s caste was likely unimportant in relation to Ignacia’s, as it would not be a tool to be used against her. *Loba* becomes an indicator of more than mixed Indian-African heritage, but a

¹²² Cope, *The Limits*, 4.

¹²³ Cope, *The Limits*, 6.

¹²⁴ Bristol, *Christians, Blasphemers, and Witches*, 37.

means to understanding that María needed Br. Alcaraz and the Inquisitors to see Ignacia as impoverished, manipulative, self-serving, and debauched. With one word to identify her, the idea is set in the mind of those in power that Ignacia was a person who would manipulate the system to better her living conditions because, to them, her predecessors and others like her had done so.

In the casta paintings and through secular and religious document descriptions of the individuals who came in contact with power systems, race was connected to physical appearance through “somatic norm image” wherein beauty is defined by the dominant group and accepted along a continuum filtering down through the classes so that race is constructed by appearance relative to the preference for whiteness.¹²⁵ However, other factors also contribute to racial identity, like lifestyle and employment. Inquisition cases generally required a witness to give racial identifiers for themselves and the accused (but not in this case, as only the accused is named), yet there is evidence that these identifiers were inconsistent and racial lines were blurred because there was no set way to agree upon these lines. Race-based caste identifiers were more rough guess than sure identifier as priests did not demand proof of parentage on marriage and birth records. Additionally there were illegitimate and unrecorded births, so race identifiers were determined by reputation and community.¹²⁶ We have no proof of Ignacia’s ethnicity; yet we see her caste identifier function in this manner throughout the case.

¹²⁵ Cope, *The Limits*, 51.

¹²⁶ Cope, *The Limits*, 53.

Caste and Opportunity

Caste informed access to and the importance of holding property. In *The Limits of Racial Domination*, Douglas Cope discussed the residential hierarchy of plebeian society in Mexico City, demonstrating that even modest private homes were a status symbol because it was difficult to retain property in urban environments. Plebeian homes changed hands often and were frequently in poor condition, and were shared among families. This idea highlights what may have been a key concern for María as a landlord. Her home and the ability to rent it were not only her means of income, but it was a status symbol, a marker that she occupied a higher caste position than Ignacia. It was a double insult that Ignacia was able to seduce her husband away and put her land-owning status in jeopardy. If a person could only afford a few pesos for rent, they had to live in substandard conditions, prone to damage from earthquakes and floods with little repair investment on behalf of the landlords. Rentals, like the one presumably owned by María, were occupied by the lowest echelons of society, almost exclusively by Indians and Afro-Mexicans like Ignacia. By reminding Inquisitors of Ignacia's caste alongside her status as renter, María is participating in this long-established caste performance, emphasizing the ways in which she occupies the higher socioeconomic and moral position, and how Ignacia is not only identified as *loba*, but is performing *loba* by being poor, manipulating her, and seducing her husband through witchcraft and demonic pacts.

Caste performance originated from an elite use of racial status as guide to moral qualities; actions had different meanings depending on who performed them. Inquisition cases cited behavior noted in racial terms: people were described in line with the *casta* stereotypes of “insolent, unrooted, drunken, and possibly immoral...mulattas (were)

gravely suspected because of (their) status, way of life, nature, and caste.”¹²⁷ Therefore, Ignacia is presented throughout this case as a usurper of home and spouse, a magical manipulator and controller, prone to making pacts and fornicating with the devil. Plebeians and members of the lower castes were believed to be inherently vicious and deceitful, always inherently guilty when involved in a case against a Spanish-descended person, often even when both parties were guilty of the same behaviors. But the poor navigated these power systems to their benefit. The poor turned to Spanish officials of both secular and religious courts to obtain justice when other avenues had failed them, particularly when there was an imbalance of power or social equity. Appeals could be used as bargaining chips to pressure the other party to fulfill their obligations, showing that they trusted their local authorities to resolve differences and ease disturbance.¹²⁸ In this participation in racial divisions dictated by elites, and using caste markers against each other in courts and appeals, members of plebeian society were participating in the social construction and performance of race. This was part of a long process “fueled by demographic and economic pressures in Hispanic society.”¹²⁹ Spaniards ignored these pressures and constructs when possible, and legislation about mixed-race peoples was an afterthought as they had no official leadership or tribunals.

What then was it like for Afro-Mexicans who came before the Inquisition? The Inquisition played a role in controlling the African descended population, whose large numbers posed a threat to Spanish dominance and contributed to anxieties over rebellion and heresy. Ordinances prevented them from gathering in large numbers or at night,

¹²⁷ Cope, *The Limits*, 40.

¹²⁸ Cope, *The Limits*, 46.

¹²⁹ Cope, *The Limits*, 51.

requiring them to reside under Spanish supervision.¹³⁰ Early in the colonial period, *bozales* and their mixed race offspring were perceived and presented as a threat to the social fabric of New Spain by the Inquisition tribunals, who tried them at disproportionately high numbers. Crown ordinances declared the children of *bozal*-indian unions to be badly inclined, and forbade them from riding horses or owning weapons, and attempted to interrupt them from having relations or marrying.¹³¹ These ordinances were reflected in Inquisition treatment of Afro-Mexicans which relied on the hearsay of the laity, accusations, corroborating testimony, and, to a lesser extent, on confessions about these individuals which reflected the existing cultural prejudices. Without popular participation of common people in these caste systems, performances, denunciations, and confessions coming from within the communities of the accused, the Inquisition would not have been able to function. Through confession and denunciation of their neighbors, common people made the most mundane and sheltered details of everyday life a matter of juridical importance. This is particularly so in the case of people of African descent, who were represented in high numbers among the plebeian populations. These interests and pursuits of the Inquisitors demonstrate the importance they placed on reform of heretical and unorthodox behavior, particularly that of a sexual nature.¹³² In this case, Br. Alcaraz so readily and ruthlessly pursued Ignacia and Nicolara, underscoring not only the way the lower castes were perceived by society, but also how they performed their roles by participating in the *sistema de castas*. They also show the Church's expectations for moral behavior and their attempts to reform and return to orthodoxy those who strayed as

¹³⁰ Bennett, *Africans in Colonial Mexico*, 52.

¹³¹ Bennett, *Africans in Colonial Mexico*, 62.

¹³² Bennett, *Africans in Colonial Mexico*, 66.

they pursued cases of fornicators, bigamists, and co-habitators among the mixed-race lower castes.

Being presented as a *loba* woman, Ignacia existed at an intersection of gender and caste where those in position of power would see her as inherently possessing negative qualities. Additionally, the only witnesses called to attest to her character were *indios*, who also produced a degree of distrust among Inquisitors. The distrust of Indians and Africans, however, was felt to different degrees among those in power, with more enmity shown on behalf of Africans and their descendants. A fear of Indians and Africans conspiring against Spanish governance caused a great fear of contact between the two groups. Viceroy Martin Enriquez de Almansa in 1574 tried to designate the children of African-Indian unions as slaves in a effort to prevent their marriages and Africans who married other races were not permitted advancement. He also petitioned the Pope to prohibit their intermarriage, but his propositions went unrealized.¹³³ Instead Africans were penalized by law for taking advantage of Indians, including sexually. The 1680 *Recopilación de las leyes de los reynos de Indias* depicts the increased tributes and lack of educational and occupational opportunities afforded to people of mixed race in the colonies, as well as the regulation of dress, friendships, and marriages. Seventeenth Century revolts contributed to the anxieties that Spaniards would lose power over the population and their privileged status.¹³⁴ The racial labels of the *sistema de castas* showed up in all records, designed to pinpoint where in the hierarchy a person belonged based on their color and cultural traits. Categories like *mulatto*, *lobo* and *coyote* were

¹³³ Katzew, *Casta Painting*, 41.

¹³⁴ Katzew, *Casta Painting*, 41.

zoologically inspired and used to refer to the children of Africans and Indians and also to dehumanize them by comparing them to animals.

By the Eighteenth Century, race was no longer reliably ascribed to social rank and so the terms show up less frequently on records. *Calidad* came to reflect a person's reputation on the whole, not just racially. Blackness presupposed a Muslim background and pointed to a slavery ancestry. Africans were thought to be Biblically damned, linked to Ham's offense against Noah and subsequent damnation and darkening, a story used through the colonial period to justify slavery. While there was a rapid generational whitening available to Indians who intermarried with Spaniards, no such option was available to Africans, who were considered inherently tainted with any degree of blackness.¹³⁵ Yet by the Eighteenth Century, social boundaries were highly blurred due to a greater distribution of wealth and the increased frequency of race mixing. Rapid economic expansion allowed lower class families (ie: those descended from slaves) to buy social mobility, education, and social standing. This caused increased concern among Spanish elites, who began to brand them as a disruptive presence, depicting them as lazy, deceitful, pompous, thieves, drunks, and adulterers.¹³⁶ Thus, María's descriptions of Ignacia as *loba* take on the most importance in determining how this word would explain her character to the Inquisitors. More so than a *mestiza* or *mulatta* identifier, *loba* would have established Ignacia as animalistic in her actions and intents, born from a total disregard for Spanish law and *sistema* custom, living up to all of the cultural connotations

¹³⁵ Katzew, *Casta Painting*, 52.

¹³⁶ Katzew, *Casta Painting*, 56-9.

and understandings of African-descended people in this particular Eighteenth Century context.

Given the context, it was more likely that Br. Alcaraz, the witnesses, and the Inquisitors would believe that Ignacia was skilled in witchcraft and summoning the devil, whether or not it was true. These were skills and practices which were associated with all aspects of her background, and knowledge which she would have inherited from her community throughout her life. Afro-Mexicans were not permitted to occupy positions of leadership in the Church (or in the State) except in the form of confraternities. Practicing unofficial religions perceived to be witchcraft; through ritual, masses, saint veneration, or unorthodox religious practices of other religions alongside Christianity, was a suspicious activity which crossed an important cultural and racial boundary. Eighteenth Century Afro-Mexicans were perceived differently than *bozales* of earlier years. They were well educated in colonial society and Catholic practice, including rituals, feasts, and using icons, and did such with confidence. Even as late as the Eighteenth Century, ideas that Afro-Mexicans were disloyal and seditious permeated societal thoughts. Accusations against gathering groups which consisted of Afro-Mexicans or mulattoes, despite the presence of other groups, indicates a concern on the part of the average individual that these gatherings were inherently a cause for concern, particularly when investigations by the Inquisition found no incident of wrongdoing.¹³⁷ This is evidence of the deeply ingrained social perceptions of people of African descent which informed legal interactions after centuries of the caste system's taught prejudices.

¹³⁷ Bristol, *Christians, Blasphemers, and Witches*, 197, 199, 200.

Decrees from the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries restricted the movement of Afro-Mexicans, demonstrating it was believed they required increased monitoring, could not be trusted to gather in number or be outside at night, and referred to them as a subset of people which were inherently disruptive and suspicious. The social restrictions even plebeian Spaniards would have felt, the inability to move up economically into the artisan classes or attend universities, contributed greatly to animosity among the lower classes and tensions between Spanish and non-Spanish castes. Additionally the artisan classes lost status and the use of honorific titles like Don and Doña in the Eighteenth Century. This led to increased competition in the growing plebeian classes between Spanish and non-Spanish persons, which is evidenced in cases when the race of the non-Spanish is emphasised to maintain social division or portray them in a negative light.¹³⁸ It is possible, then, that María was feeling the effects of the changing social climate of the time in her interactions with Ignacia. Drawing on her cultural knowledge of not only the discourse on magic, but beliefs about behaviors and proclivities attached to Ignacia's caste, María constructed a confession in which this *loba* woman deceived her, controlled her through the magical skills she inherited from other women of her caste, and seduced away her husband in line with the behaviors naturally attributed to African women in new Spain.

Conclusion

In actuality though, is it possible to determine from this case how race informs intent, action, and sexuality? Is there evidence of concerns for *limpieza de sangre* and concerns about honor? Castas often made mockery of or paid little attention to Spanish

¹³⁸ Bristol, *Christians, Blasphemers, and Witches*, 203 and 205.

rites and sacraments.¹³⁹ In populations where women greatly outnumbered men, women sought physical and economic comfort in concubinage as opposed to marriage. In addition, a great number of which relationships crossed caste lines as we see with Ignacia and Joseph. There was a higher number of mixed-race illegitimate children born to women of color from Spanish men, indicating the plebeian classes had less concern for female chastity than elites did.¹⁴⁰ This lack of concern appears to be evident both in Ignacia's perceived behavior as she is described in the denunciation and by witnesses. It is also evident in her defense when she shows a relaxed attitude towards the exchange of sexual partners¹⁴¹ and describes her actions as typical for her age and caste. While overt expressions of prejudice were rare among the plebeian classes, and indeed there is not an overt display of racism present here, there is evidence of people who were able to change their racial status during their lifetime by marrying up the caste ladder and moving to a new parish, and passing for a whiter caste. It is possible this was Ignacia's intention in marrying either of the brothers of this family. The same went for members of smaller castes who married into and passed for larger castes. To change one's race, one had to change their social relationships, because passing was not as much the physical appearance of whiteness as the culmination of a social climbing strategy.¹⁴²

Blasphemy, witchcraft, and other heresies were often attributed to Afro-Mexicans, and were considered evidence of their lack of civilization and poor understanding of colonial society. However, accusations were often linguistic tactics used to achieve an

¹³⁹ Cope, *The Limits*, 68.

¹⁴⁰ Cope, *The Limits*, 69.

¹⁴¹ Interestingly, having sex with two brothers would have constituted incest, though this is never mentioned in this case.

¹⁴² Cope, *The Limits*, 84.

immediate and symbolic end to competitive or threatening situations by those who understood colonial institutions. Afro-Mexicans used their knowledge about Christianity to portray themselves as either good or bad Christians depending on their needs in a situation.¹⁴³ There were small cracks in the Inquisition's systems that people could exploit. Afro-Mexicans used their knowledge of religious practices to challenge the system. To meet her needs, María attempted to use her knowledge about Afro-Mexican castes, magic, and Christianity to make herself appear as a good Christian despite having participated in the described actions with Ignacia. On the other hand, Ignacia was not afforded the opportunity in her defense statement to portray herself within the frame of being a good Christian. María attempted to use her knowledge of how elites understood the inherent characteristics of the *loba* caste, and Ignacia's guilt had long been established before she was called upon to defend herself.

¹⁴³ Bristol, *Christians, Blasphemers, and Witches*, 116.

Chapter 4: Popular Practice, Witchcraft, & Diabolism

Ignacia's charges fit within a standard framework of Inquisition cases on witchcraft. Women's use of magic was often connected with the tools of women's work; including food, wash water, and easily accessible flora, fauna, and textiles. Additionally Ignacia's charges included heresies involving holy icons, specifically the Eucharist and the image of the Virgin Mary. The denunciation's items and actions contain elements of indigenous religiosity blended with unorthodox Catholicism, demonstrative of the unique colonial religious blending that took place in Mexico. A discursive strategy utilizing magic had developed to be used in denunciations against women who practiced folk magic which highlighted these elements in a way which was known to draw Inquisitorial attention. By the time María made her denunciation, the Inquisition's knowledge and ideas had evolved past concerns of women wielding magic to focus on more cosmopolitan concerns, and María's strategy appears to have failed.

María claimed it all began when Ignacia brought a plate of very good beans to a dinner party one evening. Upon eating the beans, María's sight became green and she became disoriented; she claimed her sight never did return to normal. Ignacia aided her in getting to bed. The next day, Ignacia came to María's bedroom and, because of the spell cast upon her in the beans, "forced" María to aid her in a magical ritual which would help Ignacia seduce Joseph Alexo. Ignacia blessed and placed three stones into a *batea* (a wash bin) of water and shook the *batea* three times, after which a fire appeared inside. She took three pieces of cotton and threw them into the fire and shook it three more times. A small brown and white spotted goat materialized in the *batea*, Ignacia removed it, embraced it, kissed its chest and under its tail, and set it on the floor. It then instructed

her in furthering the ritual. She took two cotton dolls, meant to simulate Joseph and herself, tied them together, bound them in wax poured over their heads, and buried them under her bed in the corner, in order to bind the couple together in an “illicit friendship.” She picked the *batea* up, the goat leapt back in, she shook it three more times, and the goat turned back into the pieces of cotton which she had originally thrown into the bowl. When she removed them, the cottons were not burned, nor was the *batea*.¹⁴⁴

The women performed this ritual for several Fridays; and, after a time, there came a night where Ignacia and Joseph Alexo spent the entire night in bed together. While Joseph maintained his innocence throughout questioning, saying he never did anything with her, he did not love her, and that María was not ugly enough to leave, María admitted she began to perform the ritual herself to learn if her husband remained true, or if he had fallen in love with Ignacia. As time passed, the ritual took place more often and became more complex, incorporating more elements including the desecration of an image of the Holy Virgin. The goat was no longer brown and white spotted but black. He began to speak to the women as though human. He told them he was not only filled with the cotton of the ritual, but also with wisdom and knowledge. After a time, the goat appeared to the women as a man. While María did participate in Ignacia’s rituals to summon the Devil many times, and admits to summoning the Devil herself to persuade the Devil to bring harm to Ignacia for what she was doing, whenever he appeared María expressed fear and called upon the Holy Virgin to make him disappear. Ignacia would also step on, bind, or cover the image of the Holy Virgin which was kept on María’s altar.

¹⁴⁴ “México, 1770. Ignacia Gertrudis de Ochoa de Calidad Loba. Por el delito de hechicería, brujería, maleficio, superstición, y abuso de sacramentos.” 3-20.

For the last of the rituals, Ignacia took María to a cave where they used the stones and the *batea* to summon the Devil.¹⁴⁵ Having become successful at summoning the Devil, Ignacia finally entered into a contract with him using a pledge written on paper with blood taken from striking María in the mouth. Ignacia's pact was as follows:

She (Ignacia) said:

I give you thanks Devil that left me at dawn with the soul in the body to return to dusk. What I ask you Devil that those I tangle with don't have peace in their house and don't let them work.

What the Devil is asking of you:

If I get them entangled, you'' have part in two souls.

Ignacia:

The demonic Devil I married is going to arrange so she can get hurt and be blushing in the face and entangle. The Devil will have part of two souls, that mine is safe. Diabolical Devil, yours is the soul, yours is the body, for I comply as you ask, that there is no peace in the house. What I ask you Devil do not let them work. What I ask you Devil that the entanglement have part in two souls, that yours is safe.¹⁴⁶

After this, María became troubled by the Devil's presence, as he began to appear in her home, particularly in her kitchen, and she would frequently call upon the Holy Virgin to make him disappear. She claimed her hands and face felt as though they had been burned after Ignacia fully entered into the demonic pact. Additionally, María attempted to protect herself by making tortillas from corn and sewing them into her skirts, believing this would help solidify her marriage. After several weeks, María took the host from Church and, instead of eating it, brought it home hidden in her mouth to give to Ignacia, who used it in the ritual to make the Devil more beautiful, conducting the ritual while standing upon the image of the Holy Virgin. The women performed the last of their summoning and binding rituals in the cave with the bowl, stones, candle thread,

¹⁴⁵ "México, 1770. Ignacia Gertrudis de Ochoa de Calidad Loba. Por el delito de hechicería, brujería, maleficio, superstición, y abuso de sacramentos." 70-4.

¹⁴⁶ "México, 1770. Ignacia Gertrudis de Ochoa de Calidad Loba. Por el delito de hechicería, brujería, maleficio, superstición, y abuso de sacramentos." 74-6.

and dolls, where they inserted a lit candle made of fat into an anthill, and surrounded it with five black birds and a sparrow. Ignacia delivered her soul to the Devil in order to become like him, causing María to flee to report on what they had learned and done. After the cave rituals, María claimed Ignacia and Joseph had fallen in love and were in an illicit relationship bound by the pact with the Devil and the binding spells of the dolls.¹⁴⁷

María used a well-known strategy regarding *hechicería* to remove Ignacia as a threat to her marriage and well-being. Regardless, it appears she was aware there was no way to accuse Ignacia without also implicating herself. The initial charge involving the cursed plate of beans draws from language using food and magic to control otherwise good Catholics. It is meant to detract from María's guilt in also using common magical rituals and summoning the Devil. The elements of the rituals, including the dolls, cotton, candles, birds, caves, and anthills are connected to pre-Columbian indigenous popular religious practice. Over the course of the colonial period, indigenous practice came to fall under the umbrella of magic and heresy as people who learned to incorporate these elements into their own hybrid popular practice came under the Inquisitorial gaze. People from every echelon of society incorporated Catholic and indigenous practice in their daily life, and the Inquisition sought to correct this blended practice and return the faithful to orthodox practice. Diabolism also had carried over to New Spain from Europe, and in the new colonial context had incorporated indigenous elements. This blending over time is evidenced by the presence of the goat, which has connections to indigenous belief recorded in documents like the *Florentine Codex*, whereas in Europe the Devil is

¹⁴⁷ "México, 1770. Ignacia Gertrudis de Ochoa de Calidad Loba. Por el delito de hechicería, brujería, maleficio, superstición, y abuso de sacramentos." 72-4.

traditionally presented as a cat or a dog. The locations of the rituals also have ties to important locations in indigenous religion. The kitchen and bedroom were tied to a woman's domestic place and the locations where she conducted most of her work. The cave, however, held a place of deep meaning to the native Mesoamericans as the ritual sources of life and connection to the underworld of Mictlan and the home of the deity Tlaloc. Caves have long held ritual significance in Mexico as a place of power, thus is it an important connection to recognize in the denunciation. It is interesting as well that the denunciation does not solely rely on the magic and connections to heretical folk magic. María also included the misusing of the Eucharist and the image of the Virgin Mary, as well as her calling upon the Holy Virgin to protect her and remedy her fearful situation. These actions would have cemented the Holy Office's concerns and interest in the case, ensuring Ignacia's removal. Their inclusion is indicative that María or Br. Alcaraz were at least somewhat aware of the waning interest Inquisitors had in cases of women and magic in the late colonial period. Calling upon the Virgin was a common practice for those who needed aid and for women who were in fearful situations, such as being confronted with the Devil's voice or personage would surely be. Ignacia's binding of the image, standing upon it, and otherwise desecrating it, would be seen in the Catholic eye as an attempt to remove her power to give aid or safety to María, allowing Ignacia to freely practice her magic and summon the Devil without interference or intervention.

Considering the rural contexts of this case, the remoteness of its characters lives from the Catholic urban centers, and the ethnic diversity of their backgrounds, I am situating Ignacia's witchcraft among a hybrid popular practice of folk magic which incorporates both Catholic and indigenous elements. For most people, colonial

Catholicism and folk magic shared intersections and a blending of religious elements which include African and Mesoamerican popular practice. Ignacia's heresies, and, by relation María's, were not merely witchcraft as understood by European thought, but held deep rooted connections to pre-Columbian indigenous religion.

Most of what we know about pre-Columbian Mesoamerican culture and religion comes from the *Florentine Codex*. This text was edited by Bernardino de Sahagún to document Nahua culture and religion. In doing so, he intended to correct what he saw as heretical practice, pointing out heresies in order to educate and correct the Nahuas. Sahagún told the Nahuas they have been fooled by the Devil, taught incorrect beliefs and implores them to accept God's word. He denounced idols and idolatry by drawing parallels between their gods and Catholic idols and demons, marking them as perverse and deceitful. He explained how they fell to idolatry through art and poor leadership, and wrote these volumes to help Catholic friars understand idolatry in order to teach Natives to embrace Christianity.¹⁴⁸ His views on Nahua religion had lasting effects on later Catholic understanding on Nahuas and other Mesoamerican groups. His writing provides us with a base understanding for Catholics of some of the magical elements of this case.

Book Two describes the ceremonies and important feasts, the actions observed, and the locations where they were held. Important ceremonial locations include temples, mountaintops, and caves. It also discusses the role women played in rituals depicting important goddesses, and the use of food like tamales, cornmeal, beans, and porridge in feasts and ceremonies. Book Three presents the indigenous gods, particularly

¹⁴⁸ Bernardino, de Sahagún, 1499-1590, Arthur J. O. Anderson, and Charles E. Dibble. *General History of the Things of New Spain: Florentine Codex*. Vol. no. 14, pt. 1 "Introductions and Indices". (Santa Fe, N.M; Salt Lake City, Utah; School of American Research), 1950.

Tezcatlipoca, as sorcerers who controlled people and mischievously interfered in their lives. Sahagún portrays them in this way to discredit them and connect them to the European ideas of the Devil. He also describes the planes of the afterlife; how people were sent to Mictlan with bowls of water, buried with ceremonial papers, incense, bundles of cane, cotton thread, red cotton, capes or skirts, and were transported by special dogs. Book Five describes the omens that foretold peril or evil and were connected with the indigenous ancestors and gods, which Sahagún portrayed as false gods. Ants and anthills in the home meant persecution or lust were in the home, swarms meant death. Bundles of ashes and burning meant Tezcatlipoca was present, bringing an omen of death in war or sickness and an evil fate.¹⁴⁹ The elements selected from the *Florentine Codex* are present in Ignacia's case in many forms, indicating the perseverance of Mesoamerican popular religion even through the late colonial period. Many historians have addressed the ways folk religion developed in a unique context in Mexico, blending elements of Mesoamerican religion and European Catholicism, which inform our understanding of the discourse in María's accusations.

The seven sacraments played an important role in the early conversion process as newly arrived Catholic priests determined to what extent it was possible or necessary to incorporate Natives into the Catholic fold. Early friars arrived, enacting changes in New Spain both in conversion of the indigenous populations and in the practice of the Church in a form of New World reformation and a return to old Church values per Desiderius Erasmus Roterodamus by imitating the apostles and not the extravagant European Church of the time. They observed a commonality between the Catholic sacraments and

¹⁴⁹ Sahagún, *General History of the Things of New Spain*, books 2, 3, 5.

indigenous rituals and the regular phases of human life. While struggling with how they could fit the sacraments and European understanding in with the alien life cycles of the indigenous, they found they could use the presence of Devil, through indigenous deities, as a framework. Early accounts of *juntas eclesiasticas*, mass conversion and baptism, underplayed the conflicts, persuasions, and potential consequences natives would have faced had they refused to accept Catholicism, and the legal bindings of the Spanish and indigenous populations as a result of bringing the natives into the Catholic community. The sacrament of baptism was aided when the priests noticed similarities between baptism and naming ceremonies of indigenous newborns. Still, they came to realize adults had to receive some religious instruction so they understood the sacrament. Indigenous adults were also exorcised to remove demonic taint present from their native deities. Dominican Archbishop of México, Alonso de Montúfar y Bravo de Lagunas, observed the Franciscan failings in properly teaching and administering all sacraments besides baptism to the indigenous and called for a new theology for teaching them to participate in select sacraments. These instances combined to form a religious subjugation of the indigenous because they were not trusted to be Christians on their own. Conversion required the writing of a new catechism to unify the teachings they would receive, and who would receive them. Women were notably excluded from language on religious education. Friars also attempted to observe and understand indigenous confessional behavior using their own reconstructions of indigenous rites. Written records and drawings by those confessing detailing their sins as proof they understood confession.¹⁵⁰ This has led many to question the type of Catholicism that the

¹⁵⁰ Pardo, *The Origins of Mexican Catholicism*, 20-49.

Nahuas and other ethnic groups embraced, if they did at all. Ignacia's described practice was indicative of how folk Catholicism and repressed indigenous religion blended and expressed themselves through centuries of the colonial systems. The case shows that blending rendered them largely unrecognizable.

The Eucharist held the highest importance among all sacraments because the bread and wine actually become the body and blood of Christ, and one had to confess before receiving it. This is why its heretical use would be included and would draw the Inquisitors attention even if the charges of witchcraft did not. It was agreed that devoted Mesoamericans should not be denied the Eucharist, but the feelings and attitude around whether Mesoamericans were actually devoted complicated the giving of this sacrament. The basic requirements of confession and understanding were not deemed enough by some friars who felt they needed more instruction. On one hand, they could partake of the sacred but, on the other, if they improperly performed the ritual they would incur extra sin. This concept would actually have been rather familiar to the Mesoamericans, who held deep reverence for their own rituals and the importance they played in balance for deities and their world. The disagreement ended up a split, some could take the Eucharist and some couldn't; some who could do it when they wished and some at the will of the Church. Some priests believed communion was necessary to help Indians grow out of their spiritual childhood into adult Christians and believed they were capable of understanding because of the similar indigenous customs which included eating dough said to be the body of Tezcatlipoca during the feast of Panquetzaliztli.¹⁵¹ This type of

¹⁵¹ Pardo, *The Origins of Mexican Catholicism*, 131-159.

similarity helped priests like Toribio de Benavente Motolinía and Diego Durán make sense of the indigenous rituals and align them with Christian ones.

Through the colonial period, there is evidence of the continued hybridity of Mexican Catholicism in regular popular practice, as I believe is evidenced in Ignacia's rituals. It is important then to consider how indigenous traditions influenced Catholicism during the process of early conversion, allowing beliefs and practices to continue and become visible in these later cases. The power of words, not just naming deities and Devils, but ascribing them symbolic power and culture-specific meanings, is key in studying how the Christian rhetoric on indigenous terms aided in conversion.

Missionaries and friars came to sympathize with the Mesoamericans against the colonists and ecclesiastical hierarchy. Making Christianity appealing to Indians was only possible through developing indigenous Christian expressions. As views on Mesoamericans shifted from believing them to be docile and obedient to conspiratorial and carnal, attempts to convert them changed from focusing on extirpating idolatry to leaving them to their own versions of Christianity rooted in their previous practices. Priests had to find ways to make Christianity appealing and make sense; thus they developed outdoor chapels, incorporated existing temples, dances and songs, and shared images to convey religious concepts. The difficulties in understanding and recording information because of interpretations and a lack of equal words or symbols led to major variances in native Christian understanding and practice. Friars used indigenous moral rhetoric on punishment to get them to follow the Ten Commandments and desired behaviors. They held absolutist thoughts on sin and punishment which inhibited their effectiveness. Right and wrong, sin and the Devil, were not familiar to the Mesoamericans. Priests had to

combine the concepts of sin with *tlatlacolli* (something damaged), *pecado/peccatum*(sin) and *tlatlacoa/itlacoa* (to spoil or harm).¹⁵² Many actions fell under this term, both religious and secular, mostly excesses of drink, sex, or theft, but all usages indicate violations of social norms or integrity which brought divine intervention.

Later generations of Mesoamericans preserved idolatry by hiding their intentional rebellion within their hybrid popular practices. Idolatry cannot be employed as a systemic analytic category, colonial idolatry had an uncertain ontological status that became attached to specific practices only through the conjunction of legal discourses, doctrinal rhetoric, and specific accusations and acts of avowal. There was diversity in regional practice and beliefs that must be considered, and between collective and individual practice as well. Inquisitorial activities created a black market for native ritual, especially in herbs and healing which was, fueled by peers and by curious Spaniards. This is evidenced in Ignacia's skills with cures and curses. Native appropriations of Christian supernatural occurrences like visions of devils, saints and the Holy Virgin were not just a simple case of hybridization but reproduced a form of ritual spiritual knowledge of the non European variety but within a European context and language which gave it legitimacy. This religious hybridity did not happen uniformly or accidentally.

Marginalized Mesoamericans in New Spain used not only oral traditions but Spanish alphabetic writing to preserve and pass on knowledge of their religious symbolism, calendars, and ritual knowledge and practice, which developed in a new native textual genre. Examples from among the Seventeenth Century elite male population from urban center margin communities included almanacs, calendars, and ritual and songbooks. As a

¹⁵² Burkhart, *The Slippery Earth*, 29.

hierarchical tool, literacy was used by missionaries in evangelization and inhibitions existed around giving literacy to natives as did apprehensions of native appropriation of literacy to produce clandestine texts to preserve culture, religion, healing, and rituals. These concerns were rooted in the belief that writing would lead to an increased distribution of ideas in a way that oral traditions would not be able to. There was still an accompanying strong concern for controlling oral transmission of ideas as well, though oral and written transmission coexisted wherever ritual specialists operated.¹⁵³ The introduction of the Latin alphabet did not end oral traditions and in higher social strata contributed to increase transmission of knowledge of ritual and ushered in new populations of literate Mesoamericans. Oral traditions remained the key means for people, particularly illiterate rural women, to pass down knowledge and traditions.

México in the 1660s experienced a systematic shift towards severe punitive measures against idolatry during a period of increased trials. This caused major transformations in devotional practice among indigenous people that looked like a cemented union of indigenous and Catholic practice. Cases show a hispanization of Nahuatl deity names in current (for them) “cult” practices and evidence of continued pre-contact practices. This led to a drive to uncover, confront, and punish native practices. Also non-Natives had learned indigenous practices of spells, divination and healing by this time, so there was an increase in these cases just due to the spread of information. Eighteenth-Century changes to anti-idolatry campaigns included confiscations of texts which drove literate native specialists into social underground. The *Provisorato de Indios*

¹⁵³ David Tavárez. *The Invisible War: Indigenous Devotions, Discipline, and Dissent in Colonial México*. (Stanford: Stanford University Press. 2011.), 15-6, 124, 126-9.

y *Chinos* followed a standard set of legal procedures regarding Indian crimes of faith which could lead inquiries against Indians on idolatry, superstition, and sorcery.¹⁵⁴ This was not an office of the Inquisition, but they worked closely together at first - the Inquisition wouldn't try the indigenous cases, but they would record them. In the second half of the Eighteenth Century, the *Provisorato* attempted to use titles, insignias, and autos which mirrored the Inquisitions and led to a major jurisdictional conflict between the two. They contributed to the change from fear to skepticism in cases of maleficio in the late Eighteenth Century by setting a high threshold for conviction in which one needed proof of an implicit or explicit pact with the Devil and illness or death from unnatural means.¹⁵⁵ This threshold would have influenced María's discourse by making the pact clear instead of relying on the muddled understanding of popular religious practice. Because these cases had become so emblematic of any social or individual outcome that was undesirable, witnesses then had to fit a specific narrative similar to María's to convince judges. The influence of collective perceptions of indigenous specialists (healers or malevolent casters) contributed to the change of serious examinations of maleficio being written off as superstition. This is evident in charges that were made against healers when public opinion turned against them, even though the public would continue to visit the healer for aid while imprisoned. Bourbon Enlightenment reforms also contributed to increased skepticism and rationality as they streamlined procedures and moved power from religious to secular institutions.

¹⁵⁴ Tavárez, David. *The Invisible War*, 239.

¹⁵⁵ Tavárez, David. *The Invisible War*, 241-3.

The preservation of indigenous religious traditions within the modified framework that developed within Mexican Catholicism contributed to the appearance and treatment of diabolism in the late colonial period. By this time, diabolism was less of an urban concern than one of rural indigenous and mixed-race populations. The Devil rarely appeared except in rural indigenous community symbolism. As such, diabolical pacts and maleficio practices were no longer a serious concern for the clergy, as they were considered less of a sin and more of an excuse for unacceptable conduct like violence and sexual indiscretion.¹⁵⁶ Individuals from every echelon of society participated in witchcraft to some extent, including demonic pacts, and all members of society had a concept of the Devil in culture and in their daily lives because European concepts of the Devil had been so deeply supplanted over Mesoamerican deities, and European witchcraft over indigenous ritual practice. This was not a case of simple implantation of ideas, but indigenous communities made active choices to accept or reject European ideas as suited them. In this manner, Mesoamericans accepted the idea of demonic pacts as well and incorporated them into their own traditions and religious practices.¹⁵⁷ By the time Ignacia came before the Inquisition, the Devil was more of a cultural symbol than an actual evil force, and skepticism over accusations of demonic pacts was common among Inquisitors, who no longer saw the Devil's influence as a justification for indiscretion nor an important part of the Catholic cosmos, and therefore not a legitimate religious threat.

Earlier in the colonial period, the Devil and his demons were believed to be an offence against nature, charity, and the human race, and also against the Church and God.

¹⁵⁶ Lipsett-Rivera, "Mira Lo Que Hace El Diablo", 201.

¹⁵⁷ Lipsett-Rivera, "Mira Lo Que Hace El Diablo", 205.

They influenced people, mainly women and indigenous or African women in particular, to participate in witchcraft, causing malicious harm on others through the powers he granted them in the pacts.¹⁵⁸ Fray Andrés de Olmos and Fray Martín de Castañega treaties in Nahuatl sought to convince Nahuas and missionaries

*that diabolism was not primarily maleficent but idolatrous. Lapsed indians could no longer be seen as simpletons who had been duped by the Devil, nor even as malicious sorcerers who used demonic power to harm their fellow beings. Much more serious than this, idolatrous indians were active Devil-worshippers, members of a counter-church set up by a Devil anxious to be honored like God.*¹⁵⁹

Anything faintly religious that appeared in pagan cultures was the result of the Devil's desires, as evidenced by the parallels between Catholic practice and indigenous pagan practice which mimicked or incorporated them. Frequently, the priests who observed the indigenous incorporation of Catholic and indigenous practices were unable to distinguish between what was indigenous tradition and what they perceived to be demonic influence. Actions that would have actually been harmless came to be classified as demonic in religious initiatives to rid indigenous and other ethnic communities of heretical and unorthodox practices. Many priests believed that the Mesoamericans incomplete conversion to Catholicism was indicative of the Devil's influence over them and his teaching them to continue to practice their old religions under the guise of the new. In this manner, attempts to prevent average indigenous peoples from learning written language may have directly contributed to native opposition to full conversion and the

¹⁵⁸ Cervantes, *The Devil in the New World*, 20.

¹⁵⁹ Cervantes, *The Devil in the New World*, 25.

continued passing on of culture and tradition orally, particularly among female family members whose job it was to preserve and share, adapt, and interpret culture and religion. Instead of recognizing the Devil as friars tried to instruct them. Often the Nahuas saw him as another deity to be incorporated into their pantheon, one important to continue sacrifices to in order to maintain the natural balance. Local priests had a growing obsession with saving the indigenous peoples from the Devil's influence as they distrusted their culture for how they saw his presence in them, leading to an increased association of indigenous practice with demonic activity. However, Christianity and paganism were not mutually exclusive alternatives to be chosen from for Indians. Most blended back and forth into a practical folk religion practice that looked much like María and Ignacia's activities. Inquisition testimonies which liken demonic pacts to Indian ritual often did not bear resemblance to the rituals.¹⁶⁰

Women's vulnerability to demonic influence and possession continued as an accepted recognition of diabolism, as is apparent in this case. Catholic morality continued to associate demonic influence with female vanity and lustfulness. An interesting reverse association was also the commonplace practice of calling upon the Virgin Mary, who was considered the Devil's polar opposite, to rid someone of fear or evil or the presence of the Devil, as we see frequently happening with María. For the rural common woman, the Devil equated sex and evil while the Virgin was the epitome of holiness who could be called upon for aid and rescue. Even priests who performed exorcisms through the modern period would call upon her for aid to expel demons from their victims. As for the Devil's place in indigenous communities, he was believed to insert himself into

¹⁶⁰ Cervantes, *The Devil in the New World*, 25, 37, 47.

families and communities by using gossip to sew discord, causing people to believe their loved ones did not care for them.¹⁶¹

Diabolism continued to play an important role in the culture of rural Mexican women, as indicated by his continued presence in beliefs and practices in accusations like María's. Whether he filled a place as religious appropriation and hybridity, or as a tool of control over common people by the religious elite, the Devil existed as more than mere anecdote to the women who continued to use him in their Inquisition discourses. As we have seen, the Church had long held the belief that Mesoamericans had been influenced by the Devil, creating an urgency for conversion to Christianity and away from native deities by seeking a synthesis between Christian and indigenous doctrines, reducing his power. This served to turn the Devil's power from legitimate to an instrument of political control. However, in European Catholic belief and that which developed across Mexico, in the mind of the layperson, the Devil remained the personification of evil, a creature corrupted by free will who turned from God, a tempter, the cause of accusation and punishment against sinners.¹⁶² While the Devil had limited powers over humanity and could not force them to sin against their will, demons had penetrated every corner of Catholic belief, and Christian lives and souls, instigating desires that humans wouldn't generally acknowledge on their own.

Common parishioners and the Inquisitor both believed that women could empower themselves through demonic pacts the way Ignacia appears to have done. Some believed women had the power to transform themselves or others using the powers

¹⁶¹ Lipsett-Rivera, "Mira Lo Que Hace El Diablo", 213.

¹⁶² Cervantes, *The Devil in the New World*, 17.

gained by their pacts. This power was particularly attributed to women of color. This is why María's accusation would have been reasonable, or at least acceptable. Witnesses in cases of magical violence often connected the appearance of strange natural objects, animals, and birds to women's magical activities or believed them to be the women in changed form.¹⁶³ As we see in the *Florentine Codex*, as in Europe, Mesoamericans attached the supernatural to shapeshifting abilities as expressed through the power of witches and deities. According to Martha Few, "Europeans...possessed detailed and complicated ideas of how evil in general and the Devil in particular functioned in the human world...they used these ideas to interpret and take seriously indigenous religious practices" including shape changing.¹⁶⁴ Through the process of conversions, indigenous ideas of shapeshifting were attached to European ones, as did the connection of their deities to European ideas of witches and devils. This included women's abilities to gain evil power through their demonic pacts as it somewhat mirrored their pre-existing rituals and beliefs. The case was similar for Afro-Mexicans as well, who through their conversions and the exchange of culture and information, were able to make the same connections to their beliefs in spirit mediums and object or animal possessions. However, Mesoamericans believed that shape changing was done by both good and evil characters. This changed post-Conquest to become synonymous with witches and the Devil through European influence, as evidenced in the denunciation.

The intermingling of ethnic groups in the colonies also brought an intermingling of popular religion and practices over which the Inquisition had little control. Mulatta and

¹⁶³ Few, *Women Who Live Evil Lives*, 57.

¹⁶⁴ Few, *Women Who Live Evil Lives*, 59.

lower caste women were commonly known to be well-versed in the casting of love spells, and were frequently hired to do so for all members of society. Examples of items commonly used in the spells which do appear in the records included cooking with water used to wash genitals and incorporating chocolate and blood, hummingbirds, wash water, powders, and burying dolls or charms where the man sleeps or urinates. Sorceresses told women that the saints were dead where they lived, so do not pray to God, only the Devil listens and helps. Much as Ignacia was accused of sleeping with the Devil to gain favor and power, women were accused of sleeping with snakes representative of him. Some women used sleeping powders to control their wayward husbands while others misused the rosary and other icons to enchant them. When caught, most women passed blame to indigenous women. Inquisitors of the early Eighteenth Century found that these practices and accusations of sorcery were not worth pursuing. They were petty, generally harmless and occurred among the population of lowest education, usually distant and rural. Inquisitors began to “allow frontier paganism to accommodate itself to native beliefs.”¹⁶⁵ This allowed them to shift the inquisitorial gaze to the more manageable problems of bigamy and sexual morality. Yet witchcraft was a way for women to alleviate their marital problems, and there were many instances of self-denunciation for witchcraft, especially among women who had used it to control their husbands then turned themselves in with remorse for their sins when their magical attempts had failed. Inquisitors tended to treat commoners and mixed race people that came before them as too low class to take seriously, and so were lax to pursue their cases. This accounts for the brevity of questioning and a lack of definitive ending to the case file.

¹⁶⁵ Greenleaf, “The Inquisition in Eighteenth-Century New México”, 32, 34, 38.

Women who used pacts with the Devil did so to refashion themselves into a source of magical power, gaining control over situations in their daily lives. As such they could carry out violent acts in a secretive manner. Men and women both feared falling under their influence, particularly so for Spanish victims of *casta* magic, who would frequently call upon the aid of the Virgin Mary to save them from curses, much as María did.¹⁶⁶ Prevailing European beliefs on witches sabbath rituals in which groups of women gathered to summon the Devil or cast spells carried over to the colonial belief system. Social relationships among *casta* women in particular were believed to play a role in the passing down of magical knowledge, much as Ignacia passed down her magical knowledge to Maria. These relationships were used to sway the belief in the guilt or innocence of the accused. In cases of love magic, it becomes apparent that there was a common belief that the female body was particularly susceptible to being used for magic through its connections to the named spells, for example the common appearance of the use of wash water.¹⁶⁷ This is due to the belief that women's bodies could inspire lust or impotence, or be used to attract or return an unfaithful lover. There is also a prevalence of food items in spells, connected to women's social roles in food procurement and preparation, as we see with the initial instance of María being cursed by the plate of beans. Her claim is that Ignacia used her completely acceptable and normal role as a woman who made a common dish to curse her friend in order to control her.

Saintly relics, like the picture of the Holy Virgin which Ignacia supposedly bound and stood on, were also a commonly used talismans in witchcraft spells as the saints were

¹⁶⁶ Few, *Women Who Live Evil Lives*, 47.

¹⁶⁷ Few, *Women Who Live Evil Lives*, 52.

believed to be able to grant various forms of aid to women. The language and pressures of social situations allows us to situate our understandings of witchcraft into broader social collective relations where subversive acts take place within the sanctioned framework of power where the dominant culture produces counter-culture. According to Laura Lewis, “witchcraft is not an autonomous realm of resistance. It was instead a set of discourses and practices derived from the colonial implications of caste.”¹⁶⁸ used to destabilize the colonial condition. Patterns of accusations on witchcraft indicate moral violations from unorthodox behavior to pacts with the Devil or sorcery. They served to reverse the standard sanctioned power operations of the *casta* system, allowing subordinate classes to undermine the Spanish.

Most accusations of idolatry or seeking the aid of indigenous people in magical practice, demonic pact, or pagan ritual, were seen as a serious theological problem until the end of the seventeenth Century.¹⁶⁹ The mestizo image of the Devil had more in common with the image early friars had presented to Mesoamericans than to the medieval European image, and most *casta* groups, particularly slave populations, were terrified by the concept or presence of demonic activity, and would readily turn in a practitioner. These groups were rarely found guilty of demonic complicity. By the Eighteenth Century, despite the Holy Offices attempt to make demonic pacts unattractive or even a laughable idea, people did still actively seek to make them and acknowledged the conscious choice they were making in their trials, admitting they had actively forsaken Christianity and mentioned that God or manifestations of Christian devotion

¹⁶⁸ Lewis, *Hall of Mirrors*, 7.

¹⁶⁹ Cervantes, *The Devil in the New World*, 67.

repulsive to them. The Devil's help was seen as more a part of the natural world and so more beneficial in the pursuit of worldly things than God, and diabolism was closely associated with worldly achievement, just as Ignacia used the Devil to seduce Joseph. People called on the Devil for help with unfavorable circumstances. Examples include women lighting candles to the Devil to get the favor of men for example, or getting help in satisfying carnal lusts, even though in the long term they knew it led to fearful and lasting consequences. For the Church, Satan was seen as able to win small material victories in the here and now, if not the final battle, and could lure large numbers of human souls to damnation. To the earlier Inquisition, he presented a threatening picture, bringing self-assertion and radical movements away from God through sexual and material weakness of humans. By the Eighteenth Century, the Inquisition was no longer looking for diabolism. As seen here the common person and lay friars were still looking to convince Inquisitors of its existence, particularly in the rural regions. Most found it increasingly difficult to convince the skeptical Inquisitors of demonic presence as they had become indifferent to these accusations. The influence of Enlightenment rationality had changed the Holy Office's perceptions of divisions between the natural and the supernatural, so that they no longer believed humans could fall prey to the Devil, if indeed he existed at all in their minds. Instead they had become aware that accusations of demonic pacts were more often motivated by malice and revenge, and were easy to disprove.¹⁷⁰ The failure of María's accusations to bring about her desired outcomes are indicative of this change in Inquisitorial concerns and belief.¹⁷¹

¹⁷⁰ Cervantes, *The Devil in the New World*, 79, 81, 85, 94.

¹⁷¹ Because the charges were likely about revenge against Ignacia for seducing Joseph.

Demonic based denunciations made the Devil into a ridiculous idea over time that they could not allow to continue. They had to shift the problem of blaming the Devil to ‘fantasies’ and ‘hypocrisies’ and ‘ignorant women’ or ‘vulgarity’ of an indication of low breeding.¹⁷² As we see in this case, the conveyance of this change of approach to demonic accusations was slow to spread from urban centers to the rural populace, who continued to not only believe in the power and influence of the Devil himself, but also continued to use him in their accusations in just the way challenged by the Inquisitors.

Pacts with the Devil may have been important in the Sixteenth Century, but they were integral to rural society by the Eighteenth Century, at which time women’s pacts were strongly linked to maleficum. The Devil was seen by commoners as offering solace in a crisis or an illusion of hope, he was a good listener and better helper than God. There are multiple Eighteenth Century-case accounts of the Devil appearing as an affectionate little talking dog who is obedient, loyal, attentive, but powerful, evil, and demanding in Devil form. He speaks in the same manner as the summoned goat. In a similar case against Maria Rosa, a *loba* sorceress who learned to summon the Devil from another woman, she summoned a talking dog, kissed its posterior, entered into a long term pact with the Devil, and used it to control men and have affairs.¹⁷³ It is a near identical story to Ignacia and the goat. The Inquisition’s changing response to these women’s actions is rooted in their belief that “the lower classes...were only capable of low ideas, base superstitions, and intervention was pointless.”¹⁷⁴ Eighteenth-Century small town priests sent cases to México City that they felt were important, but which the Holy Office found

¹⁷² Cervantes, *The Devil in the New World*, 136.

¹⁷³ Behar, "Sex, Sin, Witchcraft", 45.

¹⁷⁴ Behar, "Sex, Sin, Witchcraft", 49.

trivial, demonstrating a gap in the concerns of the rural priest and parishioner and higher Church authorities. We see this evidenced in this case, as these concerns of witchcraft and demonic pacts are central not only to María's accusations against Ignacia, but in Br. Alcaraz's impassioned delivery of the denunciation to the officers in Guadalajara. It is evident not only from the fact that he presented the case on her behalf, but also in the length and language of his initial testimony.

While many questions have been raised as to the subsequent questioning of witnesses in this case, it is also possible that they were all so lightly questioned due to the waning interest in cases of magic and diabolism at this time. This testimony then holds a valuable place in the demonstration of the gap of communication and transmission of doctrine and belief between urban elites and the rural faithful. Situating Br. Alcaraz's presentation of María's accusation, and her subsequent confirmation of the charges, within the long colonial framework of views on witchcraft and diabolism by both the Inquisition and the common rural person, we see that María drew from a deep knowledge of magic and the Devil as they would have been understood by a woman of her position to craft this accusation against Ignacia. True to his place as a rural priest still fighting to represent his parishioners in a changing late-colonial and Enlightenment context, Br. Alcaraz appears to take her testimony seriously, yet the Inquisitors did not. Their lax reception of the charges was evident in the few people questioned and the brevity of their questioning. It seems the Inquisitors were more concerned with removing the quarrelsome women and limiting their social influence than with their magical performances. Yet in the denunciation, we can see clear connections of actions and items to the long history of hybrid religiosity which only developed in Mexico through a

blending of indigenous and Catholic beliefs, and we can see how it continued, at least in this rural area, through to the late-colonial period by being handed down, likely through oral practice, from woman to woman, until it rests in the testimonies of María and Ignacia.

Conclusion

In this Inquisition case from 1771, filed in Guadalajara Mexico and sent to Mexico City, María Gregoria de Herrera denounced Ignacia Gertrudis de Ochoa for the crimes of *hechicería* and *brujería* through her priest Brother Francisco Javier Alcaraz. As with most denunciations of magic which came before the Inquisition, there was more going on behind the scenes than a woman summoning the devil and casting spells.

A denunciation could be a means for a woman to regain control over a lost spouse or handle a difficult and tumultuous personal relationship. The Inquisition could relieve the stresses of economic, familial, and social strife. This case provides a glimpse into the role race played in prejudices and personal perceptions of the accused. In cases of people of African descent, a caste identification was often a guilty verdict before the case even began. Determining the elements of magic and diabolism in these late colonial cases was a difficult task for the Inquisitors, who had many layers of cultural contact to interpret. The magical and demonic elements present in this case blend European Catholic with Mesoamerican religious elements. The depth of Mexican religious hybridity presents a delightful challenge for the modern historian to interpret the events depicted in the denunciation in the broader context of the period and location. The denunciation was presented in a manner which should have alleviated María's social and economic concerns by jailing her romantic rival and returning her husband. Her denunciation was crafted in line with how the common person understood how the Inquisitors viewed cases of magic and the Devil and how they decided on their verdicts. While the common person still believed in the Devil, Inquisitors viewed these cases as instances of personal conflict, not rooted in fact, and were more concerned with issues of the clergy than of rural

parishioners practicing folk magic or pursuing pacts with the devil. Often the cases were disregarded as the folly of uncultured rural women, as it appears happened with María and Ignacia, with little questioning and a lack of certain end.

María turned to the Inquisition with an accusation of spell casting, curses, and demonic pacts to rid herself of a romantic rival and return happiness to her home and marriage after her husband had abandoned her. At the heart of this case is an all too common story of female competition and jealousy tied to social anxieties in a rapidly changing regional demographic in which women greatly outnumbered men and remarriage was an impossibility. In her language María appeared concerned about her own attractiveness when compared with Ignacia, a concern that appeared justified because her husband abandoned her for his lover, Ignacia, a year earlier. María was unable to control her situation in several ways; through the perceived dependence on her husband's return to the lengthy delivery of her denunciation by Brother Alcaraz. While men are barely questioned, they still played a pivotal role throughout the case through their actions of vocal dominance.

Ignacia claimed innocence in her brief testimony. She claimed she knew nothing of witchcraft or the Devil. She was merely a restless woman, a relative who had been given permission to leave her husband in exchange for María's based on the assumed compatibility of their personalities as suggested in her testimony, and all she wanted was to be free of the situation and María's verbal attacks. Perhaps it is this restless nature of hers which left her more prone to an accusation of witchcraft, as it falls in line with the prejudices against the *loba* caste. She was seen as a threat and portrayed negatively at every opportunity; opportunistic, aggressive, and lustful. It is clear that Ignacia's case

sheds an important light on the lived experience of an understudied category, the poor, mixed-race, transient, rural woman.

The rapidly changing demographic of Guadalajara played a key role in the anxieties of the women behind the scenes of the case. While rural Jalisco is far from Europe, and as we see information was slow to transmit to the general population, Enlightenment ideas and social and legal reforms enacted by the Bourbon kings affected the way the Inquisition reacted to the cases coming before them. This had a negative effect on the people who brought their concerns before the Holy Office with the expectation of a particular outcome. In chapter two, the gendered considerations of this case and the language around caste, honor, gender, sexuality, and relationships show how personal perception played an important part in the events and outcomes of the case. Chapter three provides an examination of the *sistema de castas* and its implications on various ethnic groups through the experiences of the *loba* caste. Until this point, little to nothing has been written on the *loba* caste, and this analysis proved remarkably difficult to do without relying too heavily on the Afro-Mexican experience. In chapter four the deep colonial history of interactions between Catholics and Mesoamericans provides the roots of the complex elements present in the case. What is described in the rituals combines elements from many religious practices which have integrated into a unique understanding of Mexican *brujería* which has ties to pre-Columbian indigenous religiosity under the cover of European witchcraft ideas. This has also been a challenging section with its own unique limitations as the colonial experience has made so much of the pre-Columbian culture inaccessible and changed what religiosity and popular practice looked like.

My thesis contributes to the literature in colonial Mexican women's history in a number of ways. To date our theories and analyses rely heavily on the experience of urban women of Mexico City, particularly those of Spanish descent and somewhat less those of the Nahuatl woman. María and Ignacia are neither, and their actions and concerns do not fit into the existing narrative on women's history. It is my intent to expand how we consider women's history to center those who have been left out. In this instance that is the rural, transient, mixed-race woman prone to an unfavorable reputation. Additionally, fairly extensive writing has been done in ethnohistory on Nahuas and Afro-Mexicans. Again, Ignacia is both of these and neither of these. There is an opening in ethnohistorical examination which calls for a more nuanced understanding of mixed-race persons, of Mesoamerican ethnicities outside of the Nahuatl, and outside of the major urban centers, specifically for connections to the northern frontier where women outnumber men, creating an unstable environment. My ethnohistorical examination, while short of what I hope to accomplish, is a push towards this more complex examination. Finally, I seek to complicate our understandings of what magical practice looks like in colonial Mexico. Witchcraft and diabolism are addressed from a Catholic understanding, and historians could understand more of the indigenous meanings inherent in *brujería*. There is a shortage of discussion on Afro-Mexican religious practice, which would make for an enjoyable pursuit of further inquiry. In Mexican ethnohistory, the historiography follows the discourse that Afro-Mexicans rapidly and fully adopted Catholicism. It would be an interesting further study to compare the ways these experiences diverged or to challenge the idea that Afro-Mexicans so easily shed the African culture. Further research into rural women like Ignacia, or into transient ranching populations, various mixed ethnicities, and

the presence of a more culturally rich religious frame, would contribute greatly to the historiography of colonial Mexico.

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