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Salus Erat in Sanguine: Limpieza De Sangre and Other Discourses of Blood in Early Modern Spain

Abstract

This dissertation considers conceptions of blood during a critical period in which religious differences between Iberian populations were reduced to the doctrine of blood purity (*limpieza de sangre*), which many scholars cite as the beginnings of a modern conception of race. Blood purity laws, disseminated throughout Spain in the sixteenth century, differentiated converted Jews and Moors (*conversos* and *moriscos*) from majority Christians, restricting Church and some government posts to those who could prove “blood purity.” This represented a critical transition in European thought, from conceiving of divisions between “peoples” as multiple to a taxonomic system based on biology that hardened difference to a single, immutable term.

Drawing on medical, art, and cultural history as well as literary studies, this dissertation explores “blood” as material and metaphor in early modern Spain in order to trace how Castilian national, imperial, and theological concerns were staged symbolically on the body. Although blood became a term of identity in this period, crucial to the place of the early modern Spanish subject in society, notions of “blood purity” mapped onto to an already complex symbolism of blood in medicine, religion, and social ideology, thus troubling its role in classifying subjects in a racial hierarchy as pure or impure. This dissertation helps illuminate the early modern debate about “blood purity,” illustrating a lively resistance to the suppression of *conversos* and expulsion of *moriscos*. Literary works addressed include Miguel de Cervantes’s *Numancia*, Pedro de Calderón’s *El médico de su honra*, and love sonnets about bleeding women.

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SALUS ERAT IN SANGUINE: LIMPIEZA DE SANGRE AND OTHER
DISCOURSES OF BLOOD IN EARLY MODERN SPAIN

Rachel L. Burk

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in
Romance Languages

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SALUS ERAT IN SANGUINE: *Limpieza de Sangre* and Other Discourses of Blood
in Early Modern Spain

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ABSTRACT

SALUS ERAT IN SANGUINE: LIMPIEZA DE SANGRE AND OTHER DISCOURSES OF BLOOD IN EARLY MODERN SPAIN

Rachel L. Burk

Barbara Fuchs, Supervisor of Dissertation

This dissertation considers blood discourses during a critical moment in which religious differences between Iberian populations are reduced to the doctrine of blood purity (*limpieza de sangre*), which many scholars cite as the beginnings of a modern conception of race. Drawing on medical, art, and cultural history as well as literary studies, the project explores “blood” as material and metaphor in early modern Spain in order to trace how Castilian national, imperial, and theological concerns were staged symbolically on the body. Blood becomes a crucial term of identity in this period, critical to the place of the early modern Spanish subject in society. It is, however, a remarkably unstable one that, I argue, is continually modified and questioned by the significance of the term in other symbolic systems like natural philosophy and theology.

Early modern Castilian blood purity statutes, first instituted in Toledo in 1449 and disseminated throughout the Peninsula in the following centuries, differentiate converted Jews and Moors (*conversos* and *moriscos*) from majority Christians (*cristianos viejos*), restricting Church and some government posts to those who could prove *limpieza*. Early modern “race” is not the same as “race” in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, most notably in the later period’s emphasis on visible, physical traits like skin color to distinguish one race from another. Nevertheless, as Walter Mignolo and others have explained, the conceptual framework for race is born of religious difference and the

suppression of Judaism and Islam in early modern Iberia, which in turn is revised and expanded by post-Enlightenment science and philosophy. Indeed, the discourse of blood purity in Spain represents a critical transition in European thought, from conceiving of divisions between what had been “peoples” or “nations” as multivariable (based on geography, culture, common history, beliefs, and caste as well as bodies) to a taxonomic system based explicitly and essentially on biology and thus reducing difference to a single, immutable term.

The propagation of blood purity as a doctrine maps onto to an already complex symbolism of blood in medicine, religion, and social ideology. As a hidden, internalized marker for race and as a significant term in a constellation of other symbolic systems, “blood” is essentially unfixed, troubling its role in classifying subjects in a racial hierarchy as pure or impure. Given the culture’s emphasis on blood as an internal state (seat of nobility, valor, health, and, eventually, race), its externalization (sacrificial bloodshed, medicinal bloodletting, menstruation) and the imbibing of blood (transubstantiation, cannibalism, kosher and halal dietary laws) become symbolic means to question and revise this new racial understanding. This dissertation helps illuminate the active debate about “blood” and “blood purity,” illustrating a lively resistance to the suppression and expulsion of *conversos* and *moriscos* in the early modern period, and the ways in which both the multiethnic population of the Peninsula and the invention of race shape national-cultural identity in Spain.

This dissertation consists of five chapters. Chapter One, “*Limpieza de Sangre* and Other Discourses of Blood,” gives a context for the emergence of the blood purity statutes while detailing how simultaneously “blood” transcended any single field of

reference, playing vital roles in early modern legal, social, religious, and medical thought. Chapter Two, ““La patria consumida’: Blood, Nation, and Eucharist in Cervantes’s *La Numancia*,” explores Christian sacrifice and Eucharistic commemoration, posed by Cervantes as an alternative to a community predicated on biological inheritance. Chapter Three, “Eros and the Poetics of Bleeding,” reads a corpus of love poems on female bleeding in which women’s blood becomes, improbably, an aspect of feminine beauty, conflating notions of sexual and racial purity. Chapter Four, “Deadly Phlebotomy: Female Bleeding and Male Subjectivity in Calderón’s *El médico de su honra*,” proposes that the error of the central character, who murders his wife, is to materialize honor, confusing it with *limpieza* and leading to the diminishment of male subjectivity. The Epilogue, “Blood in an Empire of Converts,” opens avenues to further study of the resonances of blood in Spanish America and the European Hapsburg empire through culinary issues related to Muslim and Jewish dietary law and butchering practices.

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INTRODUCTION: LIFE IS IN THE BLOOD

The taste of blood permeated yesterday's violent, cruel, immoderate society. From birth to death, the sight and smell of blood were part of the human and social pilgrimage of each and all [:] gallows and scaffolds, executioners' carts smoking in the streets [...], heads impaled on stakes or nailed to doors [...] the butcher shop that hacked up persons merged imperceptibly with the one that slit open the throats of bulky beasts slaughtered in the open.

—Piero Camporesi, *The Juice of Life*

Blood was an omnipresent reality for early modern Europe. City and country residents alike were surrounded by bloody sights whose clammy aroma drifted through streets and houses and whose sticky trace stained plazas, cobblestones, sheets, and cookery. Barbers, butchers, midwives, executioners, and brother hospitalers worked daily with the blood of expecting mothers, patients, pigs, criminals, and heretics. At the same time, theologians, mystics, doctors, inquisitors, and lawmakers—to say nothing of poets and painters—engaged blood in its myriad emblematic forms: the blood of Christ, of the holy, of the infidel, of husbands and wives, of patients, of princes, of subjects.

Piero Camporesi depicts the visceral presence of blood in pre-modern life. Before public sanitation and food processing plants, in times of an excessive justice system, blood ran in the streets—and not only in moments of violent civil strife. Because of its quotidian materiality and its connection to sustaining life, blood, then as now, encouraged metaphorical understandings. Early modern thought on blood tended to transition from gore to metaphor (and back again) effortlessly, suggesting a thin line separating the physical world from the metaphysical. On one hand, early modernity appreciated blood's

vital link to physical life, to suffering, birth, and death. On the other, it read the body as fundamental to a greater design of correspondences that ordered God's universe.

Blood produced effects both literal and figurative in early modernity; it was a material reality with copious symbolic functions, to paraphrase Michel Foucault. In characterizing pre-modern Europe as part of *The History of Sexuality: An Introduction*, Foucault discusses blood, attributing its importance to its far-reaching symbolism:

[Blood] owed its high value [...] to its instrumental role (the ability to shed blood), to the way it functioned in the order of signs (to have a certain blood, to be of the same blood, to be prepared to risk one's blood), and also to its precariousness (easily spilled, subject to drying up, too readily mixed, capable of being corrupted). (147)

As his observation makes clear, blood was not only central to a range of discourses, but its significations were various and sometimes contradictory, underscoring the fundamentally polysemous character of "blood" in early modern Europe. Blood was a token of living and dying; sacred and profane; healthful in moderation and lethal in excess; fundamental to the make up of the body and a sign of its interiority; high and low, good and bad, hot and cold. It was an unstable signifier whose symbolic significance changed depending on whose blood it was (Felipe II, *conversos*, Christ), what it was doing (bleeding, circulating, being imbibed), and where it was found (*in vivo*, on the battlefield, in an anatomy theater, in Madrid, in Jerusalem, in Tenóchtitlan). Always valued, "blood" transcended any single field of reference, playing vital and various roles in early modern legal, social, religious, and medical thought.

Blood was a fundamental means through which the body took part in early modern life. In this period it took on a greater—although frequently ambivalent—role in

delimiting the bodies of subjects and the body politic through the emergence of *limpieza de sangre* in Spain. This dissertation investigates blood discourses during a critical moment in which religious and cultural differences between Iberian populations were reduced to the doctrine of blood purity (*limpieza de sangre*), which many scholars cite as the beginning of a modern conception of race. The first chapter of this dissertation lays the historical, religious, and legal groundwork for the emergence of blood purity. The following analytical chapters explore how the dense, mutable overlay of significations of blood complicated the term as a marker of racial difference. Blood became a crucial term of identity in this period, central to the place of the early modern Spanish subject in society, classed as either *cristiano viejo* or *converso*. With the growing importance of *limpieza*, blood acted as a topos, made legible only in signs and traces, that concealed both menacing difference and unnerving resemblance. It was, however, a remarkably unstable one that, I argue, was continually modified and questioned by the use of “blood” in other discourses like medicine and theology.

The study of the materiality and metaphors of blood in the Spain of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries serves to trace how Spain’s national, imperial, and theological concerns were charted symbolically on the body. I seek to address two central dilemmas posed by blood purity in early modern Spain: What results from conflating the substance and symbolism of blood, that is, from embodying the loosely-defined, immaterial notion of familial inheritance and making it constituent of communal identity? Moreover, how does this conception intersect with other understandings of blood, both old and new, in ways that express and undermine nascent understandings of race?

With this dissertation I broaden the scope of work by other Hispanists who have investigated the role of blood in subject formation by paying more heed to its participation in coetaneous systems of signification. The function of blood as an ideological tool of the emergent Spanish nation and its determining role for the early modern subject has been investigated thoughtfully in, for example, George Mariscal's *Contradictory Subjects: Quevedo, Cervantes, and Seventeenth-Century Culture* (1991) and Jonathan Beusterien's *An Eye on Race: Perspectives from Theater in Imperial Spain* (2006). Historians Américo Castro, Antonio Domínguez Ortiz, and Albert Sicroff have argued that blood in early modern Spain was a principal element in the physiological discourse that reified nobility as it was being threatened by an emergent, partly Jewish, bourgeoisie. This important body of scholarship has focused exclusively on *limpieza de sangre* and its societal and cultural effects. My orientation in this dissertation, however, is distinct: however: to consider blood as a shared nexus in medicine, religion, and politics, categories that were not viewed as discrete in the early modern period, as well as the connected role of blood in other representational practices.

Starting from the premise that any given person's experience of corporeality is neither authentic nor immediate, but rather mediated through discourse, I contribute to an early modern history of the body by centering on blood, taking anthropological works such as Piero Camporesi's *The Juice of Life: The Symbolic and Magic Significance of Blood* (1995) and Reay Tannahill's *Flesh and Blood: A History of the Cannibal Complex* (1975) as precedents. Unlike Camporesi and Tannahill, my dissertation forgoes descriptive survey of the uses of blood, focusing instead on the specific cultural conditions of early modern Spain that produced an unusually rich and paradoxical

metaphorics. My intention is to fill a temporal and geographical gap in the growing body of cultural and religious studies work on blood in Europe by Peggy McCracken, Miri Ruben, Caroline Walker Bynum, and David Nirenberg, as well as enhance transatlantic studies like that of María Elena Martínez, who investigates the relationship between Iberian *limpieza de sangre* and the American *sistema de castas*. Forthcoming studies on early modern blood by Gil Anidjar, who addresses the relationship between blood and race in Christian theology, and Roland Greene, whose literary etymology *Five Words* will address blood in a comparative context, as well as the 2011 conference, “Bloodwork: the Politics of the Body 1500-1900” at the University of Maryland suggest that many scholars have turned their attention to similar problematics.

Finally, this project participates in a larger revision of race history that extends the term further into the past and examines it more rigorously in conjunction with empire. In the past two decades, Etienne Balibar and Walter Dignolo, along with Mariscal and Nirenberg, have proposed the vital role of *limpieza de sangre* within the development of European racial ideas, a precursor to the “scientific racism” of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. At the same time, criticism of Foucault and new readings of his work of the 1970s have considered the ways that race arises from the dynamics of modern empire-building, begun under the Spanish in the sixteenth century. What has been missing from both of these critical realignments is a consideration of blood itself, which I do here. Blood must not simply be treated as a synecdoche for the body, but as a symbol deeply ingrained in the history of western culture and a material that generates difference yet remains (mostly) invisible and difficult to authenticate.

In the typological thought of Christianity, the notion of *salus erat in sanguine* found in the Old Testament suggests that spiritual health lies in Christ's blood. But while Christians took the "salus" to mean eternal life granted by Christ's sacrifice, the other Iberian religions understood it in its original context in Leviticus as the essence of an animal that should never be consumed. Christianity differed fundamentally from the other Religions of the Book on the issue of imbibing blood, both in its prosaic material and spiritual forms. Blood figured in Christian Spanish culinary traditions (blood sausage, blood pudding, *sangre quemada*) while halal and kosher butchers slaughtered animals so as to assure the complete desangranation of their meat; animal blood was treated carefully, often buried or hidden and, above all, never consumed. At the same time, transfigured blood or wine was the fundamental drink of Catholicism, even its godhead, the human and divine essence of Christ. In contrast, both Islamic and Jewish law had strict, stated rules barring anthropophagy, a close relative of theophagy for the non-believer, without equivalents in Christianity. Sacramental wine violated the halal prohibition against alcohol and the Kashrut prohibition against wine made by gentiles.

My title emphasizes how divergent religions' readings of the *Salus* passage exemplify broader questions at the heart of my thesis and speak specifically to the early modern Spanish condition. Despite commonalities between monotheistic belief systems that shared geographical and philosophical origins, focusing on blood exploits and magnifies a key point of divergence in which Islam and Judaism coincided against Christianity. Communal rites and dietary law, in this case regarding the imbibing of blood, marked the limits of religious community through bodily practices. Nonetheless, this surmountable difference in culinary rules caused little concern during *convivencia*.

Under Christian rule in Trastámara and Hapsburg Spain, this small difference in culinary rules was imbued with larger significance in the transforming of the Pauline spiritual community into one constituted by nation and lineage.¹

Limpieza de sangre became the primary optic for perceiving blood in early modern Spain but it was never monolithic, perhaps not even hegemonic. The sixteenth-century propagation of the *limpieza* statutes met with resistance from many quarters: among outspoken *conversos* and *moriscos* like Miguel de la Luna; among the aristocracy who stood to lose standing because of prevailing, documented Jewish ancestry and agricultural workers who farmed their lands; among Catholic reformers who saw it as a challenge to the efficacy of baptism and a perversion of Christ's Millennialism.

Taking the broad view of my research, I recognize a fundamental tension between blood as an internal state (seat of nobility, valor, health, and eventually race), its externalization (bloodshed in battle, medicinal bloodletting, menstruation) and its internalization (dietary law, transubstantiation, cannibalism) in early modern Spanish society. This corresponds to an elemental organizing principle of my project. In representational terms, there were three distinct relationships between blood and body vital to early modern understanding: blood *in vivo* (that is, within a healthy, functioning body), bleeding, and consuming blood. If blood purity made racial identity a static quality of blood *in vivo*, then the passage of blood in and out of the body were means to challenge and modify this newly racialized understanding. This dissertation seeks to explore representations of *limpieza* in the context of blood's "other lives," centering on blood traversing the body's limits.

¹ This is the thesis of Gil Anidjar in "Lines of Blood," discussed in Chapter One.

Chapter One, “*Limpieza de Sangre* and Other Discourses of Blood,” gives a context for the emergence of the blood purity statutes while detailing how blood simultaneously transcended any single field of reference, playing vital roles in early modern legal, social, religious, and medical thought. Chapter Two, ““La patria consumida’: Blood, Nation, and Eucharist in Cervantes’s *La Numancia*,” explores Christian sacrifice and eucharistic commemoration as an alternative to a community predicated on biological inheritance. Chapter Three, “Eros and the Poetics of Bleeding,” reads a corpus of love poems on female bleeding in which women’s blood becomes, improbably, an aspect of feminine beauty, conflating notions of sexual and racial purity. Chapter Four, “Deadly Phlebotomy: Female Bleeding and Male Subjectivity in Calderón’s *El médico de su honra*,” proposes that the error of the central character, who murders his wife, is to materialize honor, confusing it with *limpieza* and leading to the diminishment of male subjectivity. The epilogue addresses future directions for the project that will explore the role of Catholic transubstantiation and cannibalism in metropolitan discussions of the New World Empire and blood within Netherlandish anti-colonial (anti-Spanish) discourse.

CHAPTER 1: *LIMPIEZA DE SANGRE* AND OTHER DISCOURSES OF BLOOD²

While blood held a place in medieval daily life and imaginary, it became paramount to the thinking of early modern Spain. Some of its figurations changed during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries as others kept their previous valence in new contexts. Shifting meanings of blood reflected both historical circumstances and ideological ends. In pan-European natural philosophy, entrenched Galenic concepts of the body competed with developments in Renaissance anatomy. The close of the Christian Conquest in 1492 marked the end of the last Iberian Islamic state and the ascent of Castile-Aragón as the most powerful kingdom on the Peninsula. In the sixteenth century, the Council of Trent and the Catholic Reformation, centered in Spain, sought to reform and reaffirm doctrine as well as faith in the face of the Protestant schism. The consolidation of the Spanish nation state along with the founding and growth of the empire led to the forced conversion of Jews, Moors, and Amerindians to Christianity.

Early modern Spaniards understood physiognomy according to the precepts of natural philosophy which, following Galen, viewed blood as a substance that conveyed “spirits” through the body and the most acclaimed of the four bodily humors whose balance determined the psychosomatic make-up of a person. Contending with Galenism, New Science offered alternative paradigms of the body’s interior, particularly advancements in the understanding of blood circulation begun in the work of William Harvey. At the same time, material and political discourses of blood confronted the dogma of the Holy Blood of Christ, which grew more prominent—and problematic—as

² Thank you to Michael Solomon for his many contributions to the discussions of medical theory in this chapter.

Catholic Reformation theology contended with Protestantism and the proselytization of America.

Above all, however, was the advent of *limpieza de sangre*, an emerging legal designation of religious identity as a quality attributed to the purity or impurity of one's blood. Instituted via local statutes beginning in Toledo in 1449, *limpieza* or *pureza de sangre* laws were widely propagated in the sixteenth century.³ With its growing significance in early modern Spanish life, blood purity became the most prominent discourse of blood, overshadowing others. The body of local law on *limpieza* prohibited recent converts to Christianity, and eventually their descendants, from holding select offices in government and the Church. To qualify for such positions, proof of "pure" lineage, that is, free of Muslims and Jews, was required. Although at the start the discriminatory impact was small—blood law remained local and in many places statutes went unenforced into the sixteenth century—the ideological shift it instituted had far-reaching effects (Edwards "Raza" 244-45). From this point forward Spanish national-religious identity was associated with an internal differential, a difference in bodies located in the blood regardless of creed. To be a *cristiano viejo* (Old Christian) rather than a *converso* (converted Jew), *morisco* (converted Moor), or a child of *cristianos nuevos* (New Christians) bespoke an innate ancestral inheritance marked physically in one's blood.⁴ Baptism, in the case of the mandated conversion of Jews and Muslims to

³ The initial, comprehensive historical studies of *limpieza de sangre* come from Sicroff, *Los estatutos de limpieza de sangre*; Domínguez Ortiz, *La clase social de los conversos*; and Caro Baroja, *Los judíos*. More recent contributions in monographs and broader works include Márquez Villanueva, Maravall, Kamen, Méchoulán, Stallaert, Nirenberg, and Hernández Franco.

⁴ Regarding terminology, *converso* often refers to converts from Judaism and their descendants, but Henry Kamen suggests the term could indicate either Jewish or Muslim converts, depending on the situation. *Morisco* (little Moor) always pertains to those converted from Islam. *Cristiano nuevo* includes both and was a less precise term used to differentiate new converts from *cristianos viejos*. Importantly, the designation as outsider, which all these terms suggest, outlasts the first generation of converts. It comes to

Christianity, is no longer viewed as a rebirth into new faith. Rather, via the doctrine of *limpieza*, the body itself comes to be seen as recalcitrant: it passes on the mistaken belief of ancestors irrespective of the sincerity of one's conversion, underscoring the growing division between mind and body. In the history of race, blood purity is significant because it foregrounds the body as the material inheritance of lineage and the singular, generative source of difference between populations.

Limpieza de sangre was a complicated, mutable notion that continued to provoke public debate as its implications played out on a large scale in the increasing fanaticism directed against converts and their offspring. As a symbol imbued with a singular role in social ordering, blood was inherently problematic as the material trace of race because of its prior cultural meanings as a term of inclusion as well as exclusion and as a social bond outside religio-ethnicity. "Blood-as-race" mapped onto already intricate understandings of "blood" in other discourses, in particular medicine and Pauline theology. This dissertation examines the intersection of discursive constructions of blood in literary works to illustrate how Miguel de Cervantes, Pedro de Calderón, and a group of Golden Age lyric poets came to terms with blood purity in conjunction with other blood discourses. Not only do these moments of discursive overlap shed light on the reception and effects of blood purity in early modern Spain, they point to a counter-discourse that questions and modifies incipient notions of race as they came into being precisely through alternative blood discourses.

encompass not only the generation who became Christians, but their children, grandchildren, and great grandchildren. How many generations post-conversion are subject to the "infamy" of impurity constitutes a central point in the many debates on *limpieza*.

Los estatutos de limpieza de sangre

In order to understand how other blood discourses modify blood-as-race, it is useful to examine briefly how blood purity arose as a social phenomenon from the fifteenth through the end of the sixteenth century, when it reached a stable form, before going into decline in the eighteenth century. The Iberian Peninsula experienced 800 years of Islamic rule and gradual Christian re-conquest during the whole of the medieval period. Thus, late medieval Iberia was home to not only a significant Islamic presence, but also a larger, older, and more robust Jewish population that formed a significant portion of society. (Most other European kingdoms exiled their smaller populations of Jews by the twelfth century while Jews often prospered under medieval Iberian rulers, both Muslims and Christians.) However, by 1526, thanks to more than a century of often violent coercion, all Spaniards were Christian. Waves of mass conversions from 1492 through 1507 left many new converts unacculturated to the beliefs and practices of the Church. In this and the subsequent period of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, many of the recently converted and “Old” Christians alike, particularly early on, sought a peaceful incorporation of former religious minorities into the majority.⁵ Nonetheless, at the same time *pureza de sangre* grew to counteract the movement towards assimilation as a means for differentiating former Jews, former Muslims, and the descendants of both from “Old” Christians. After a contentious century (1450 – 1550), it was the instinct to exclude that won out over any messianic goal, even though both sides saw their principle

⁵ Sicroff provides an inclusive profile of the anti-*estatuto* movement in his first two chapters.

as a matter of religion.⁶ Often referred to in relation to official statutes, blood purity extended beyond its initial life as a legal mechanism and grew into a full-fledged culture-wide preoccupation by the turn of the seventeenth century. As we shall see, it was a doctrine, but not in a purely theological sense, and a policy, but not simply in the political sense.

The *pureza* statutes reflected long-standing Christian fears about the character of Jews with two added elements: a new intensity to concerns over infiltration and contamination of the larger community by seditious converts, and an emphasis on blood as a correlative to ancestry and ethnicity, regardless of belief. The 1449 Sentencia-Estatuto is the first to make explicit an association between lineage and the undesirable qualities often attributed to Jews: “todos los dichos conversos descendientes del perverso linaje de los judíos” (qtd. in Edwards 244). The statute emphasizes that conversos are “infames,” a telling term suggesting a religious category of lasting dishonor, a stain not removed by baptism akin to the Old Testament curse of Ham, a sin of the father visited upon the son. It is this, in turn, that makes them otherwise dishonorable.

Conversos’ new status was as heretics, disobeyers within the fold, rather than heathens, disbelievers outside the fold. It was this double proximity, both spiritual and physical (unlike Jews, converts did not live in separate enclaves and were party to Church institutions), that supposedly threatened Christians. The Bishop of Córdoba, writing in 1530, claimed that “Jewish” characteristics included heresy, apostasy, love of novelty and dissention, ambition, presumption, and a hatred of peace; not only were they hateful, but

⁶ Although the essentializing doctrine of *pureza de sangre* was paramount by the mid-sixteenth century, my purpose in the chapters that follow is to examine how it was not the exclusive way to conceive difference in relation to the body nor did it go uncontested.

their degradation was encoded in each drop of blood, making any Jewish ancestor a source of moral contagion (Nirenberg “Race” 82).

This lexicon of contamination, suggesting that the presence of *conversos* put the orthodoxy of *cristianos viejos* in jeopardy, confused religion and biology. Alarm at what *conversos* might say or do in the company of non-*conversos* became a fear of their mere physical presence. This line of thought may have begun in fears about judaizing, that is, *marranos*, cheek to jowl with Old Christians, sharing their beliefs and thus spreading heresy. In the course of the sixteenth century, however, the material body was so conflated with religion that it eventually usurped belief as the more important term. As Nirenberg explains, “Judaizers were to be identified by their behavior, but that behavior only gained meaning in light of their genealogy” (82). One notable example is a seventeenth-century polemic addressed to the queen in which doctor Miguel Pérez de Almansa argues for ridding the Court medical corps of *converso* doctors (*Medicos que no fuesen christianos viejos, limpios de toda mala raza de Iudios, Moros, Esclavos etc.*). Pérez de Almansa accuses New Christian doctors of seeking to do ill by their principal patient, the king, citing a history of poisonings by minority physicians. He focuses particularly on *conversos judíos* and their *sangre manchada* that creates in them the need to do ill against Christians: “Su sangre los enseña a ser enemigos de los Christianos, tienen radicado en su coraçon este mortal odio” (9v). Equally, he cites “el contagio,y putrefaccio[n] de los Iudios,” implying that their presence at court was detrimental, even dangerous.

With the requirement of blood purity for entrance into educational, clerical, and governmental institutions came a legitimizing system to prove the often unprovable—an

institutional structure of evidence gathering called *probanzas* or *informaciones de limpieza de sangre*. Integral to them was sworn testimony from family members and in particular long-term residents of the community where the applicant claimed origin. For example, the 1664 application of D. Juan de Alfaro of Córdoba for a position as a notary for the Inquisition is a dossier of close to 30 documents attesting to the applicant's *limpieza*. Along with letters, it includes a printed form with blanks as well as a guide, also printed, for providing information on “blood purity” by those asked to evaluate the job candidate:

7. Iten, si saben que el *dicho Don Juan de Alfaro* ____ y el dicho *Francisco de Alfaro* ____ su padre, y los dichos *Henrique Baca de Alfaro & doña María Díaz* sus abuelos por parte de padre, y los demas ascendientes por parte de padre, y todos y cada uno de ellos, han sido, y son cristianos viejos, limpios de limpia sangre, sin raza, ni macula, ni dece[n]dencia de Iudios, Moros, ni co[n]uersos, ni otra secta nuevamente co[n]uertidos, y por tales son auidos, y tenidos, y comunamente reputados, y de los contrario no auido, ni ay fama, ni rumor, y q[ue] si lo huviera los testigos lo supiera[n], ohuviera[n] oydo decir, segu[n] el conocimie[n]to, y noticia q[ue] de los susodichos, y cada vno dellos ha[n] tenido, y tienen. (Folio 23v; italics are handwritten in printed document)

A like declaration on the mother's family is included. Not only does the dossier establish the importance of “witnesses” in establishing *limpieza*, but the use of a printed formula is remarkable for the degree of bureaucratic institutionalization it suggests. Both “fama” and “honor” are treated as if they were easily quantifiable, like a driving record.

Probanzas of this sort have a corollary and antecedent in an earlier form of legal proof, the *carta de hidalguía* (letter of nobility), which gave shape to the evidentiary process of *limpieza* proof and with which it often became synonymous.⁷

⁷ Two late sixteenth-century examples at the BNE have titles that suggest the growing similarity of documentation used to prove nobility and *limpieza*: *Probanzas públicas de la gentileza y limpieza de*

While unprecedented, the Castilian blood purity statutes did not appear *ex nihilo*. They grew out of a specific political and social climate in early modern Spain and have a place in larger religious-theological and cultural developments at work throughout Europe, even though most historians and critics view the racializing of religious difference begun in fifteenth-century Castile as something of a puzzle. Gil Anidjar insists that conditions that facilitated the emergence of blood purity (concern over the Eucharist; growing “blood piety” like the veneration of blood relics and miracles of the stigmata; the association of Jews with blood, most notably so-called blood crimes; etc.) were common to all of western Christendom.⁸

Beginning in late medieval Castile as well as in León and Aragón, tensions between majority Christian and minority Jewish and Muslim populations were on the rise because of economic instability, brought on in part by internecine war and bouts of plague; jostling between princes, nobility, and rising bourgeoisie; and the consolidation of Christian dominance among other factors.⁹ By a century later under the Catholic Kings and with the conquest of Granada, the double movement of unification of Iberian kingdoms at home and expansion abroad brought a definitive end to medieval *convivencia* between Muslims, Christians, and Jews who had lived together as unequal partners throughout the eight centuries of the Islamic rule and Christian Conquest. In advance of the imposition of the *limpieza* statutes, the scapegoating of Jews led many to

sangre, vida y costumbres (BNE Mss 12943/74 1583) and *Traslado testimoniado de la carta de hidalguía y limpieza de sangre* (BNE Mss 11576 1625)

⁸ Many critics, including Anidjar and María Elena Martínez, rightly protest against Spanish “exceptionalism,” the propensity, promoted by Franco’s regime in the twentieth century, to see Spain as unique within Europe and the Mediterranean. On this point, ironically, arguing for Spain’s special role, its precocious contribution to the development of race, plays into the Black Legend, Spain’s reputation as uniquely cruel and retrograde among European powers.

⁹ Mounting conflict between religious populations in late medieval Iberia was a complex phenomenon. See Nirenberg, *Communities of Violence*, and Netanyahu, *The Origins of the Inquisition*.

convert to Christianity in the late fourteenth century. This was most prominently the case in 1391 after a pogrom broke out in Seville, followed by violence against Jews in Toledo, Valencia, and Barcelona. Similar events followed in 1412.¹⁰ This first mass generation of *conversos* encountered a varied landscape for integration into Christian society. Many found routes to success via the Church or were incorporated into a growing urban bourgeoisie.

What are often considered the first blood purity statutes were instituted by the ambitious *alcalde mayor* of Toledo, Pero Sarmiento, in 1449. They banned all *conversos* from holding governmental positions (“todo oficio e beneficio publico”) on the basis not of any particular group deed but genealogy, their impure blood, in the terms of the statute.¹¹ Sarmiento’s so called Sentencia-Estatuto was one act in a larger revolt against the Castilian King Juan II, and his proxy, Álvaro de Luna (who was rumored to be sympathetic to Jews and most likely a *converso* himself), concerning the imposition of what many Toledans considered an unjust tax in support of the Castilian war against Aragón. In response to the levy, a crowd attacked Alonso Cota, a converted Jewish tax collector and landowner, along with other wealthy local *conversos* in the Magdalena neighborhood. Sarmiento’s decree was in support of the mob. When Toledo came back under monarchical control in 1451, Juan II forgave the rebels but disputed the blood purity

¹⁰ Although Moors living under Christian rule (*mudejars*) were less victim to mob violence because they tended to live in isolated rural communities and had a less visible role in the economy, they would not be left alone for long.

¹¹ Several historians propose earlier incidents of blood purity laws. Poole, Salazar Acha, and Henández Franco cite *limpieza* requirements at *colegios mayores* earlier in the fifteenth century. They also suggest the ways in which the doctrine began as a convenient excuse, a secondary “offense” that would become primary. For example, Edwards points to the example of Fernando Ruíz de Aguayo, the chantry of the cathedral, in Córdoba in 1446 who insisted that applicants for chaplains and sacristans prove blood purity because, although he deemed *conversos* worthy in general, two cousins had received bad treatment at the hands of unnamed converts (“Raza” 245-46).

statutes and sought adjudication from the Papacy. For his part, Pope Nicholas V rejected the measure outright (Sicroff 51-56).

The *estatutos de limpieza de sangre* never constituted pan-Iberian law although at their height requirements for blood purity were in place in at least a majority of local and regional governments as well as church, educational, and trade institutions. Rather, the statutes appeared unsystematically and spread in a gradual, piecemeal process, reflecting both the diffuse character of authority in late medieval and early modern Iberia and the contentious debate that *limpieza* provoked. Institutions like religious brotherhoods, churches, cathedrals, individual trade unions, schools, universities, and city governments established their own policies on blood purity, demanding “pure bloodedness” of their members in fits and starts. In the course of their progressive implementation, requirements for blood purity were sometimes rescinded, reinstated, vigorously challenged, and kept but not enforced, but the end result was a general saturation (Sicroff, Ch. 1, *passim*). In 1471, the Brotherhood of Charity (Hermandad de la Caridad) excluded membership to Jewish converts. A spate of anti-Jewish violence prompted by the Hermanos followed in 1473 during Easter celebrations. Later, also in Córdoba, don Alonso de Aguilar, the chief magistrate who had been unable to stop the violence, banned *conversos* from public office. These statutes were overturned by the *Reyes Católicos*, who early in their reign defended both Jews, as had monarchs before them, as well as *conversos*. In the 70 or so years from its first instantiation, blood purity laws spread one by one to Church institutions (e.g., reformed house of Benedictines of Montserrat 1502, the cathedral of Seville 1515, of Córdoba 1530) throughout the Peninsula. Beginning in the early sixteenth century, individual guilds (*gremios*) and schools (*colegios mayores*)

instituted *limpieza* requirements for entrance. 1486 marked the first instance of *limpieza* instituted in a religious order inside the Catholic Church when the new Inquisition in Castile purported to find crypto-Jews among the Heronymite friars. As a result of the Heronymite controversy, Pope Alexander VI would finally approve blood purity as a requirement for entering friars in 1555, reversing the precedent of Nicolas IV, but only after active campaigning by Spanish bishops. Educational institutions followed suit: the Colegio de San Antonio de Sigüenza in 1497, the Colegio de San Ildefonso in 1519, and the universities of Salamanca, Valladolid and Toledo in 1522. It was not until 1547 that the principal seat of the Spanish church, the cathedral at Toledo, reinstituted purity requirements after a campaign by the Archbishop, Juan Martínez Silíceo. Eventually the Inquisition took up blood purity as requisite for most positions in its own ranks, securing the place of *limpieza* in Spanish life through most of the seventeenth century and, nominally, through to the first half of the eighteenth century. Blood purity remained a principal preoccupation for Spanish subjects and a topic for debate for a century and half and well after the first generations of converts had long died. (Sicroff; Edwards *Religion*; Domínguez Ortiz *Conversos*)

Critics differ on who originated the statutes and who stood to benefit the most from their propagation. The state, peasantry, nobility, and Church all had a stake in the issue. Beginning under *the Reyes Católicos*, Castilian monarchs sought the universal imposition of Catholicism as a means to bring together the disparate kingdoms in the Iberian Peninsula under the banner of a shared belief. Castile, León, Aragón, and Granada—as well as Navarre and Portugal, later additions to the Spanish fold—had distinct languages, histories, systems of governance, and bodies of law. (Paradoxically,

what most of the Peninsula at the time did share was a multi-religious population.) During the sixteenth century, blood purity contributed to broader legal and political efforts to regiment religion by the state as part of efforts to promote political centralization and Christian militancy. Isabel and Ferdinand sought to secure stability after the civil strife of succession controversies and unification of major kingdoms of the Peninsula. In addition to blood purity laws were the 1492 expulsion of Jews who refused to be baptized and like the expulsion of Moors in 1502 and 1507 for similar reasons; the massive forced conversion of Iberian Jews and Moors; the imposition of multiple Edicts of Faith, which forbade Moorish, Jewish, and other heretical customs; and the eventual expulsion of the *moriscos* in 1609. Although the conversion of Moors occurred under Carlos V's Hapsburg Empire, it was his son, Felipe II, who would continue in the centralizing—and, by turns, isolating—spirit of the last Trastámara kings that put forward religio-racial purification as policy.

However, the monarchy was neither the instigator nor the sole promoter of blood purity. All three medieval estates had a stake in the doctrine as well. The spread of blood distinctions potentially provided every Christian Spaniard with a claim to a kind of nobility, particularly in the North where the medieval Islamic empire ruled for only a short period or not at all, as in Navarre and the Basque Country. Every peasant who could claim Old Christian status gained honorable standing, conveying moral-cultural capital if not explicit legal rights. Particularly in the “gothic” north, these claims were easily made among the popular classes because the only existing record of kinship was shared memory. Moreover, their role in upholding the statutes was substantial. The Inquisition demanded testimonies to lineage and denunciations by neighbor and kin,

institutionalizing a form of community self-monitoring which in turn fed on itself, creating self-disciplining subjects out of the vast majority of Spaniards, a “general, panoptical scrutiny produced and maintained around Christian blood, for and by the masses” (Anidjar 125).

For their part, the nobility were ambivalent about the blood purity statutes, particularly during the first century of their existence. Many of the state and ecclesiastical posts subject to *limpieza* requirements were designated for noblemen, whose legal and tax status depended on their not performing manual labor, restricting their possible employments. The rising urban bourgeoisie, partially Jewish and perceived as mostly so, threatened the role of nobility here as in the rest of Europe as they challenged its lower orders in education and wealth. On the other hand, Salucio in his treatise against blood purity cites a common argument against blood purity—the well-known practice of intermarriage in many noble families that threatened to jeopardize their standing if *limpieza* was taken into consideration. In 1449, Fernán Díaz, relator of Juan II of Castile, also pointed to the riskiness of a genealogical system for the aristocracy, contending that most noble families had *converso* ancestry (Nirenberg “Race” 82). Some historians have argued that *limpieza* served to rein in and weaken the noble classes to the advantage of a centralizing monarchy. Although the nobility had more resources at their command, they also had the archive to contend with—extensive written records of ancestry that stretch back generations, used previously to support an aristocratic caste claim. The most infamous text of the age, the *Libro verde de Aragón* (1507), indicting the “tainted”

ancestries of noble families, exposed just this caste vulnerability.¹² In the loosely tiered Spanish aristocracy, the upper-echelon *grandees* could remain secure in their holdings and power regardless of their *converso* relations although some machinations (e.g., expunging the family record) might be necessary. The more vulnerable *hidalgos*, already in competition with the bourgeoisie, had more to fear. Indeed, with the spread of *limpieza*, they were obliged to defend their status by proving their purity, sometimes through elaborate measures and regularly via the use of legal formulas called *probanzas* or proofs, mentioned above.

Even though *limpieza* had promoters and enthusiasts on multiple fronts, the primacy of religion to its emergence is undeniable. In the Peninsula, the renewed spirit of Christian militancy, instigated by Isabel and Ferdinand and spurred by the war on Granada, the final Islamic territory in Iberia, carried over into the colonization of the Americas and wide-ranging saber-rattling in the name of Christianity and Castile. While it would be a mistake to see the early modern Spanish Church and State as anything but inextricably imbricated, Christianity viewed broadly should also be considered as a historical, transnational tradition.

Christianity was the principal frame of perception for early modern Europe. Stuart Hall asserts that religion was the domain into which all other social relations and ideological structures had to enter, the chief discourse of the age. Mignolo agrees: “[T]heology was the master epistemic frame, before secular philosophy and science grounded on the Cartesian epistemic shift ” (319). Significantly, he goes on to elaborate the connection between religion and race in early modernity: “Theology offered the tools

¹² *El libro verde* and *El tizón de la nobleza* were anonymously-authored compilations of genealogical information on principal noble families that cast doubt on the purity of lineage of many; copies were eventually banned. See Beusterein, “Blood Fictions.”

to describe and classify people with the wrong religion and people without religion” (319). Mignolo maintains that the conceptual framework for race was born of religion in sixteenth-century Iberia, creating a theologically-based “racial system” (312). Also linking the larger theological outlook to *limpieza*, Anidjar argues that despite the investment of the state, masses, and aristocracy, it was the Church that invented the association of blood with lineage and pure blood as the source of worthy lineage.

Nonetheless, blood purity was not a cut-and-dried matter, theologically speaking. Dividing the Christian community into lesser and greater goes against the Pauline ideal of Christian unity expressed in his letter to Galatians 3:28: “There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.” All professed believers are incorporated into the *corpus mysticum*, the mystical body of the Church, the spiritual community of Christians, defined by practicing the sacraments. The doctrine of blood purity transforms long-held notions of Christian community, as will be discussed below. It also denies the efficacy of baptism to incorporate new followers into the fold. (This assertion is complicated by the fact that efficacy is, in part, predicated on willing conversion.) Both objections are fundamental to the argument of Alonso de Cartagena’s *A Defense of Christian Unity* (1450), a justification of converts and the effectiveness of conversion, circulated years before the Expulsion of the Jews.¹³ Cervantes takes up this anti-*limpieza* strain of Christian thought, very much in line with Erasmian humanism, in *Numancia* (w. 1582-87), as discussed in the next chapter.

¹³ Cartagena uses the Old Testament story of Ruth, who converted to Judaism, as exemplary of the primacy of faith over blood, posed in no uncertain terms as the substance of difference: “Aunque nacida de sangre extranjera, o por mejor decir de sangre enemiga, sin embargo, por la aceptación de la ley habían hecho su alma israelita” (Mariscal “Role of Spain”190).

During the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, concern over purity, status, and genealogy penetrated every level of society, becoming a fixation of most, regardless of their social standing.¹⁴ Recent critics agree that early modern blood purity beliefs helped create a Spanish identity based dually on place and religion through exclusion, through defining what “Spanishness” was not, that is, not Jewish and not Muslim in a territory that, even as late as 1500, was heavily and historically Semitic. Deborah Root offers a compelling version of the ideological development of blood purity as a decisive element in religio-national identity. Root places the *limpieza de sangre* statutes and what might be called “minority policy” more generally in a dynamic relationship with an ideological progression taking place over the course of the sixteenth century in which Catholic orthodoxy and *españolidad*, a kind of proto-national identity, become equivalent. By contrast, “[r]eligious deviance by Spaniards of Muslim [and Jewish] descent came to be denoted by cultural deviance, or heterodoxy in respect to lineage, or ‘purity of blood’” (118). Heresy came to function as a social and genealogical category, rather than one purely indicative of religious affiliation (Root 118). In the mandated culture of Catholicism, customs of all kinds, even those less associated with religious belief per se like language, dress, and cuisine, came under scrutiny and were lauded as orthodox or suppressed as heterodox. Edicts of Faith, issued regularly by the Inquisition, criminalized cultural habits like the use of Arabic and Hebrew, marking the Sabbath on Saturday with clean linen and special foods, and avoidance of pork and wine. The process of distinguishing between Catholic and Moorish or Jewish conventions was not simple.

¹⁴ As Cervantes suggests in *El retablo de las maravillas* with satirical incisiveness, the doctrine preys on our worst instincts and fears of exclusion. His two shyster play producers, Chanfalla and Chirinos, convince a small town’s leaders that a stage show, in which nothing occurs, can only be seen by the pure-blooded. No one fesses up to the sham for fear of betraying that they cannot see the production and doubt their own “purity” for it.

Given the long history of *convivencia*, cultural practice was often as much a regional as a religious matter.¹⁵

The gradual diminishment of distinction between “converts” and “non-Christians” paved the way for all descendents of *conversos* to be considered heretics. Blood purity laws initially extended the period of transition from one religion to another; the instantaneous conversion of baptism became a period of assimilation and a generation of converts. Ultimately, as the laws grew in scope to affect all generations post-conversion, *limpieza* would obstruct genuine conversion under most circumstances. Blood was often viewed as a sinister, hidden site of difference. By claiming that difference was interior and corporeal—“in the blood”—it became an innate quality that, while invisible, was also immutable. At the level of the individual, blood purity became fundamental to creating and reproducing a new norm of the Spaniard: Old Christian, male, and aristocratic. At a larger societal level, blood purity promoted a new model of community that affected understanding of related notions like Christendom, nation, and empire.

Race and Blood Purity

Early modern “race” is not the same as “race” in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, notably in the later period’s emphasis on visible, physical traits like skin color to distinguish one race from another.¹⁶ Nonetheless, the discourse of *limpieza* or *pureza de sangre* in Spain represents a critical transition in European thought, beginning in the

¹⁵ See Fuchs, *Exotic Nation*, for a careful discussion of the hybridity of early modern Spanish culture.

¹⁶ For a discussion of the early modern terminology of race in Spain, see Herring Torres, “¿Racismo en la edad moderna?” For a broader study of racial lexicon in early modernity, see Ania Loomba, *Shakespeare, Race, and Colonialism*.

fifteenth century, from conceiving of divisions between what had been “peoples” or “nations” (in Greek *ethnos*, in Latin *gens* or *natio*) as multivariable, based on geography, culture, common history, beliefs, and caste as well as bodies, to a taxonomic system based explicitly and essentially on biology and thus reducing difference to a single, unchanging term. Although in later manifestations race will come to mean skin color, Barbara Fuchs explains: “[B]lackness emphatically does not equal Moorishness within Spain. Instead Spanish racial hysteria focused on covert cultural and religious practices, and on the much more ambiguous register of blood” (95). Other characteristics, previously as or more important than the body, are either ignored or perceived as secondary to what is viewed as meaningful physical difference. Blood purity naturalizes social and cultural diversity, thus making it absolute in a way previously inconceivable, given that the multi-fold cultural, religious, historical, and geographical difference of old—what we would now call ethnicity—was inexact, open to conversion, chance, and change. It is the reduction of variables, hardening of categories, and prioritizing of physicality that are critical to modern notions of race that suggest that sixteenth-century blood purity should be viewed as continuous with race in its post-Enlightenment form.

In the past twenty years critics like Etienne Balibar (*Ambiguous Identities*), Walter Mignolo (“Black Legend”), and George Mariscal (“Contemporary Race Theory”) have offered a corrective to earlier histories of race, insisting on the centrality of Spain and the idea that the conceptual framework for race is born of religious difference and the suppression of Judaism and Islam in early modern Iberia, which in turn is translated, adapted, and expanded by post-Enlightenment science and philosophy. Earlier generations of race theorists were the first to historicize race, undermine its legitimacy as

a natural or biological verity, and show how it is always both contingent and relative. However, they also insisted on a time frame that views the advent of race as a radical disjunction from the past and a unique hallmark of modernity unknown to the premodern era. In this they err in replicating a fallacy of racism by insisting on a single definition of race rather than viewing the phenomenon as a related “series of historical racisms” in Martínez’s term or “imaginarios de racismo” according to Herring Torres.

Race theory that insists on its modernity also tends to underplay the significance of imperialism to the origination of race, particularly Foucault, who saw race as an inter-European phenomenon.¹⁷ Sylvia Wynter, Ann Laura Stoler, Homi Bhabha, and Kathleen Biddick along with Anibal Quijano and Mignolo have critiqued the minimal role of race and colonialism in this model and suggest that the colonial relationship produced metropolitan modernity. The tension between blood and pedagogy, to use Foucault’s terms, becomes particularly acute during times of colonization. Accordingly, Stoler and Biddick argue, medieval and early modern European colonies produce the ideological friction that generates incipient notions of race.¹⁸ Mignolo, Stoler, and Wallerstein cite the addition of national-colonialist forces as fundamental to the birth of race: “Racism emerged as a discourse to assert the superiority of Western Christians and as justification

¹⁷ Foucault contends that racism “in its biologizing, statist form” took shape in the second half of the nineteenth century. Postcolonial critics like Stoler have rightly questioned the limited role of colonialism in his narrative of the emergence of modernity in the *History of Sexuality, Vol. 1*. His paradigm posits that in modernity the “analytics of sex” subsumed the pre-modern “symbolics of blood” as part of the larger transition from a social order based on the right of death to one that assumes power over life (148). Catelli, Mariscal (1998), and Nirenberg (2006) all disagree that Foucault posits intractable discursive breaks attributed to him by Stoler, citing his 1975-76 lectures at the Collège de France. He elaborates on “race war,” which did exist in premodern contexts, as a permanent confrontation of two groups within a society; that is, he argues that race is contingent on conflict not biology. See Foucault, *Society Must Be Defended*.

¹⁸ Interesting work is being done to trace connections between Spain’s doctrine of *limpieza de sangre* and the *sistema de castas*, the elaborate caste hierarchy that develops subsequently in Spanish America. See María Elena Martínez, *Genealogical Fictions*, and Lúcia Costigan’s *Cracks in the Wall* for a complete treatment.

for land appropriation and exploitation of supposedly lesser human beings” (Mignolo 314).

Understandings of the body also play into this debate. The earlier approach contends that race only comes into being through justifications from modern science, particularly biology. Robert Bartlett argues that while the medieval language of race (“stock,” “nation,” “blood”) was biological, the reality was almost entirely cultural. Balibar argues that race did achieve a “statist form” in early modern Spain, but without the “biologizing” aspect. I would push this assertion further to say if we take the wider view and recognize the continuities between Greek medicine, baroque science, and nineteenth-century biology, we can recognize that early modern cultural racism had a significant corporeal dimension—blood—that anticipates the later, empirical form of biological racism in meaningful ways. Moreover, racism is not an isolated, reductionist fallacy. Rather it is a crucial part in a larger change in the epistemic order that leads to, among other things, modern biology. Mignolo concludes: “Racism, in other words, is not a question of blood or skin color but of a discursive classification entrenched in the foundation of modern/colonial (and capitalist) empires” (Mignolo 317; emphasis mine). It is not a question of how one age understands the body (e.g., Greek medicine and Christian theology of the sixteenth century versus secularism and empirical science of the nineteenth), but rather the way in which discourse incorporates the body into a classification system. If blood-as-race is discursive, studying other discourses that rely on blood as a central term can be revealing. This project traces just this competition between “blood” discourses, both emerging and residual, in which *limpieza de sangre*, although on the ascent, is challenged and revised.

Blood, Genealogy, Contagion, and Community

Race theorists who incorporate *limpieza* into the history of racial difference address the significance of making the body the fundamental sign of that difference, but leave unanswered the question why blood in particular occupies a special status. To my thinking this is a provocative question whose possible answers shed light on later developments in racial ideas. What about blood makes it available to serve as the distinguishing factor between populations? What makes the racialization of blood thinkable? And why write race onto blood (of all things)? Modern racism, based on positivist science, will focus on exterior signs of difference. While like blood these are physical, they are also visible, and function to create immediately apprehensible distinctions, a classing by externals. In view of later characteristics that make up race, “blood” seems like a problematic choice. As Foucault reminds us, blood is hidden, hard to differentiate, and easily mixed (and thus open to corruption). Moreover, it is overwritten with significations in other contexts. Nonetheless, the racialization of blood was possible because of its deep, long-standing symbolic significance in various contexts: the association of blood with lineage (and thus with nobility and social ideology), sacramental blood as a token of the Christian community in theology, and blood as the most important of the corporeal humors in Galenic medicine, critical to physical well-being. Even before *limpieza*, blood’s symbolic import needed no affirmation.

Central to the development of *limpieza* as a discourse of difference was the notion of blood as the material imprint of family. With time, the notion of heredity contained in

or consisting of blood created a relationship between the two significant systems of hierarchization, one emergent and one dominant: race and estate (*estatamento*). Anidjar speculates that it was a relatively new assertion to associate lineage with blood although no scholar has devoted sufficient work to this issue. By the time of the first blood purity statutes, bloodline had become synonymous with blood in the body, even if this connection was not carefully articulated. It is worthwhile to keep in mind that early modern science did not share our mechanized and extensive knowledge of the body and its systems. *Cronista* and priest Andrés Bernaldez insists that, in contrast to the opinion of the Pope and theologians, Judaism is transmitted via blood and thus neither Baptism nor the Eucharist can alter its mark (Edwards “Raza” 250). The *Diccionario de los inquisidores* (Valencia 1494) echoes similar sentiment under its entry for “apostasy”: “los judíos transmiten de uno a otro, del padre al hijo, la perfidia de la antigua Ley” (19). Nirenberg situates the growth in the importance of lineage in determining a person’s character in the mid-fifteenth century. Privileging lineage was not, he explains, an *a priori* anti-converso gesture. Indeed it was often deployed to defend their rights by citing a genealogical relationship to the Virgin that the Gentiles could not claim (“Race” 81). As Nirenberg asserts, “Medievals had many ways of thinking about the transmission of cultural characteristics that were not geneological,” but once what he calls the “geneological turn” to fixed, corporeal notions of difference was taken, it proved irresistible (ibid.). Significantly, the combination of *limpieza* with the understanding of blood as lineage creates a sea change in how Spaniards conceive of themselves at every social level. Each individual—not just those of aristocratic houses—came to see him or

herself as part of a bloodline, and to value it with different degrees of worth based on *estamento* and religion (Anidjar 124).

While the mapping of religion onto the discourse of blood as lineage produced a means to classify new social groups in a way that better conformed to the existing estate hierarchy, critics disagree on the place of noble lineage in the development of race.¹⁹ Many critics (Foucault, Stoler, Wallerstein and Balibar, Benedict Anderson) posit that the discourse of ancestry or bloodline, which distinguishes the aristocracy from the peasantry, was later employed to posit a fundamental difference of race, but they differ in characterizing the relationship between the two. They do not address Spain nor blood purity, but those that do confront a similar set of issues vis-à-vis the nobility: how to characterize their obsession with blood and corporeal inheritance, their anxieties about reproduction outside the group, and their assumptions about inferiority and impurity of the commoner caste in relation to lineage.

By focusing explicitly on the development of blood purity in Spain, Martínez suggests that a progression from the first appearance of the *limpieza* statutes in fifteenth century to their dissemination and crystallization for the following hundred years includes a gradual merger with notions of nobility. Etienne Balibar asserts blood purity as “a product of the disavowal of the original interbreeding with the Moors and the Jews,” explaining “the hereditary definition of race [...] serves in effect both to isolate an internal aristocracy and to confer upon the whole of the ‘Spanish people’ a fictive nobility” (208). By making *limpieza* a requirement for full subjectivity, Old Christian

¹⁹ Robert Lacey attests to the custom among Spanish nobility of uncovering their forearms to show blue veins that could be seen below the skin with the supposition that this quality was pure lineage without taint of dark-skinned peoples. According to the OED, the notion of “blue blood” or *sangre azul* originated in Spain. (*Aristocrats* 6) .

peasants improved their standing, taking on an aura of privilege, without any real legal change in caste. *Limpieza* progressively becomes associated with nobility in the sixteenth century, providing a useful explanation for the way in which aristocratic values became a society-wide concern and, as a result, the growing hysteria about *honra*, irrespective of caste.

Another significant change regarding genealogy relates to new ideas about mothers and maternal inheritance. Martínez and Anidjar argue that before the early modern period familial decent passed from father to son. The maternal line was irrelevant, as much for the inheritance of familial traits as for legal property rights. Two-line descent had not been the norm in western Christian society even though the significance of mother to child inheritance in Jewish cultures is well-known. The Romans, for example, determined inheritance via the paternal line only. This was a flexible notion as they encouraged adoption among “great men,” creating legal bloodlines unrelated to biological parentage. Mothers were a matter for concern in issues of inheritance insofar as their chastity assured the legitimacy of the paternal line. Women had a role in biological inheritance as vehicles for male lineage. Only female monogamy mattered, not the mother’s blood or family, resulting in her being subject to a standard of purity based on the regulation of sex. Early modern Spain, however, came to believe that both maternal and paternal ancestry made significant contributions to birthright vis-à-vis blood purity. This development placed women at the center of two purity discourses, sexual and religio-genealogical, as will be explored in Chapter Four on *El médico de su honra*.

Nirenberg as well as Edwards see as fundamental to the development of the blood purity doctrine an evolving understanding of the sources of disease and the character of contagion. Renaissance medical thought contributed substantially to the conceptual framework in which ideas about essentialized bodily difference between peoples were able to gain traction.²⁰ In the course of the sixteenth century, Galenism, which had relied on a physiological model based on humoral imbalance as the root of ill health, shifted its emphasis towards ontological notions of sickness and began to embrace early contagion theory. Chronic illness could affect one's ontological status, defining lepers, for example, as essentially and biologically other. Contagion theory, an antecedent to germ or bacterial theory of the nineteenth century, understood that some diseases came from external, communicable sources, "airborne seeds" in Fracastoro's term.²¹ (In no way were these views everywhere agreed on; divine or evil design remained a persuasive explanation of sickness in non-medical circles.) Integral to contagion was an agent of disease, a contaminant, that spread infection through contact or proximity. This could be a class of persons. In *Communities of Violence*, Nirenberg explores how late medieval lepers shared a despised ontological status with Muslims and Jews and were thus all victims of similar kinds of violence.²² The association with leprosy encouraged the sixteenth-century resignification of *conversos* (as well as Jews and Muslims) as biologically different.

Finally, Anidjar argues for a historical reconceptualization of community as central to the development of *limpieza de sangre*, that blood purity was a "theological

²⁰ See Nutton, "The Seeds of Disease," for an introduction to the development of contagion theory, beginning even before Galen. Contributing to the growing interest in contagion, as Solomon has pointed out, were epidemics of the plague from 1348 and syphilis in 1499.

²¹ Fracastoro in his *De contagione* of 1546 has been credited with first elaborating contagion theory, but Nutton contends that "seeds of disease" can be found in Galen and that the question was on the minds of contemporaneous physicians.

²² See *Communities of Violence*, Part 1. Also, see Zimmerman, "Lepers."

construct” that transformed the Christian community from one of spirit to one of blood.

He explores the large-scale effects of the blood purity doctrine that, he argues, reconstituted community, revising previous divisions and distinctions, explaining:

Whereas social and even genealogical distinctions had existed long before, the idea that blood—and moreover, pure blood—would be determining to establish distinctions between communities, that blood could not change or be affected by conversion and would on the contrary contaminate and infect other, distinct kinds of blood, is undoubtedly a novel idea. (120)

Thus, through the doctrine of *limpieza* the theological community of Christians becomes a blood-based racial and national community of modernity. The family envisioned in the medieval conception of nobility is subsumed into an expanded vision of biological connection through race. This is not, of course, an overnight transformation, but one that was growing in effect in the period in question.

The chapters that follow illuminate the resonant metaphors of blood through its rich seam of written and visual representations, examining its symbolism as a site both for racializing difference and as a means to question naturalized (i.e., blood-based) diversity. With its growing significance in early modern Spanish life, blood purity became the central way of talking about blood over the course of the sixteenth century exactly because of its pre-existing multi-discursive symbolism, its prior importance to legal, medical, and religious systems of representation. Even though *limpieza* overshadows other significations of blood in transubstantiation, as a Galenic humor, and as a token of gender and caste difference, these other conceptions continue to have resonance in early modern society. As I argue forthwith, through these alternative, sometimes backward-looking, discursive frames, blood was open to appropriation as a counter-discourse to interrogate blood purity.

CHAPTER TWO: “LA PATRIA CONSUMIDA”: BLOOD, NATION, AND EUCHARIST IN CERVANTES’S *NUMANCIA*

Blood infuses the best known of Miguel de Cervantes’s plays, *La destrucción de Numancia* (early to mid 1580s).²³ Like much neo-Senecan drama, *Numancia* centers on violence, brutality, bloodshed, and death in large scale. The play portrays bodily suffering in the form of starvation, cannibalism, and group suicide, staging a baby suckling blood from his mother’s emaciated breast and a father killing his compliant wife and children. In the climax of the *comedia*, when Roman troops breach the city walls, they discover the inhabitants dead and the town converted into a lake of blood: “De mirar de sangre / un rojo lago” (IV 2218-19).²⁴ Yet what in lesser hands would be gross spectacle here becomes a complex meditation on the role of the body, in particular the status of blood, as determining of early modern Spanish subjectivity.

Numancia draws on the multiple, overlapping meanings of “blood,” its associations with position, nobility, family, purity, Christian sacrifice, and redemption, and as a synecdoche for the body internal. By extending the discourse of blood as a token for violence, Cervantes explores the term as a trope not only for death—a constant—but also for Spanish nationhood and the Catholic Eucharist. The omnipresence of bloodshed in the play allows Cervantes to engage its metaphorical, polysemous character as central to early modern understandings of caste, race, and religion while making use of the slippages between these fields of meaning.

²³ Willard King suggests an earlier date of 1581-1582 when the author was in Lisbon at Felipe II’s court. Other critics like Malveena McKendrick offer the somewhat later date of composition no later than 1587. A fuller discussion of the difficulty in dating the play may be found in Jean Canavaggio’s work. The play was first published as part of Cervantes’s 1516 collection, *Ocho comedias y ocho entremeses nuevos nunca representados* (Madrid).

²⁴ Quotations throughout from Robert Marrast, ed., second edition, *El cerco de Numancia* (1990).

From the Middle Ages forward, shared royal bloodlines determined ruling oligarchies. The dual nature of the warrior class, both nobles and knights, turned on “blood”: they were of *alta sangre* (high blood) and employed in spilling the blood of their enemies. As Spain grew as an empire and a nation in the sixteenth century, blood took on a second significance in subject-formation. With the emergence of the *estatutos de limpieza de sangre*, an early legal designation of race as physiological difference critical to the emergent Spanish national-religious identity, blood came to embody difference. To be a *cristiano viejo* (Old Christian) rather than a *converso* (converted Jew) or *morisco* (converted Moor) bespoke an innate inheritance of superiority predicated on “purity of blood.” In the same period but in distinct circumstances, the sacrament of the Eucharist and the doctrine of transubstantiation, contested by Protestants, became paramount in Spain, seat of the Catholic Reformation.²⁵ Commemorating Christ’s sacrifice by imbibing his Holy Blood was the fundamental rite of belonging in theological terms. Thus engaging “blood” on these multiple fronts as a material reality with symbolic functions—to borrow Michel Foucault’s phrase—*Numancia* opens the intricate connection between embodiment and subjectivity in early modern Spain to investigation.

In this chapter, I argue that Cervantes turns the racializing discourse of *limpieza de sangre* (blood purity) on its head by revisiting the relationship between blood and religion at a supposed point of origin of the nation. To the ultimate end of discounting blood purity as constitutive of Spanish identity, the *comedia* emphasizes the role of blood in the Eucharist, promoting a flexible Christian model of community over one based on

²⁵ Transubstantiation was Church doctrine concerning the character of the Eucharist affirmed by the Council of Trent (1545-63). The bread and wine used to commemorate the Last Supper contained, once consecrated, the real presence of Christ’s body and blood although they retained their previous appearance.

static religio-ethnicity. *Numancia* maintains the notion, central to the emerging understanding of race, that Spanishness is a quality “of the blood.” However, the work proposes the Eucharist as a competing paradigm for embodiment through blood. Holy Blood replaces *pureza* as fundamental to national identity. Blood as lineage—even distant—is not, the playwright suggests, what links the Spain of his day to the Numantia of the nation’s legendary beginnings. Instead, he insists, it is only through the sacramental embodiment of the Eucharist that Spaniards reach their Numantine forefathers. Through Christ’s blood rather than genealogical inheritance Spaniards form an imagined community around their heroic beginnings. In the play, Leoncio, a Numantine soldier, sees the Romans consuming his homeland, surrounding it and making it theirs: “Ves la patria consumida / y de enemigos cercada” (717). In my reading, this is the first of multiple acts of eating, becoming, and belonging that move from violent to pacific, ending in a plea for an inclusive form of Spanish dominion.

National origin is a defining concern of the play.²⁶ Building on sources that cite the heroic sacrifice of Numantia as foundational for the prosperous, imperial Spain of his day, Cervantes situates Numantia in the history of Spain through the inclusion of epic prophecy that looks forward to Spain’s ascendancy as recompense for Numantia’s fall, implicitly relating the two. Rather than reinforcing the conventional link between epic past and author’s present as an ancestral tie—heroic progenitors to now victors—Cervantes suggests a Christian paradigm of national salvation through self-sacrifice by structuring the work around a series of Eucharistic rites. In the final analysis, Cervantes’s

²⁶ I use “nation” here with caution as I do not mean to suggest that Spain of this period was a modern nation-state. But following Antonio Feros, I contend that *Numancia* participated in the creation of institutions and discourses that allowed Iberians to imagine Spain as a political community in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, which was an important step toward the development of the Spanish nation.

play proposes that in order to claim Numantia as foundational, Spain must create a community based on blood as a practice, a sacramental rite, rather than blood as a birthright.

The play begins in the sixteenth year of the siege of Numantia, a Celt-Iberian city in present-day Soria, by Roman troops under Cipión (Scipio Numantinus) who renew their attack by surrounding the city and cutting off supply channels. The action alternates between the Roman camp and Numantia as auguries and allegorical figures predict the impending conquest of the city and the future greatness of Spain. Numantine leaders try supernatural and diplomatic remedies, but eventually acknowledge their plight. At the urging of the *numantinas*, who insist on participating in the response to the Romans, the community agrees to act together. In the violent culmination of the action, they cannibalize their Roman prisoners, burn their possessions, and kill one another in order to deprive the Romans of the spoils of victory, human and material. Only Bariato escapes; ultimately, however, he throws himself from a tower, effectively denying Cipión his last possible reward. The play ends with a figure of Fama appearing to celebrate Numantia and laud its valor.

The interpretive tension of *Numancia* arises from the play's multifold frame of reference, one stated—the historical conquest of the Iberian city of Numantia by the Roman Empire in 134 BCE—and the others analogical—the sixteenth-century politics of Spain under Felipe II, for example, or the destruction of Troy. Frederick de Armas describes this quality as “[the] doubling of history, through the representation of several dual presents” (14). Critical reception of the play has in great part centered on its analogical dimension, as commentary on the author's present. One critical strain views

the play as a celebration of the imperial mission and methods, affirming *traslatio imperii*, that the right to empire has passed from Rome to Spain.²⁷ By contrast, performances of the play in Spain during the Napoleonic invasions of the early nineteenth century and the Civil War of the twentieth favored reading the Spanish as *numantinos* and the text as a wholly favorable portrait of heroic resistance to overwhelming military force. In the past thirty years, however, critics have come to the conclusion that the richly allusive play resists univocal allegory. Instead, it promotes the identification of its early modern Spanish audience with both the Romans, conquering epic heroes, and the *numantinos*, ennobled tragic victims destined to fame in posterity. Neither portrayal is wholly positive, critics contend, thanks to the ideological and conceptual complexity of the play (Bergmann); its “radical ambiguity” (Johnson); its polyphony of genres that forestall closure and definitive meaning (Smirka); and its invocation and subversion of imperial and heroic concerns (Armas). Many look to parallels in the use or abuse of imperial might to see how the play addresses the justification for war and the legitimacy of conquest, pressing concerns for late sixteenth-century Spain. Hermenegildo understands Cipión as a figure for Don Juan de Austria and the siege as corollary to the suppression of the *moriscos* during the Alpujarras revolt (1568-71). Willard King sees resonance in the revolt in Flanders and the Duke of Alba’s campaign of terror (1567-73). Both Carroll Johnson and King point to allusions to the on-going resistance of the Araucan Indians of Chile to Spanish domination, citing as evidence the influence on Cervantes’s text of Alonso de Ercilla’s *La Araucana* (1569, 1578, and 1589), which paints a sympathetic picture of their fight against the Spanish, Michael Armstrong-Roche (2005) goes as far as

²⁷ See Juan Avallé-Arce and Alfredo Hermenegildo.

proposing a “speculative reading” of Rome as the Hapsburg empire under Carlos V and the Numantines as Castilian and Aragonese *comuneros* in reference to the 1520-22 conflict over tax burdens and the foreignness of the new court.

My reading focuses less on historical analogue and more on the discourse of origin in order to consider how the play situates the Numantine past with respect to Cervantes’s present. Along with a critique of present rule is a vision of what Spain should be, explored through posing the Numantines as forefathers to Spaniards and the siege of Numantia as an originating point in the narrative of the Spanish nation. The play is rooted in a well-established historical story of the Roman conquest of Iberia. Early modern Spain knew the Numantia story through Roman chronicles, Spanish histories, *romances*, and other *comedias* of the same period as Cervantes’s play.²⁸ The proliferation of versions in the early modern period attests to its ideological usefulness as a touchstone in the centuries following the unification of Castilla and Aragón as the monarchy and the Church sought to forge a top-down national consciousness.

Fundamental to my interpretation is the relationship the play defines between siege story and triumphant empire, a correlation established and negotiated through blending literary genres. In addition to owing much to Seneca and to tragedy, however, *Numancia* evidences a thoroughgoing engagement with epic, specifically epic prophecy, which unites the fall of the ancient city of Numantia to the sixteenth-century Spain of the writer in a teleological progression. The incorporation of epic prophecy within the frame of tragedy figures the Numantine past into the Spanish present as a foundational

²⁸ See Santiago Gómez Santacruz, Rudolph Schevill and Adolfo Bonilla, George Shivers, and Aaron Kahn for a full discussion of historical sources on the siege of Numantia and Cervantes’s possible sources.

moment.²⁹ Despite its historical subject, the *comedia* projects strongly from Roman precedent into the author's present, upending the tragedy of mass suicide by couching it as a triumph in posterity for Numantia, heroic ancestors of Spain. Moreover, these epic concerns help to define a corporeal connection between the ancient city dwellers and early modern Spaniards through the paradox of Holy Blood. Through the inclusion of prophecy, *Numancia* poses a national teleology for Hapsburg Spain, beginning with the fall of the city to the Romans. The recourse to epic within the frame of tragedy reduces catharsis and pathos—death comes to martyrs who prevail through posthumous fame, not to heroes whose flaws lead to their downfall. On the other hand, the infusion of epic allows Cervantes to affirm the Numantia story as ideologically foundational to the nascent Spanish nation of his time. In the Virgilian model of the genre, epic is the story of “first inhabitants,” the beginnings of a relationship between a people and a land. The genre has a strong connection to its author's present, serving as an explanation for a group's claim to present prominence. In recent criticism, Classical and Renaissance epic has often been identified as the principal generic vehicles for imperial ideology. Epic's triumphalist program establishes the heroic origins of a civilization and points to more recent history as the fulfillment of destiny. As Fuchs explains, “[b]y simultaneously projecting it into the future and recounting its own solemn origins, triumphalist prophecy establishes the legitimacy of the imperial project” (39).

Given the ideological underpinnings of the epic tradition, the incorporation of prophecy in *Numancia* seconds Cervantes's engagement with empire. According to generic convention, prophecy shows a hero his future greatness and that of his descendents, linking fame to family. The touchstone example is Anchises's prediction of

²⁹ See Simerka, *Discourses of Empire*, for an extended consideration of the play's relationship to epic.

the future prominence of Rome to his son Aeneas at the city's founding in Book IV of *The Aeneid*. This prophecy establishes Aeneas as a genealogical link to the heroic Troy of the past for the Rome of the then-future. Accordingly, Trojan renown is passed as a kind of inherited trait through Aeneas and his decedents to Rome. This far-fetched, metaphorical relation of Rome to Troy remained loose and unexamined in Roman imperial thought. Familial *translatio* of this kind existed in conjunction with other “proofs” of the Trojan spirit being passed to Rome. However, the idea of empire as birthright becomes more fraught in the climate of genealogical anxiety that pervades early modern Spain. To the extent that the connection to heroic origins is understood as a familial, or blood, relationship, *limpieza de sangre* influences the discourse of imperial *translatio*. Cervantes takes exception to this notion by proposing an alternative form of inheritance—and a “blood relation” of another kind.

In the first of two prophetic episodes, allegorical figures of Spain and the River Duero weave pre-Roman history into a prophecy that begins with the conquest of Numantia and leads to the eventual rise of Spain, suggested as its natural successor in the second. Together they construe history as a unidirectional narrative that ends at the time of the play's composition. When the Romans first surround Numantia, a beleaguered figure of España comes forward to lament her circumstances and those of the city, asking the River Duero for advice. Directing herself to the heavens, she bemoans her history as a land conquered, enslaved by foreign nations and mistreated by tyrants, as exemplified in the present circumstance of Numantia surrounded by Roman troops. “[S]oy la sola y desdichada España!” (375), she proclaims, continuing: “¿Será posible que contino sea / esclava de naciones extranjerias, / y que un pequeño tiempo yo no vea / de libertad

tendidas mis banderas?” (369-72). España is the personification of a geographical entity, a territory, suggesting a preordained correlation between land and state. She claims a people, her children, who in this her darkest moment wander displaced: “[P]ues mis famosos hijos y valientes / andan entre sí mismos diferentes” (375-76). Central to España’s self-delineation is that her children are distinct from the “naciones extranjeras” who are constantly making her (and them) subject. The use of the term “nación” may retain in part its medieval sense of a people when referring to the Other, but the character of España suggests the collapse of meaningful distinction between people and place that is one hallmark of “nation” in its modern sense. By aspiring to liberty, España puts forward a cohesive identity symbolized in the flag. In this fashion, Cervantes projects a Spanish state into the past a millennium and a half before any such a political entity came into existence. He proffers sixteenth-century Spain as the end product of an organic process of development, a state that existed in spirit well before its political realization.

In the same early scene between geographical figures, the River Duero responds by confirming España’s fears—Numantia will fall—, but offers the consolation of future prosperity:

Duero: De remotas naciones venir veo
 gentes que habitarán tu dulce seno
 después que, como quiere tu deseo,
 habrán a los romanos puesto freno.
 Godos serán, que con vistoso arreo,
 dejando de su fama el mundo lleno
 vendrán a recogerse en tus entrañas,
 dando de nuevo vida a sus hazañas. (473-80)

He describes how other invaders, the Goths, will displace the Romans and goes on to elaborate the eventual rise of Spanish power with relation to Rome, now the Vatican, including the 1527 sack of the city by Carlos V and ongoing Catholic League intrigue.

Finally, the River insists, España will subject—at sword-point—as many nations as she was once subject to in perfectly measured revenge.

Duero: ¡Qué envidia, qué temor, España amada,
 te tendrán mil naciones extranjeras,
 en quien tú teñirás tu aguda espada
 y tenderás triunfando tus banderas! (521-24)

The Duero returns to the language of España's complaint and predicts an absolute inversion of "naciones extranjeras" and "banderas." In her future ascendancy, Spanish flags fly over foreign nations. What in España's speech had been a desire for self-rule—"un pequeño tiempo [...] de libertad"—becomes in the River's prophecy an empire predicated on revenge. The corporeal imagery is worthy of note: España's anthropomorphized body, characterized by its soft, feminine interior, its "dulce seno" and pliable "entrañas," open to foreign domination, transforms into an externally-focused, masculine physicality in its ascendancy.

Understood in conjunction, both España's history and the Duero's prophecy remain ambiguous as to who constitutes this Spanish nation destined to renown. Phoenicians, Greeks, Romans, and Goths have been classed as alien conquerors—although the Goths are given decidedly softer treatment. While who belongs to the "foreign" is delineated, the "authentic native," subject to conquest, remains elusive, a category defined by what it is not. In spite of the underscored distinction that España and the Duero make between her children and *naciones extranjeras*, Moors and Jews, the most present "foreigners" according to Castilian nationalist propaganda, get no mention at all. Moorish rule, taken as a single epoch from 711 to 1492, constitutes the longest continuous dominance of one group in Iberian history, definitively longer than Roman or Gothic hegemony. The elision of the Moors seems particularly notable in light of the date

of Cervantes's writing in the years just after the Alpujarras revolt, a veritable civil war taking place in Granada in response to the imposition of repressive anti-*morisco* laws, and from a region with an active *morisco* population, vital to the economic life of Valencia. It could be argued that the Jews have no place in the litany of rulers that the Duero presents as their ancient Iberian population never governed (although they often had a place in ruling oligarchies). Nonetheless, the longstanding Jewish presence might merit some mention as the population predates the Roman from the period after the destruction of the Second Temple. Moreover, who constitutes *la nación española* is a central question for early modern society, one in which the formerly Jewish as well as formerly Muslim Iberians play significant roles. The erasure of Muslims and Jews from the narrative of Spanish history as described in the text is a strategic omission. Cervantes is purposefully vague on who constitutes present-day Spaniards, inheritors of Numantia and destined to glory. By omitting the large and politically problematic population from the list of foreigners, of others, the author implicitly opens up the category of the "native" to include Jews and Muslims and their convert descendants.

In the next prophetic episode, the work reappraises how the heroic legacy of Numantia comes down to sixteenth-century Spain, questioning genealogy as the connecting bond between epic past and present. The second prophecy comes in the final moments of the last act. Another allegorical figure, Fama, insists that there is a happy end to the story—however implausible this might seem to a modern audience who has witnessed the Numantian protagonists die en masse. Numantia has kept its honor, acted heroically, and won fame while Rome has been denied its full victory. The spoils are in posterity, Fama asserts:

Fama: La fuerza no vencida, el valor tanto,
 digno de en prosa y verso celebrarse.
 Mas, pues de esto se encarga la memoria,
 demos feliz remate a nuestra historia. (2445-48)

Fama at the close of the *comedia* ascribes the heroism of Numantia to “nuestra historia,” referring both to the plot of the play and the history of Spain qualified as “ours,” again reiterating the place of Numantia in Spanish history. She returns to the relationship between Numantia and Cervantes’s Spain, affirming the association posited in the earlier prophecy of the two as kin:

Fama: Indicio ha dado esta no vista hazaña
 del valor que en los siglos venideros
 tendrán los hijos de la fuerte España,
 hijos de tales padres herederos. (2433-36)

Fama articulates Numantia as “padres” to the “hijos [...] herederos” of the now robust Spain. Their unwitnessed act of self-sacrifice bespeaks the valor of Numantia that Spain will later evidence. The baroque syntax here, however, confuses the issue to the extent that it brings up a question of causality—perhaps displaying valor and not bloodline is what makes Spaniards the inheritors of the *numantinos*?

Indeed, for all the allusions to parentage in the play, no Numantines survive the siege to sire future Spaniards. The Roman belief in honorable conquest demands that conquered peoples live on to live under Roman rule. Thus Numantine victory is predicated on the absence of survivors. Any possibility of consanguinity with Spaniards is rendered impossible; the text is insistent on this point. In the final scene of the *comedia*, Cipión begs Bariato, the last living *numantino*, to give himself up, promising everything he might want. But the young man instead throws himself from his father’s tower, dying on his own terms: “Yo heredé de Numancia todo el brio; / ved si pensar

vencerme, es desvario” (2367-68). No captives will accompany the triumphal cart of the general to Rome, fundamental to the Roman notion of honorable victory. At the same time, Bariato’s suicide secures the lasting fame of his people, as Cipión acknowledges, lamenting:

Cipión: ¡Oh nunca vi tan memorable hazaña,
niño de anciano y valeroso pecho,
que no sólo a Numancia, mas a España
has adquirido gloria en este hecho! (2401-04)

Historical sources available to Cervantes offered conflicting accounts on survivors of the Roman siege. As Armstrong-Roche details, most of the earliest histories (Livy, Strabo, Appian of Alexandria) depict Scipio’s complete victory: some Numantines survive and are taken to Rome as trophies or sold into slavery. Roman historian Annues Florus, writing in the first century CE, offers a variation describing how Scipio was thwarted by the total annihilation of Numantia. Cervantes’s immediate—and perhaps single—source, Morales’s *Corónica* of 1574, debates the merits of anterior accounts, settling on mass suicide without survivors, the most “extreme example of tragic valor” (Armas 10). He goes further to extol the Numantines’ active program of resistance through self-sacrifice (187). King believes that Morales is the first to celebrate the Celtiberians of Numantia over the Romans and to promote Numantia as foundational to Spain. Interestingly, this is an argument based at least in part on inheritance, broadly-conceived. Morales weaves the Numantine Celtiberians into the medieval tradition of the noble Goths as the progenitors of Spaniards who routed the weakened Romans out of fifth-century Iberia (King 203).³⁰ Cervantes follows his contemporary Morales in presenting Numantia as foundational myth, akin to other originary stories that root the

³⁰ Juan de Mariana will affirm the same in his *Historia general de España* (1592 and 1605).

present prosperity of a people in the heroic defiance of past oppression. Nonetheless, while he has precedent to do otherwise, Cervantes disallows any genealogical connection between Numantia and Spain, even a tenuous bond, setting the stage for a distinct relationship. When the text suggests that Numantia fathers Spain, this inheritance cannot be a bloodline. Cervantes is unequivocal on this point: Spaniards are not the children of Numantia in the conventional sense.

The relationship of bloodline to nation takes on particular significance during the Castilian monarchy's contentious attempts at defining Spain as a Christian nation. The discourse of ancestry or blood relations, previously reserved to distinguish the aristocracy from the peasantry, was newly employed in the sixteenth century to posit a fundamental difference between *cristianos viejos*, who traced their family's faith to time immemorial, and *cristianos nuevos*, whose ancestors' conversion from Judaism or Islam was in living memory, even if several generations had passed. The kingdoms of fifteenth-century Iberia were populated by a mixed and in large part Semitic population. Beginning in the late fourteenth century, the compulsory baptism of Iberian Jews and Muslims caused anxiety as to what their incorporation into the Christian majority might signify. By the 1580s, both Moorish and Jewish communities had been converted to Catholicism for half a century and almost a century, respectively, and under duress lost much of their autonomous character. Removing long-standing social divisions of faith meant that these minority populations threatened to become indistinguishable from the majority. As Fuchs asserts, "[r]eligion and phenotype by no means coincided; there were, for example, Moors of all colors, including blondes" (10). This, in turn, provoked a re-definition of orthodoxy—no longer as purely religious but as genealogical and physiognomic as well.

Because populations could not be separated by visible physical differences, “difference” was relocated to the blood as the locus of a proto-ethnic inheritance. By the same token, claiming *conversos* as distinct and defining their insufficiency as corporeal—“in the blood”—difference became an innate quality that, while invisible, was also immutable.

Nonetheless, despite attempts to fix it as a static signifier, blood had an unusual semiotic fecundity—a polyvalent slipperiness—in early modern Spain that allows Cervantes to re-conceive the role of the body in the ideology of the Catholic nation. He does so by bringing epic prophecy and its corresponding discourse of national origin into dialogue with the Eucharist. The sacrament represents a discrete relationship to blood that stands in opposition to birthright, at least as presented here. The theological import of the Eucharist is predicated on the notion that, through His death, Christ brings new life; the material correlative to this sacrifice is bloodshed, and salvation, receiving Christ through the wine and bread of the Eucharist. Believers participate in Christ’s sacrifice as well as His redemption through blood, bloodshed on the Cross and miraculously consumed in the sacrament. Moreover the Mass, in particular the Eucharist, serves to create and maintain Christian community. Within the larger frame of Eucharistic doctrine, Cervantes focuses on blood in particular as critical to the dogma of sacrifice and incorporation, allowing him to speak to the Spanish context in which bloodlines and blood purity hold sway. Refracting the discourse of race onto that of the Eucharist, he recontextualizes “blood ties” into a reformist worldview. Unlike birthright—and baptism, for that matter—incorporating Christ requires choice and repetition. If blood purity is innate, blood in the Christian sacramental context must be renewed through practice and can be forever made pure again.

Cervantes invokes the principal Catholic sacrament by dramatizing Eucharist-like rites of sacrifice and consumption, which I will term serial blood rites, that form the architecture of the play. Understood as a group, these iterate the significance of sacrifice and put forward the notion of corporeal embodiment as a holy practice. Eric Graff suggests in his dissertation that blood rites in *Numancia* become more exaggerated and more elevated, progressing from deeply flawed to ennobled and finally culminating in Numantia's collective self-sacrifice, prefiguring the Passion. Indeed the play intertwines heroic sacrifice and its sacramental iteration, critical terms of Catholic Reformation theology, and emphasizes the role of the Eucharist in creating and defining community, thus further associating it with the *comedia*'s other central concern—Spain.

Through representing blood rites in *Numancia*, Cervantes engages contemporaneous discussions of the Eucharist in the wake of Martin Luther (1483-1546) and the Council of Trent (1545-63). In response to the Protestant Reformation, Trent affirmed categorically that the communion at the Last Supper was not figurative nor was the Eucharist merely commemorative (Session XIII). Rather, the miracle of transubstantiation occurs over and over again at the moment of consecration: as the priest blesses the bread and wine, they miraculously transform into the flesh and blood of Christ, both divine and human, although they retain the accidental form of food and drink.³¹ Transubstantiation forefronts embodiment, the absorption of the humanity of Christ into every believer: “by the consecration of the bread and of the wine, a conversion is made of the whole substance of the bread into the substance of the body of Christ our Lord, and of the whole substance of the wine into the substance of His blood” (78). The

³¹ The decree reads: “[...] after the consecration of the bread and wine, our Lord Jesus Christ, true God and man, is truly, really, and substantially contained under the species of those sensible things” (76).

Council clarifies the stakes of the Mass, declaring the superior place of the Eucharist, its “excellency,” over all the rest of the Sacraments.

As Caroline Walker Bynum discusses in *Holy Feast, Holy Fast*, transubstantiation is just the preparatory step to incorporation. She argues for a change in understanding of the Eucharist that occurred throughout Europe in the late Middle Ages. The focus of the Mass moved from viewing the holy repast as nourishment from heaven, centering on the miraculous transformation of bread and wine, to an emphasis on the consumption of the transformed foods as an incarnation of Christ’s suffering humanity in which the believer participated. The later medieval period began seeing the Eucharist as a miraculous exchange, an act of consuming that paradoxically consumes. Walker Bynum goes on to explain that holy eating brought about the mystical union of the believer with Christ: “[T]o eat was a powerful verb. It meant to consume, to assimilate, to become God. To eat God in the Eucharist was a kind of audacious deification, a becoming of the flesh that, in its agony, fed and saved the world” (3). She elaborates: “To eat God was to take into one’s self the suffering flesh on the cross. To eat God was *imitatio cruce*s” (67). Consuming the Eucharist is thus an act at once profoundly materialist and deeply spiritual, resolutely theophagous even though the godhead arrives in mystical form.

Martin Luther mounted a forceful critique of the Catholic Mass. He objected to what he felt was the egotistical notion that Christ’s sacrifice on the Cross could be imitated as it was undeniable and unrepeatable. He sought to replace the body of Christ with the Word of God as the theological centerpiece of Christianity. Trent replies to Luther’s challenge by forcefully avowing the body. While affirming the place of the institutional Church, the Counter-Reformation also fortifies the instrumental role of the

material humanity of Christ, the embodied connection between God and man, as well as the bodies of believers, who embody His sacrifice through communion. The late Medieval Church had tended to reserve the Eucharist for priests, who received it in the semi-privacy of the sanctuary, and only through them did laymen receive its benefits by proxy. The Church had been drifting towards a symbolic understanding of communion until the Reformation required it to take a reactive stance. Trent sought to reform the practice by assuring that all who had confessed merited the sacrament and that Eucharist could and should be performed at every Mass. If the Medieval Mass tended towards an abstracted connection between lay bodies and the body of Christ *de facto* if not *de jure*, the Counterreformation Church re-materialized that connection on a massive scale. It is this connection to corporeality that Cervantes exploits to undermine blood purity.

Numancia situates the Eucharist as foundational for the national imaginary and present at a critical moment of national inception. This is a significant gesture that speaks to a more capacious view of the Catholic nation. “[T]he prototypical meal” is the principal practice that defines the Catholic community according to the Tridentine Reformation. It constitutes the fundamental act of community, the creation of group identity through the breaking of bread in communion (Walker Bynum 3). Walker Bynum elaborates: “Fasting and Sunday eucharist were what everyone had in common [...] It was, in Cyprian’s words, to be united with one’s fellow Christians as the grains of wheat are united in a loaf of bread” (33). Participation in the holy meal in early modern Spain created an “us” and a “them” in material terms; the sacrament separated out the bodies of a religiously mixed society into those who had Christ “in them” and those who did not. Furthermore, one significance of the Precious Blood of Christ was its fluidity, its ability

to flow and to nourish. After the Latran Council of 1215 that first attempted to solidify Eucharistic doctrine, Pope Honrius III elaborated on the significance of Christ's blood in relation to community. It circulated through believers, uniting and joining them, both figuratively and materially. The Council of Trent pronounced that the Eucharist created a community of practicing believers: "He would fain have all Christians be mentally joined and united together [through celebrating the Eucharist]" (75). Nonetheless, this sanctified bodily state, available to all baptized Christians, was attainable as well as impermanent.

Playing up the residual ritual quality of drama, *Numancia* stages serial blood rites, enacted by both Romans and Numantines, that reference the Eucharist in their use of collective oaths, sacrifice, and ritualized consumption as foundational for community.³² Both Cervantes's Romans and Numantines evidence monotheistic paganism, support for the proto-Christian bent that Erasmus would attribute to pre-Christians. The reiteration of the pseudo Eucharist acts as a structuring device throughout the play, so much so that Graf calls *Numancia* Cervantes's "history of the Eucharist" (12), and each episode suggests another view on the relationship between consumption and sacrifice.

In the first blood rites, at the start of the play Cipión gathers the Roman soldiers to harangue them for their decadence and their failure to win the city, shaming them into leaving their old ways and making a final push to conquer Numantia. With all present and attentive, the general administers an oath, a martial rite of fealty with sacred overtones.

Mario: De hoy mas con presta voluntad y leda

³² The place of blood rites in *Numancia* suggests a metatheatrical relationship to literary history. The play's depiction of sacrament-like rites harkens back to the Greek roots of drama and its medieval history in the Church. In early Greek drama tragedy was a ritual sacrifice to Dionysus accompanied by a song. The Middle Ages, unfamiliar with Classical tragedy, viewed the form as pertaining to the greatest tragedy of all time (that is, the Passion and death of Christ), often the basis of mystery plays, which would form the basis of Renaissance theater.

el mas mínimo de éstos cuida y piensa
de ofrecer sin revés a tu servicio
la hacienda, vida, honra en sacrificio.

...

Soldado 1: Todo lo que habéis dicho confirmamos.

Soldado 2: Y lo juramos todos. (189-92, 197-99)

The soldiers agree to pledge all in sacrifice to their leader, whom they refer to, for the first and last time, as “señor mío.” Their codified language and collective gestures are evocative of the forms of address afforded to God, bring to mind a sacramental atmosphere although in a somewhat cursory fashion.

In a second instance of gesturing toward the Christian sacrament, Numantine priests organize the sacrifice of a ram to Jupiter in the hopes of appeasing the suffering of the besieged city. The text includes stage directions specifying special garb for the priests as well as an altar, incense, wine and water, all of which figure in the enacted ritual, making this scene more reminiscent of the Christian rite. The priests call Jupiter “eterno padre inmenso” and make declarations of willingness and contrition:

Sacerdote 2: [...] que la oblación mejor y la primera
que se ha de ofrecer al alto cielo,
es alma limpia y voluntad sincera. (801-03)

Rather than an oath alone, the rite centers on the blood sacrifice of an animal.

Preparations include declarations of a pure heart and mind. Suggestive of a form of magical thinking, the priests slay the ram in order to bring about the slaughter of their Roman opponents.

Sacerdote 1: Y así como te baño y ensangriento
este cuchillo en esta sangre pura,
con alma limpia y limpio pensamiento,
así tierra de Numancia dura
se bañe con la sangre de romanos,
y aun los sirva también de sepultura. (879-84)

The priest addresses the significance of sacrificial bloodshed in pagan understanding, directing his comments to his knife. He understands that the animal's shed blood sanctifies the space and acts as a holy medium through which the Numantines' petition will be enacted. Here Cervantes inserts the language of blood purity: among the priests' erroneous beliefs is their attention to *sangre pura* and *alma limpia*, synonymous with faultlessness of Christian lineage in early modern Spanish thought and associated here with the mishandling of blood. Equally, according to Christian belief, the error is of the priest to think of sacrifice in self-serving terms as a kind of wish enactment. At its founding, Christianity turns pagan sacrifice on its head by believing that the only legitimate form of sacrifice is self-sacrifice. Erasmus, in that same spirit, proposes that the martyr is the only true Christian warrior—one against war, against violence, against personal desire for power. Accordingly this primitive Eucharist ends up bumbling and farcical. All auguries point to Numantia's impending doom; the sacrifice fails, even by pagan standards, as a devil sneaks in to steal the spoils to the alarm of the sacrificants. The two initial rites, failed and partial, appropriate elements of the Eucharist to misguided ends—the honor of Rome and the aid of Jupiter.

From this episode forward, the rites reveal increasing power to affect change as they become more like the Catholic Mass. Blood—more so than flesh—is presented as a principal constituent of sacrifice. This is in part because bleeding precedes death, and death looms over Numantia from the start of the siege. But it is also because blood goes beyond its universal role as synecdoche for the life of the body and takes on various metaphorical meanings. As the *comedia* progresses, the blood rites intensify and sacrifice becomes more explicitly linked to auto-sacrifice and spiritual nourishment.

This intensification comes as a result of the siege that brings on hunger, which also holds a significant place in the economy of holy consumption. To the pious, the renunciation of ordinary food prepares the way for sacred eating, consuming (i.e., becoming) Christ in Eucharist. Like commensuality, fasting in unison constitutes community. According to Walker Bynum, “food abstention was a group practice,” commanded by the Church, originating early in Christian history and with roots in Jewish practice (38). She explains its importance and its deep association with holy eating:

[...] [F]asting was intensely corporate[...] [It was] a recapitulation of as well as a preparation for the eucharistic sacrifice. By fasting, the Christian joined with Christ who, in the garden and on the cross, kept the rule of abstinence that Adam had violated in paradise and became himself sacrificial food, propitiating God and saving sinners. (35)

Though one could point out the distinction between fasting and starvation, for all its unwilling suffering, Numantia reaps the benefits of fasting in the play’s final acts. The growing exigencies of the body lead Numantia’s residents to spiritual clarity; suffering brings forward a sacrificial impulse, first individually, then collectively.

For the next blood rite, conditions in Numantia—at the brink of starvation—have grown desperate as the siege progresses. Seeing that Lira is about to die from hunger, Marando recklessly decides to venture into the Roman camp in order to steal food. His level-headed friend Leoncio advises him against what he sees as a suicidal mission, but on recognizing Marando’s determination chooses to accompany him. Only Marando returns to Numantia, bleeding and mortally wounded, to bring Lira bread.

Marando: [...] dando a mi dulce Lira
este tan amargo pan,
pan ganado de enemigos,
pero no ha sido ganado
sino con sangre comprado

de dos sin ventura amigos. (1822-27)

As he makes clear on his return, her bread was bought with blood, in exchange for the life of two young men. The connection to Christ's sacrifice and the Church's sacrament is made explicit as Marando lies dying in Lira's arms when he bids her to eat the stolen bread dipped in his blood.

Lira: ¿Qué dices, Marando amado?
 Marando: Lira, que acates la hambre
 entretanto que la estambre
 de mi vida corta el hado.
 Pero mi sangre vertida,
 y con este pan mezclada,
 te ha de dar, mi dulce amada,
 triste y amarga comida. (1840-47)

Lira must consume this sad, bitter food to legitimate her lover's act and to participate in the new life his death is intended to grant her. Marando here goes on to partially iterate Christ's address to his disciples at the Last Supper. He gives over his body to her in the same breath that he has given over the dearly-bought bread, conflating the two terms.

Marando: Y pues en tormenta y calma
 siempre has sido mi señora,
 recibe este cuerpo agora
 como recibiste el alma. (1860-63)

Rather than sharing his body in marriage, she receives it as nourishment. Lira, in response, takes pleasure in the abjectifying adoration of Marando's blood, reminiscent of late medieval female saints who sucked diseased portions of bodies of the sick (lepers' sores, pus from infected lesions, and so forth), apprehending their gestures as ministrations to Christ's body.³³

Lira: No te llegaré a mi boca
 por poderme sustentar,

³³ This phenomenon has been treated at length by Walker Bynum in *Holy Feast, Holy Fast*.

si ya no es para besar
esta sangre que te toca. (1884-87)

If we view the scene on a platonic scale in which kinds of love are graduated, romantic love and accompanying sacrifice represent an intermediate stage, approaching the love of the divine, that marks a decided forward progression from the priests' understanding. The episode signifies a double self-sacrifice for love, one erotic—Marando for Lira—and one fraternal—Leoncio for Marando. On one hand, both fail to the extent that Marando perishes from his wounds and Lira, presumably, dies shortly thereafter with the rest of the city's inhabitants. On the other, Cervantes does not emphasize the ultimate failure of this blood rite (unlike the earlier priests' fiasco), and Lira's survival allows her to share in the collective glory of the town's final act. In either case, it is apparent that the series of primitive Eucharistic scenes is building toward the correct form of sacrifice.

If the blood rituals at first prove irrelevant, then ineffective, they approach successful *imitatio cruces* in the cathartic bloodletting of the last act when sacrifice is undertaken for the collective: Numantia for Numantia and, finally, Bariato for Numantia. In the penultimate example, the Numantines prepare to sacrifice themselves by setting fire to their possessions and cannibalizing the Roman prisoners. Burning their material wealth in the main square acts as a ritual cleansing, a "santa ofrenda" to an undefined higher power, preparing the way for the main event (1654). The anthropophagy here is portrayed as a poignant necessity in light of extreme desperation and self-forfeit as well as a part of ritual preparations. Teógenes directs the town to split up the Romans amongst themselves, conveying the sense that the ceremonial food—"la comida celebrada"—is again sad and bitter: "repártense entre todos, que con esos / será nuestra comida celebrada

/ por estraña, crüel, necesitada” (1439-41). In the latter example, Bariato explains to Scipio, the audience, and his departed countrymen that his suicide is motivated by “el amor perfecto y puro / que yo tuve a mi patria tan querida” (2398-99). He invokes patriotic fervor as if it were Christian love, which at its most exalted—God’s unconditional love for humanity—is closely associated with sacrifice. In light of the Platonist’s scale of love previously mentioned, blood rites represent a succession from lesser to greater self-sacrifice, from *eros* to *ágape*.

Cervantes exploits the multiple discursive resonances of blood to complicate the emerging association between national identity—Spanishness—and *pureza de sangre* by suggesting another relationship to blood as the substance of Christian sacrifice and as such better constitutive of a Catholic nation. In *Numancia* Cervantes goes even a step further, posing an alternate model of subjectivity to *limpieza de sangre*, that is, to blood as constitutive of an intrinsic, ethno-religious corporeal state. In the dominant paradigm, blood can be pure or impure, legitimate or illegitimate, Spanish or not. By contrast, in predicating Spanish subjectivity on the Eucharist, as spiritual rather than corporeal, the playwright not only argues for an intrinsically inclusive model of Christianity, but also opens the possibility of moderate self-fashioning among believers.³⁴ The Eucharist is not a position but a practice. In posing it as constitutional to Spanishness, Cervantes undermines religio-national identity as an ontological category intrinsic in the blood purity doctrine. Thus to be a Christian and to be a Spaniard, in Cervantes’s scheme, depends on conduct, not biology.

³⁴ From one perspective this is a deeply conservative gesture, an attempt to maintain the Church community in its premodern form as *corpus mysticum*, a spiritual kinship.

Numancia questions the rhetoric of blood as lineage (de facto, ethnicity) and replaces it with one of sacrifice, gesturing towards the Passion of Christ and its commemoration in the Catholic Mass. The ideological heft of the *comedia* comes from the place of the Numantia story within the emerging national imaginary of Spain. Through affirming the siege of Numantia as a myth of origin while insisting on its status as the childless father of Spain, Cervantes contradicts the dicta of pure blood and faultless lineage. The Eucharistic model of belonging to nation is transgressive to the extent that it does not depend on family, allowing for genuine conversion of Jews and Muslims to Christianity. What is compelling about communion as an alternative social determinant to *limpieza* is that it involves choice and practice, allowing the possibility, proper to the early Church, that converts could fully participate in a community founded along these principles.

In light of the rhetoric of ingestion and incorporation, the notion of “la patria consumida” that Leoncio introduces in the first act comes to suggest not only that the Roman Empire consumes Numantia, but also that Spaniards must incorporate their inheritance through consumption. Through bloodshed (sacrifice) and blood sacrament (embodiment through ingestion), belonging to Spain comes from Catholic practice—sacramental and sacrificial—not birthright. Cervantes proposes a Christian regime of Spanishness. While affirming national identity as a physical state, Cervantes also poses that it is contingent on observance. He asserts a blood tie between ancient *numantinos* and early modern Spaniards, but that bond is sacrament, not lineage. The *patria* is not innate. In this paradigm, incorporating Christ through the Eucharist is a defining patriotic act. Holy Blood poses an alternative subjectivity to *pureza de sangre* in which *conversos*

and *moriscos* can be judged on practice rather than ancestry. Thus to inherit the legacy of Numantia, its sacrificial ethos must be embodied. Like the Holy Body and Blood of Christ, “la patria” must be “consumida,” consciously and repeatedly enacted.

CHAPTER 3: EROS AND THE POETICS OF BLEEDING

Rimas humanas CXCI

Es la mujer del hombre lo más bueno,
y locura decir que lo más malo,
su vida suele ser y su regalo,
su muerte suele ser y su veneno.

Cielo a los ojos cándido y sereno,
que muchas veces al infierno igualo,
por raro al mundo su valor señalo,
por falso al hombre su rigor condeno.

Ella nos da su sangre, ella nos cría,
no ha hecho el cielo cosa más ingrata;
Es un ángel, y a veces una arpía.

Quiere, aborrece, trata bien, maltrata,
y es la mujer, al fin, como sangría,
que a veces da salud y a veces mata.

—Lope de Vega

Lope de Vega's comic complaint on woman, part of his *Ciclo de Lucinda* (1598-1608), lists a series of antithetical pairings to underscore her contrary nature. In the final verses Lope settles on a simile that synthesizes her supposed paradoxical character: a woman, like a bloodletting, sometimes heals and others, kills.

Lope's curious conceit of women and bleeding may be interpreted in light of contemporaneous medical beliefs. In the first line of the sestet, the poet alludes to maternity and child-rearing, creating an unstable distinction between selfless mothers and selfish lovers. "[S]u sangre" is a familial, corporeal inheritance, either contained in or consisting of blood. Modernity retains this notion residually in language (e.g., "blood

relatives”).³⁵ Nonetheless, the early modern era struggles with the notion of blood as the bodily substance of family in more concrete terms. The mother’s blood refers to the belief common in Galenic science that breast milk is, like semen, blood transformed by heat; mothers feed their children on a concoction of their own blood, and more broadly bleeding is central to reproduction.³⁶

When Lope compares woman to bloodletting, he suggests that she is inherently dual and changeable, common currency of a venerable tradition of misogynist rhetoric. Interestingly, the sonnet maintains a symmetry between positive and negative womanly attributes and does not devolve into a vituperative attack on the female kind as an early modern reader may have expected.³⁷ Nonetheless, what is most suggestive about the sonnet is that Lope selects phlebotomy as his guiding simile. Woman’s oppositional duality makes her comparable to bloodletting, a therapeutic practice that could exacerbate illness as well as cure the body depending on the malady and the surgeon. Despite the long-standing and wholesale reliance on *sangría* as therapy for most diseases, the practice had inherent dangers, as Lope indicates. Given that it was widely held that the body contained some 25 pints of blood (about three times the quantity now believed present), bloodletting, when over prescribed, was occasionally fatal. It was also a form of minor surgery, conducted in less than sanitary conditions, which could lead to infection. Although the wisdom of bloodletting was rarely doubted (except in erudite medical circles and then only after the mid-seventeenth century), the practice was often subject to

³⁵ In light of genetic science, blood as familial inheritance could be viewed as synecdochal—an available source of DNA.

³⁶ For an introduction to blood in Galenism and natural philosophy, see Sirasi, *Medieval and Early Modern Medicine*.

³⁷ Texts in this vein often harp on the scatological, in particular menstruation, to inspire repugnance for all female bodies, a trope that Lope here avoids. See Solomon, *The Literature of Misogyny*, for a discussion of anti-woman discourse in medieval Iberia; see also Lope’s “A una sangría de un pie” in the Appendix.

ridicule: like the quack doctor, the clumsy surgeon was part and parcel of early modern satire.

In making this comparison, Lope iterates one of several understandings of the complicated relationship between female bodies and bleeding. In Chapter Two, I discussed sacrificial bleeding that “realizes things” in Peggy McCracken’s phrase; this includes the bleeding of saints, martyrs, and heroes of romance.³⁸ Overwhelmingly, representations of “extraordinary” bleeding are associated with the singular endeavors of men. I make a distinction between holy bleeding, discussed previously, and the quotidian bleeding at issue here and in the fourth chapter—repeated, unremarkable blood loss related to the well-being of the individual body and often associated with pollution and femininity. Quotidian bleeding includes phlebotomy. In the Hippocratic-Galenic system of medicine, bloodletting was a form of therapy and hygiene that restored an inner balance and created a internal harmony required for health. Women had a particular association with daily bleeding because of menstruation and childbirth; that they bleed habitually without medicinal intervention was a sign of their imperfection in comparison to men.

With Lope as prologue, I argue in this chapter for an unusual literary occurrence in the seventeenth century: a corpus of amorous sonnets about women bleeding. Grouped together they register one way in which the emergence of blood purity as critical to early modern Spanish subjectivity affected attitudes towards women’s bodies and quotidian

³⁸ Female martyrs and stigmatics “realized things” with their blood, but they were the exception. The sanctification of the female body was achieved in part by changing its relationship to bleeding. As Peter Brown has detailed, the female saints of medieval hagiography often stop menstruating, which is understood as a token of their holiness. As the cult of the Virgin developed in the High Middle Ages, the amenorrhea of Mary was understood as proof of her unwomanly purity, a purity that transcends femaleness (2-3).

bleeding. The ten examples selected for this “bloodletting corpus” were composed over more than a century (late 1500s to mid 1700s) and include poetry by Lope de Vega, Luis de Góngora, Francisco Quevedo, Gabriel Bocángel, Sebastián Gadea y Oviedo, Catalina Clara Ramírez de Guzmán, and Diego Torres de Villarroel.³⁹ Like Lope’s initial poem, this body of texts incorporates bleeding and women into the matrix of the sonnet. In contrast to the epigraph, the other poems do not employ bloodletting as an ambivalent metaphor for womankind, but rather each describes an incident of female bleeding in erotic and aesthetized terms. The chosen sonnets represent the subjective experience of witnessing blood loss (or in one case performing a bloodletting) by male poets about female patients with one exception: a female poet writing to another woman. Viewed collectively, the corpus raises questions as to why female bleeding—seemingly antithetical to idealization—would have become available for lyric treatment in the sixteenth century and what representing women’s blood in this idealized fashion accomplishes.⁴⁰

As Lope’s simile suggests, bleeding was regularly gendered. While holy bleeding was normally associated with Christ, heroism, and masculinity, quotidian bleeding was feminine, a function of the lower body, and unclean. The blood shed by women was itself abject and frequently understood as a sign of greater abjection, a synecdoche of internal and moral insufficiency of the female body as a whole.⁴¹ God’s curse on Eve concerned blood: painful childbirth marked by severe bleeding was punishment for woman’s expulsion from Paradise. Nonetheless, the poets considered in this chapter elegize female

³⁹ Complete texts of each poem are included in the Appendix.

⁴⁰ The selection also differs from a well-known treatment of blood and love, John Donne’s “The Flea,” because the bleeding depicted is exclusively—and improbably, I contend—female.

⁴¹ See Kristeva, *Desire in Language*, and Douglas, *Purity and Danger*, for founding critical discussions of the relationship between female bodies and abjection.

bleeding in love poetry, reversing its negative valuation in other symbolic systems. Female blood made external becomes, unexpectedly, an aspect of feminine beauty, a token of the beloved's perfection.

This chapter contextualizes bleeding in relationship to gender to illustrate how this affirmative representation of female bloodletting was at odds with prevailing cultural norms, confounding representations of blood in medicine and related theories on love that influenced Petrarchan discourse. I propose a causal relationship between the coetaneous emergence of "bleeding lyric" and the greater diffusion of *limpieza de sangre* to account for this symbolic reversal. Elements of the love lyric lend themselves to addressing specific ideological concerns about women, subjectivity, blood, and bodies in early modern Spain that make the elevation of female bleeding thinkable. Taking into consideration how Petrarchism was used as a generic means for self-articulation, as Nancy Vickers among others has put forward, as well as a means to explore disparities in the period, as argued by critics like Roland Greene, I propose that the bloodletting corpus represents an attempt to project female *pureza*, both sexual and racial, as an aspect of male poetic self-fashioning, affirming the poet's status as unadulterated.

Quotidian Bleeding and Women

Phlebotomy, a form of minor surgery, does not lend itself easily to poetic superlatives. Yet Lope, Bocángel, Quevedo, Góngora, Ramírez de Guzmán, Gadea y Oviedo, and Torres Villarroel invoke, directly and indirectly, this central practice of early modern medicine to both cure and prevent illness. In the humoral body, composed of

fluids and characterized by flux, health depended on equilibrium, and illness resulted from an imbalance of bodily humors. Blood *in vivo* could go bad, be tainted, exhausted, and require removal. A well-known medieval surgical guide by Guy de Chauliac, which was reproduced with frequency in early modern Spain both in Latin and the vernacular, gives the following definition:

[...] por que entre todos los remedios, la sangria es el mas comun, y mas generoso alomenos en las enfermedades que proceden de sangre, por tanto segun Galeno ... Sangria es incision o cortamiento de la vena, por la qual se evacua la sangre junto con los otros humores...Sangria es una evacuacion general de los quatro humores, hecha ... por instrumento pungente y cortante, qua es la lanceta para evacuar la multitud de los humores que hay dentro las venas ... la sangria es remedio comun para todas las enfermedades, que se nazen de plethora...assi para conserver la sanidad, como para curar las enfermedades. (*Cirugía De Guido de Cauliaco* Libro séptimo 433)

Blood, although considered the supreme humor, also tended towards overabundance, or plethora in Galen's term. Because blood flowed but did not circulate, corrupted blood needed to be expelled from the body. Otherwise it would stagnate if not used up in bodily processes or discarded as waste. Bleeding, as Chauliac indicates, released not only blood gone bad but other humors as well, returning the body to its tempered state. Phlebotomy was used to treat most diseases, but equally it served as a part of healthy living, a regular hygienic practice albeit done under appropriate medical supervision. As Figure 1 illustrates, phlebotomy was not nearly as simple as its latter day practice.⁴² There was an art to treating symptoms by removing blood from areas of the body where the excess "pooled." Venesection, or "breathing a vein" in the arm below the elbow, was perhaps the most common practice, the arm the most common site to lance; the foot, another, but

⁴² Modern medicine uses phlebotomy regularly as a diagnostic tool rather than a treatment. Even after Harvey's theory on the circulation of blood received wide acceptance in the seventeenth century, phlebotomy continued to have adherents in Western Europe up to the nineteenth century. See Harvey, *On the Circulation of Blood*.

almost any vein could be identified as a good spot to bleed depending on the ailment being treated.⁴³

⁴³ In addition to Chauliac's general guide to surgery were a multitude of treatises that dealt exclusively with the mechanics of bloodletting. See, for example, Granado, *Dudas a La Aniquilación Y Defensa De Las Sangrias* (1653) and Piñero, *Concordia De La Controversia Sobre El Sitio De La Sangria, en Los Principio De Las Enfermedades* (1655).

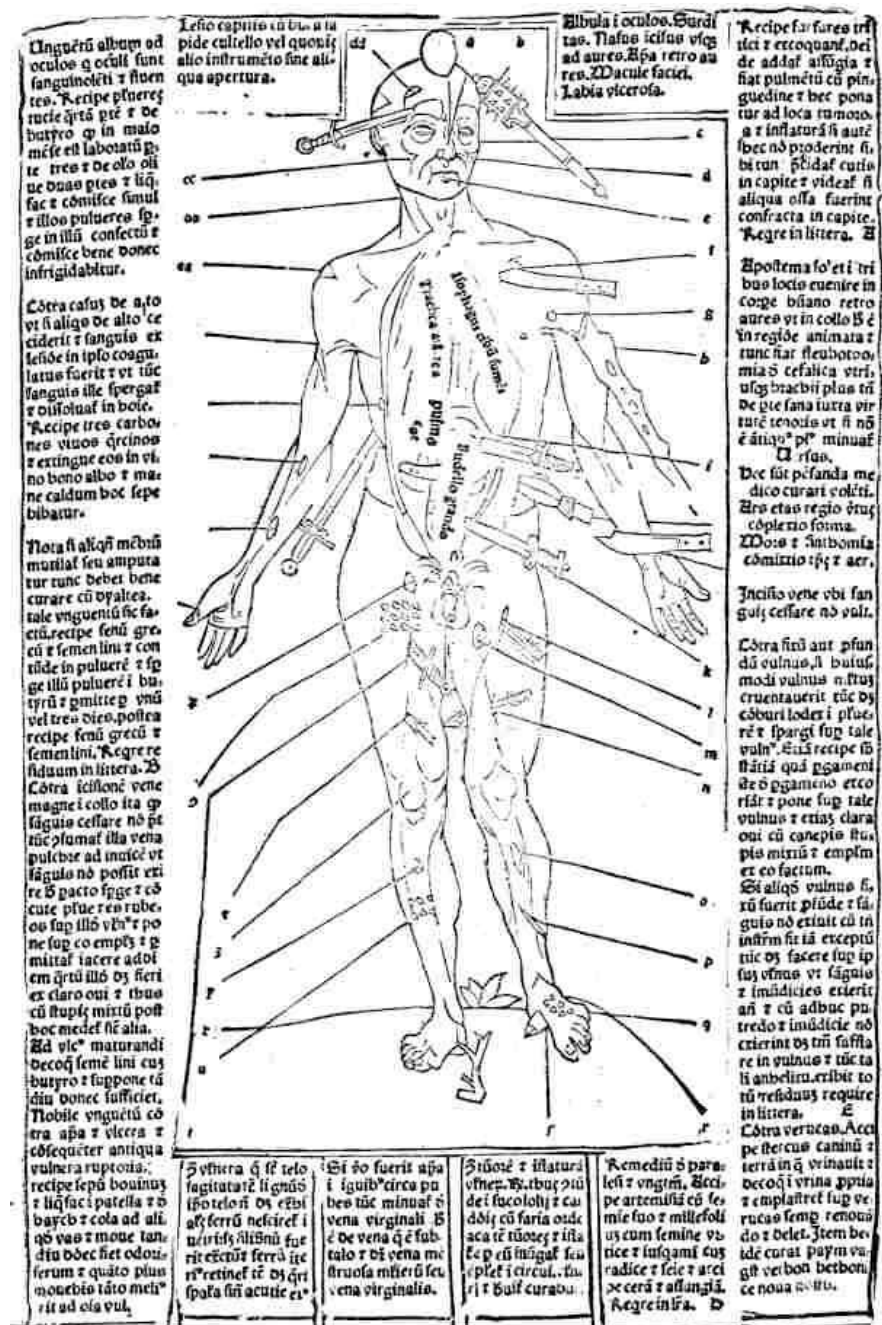


Figure 1. *Bloodletting Man* from Johannes de Ketham's *Fasciculus Medicinae* = *Epilogo En Medicina Y Cirugía O Compendio De La Salud Humana*. Burgos: Juan de Burgos, 1513. Illustrations such as this one accompanied medical texts explaining the how-to's of phlebotomy. The diagram of a nude figure, always male, indicates points to lance for bleeding according to the symptoms displayed. Glosses on Bloodletting Men also advised on the best seasons of the year and most favorable astrology for successful bloodletting.

In likening woman to bleeding, Lope's sonnet proposes the slippage between phlebotomy and menstruation as two forms of purging excess blood, both tokens of a body's fallen nature and understood in terms of Galenic medicine as well as theology. Women's bleeding typically reads as menstrual flow irrespective of its source. In the epigraph, Lope takes up a tradition of seeing gender difference in terms of bleeding (although one not often expressed in sonnet form). Women bleed regularly, without injury or surgical intervention, in contrast to men.⁴⁴ Thus menstruation and by extension bleeding women were a convenient vehicle for expressing essential difference from the masculine norm.⁴⁵ Early modern medical thought on menstruation agreed with classical antecedents on the point that the blood shed was at best unprofitable, at worst venomous. Hippocrates (460-370 BCE) had argued that the female body purified itself through menstruation, while Galen (CE 129-199/217) held that menses resulted from the habitual excess of women's blood, another token of their inherent imperfection as they were incapable of making profitable use of all blood produced to nourish the body (Crawford 50-53).

In both the Greco-Roman and Judeo-Christian traditions, menstruation was deeply profane, a potent source of pollution and danger. A woman's monthly cycle served as a reminder of her hidden monstrousness, her contaminating otherness. Unlike holy blood, quotidian bleeding was associated with suffering, abjection, the inferior lower body, and the curse of Eve. Menstrual blood itself epitomized the frightening and unknowable

⁴⁴ All vaginal bleeding, hymenal, menstrual and parturition, was considered the same. (Bynum *Fragmentation* 220)

⁴⁵ See Crawford, "Attitudes to Menstruation," and Dawson, "Menstruation, Misogyny, and the Cure for Love," for an overview of early modern beliefs on menstruation. It should be said that views on menstruation were not monolithic. Many saw it as a sign of fertility and menstrual blood was used as a cure for leprosy. Equally, amenorrhea in regular (that is, non-saintly) bodies was understood as an illness. But it is fair to contend that on balance female bleeding was met with concern and disgust.

otherness of the interior of the female body and gave it external form.⁴⁶ Pliny, writing in the second century CE, speaks to the corrupting effects of menstruating women in his *History of the World*: wine sours as they pass, looking-glasses discolor, knives blunt, bees die. Leviticus and Deuteronomy prohibit sex with menstruating women as a crime punishable by death, also a particular concern of early modern moralists; they believed it tainted the reproductive process, producing monstrous children. Lesel Dawson asserts: “Associated with prostitution, poison, corruption, and sexual depravity, menstrual blood is more than just a bodily fluid in the early modern period, it is the symbol for anything immoral or depraved” (469). Regardless of individual merits, women are corporally duplicitous; their bodies are not what they seem (Dawson 471).

In natural philosophy, shed blood was loathsome, whether the result of phlebotomy or menstruation. Phlebotomy served to purify the body in the pursuit of health, but as an invasive medical procedure it was little suitable to idealizing poetry that focuses on the intact surfaces of beautiful *damas*. Men’s bleeding purifies their bodies in the case of phlebotomy. Women’s bleeding, however, tends to pollute. Rather than seeing the healthful effects of evacuating stale blood in women, early modern thought focused on the lost blood itself and the repugnance it inspired.⁴⁷

⁴⁶ The understanding of female bleeding as abject was so established an association that it could malign others by proxy. In the polarizing climate of early modern Spain created by the expulsion of the Jews and the clean-blood statutes, the supposed incidence of Jewish male menses, an old canard of anti-Semitism, became more common as a means of discrediting Jews generally and ferreting out false converts. See Resnick, “Medieval Roots of the Myth of Jewish Male Menses,” for a discussion of origins and Beusterien, “The Myth of Jewish Male Menstruation” for a detailed treatment of the question in early modern Spain. Protestants even slandered Catholics by associating them with menstruation. This was particularly the case with the Pope, sometimes called the “red whore of Babylon” and depicted with menstrual rags (Dawson 472).

⁴⁷ See McCracken, *The Curse of Eve, the Wound of the Hero*, Chapter One.

Blood and Love

The amorous poetry of early modern Europe drew heavily on Hippocratic-Galenic medicine. Love was considered a bodily phenomenon, a subject for medicine as well as Christian and philosophical thought. Blood had a significant role in love discourse, but that role was exclusively masculine and pertained to blood *in vivo*. The poetic phraseology of blood in particular was not only figurative, but also reflected this material understanding of the body and passions.⁴⁸ It comes as little surprise that corporeal understanding of blood in relationship to gender found origin in medical explanations of heterosexual desire, that is, with the effects of women on men. Stemming from Ovid's *Remedia amoris* [*Cures for Love*] as well as Lucretius and Avicenna, natural philosophy viewed erotic love as a disease. Some writers, such as Constantine the African (c. 1020-87), classify only certain kinds of love as insalubrious while others, particularly poets, attribute a generalized pathology to lovers. Although the Platonic understanding of desire views Eros as a rung on the ladder to abstract, divine love, natural philosophy understands men's desire as an intemperate and dangerous state that has the potential to corrupt health and subvert gender hierarchy, making women the unnatural rulers of men. Love theory concerns men; depictions of women in love are the aberration, not the norm.⁴⁹

Blood *in vivo* played a significant role in *mal de amores*. Burning with desire and

⁴⁸ For a general introduction to the history of love discourse, see Laqueur, *Making Sex*; for the physiology of love in English literature, see Babb, "The Physiological Conception of Love in the Elizabethan and Early Stuart Drama." For a more detailed treatment of eros and physiology in Medieval Spain, see Solomon, *Misogyny* and Dangler, *Making Difference*, particularly "The Medical Body."

⁴⁹ Wack, *Lovesickness in the Middle Ages*, provides an excellent introduction to critical inquiry into the relationship between poetry and medicine. See also Wells, *Secret Wound*.

aching hearts were signs of lovesickness as were clearer symptoms of illness like itchy veins or boiling blood. In lyric poetry, love was synonymous with an internal flame, sometimes gentle, sometimes raging, that kindles the entrails and breast, specifically the heart, blood, and veins. Gutierre de Cetina (1519-54) follows this tradition in asserting: “Por vos ardí, señora, y por vos ardo, / y arder por vos mientras viviré espero” (3-4). In *Sonetos para Lisi*, the long-suffering lover of Quevedo’s cycle complains: “Diez años en mis venas he guardado / el dulce fuego que alimento, ausente, / de mi sangre” (5-8). And in “Amor constante más allá de la muerte” he elaborates: “Alma a quien todo un dios prisión ha sido, / venas que humor a tanto fuego han dado, / médulas que han gloriosamente ardido, / su cuerpo dejará, no su cuidado” (9-12). The traditional imagery of a lover’s ardent blood remains an internal condition, symptomatic of lovesickness and proper to the male lover-poet.

Early modern poetics assigned to the infirmity of love a distinct pathology: swift and headlong, love entered the body through the eye, traveled through the veins, and settled in the liver, the organ thought to foment blood, and, like other passions, provoked the action of the heart, breeding internal heat and inflaming the lover from within. Love entered through a lesion made by cupid’s arrow, often ocular. In Quevedo’s “Inútil y débil victoria del amor,” the poet addresses Love, complaining: “Qué flecha de tu aljaba no he sentido?” Lope’s *Soneto 125* begins: “Mano amorosa a quien amor solía / dar el arco y las flechas de su fuego (1-2).”

Love wounds poets, and the violent entrance of love into the body itself is key to the construction of their poetic persona. Though otherwise chivalrous and valorous, through the wound knights are made in medieval romance; they are most fully

themselves. The trope of a wound through which subjectivity is constituted remains as the generic vehicle changes.⁵⁰ The wound of love in lyric poetry, however, is a distinct kind, a cut that transfuses or incorporates, not one that releases or externalizes. The heroic wound of the knight has been entirely internalized into a love cut, affecting the blood but not externalizing it, a metaphorical slit, a quasi-physical injury. The wounded lover is more in keeping with Mikhail Bakhtin's classical male figure whose body boundaries are well-defined.⁵¹ Perhaps it is this internalized quality that allows its figurative obverse in bleeding women.⁵²

The medical-poetic tradition proffers a number of therapeutic strategies to cure the intemperate state of lovesickness. Michael Solomon details an imaginative therapy for curing *mal de amores*: maligning the object of affection by reminding the patient that, despite any one woman's admirable qualities, she was a woman with all the inferiority and duplicity that designation entails. In the first *acto* of *La Celestina*, Sempronio tries to dissuade Calisto from loving Melibea, conjuring up a litany of misogynist tropes on woman's wickedness. Therapeutics go beyond realistic correction to misogyny through an exclusive focus on the scatological. In this same line of thought, there is even a menstrual cure for lovesickness, a form of "aversion therapy" in which the besotted is made to see the menstrual blood of his beloved. Dawson explains: "[...] the male lover's horrified reaction to the display of menstrual blood is not only due to visceral disgust, but also to the moral misgivings such blood engenders about the beloved" (469). In Quevedo's "El mundo por de dentro" from his collection of Lucianesque satires *Los sueños* (1627), a venerable old man instructs the young narrator on the dangers of love.

⁵⁰ Again, see McCracken, *Eve*.

⁵¹ See Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*.

⁵² See Wells, *Secret Wound*.

Watching a beautiful woman pass by, the *viejo* warns against loving her and recommends a cure for troublesome passion: imagine her menses, symbol of her false exterior and rotting core:

Pues sábete que las mujeres lo primero que se visten en despertándose es una cara, una garganta y unas manos, y luego las sayas. Todo cuanto ves en ella es tienda y no natural [...] *Considérala padeciendo los meses y te dará asco; y cuando está sin ellos acuérdate que los ha tenido y que los ha de padecer, y te dará horror lo que te enamora* (299-301; my emphasis).

On occasion bloodletting was even advocated as a last ditch cure for lovesickness as, in humoral terms, phlebotomy can dispel heat and excess, both integral to passion. In *Love's Labours Lost*, for example, Durmaine complains that he would like to forget his mistress, but she reigns in his blood, suggesting the beloved has been incorporated into the body of her lover. This, however, is not a happy union; Durmaine sees her presence within him as unwelcome, to which his friend jests she should be let out by opening a vein.

As we shall see, the lyric discourse of male desire has resonances with phlebotomy: it often features a wound and effects the blood. Nonetheless, a male poet's desire only involves blood *in vivo*. Despite the perils of lovesickness, most often chronicled in satire, medieval courtly poetry and Renaissance lyric depicted love as a desirable if feverish state in which one suffers pleasurably, an illness that many wished to catch. Significantly, Mary Frances Wack argues that lovesickness is "a class-specific ailment," principally affecting aristocratic men, and one linked inextricably to poetic creation.

The Bloodletting Corpus

The positive representation of female bloodletting in my corpus of sonnets is unexpected, given its association with menstruation, medical views on blood in love associated with the male lover, and idealized portrayals of bleeding as exclusive to male characters.⁵³ I am insisting on the aberrant character because it underscores that the motivation to overcome the negative associations of bleeding women had to be powerful. In this case, that motivation was ideological, related to male subjectivity and *limpieza de sangre*. Incorporating female blood into the Petrarchan love lyric took advantage of the status of women's bodies, noble women above all, at the intersection of sexual and racial purity.

The corpus I propose consists of ten poems, full texts of which are available in the Appendix. All the poems share a central incident of bleeding and a repertory of idealizing, lyric tropes and concerns including the erotic portrayal of female bloodletting. All but one are sonnets; all are addressed to a woman who bleeds. Below, I treat at greater length two features of the corpus poems: blood as a central attribute of woman's beauty, that is, the integrating of blood into the *blason* tradition; and how the wound of the beloved affects the poet, specifically how female blood serves in the male poet's self-

⁵³ There is an antecedent tradition of Islamic phlebotomy poetry, occasional verse on *faṣḍ* [bloodletting] in Abbasid poetry from the ninth and tenth centuries. Julia Ashtiany Bray has identified a group of short poems on bloodletting, which formed part of "palace literature." Read as a group, they suggest that the bloodletting of a medieval caliph or sultan was viewed as a ceremonial, social, and literary occasion, a planned court spectacle, complete with well-wishers and entertainment. The public display of royal blood was cause to versify on its qualities: heroic, pure, sweet and good smelling, even possessing magic and curative powers. Some *faṣḍ* verses had the tone of love poetry; most were gifts or accompanied gifts to wish the sultan well. Bray's work on *faṣḍ* suggests that blood became a suitable topic for lyric once shed publicly. On being let, the blood encourages conjecture on its uses as a substance apart from the body that expelled it. The model of reception that the *faṣḍ* poetry implies is also suggestive: poets compose poems on bloodletting in exchange for, to make up for, the let blood, similar to the poet's bid to make up for his beloved's lost blood in Góngora's 1585 sonnet "A una sangría de un pie." He'll need all his poetic skill in order to keep the "remedio" going and compensate for "what the day lost in red blood." The poetic act is to rekindle desire, and the poem proposes itself to the place of his lover's let blood, a kind of literary incorporation.

fashioning.⁵⁴

A few of the poems fit the overall schema but are worthy of note for how they differ and what this underlines about the corpus in total: the first has a female author, Catalina Clara Ramírez de Guzmán, and the second treats a specified occasion of bloodletting by named participants, “En ocasión de auer dado un fluxo de sangre.” Because these are both peripheral examples in the sense that, written by minor poets, they presumably had little circulation in their moment, they provide useful contrasts to the rest, casting new light on dominant trends.

What unifies this corpus, evidently, is the portrayal of female bleeding that structures each of the poems. Some of the texts rely entirely on metaphor, making clear the occasion for the poem only in the title to a *dama* on the occasion of her *sangría*. Others go so far as to comment on the medicinal process, even punning terms like “fuente” and “puntos,” which form part of the technical jargon of phlebotomy. Torres de Villarroel, writing in a satirical vein, introduces doctors, surgeons, lancets, and prescriptions into the scene of the poet’s longing. In his 1752 sonnet to Clori, the poet-lover reports in jealous tones the unfortunate circumstance of her bloodletting at the hands of another, the barber-surgeon.

While many include reference to pricking or injury, the central focus is on the overflowing of blood from the veins, which also serves as the richest source for poetic imagery. “Mas ya que vivas rosas desatadas / han de salir de venas tan lucidas [...],”

⁵⁴ The examples could be grouped into two sub categories as well: poems in which the bleeding is accidental (this includes the best-known) and the majority that depict medicinal bloodletting. Paradoxically, what is most interesting about this distinction is that, in terms of tone and imagery, they are more or less indistinguishable. Taking into consideration the explicit mention of phlebotomy in the majority of poems and the employment of sonnets as gifts on the occasion of a *sangría*, the “accidental” bleeding seems like a poetic cover story.

writes Torres Villarroel (1752 9-10). In some poems, blood bathes the foot, marking surfaces around it like snow: “sobre nieve / claveles deshojó la Aurora en vano” (Góngora 1620 13-14). Ramírez de Guzmán, whose contribution is more than three times the length of the rest, giving her ample opportunity to explore the theme, includes lyric descriptions of the tourniquet and chambray cloth used to staunch the opening at the end of the procedure. More commonly, the denouement of the sonnets (and the treatment itself) was the fainting of the patient, treated in poetry as an erotically-charged pseudo death: “la fingida muerte de un desmayo” (Bocángel 13). Indeed Bocángel titles his sonnet, “A Lisi, desmayada por una sangría,” centering attention on the beloved in a moment of defenseless beauty. Gadea y Oviedo’s poem offers a suggestive setting. Among the most abstracted of the sonnets, it paradoxically includes the names of two ladies at court, Doña Leonar de Sylva and Doña Mariana de la Cerda, who received *sangrías* in the title. Equally singular, the author was a doctor and in his work assumes the role of poet-lover-surgeon.

The bloodletting corpus uniformly presents a Petrarchan dynamics of desire between devoted poet-lover and dismissive lady. The central figure is always the “dama,” often given a classical name (“Clori,” “Belisa,” “Filis,” “Aminta”) and described in the high rhetoric of idealized beauty and heightened emotion. In all but the Ramírez de Guzmán poem, the poet is expressly present as a suffering lover although his attitude towards the bleeding varies. While Góngora worries about what the lost blood may mean, Lope and Quevedo relish vengeance against their cold beloved before realizing that they endure more than she.

The corpus also employs a tropic repertory familiar to Petrarchan lyric that

emphasizes colors, jewels, and flowers. Red in all its chromatic variety is paramount. The sonnets engage a sphere of color referents: vegetable (“rosas,” “claveles”), mineral (“el coral,” “los rubíes,” “granates”), and human (the powerful, “cardenales”). Peraita affirms: “En el orbe de las pasiones, la *sangre* es, gracias a su variedad cromática, un elemento de aristocrática connotación” (173). Shades of purple used to describe her flowing blood have sumptuary associations with the clergy and aristocracy (“tu púrpura líquida” [Quevedo 11]; “púrpura ilustró menos indiano / marfil” [Góngora 1620 12-13]).

Significantly the red of the patient’s blood is repeatedly contrasted with the whiteness of her skin. “Y hace que rojos claveles / produzca un pie de azucenas” (7-8), describes Ramírez de Guzmán, opposing carnation and lily. According to Lope, heaven has been the author of his lover’s bloodletting, assuring that from the wound “nacer corales entre nieve fría” (10). In Quevedo’s sonnet, the poet’s beloved, holding a carnation in her mouth, briefly angered, bites what she thinks is the flower, but instead pierces her lip and bleeds. He contrasts the “blancas perlas” (6) of her teeth with the “clavel” (1, 8, 14) and “rubí” (4) of her bitten lip. Apart from Quevedo’s split lip and Góngora’s pricked finger, the remaining works center on the patient’s skin (or naked foot) and blood. No other attribute of beauty merits mention, suggesting that these alone are sufficient to invoke the perfection of a Petrarchan *dama*.

Bloodletting contributes not simply to the patient’s beauty, but more potently to the poet’s desire. In the context of the corpus, female bleeding increases her attractiveness. “A Aminta” by Quevedo, from a series of intimate, consumately Petrarchan poems in *Parnaso español* (1648), portrays gestures and situations as brief moments of erotic potential and feel like poetry composed for a dressing room.

Quevedo's sonnet establishes an eroticized equivalence between mouth, carnation and let blood, all interchangeable. Here markedly and in the rest of the corpus as well the poet oscillates between pleasure and pain, a tension fundamental to desire. Not only does his lover's unconsciousness make her more available to sexual fantasy, the procedure itself mirrors intercourse from the penetration of female body to the release of liquids to the culmination in an altered state. "Descomedido un desmayo / De su beldad se apodera / Y a fuer de flor más hermosa / Quedó Belisa trapuesta" (Ramírez de Guzmán 25-28). Equally the Ramírez de Guzmán poem provides another interesting counterpoint in this respect. The poetess makes explicit that the *sangría* served as part of beauty regimes because it made the skin paler, "[...] con el pie la salud / asegura su belleza" (3-4). "Pálido ofreces, Lisis, el semblante" (9), Bocángel admires, later comparing her visage in the moment of her fainting to "el cielo pálido." Ramírez de Guzmán also gives lengthier attention to the *desmayo*, not to seeing the *dama* prostrate but fainting itself, the female experience of bloodletting ending in "éxtasis" in her term.

Beauty and Bleeding

The selected poems here treat an unlikely subject in a familiar way. They naturalize female bleeding into the Petrarchan *blason* tradition, which both idealizes and anatomizes the poet's object of affection, focusing on her appearance rather than thought, word, or action. The appropriation of bleeding into the paramount idealizing discourse of female beauty feels so effortless that it has gone mostly unremarked in the anthologized sonnets of Góngora and Quevedo. Peraita attributes the portrayal of bloodletting in lyric

to a premodern sensibility that is foreign only because it is foreign to us. I think there is more at work here. While she is correct that the corpus would not strike an early modern audience as unusual, the eroticized representation of bloodshed is unprecedented. The constellation of love lyric tropes about woman center on her impenetrability, corporeal and by extension emotional. The interior of her body—her blood—has the potential to disrupt the contrast to the injured poet-lover, critical to his subject-creation, and representations of women bleeding automatically bring up the specter of menstruation, which is antithetical to love in medical discourse. Equally, the appearance of the first examples at the end of the sixteenth century and duration through the seventeenth is significant. Both phlebotomy and love lyric had long histories before their crossing-of-paths at the same time as the greater diffusion of *limpieza de sangre*.

Within Petrarchism's economy of signification, the female body has a unique and valued status. As Nancy Vickers and others have articulated, Petrarchism defines its object, the beloved, through the external beauty of her body. Nevertheless, this is not a holistic portrait. She is only represented as a part or parts of a whole—hair, hand, breast, foot, eyes, cheek. Petrarch's "obsessive insistence on the particular" fragments Laura's body and effectively makes her mute and disperse (Vickers *passim*). Petrarchism thus converts the visible totality of the beloved's body into signs, most clearly exemplified in the *blason* form, a catalogue of perfect parts. The fragments in themselves are hard and gem-like in their self-contained perfection, the material correlates to the distant, dismissive woman for whom the poet longs (Freccero 38-39). Vickers attests: "Her textures are those of metals and stones; her image is that of a collection of exquisitely beautiful disassociated objects," notable for their "blondness, whiteness, and sparkle"

(266). Made up of loosely-related, impenetrable parts, the beloved's perfection is not the same as that of a classical body in Bakhtin nor even the perfect vessel described by Vives. Rather, she has been robbed of any unifying subjectivity that would make her impenetrability commendable.

In the socio-historical context of early modern Spain, Petrarchan love discourse offers a suggestive possibility: its dismembering gaze converts the body of its ostensible subject into a legible series of signs. It was just this kind of corporeal transparency that institutions like the Inquisition sought to impose on the Spanish populace in order to differentiate New Christian from Old. Given the growing importance of blood in determining social standing, Petrarchan lyric provides a means to insist on the beauty and, by extension, the purity of the beloved, centered in her blood.

Within the bloodletting corpus, beauty, always predicated on caste, is racialized. If medieval courtly love from which the Petrarchan tradition arises expresses a typified notion of beauty, signified by blond hair, light eyes, and fair skin, in the context of early modernity this conception could be racially inflected. As suggested above, white and red, specifically pale skin and blood, are central to the dynamic of interrelated colors, common to all the corpus. (As discussed, increased pallor or whiteness, caused by blood loss, was one of several desired ends for phlebotomy.) In the first stanza of Góngora's 1585 sonnet, the beloved and her blood tinge both the poet's face and the snow: "Mi rostro tiñes de melancolia, / mientras de rociar tiñes la nieve" (1585 3-4). On one hand, the pink blood stain on snow replaces more conventional praise of the beloved's modest blush on a fair cheek. It points to bloodletting as synonymous with flushing, symbolizing youth and sexual innocence. On the other, Góngora creates a telling analogy between

poet and lover in which the outward effects on her are inward effects on him.

El blanco of her skin like the *azucena* only becomes an attribute of racial purity in combination with the display of aestheticized “pure” blood. The language of female beauty, often associated with chastity, gets conflated with ethnic and moral purity, drawing on the association of beauty with *limpieza* and high birth.⁵⁵ While not always explicit, the coldness and distance of Laura in Petrarch implies sexual purity in addition to unapproachable perfection; the unrequitedness of his desire, the yearning her rejection inspires, speaks to her chastity. This alluring undercurrent of sexual purity is transformed in the bloodletting corpus, centering on the limpid clarity of the *dama*’s blood. The blood portrayed is pure in color and viscosity. The lexicon of purity in addition to discussions of the beauty of blood speak to clarity of lineage, to *pureza de sangre*, as fundamental to the *dama*’s desirability. Lope extols the “rubies puros” of his mistress’s blood (9). In one sonnet, Torres de Villarroel elegizes her blood for being a “pure” copy: “...por su brazo de cristal rebosa / de coral destilado copia pura” (2-4). In another more jocular text, he underscores the importance of its purity in his emphasis on the barber-surgeon’s hygiene, whose scrubbed lip and hands, “el limpio labio / con sus manos lavadas,” seemingly preserve the purity of Clori’s blood.

Lyric Subjects

Petrarchistas like John Freccero, Josette Feral, and Nancy Vickers have argued that the real subject of the Petrarchan lyric is the act of poetic composition, and the real

⁵⁵ “Lindo” is derived from the Latin LEGITIMUS and comes into medieval Spanish to describe children of sanctified marriages, often heirs.

creation is its own author as master poet. The ostensible topic, the poet's beloved, is rather an instrument or an occasion for the poet-lover's own self-fashioning, attained at the price of his subject's voice and autonomy. His pained interiority contrasts the disdainful exterior of his beloved. Thus male poetic subjectivity is constituted through his suffering body as well as his anxious mind, and it is in this first term that blood figures prominently. The female object is instrumentalized to constitute male authority, her physical parts scattered to constitute the whole male.

Criticism of Petrarchan lyric in the past thirty years has investigated its role in self-fashioning (John Freccero), its ostensible female subject (Nancy Vickers, Ann Rosalind Jones, Patricia Parker), and, most recently, its social, political, and imperial dimensions (Roland Greene, Ignacio Navarrete, Leah Middlebrook). All take for a given the significant role of the sonnet in the social creation of its author. The closed form of the poem, its ahistorical subject, and narrow figurative repertory provide a rhetorical model for an eloquent male "I" to articulate his desire and write himself into social being. Dominant medieval genres like epic and romance reify noble and royal castes in general terms. Lyric, which comes to the fore in the early modern period, is more democratic, "a widely adaptable literary technology," according to Greene, that literate men can use to stake out a social place (4).⁵⁶ Courtier poets fashion themselves as lovers rather than warriors, creating themselves through expressing desire, that is, constituting courtier subjectivity through unrequited love.

Lyric is not only a means of self-fashioning but also a codified way of mediating difference, particularly of gender and power (Greene 6), necessarily predicated self-definition on defining a relationship of difference. In early modernity, with the advent of

⁵⁶ See also Middlebrook, *Imperial Lyric*.

empire and the “discovery” of the New World, sameness or difference, incorporation or exclusion, are social and philosophical issues very much at the forefront. As Greene posits in *Unrequited Conquests*, the sonnet creates its authorial subject through signaling difference; his subjectivity is predicated on contradistinction, on divergence from the object of affection described. This is not to say that lyric resolves differences, but rather that poetic self-creation relates “I” to “Other,” defining both. For Petrarch (1304-74) and his early imitators, this relationship is unrequited love for a Laura, a woman who disdains his affection. In the post-Petrarchism of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the category of Other against which one could define oneself expands exponentially as the beloved stands in for any number of non-normative subjects. Greene argues for “the extraordinary vitality of lyric as the carrier of social and political reflections” for just this reason (4).

The final defining characteristic of the bloodletting corpus is the way in which his mistress’s bloodletting affects the poet-lover. In Petrarchan lyric the poet is the one typically wounded, following the dicta of lovesickness, which conceives love as a physical entity that enters the body through a lesion as well as the also unseen injuries received by her rejection. The issue of harm, fundamental to poetic subject-formation as explored above, would seem to confound the bloodletting scenario. A solution is found in many of the sonnets by maintaining that it is the narrative “I” who suffers harm: “no puede explicar bien la herida / de quien muere, en la sangre de quien ama” (Gadea y Oviedo 7-8); “[¿]la sangre es tuya y el dolor es mío?” (Lope 14); “Viva, ¿qué hará?, quien mata cuando muere” (Bocángel 14); “mi rostro tiñes de melancholia, / mientras de rociar tines la nieve” (Góngora 1595 3-4). The hyperbolic self-aggrandizing of claiming

his spiritual wound as greater than any physical pain affirms Petrarchan discourse as principally concerned with male subjectivity. It is significant that the single female poet does not include a like demarcation of self in contrast to her subject Belisa. Although Peraita notes that Ramírez de Guzmán sometimes wrote lyric in other voices, mostly masculine, in her bloodletting poem she does not assume one, but keeps an omniscient point of view that reveals no interest in reflecting on a poetic “I,” distinct from the other poems of the corpus.

In the specific circumstance of early modern Spain, by incorporating female bleeding into the *blason* tradition, the corpus employs the flexible technology of Petrarchan lyric to constitute the male author as both courtier and *cristiano viejo*. Courtly love and its poetry was a marker of both caste and gender in medieval Europe; establishing and maintaining rank was not only a function of success in warfare but also of love, or rather of associating oneself with a woman of higher rank through the discourse of courtly love. With the centralization of monarchies in the early modern period and professionalization of warfare, the nobility staked out a social place at court. Position depended less on battle and more on political skill, family, and what we might call the gentlemanly arts of courtiership. The love lyric reformulated by Petrarch, taking the place of courtly love, was central for creating a name for oneself (Wack xii, 219).

In the bloodletting corpus, the anatomization of the *dama* allows the poet to create a courtier subjectivity not only through contrast but also appropriation as in other forms of Petrarchan discourse. The poet composes himself as the opposite of the dispersed, exteriority of his lady; as present, whole, and unified, a complete speaking subject with meaningful interiority. But his beloved is not just any Other, and it is worthwhile to

consider how poems like these could have operated within an emerging caste-race framework. Both poets and addressees were “of the blood,” but she of higher standing. (This is an aspect of her inaccessibility and desirability, of course.) Through the poetic act that creates a relationship between the two, the poet appropriates—perhaps it is even fair to say incorporates—her standing, that is, he betters his own. Here, through the poetic treatment of female bleeding, that bettered standing is both aristocratic and racial.

Idealizing Bleeding

We began this chapter with my insistence that phlebotomy and women’s blood were unlikely subjects for love lyric, distant from the traditions of idyllic poetry. In closing I would like to present a paradigm for considering idealized bleeding, the French medieval romance, that suggests one way in which *limpieza de sangre* makes social ordering dependent on the female body, as I explore in Chapter Four.

McCracken argues for distinct economies of male versus female bloodshed in medieval courtly romance similar to the distinction I have made between quotidian and holy bleeding. While in other symbolic systems the superiority of the self-contained masculine body is expressed in opposition to the porousness of female bodies à la Bakhtin, in romance male bleeding is a “public act that establishes and maintains social order” (111). In the context of romance, the warrior or knightly class was defined by the right and obligation to shed blood, both committing violence and being wounded in battle. Valorizing public bleeding as masculine and heroic serves as a means to reify social ordering. Male bleeding on the battlefield or in other formalized conflict proves

courage and rights injustice. It is the “basic currency” of fights and quests: “[In] the world organized by battles and the exchange of women between knights, only men bleed” (McCracken 13). To paraphrase McCracken, men’s bleeding realizes things—it seals covenants and saves lives. It is extraordinary, both for what it does—much; how often it happens—once in a lifetime; and consequential—reaching beyond the individual to larger society.

The gendering of bloodshed in romance “enacts a curious reversal” of body values in other symbolic systems (6). The classical-grotesque valuation is reversed in that men bleed while women rarely do. McCracken further argues that the aggrandizing of men’s bleeding depends on the suppression and obfuscation of women’s bleeding, associated with menstruation and childbirth and equally with pollution and contamination:

Women’s blood cannot guarantee justice or mark a covenant. In medieval fiction, only men bleed in ways that have consequence beyond their own bodies, in ways that bring about lasting change and recognition. Women’s blood is linked to the body, and to embodiment; its effects are seen to affect the body, not society [...]. (18)

Female bleeding is not often represented in romance; in this case women’s bodies are often sealed and intact. When McCracken finds the unusual example of women bleeding, its effects are summarily local.

What is interesting in comparing romance and the bloodletting corpus is that women’s bleeding here performs the same function as men’s by establishing forceful male subjectivity. Reversing the negative valence of quotidian, female bleeding, the beloved receives the wound, bleeds, and that blood has social effects.

Public Bleeding

For the court, bloodletting was a regular part of hygienic as well as medicinal practice; it could be a treatment for an illness, but also a way of maintaining health—under a doctor’s supervision, of course. Although little scholarly work has been done on the subject, it is possible that bloodletting took on ceremonial life in early modern courts. According to the *Diccionario de Autoridades*, a *sangría* is not only a bloodletting, but also a gift, “el regalo, que se suele hacer por cortesanía, o amistad a la persona que se sangra.” These could be “joyas, o cosas de gusto al que se ha sangrado.” Carmen Peraita suggests that a poem, addressed to a patient on the occasion of her treatment, could certainly count as a *cosa de gusto* given as a token of well-wishes. While *Autoridades* maintains that the patient was either male or female, the sonnets in question were written exclusively to women, and I have not encountered a single example written to a man. The practice of gift-giving for a medical procedure suggests a communal context as does the bloodletting corpus itself, in particular the Gadea y Oviedo poem which implies a theatrical entertainment in a court setting as backdrop to phlebotomy: “En ocasión de auer dado un fluxo de sangre a la S[eño]ra D[oña] Leonar de Sylva y a la Señora D[oña] Mariana dela Cerda esta[n]do en el Salon viendo representar la comedia intitulada las armas de la hermosura.” Particularly interesting is the complicated occasion for poetry the title suggests, its historical specificity of place, the salon of a palace, and time, during the performance of a *comedia*. The circumstances alluded to in the title suggest a semi-public bloodletting performed in consort and set against the backdrop of a court entertainment. Although traditionally circumscribed and avoided, the space of

bloodletting is explicitly shared and open in “Fluxo de sangre,” and draws attention to the greater visibility of bloodletting in the corpus as a whole.⁵⁷

Through the early modern period, female bleeding was subject to containment in order to hem in its noxious qualities. Hebrew law insists that women be separated from the household and temple during their monthly courses. In the sixth century, Church Father Gregory the Great writes explicitly against prohibitions that kept menstruating women from attending Church, taking Eucharist, even from remaining in the household, suggesting that they were relegated to a space apart, a form of “menstrual exclusion” in anthropological terms. Early modernity harbored residual beliefs about a menstruating woman’s power to corrupt, although strictures were less severe than in classical society. Menstruating women were assigned a place that was private and away from men, public life, and the greater household. They were disallowed from some public functions, and childbirth continued to be an all female affair.

However, the bloodletting sonnets confound the cloistered space of bleeding women, designed to contain its contamination and save men from the disgust that it inspires. While menstruation and childbearing had a confined geography in early modern society, the selected corpus makes female bleeding public, both through articulated representation in poetry and by means of the communal, male-female setting of the

⁵⁷ Given the publication dates of Gadea y Oviedo’s other works, it is plausible that the *comedia* mentioned in the sonnet title was Calderón’s *Las armas de la hermosura*, first performed at court around 1680. The poet adoringly addresses his female subject, acknowledging that she may never concede herself or her beauty to any man. Beauty is conceived of in martial terms through a play on “hermosura” and “armas.” Gadea y Oviedo’s sonnet seems to enter into dialogue with the play’s discussion of the public and private and the gendering of spaces as well as bodily fluids. *Las armas* tells the story of Coriolanus, taken from early Roman history when the city was only one of many powers in the Italic peninsula at the end of the reign of the Tarquin kings. As the title suggests and in contrast to Shakespeare’s version, a principal subject of Calderón’s play is the relationship between women—“la hermosura” of the title—and bloodshed—this time not bloodletting, but the commission of violence. What are the weapons of beauty, the play queries: compassion (tears), seduction (apparel), or violence (swords)? See Calderón, *Las armas de la hermosura*, and Hernández Araico, “El mito de Veturia y Coriolano en Calderón.”

bleeding depicted. The corpus modifies the model of medieval romance so that the bleeding female body can serve as subject-making. That subject is not the female figure put forward, of course, but the masculine poetic voice that articulates her.

Bleeding engages two defining concerns about early modern bodies: integrity and purity. These two qualities are related not only to the complex constellation of meanings of blood, but also to the process of bleeding, of a wound and a fluid traversing body limits, of the interior made external. Just as imbibing blood modifies the condition of blood in the body, so bleeding modifies the blood shed. The bloodletting corpus suggests an unusual attitude towards women's blood. Female bleeding loses enough of its negative associations to take on an erotic charge and becomes an occasion for love lyric, that is, an object of male desire. This reversal of symbolism reflects the coetaneous emergence of blood as a principal discourse of difference. In the poems of the corpus, women's blood is incorporated into the *blason* tradition and becomes yet another weapon of external beauty like pearly white teeth or sapphire-hued eyes. Petrarchan discourse of desire works here as elsewhere to establish the subjectivity of the poet, this time not only as courtier but also as Christian. Thus the female body has a more prominent role in social ordering in the wake of *limpieza de sangre*, signifying that women become an even greater source of anxiety. At the same time, the corpus displays the fragility of feminine corporeality whose pure blood is always at risk, acting to rally the poet-courtier class to defend honor of a new kind, predicated on blood rather than sexual or caste purity.

**CHAPTER 4:
DEADLY PHLEBOTOMY: FEMALE BLEEDING AND MALE SUBJECTIVITY
IN *EL MÉDICO DE SU HONRA***

DON GUTIERRE: A verla en su cuarto, pues,
 quise entrar esta mañana
 (aquí la lengua enmudece,
 aquí el aliento me falta);
 veo de funestra sangre
 teñida toda la cama,
 toda la ropa cubierta,
 y que en ella, ¡ay Dios!, estaba
 Mencía, que se había muerto
 esta noche desangrada.⁵⁸ (2848-57)

In the final scene of Pedro Calderón de la Barca's *El médico de su honra* (c. 1633), King Don Pedro and his guard, following a trail of bloody handprints, find their way to Gutierre's house to discover the dead, exsanguinated body of Gutierre's wife Mencía displayed—blood-soaked clothes and bloodied bed—as a horrifying spectacle. Not only has Gutierre had Mencía killed, he has orchestrated her death scene for onlookers, including the play's audience. In cinematic fashion Gutierre describes his “discovery” of Mencía to the king, as his gaze supposedly moved from bloody scenery to the bloodless corpse of his wife. If we put aside Calderón's rhetorical fondness for antitheses, it is evident that Gutierre makes a point of emphasizing that body and blood have been wholly separated. Only *desangrada* does Mencía regain her *perfección* in Gutierre's eyes—she is chaste in death, cleansed of the stain of suspected adultery, epitomized as tainted blood, that marred her in life: “Mencía a quien adoré / con la vida y con el alma / anoche a un grave accidente / vio su perfección postrada / por dimintirla divina / este accidente humana” (2830-35). Providing this gory tableau as evidence, Gutierre contends that her

⁵⁸ Quotations throughout from D. W. Cruickshank, ed., *El médico de su honra* (1989).

death was the result of an unruly surgeon who, hired to cure Mencía, let too much blood. Both audience and king know this to be a well-evidenced lie.

Ludovico, the barber-surgeon forced to murder Gutierre's innocent wife, has written another, contrasting version of events in bloody handprints that stain the walls and doors of the house. Previously that night, Gutierre kidnapped him, leading him to a room empty save for a bed, a crucifix, and a body, and forcing him on pain of death to bleed the unconscious, unidentified figure before him. Gutierre then takes Ludovico, blindfolded, away from the scene of the crime at knifepoint. But the honest surgeon, surreptitiously, "[...] saqué bañadas / las manos en roja sangre, / y que fui por las paredes / como que quise arrimarme, / manchando todas las puertas, / por si pueden las señales / descubrir la casa," signaling in red handprints the place where Mencía was murdered (2698-04).

In the play's final moments, competing meanings of blood inform *El médico*. This last scene presents two versions of how to read Mencía's spilt blood: as safeguard of Gutierre's honor or indictment of his actions. Royal authority sanctions the former when the king, aware of the crime that has taken place, marries Gutierre to his former lover rather than punishing him. Gutierre stages Mencía's death to purposefully and wholly convert her body into a sign of his own devising that reads in two ways: to the public, her body bespeaks a devoted wife killed by accident; to himself, the king, and knowing parties, an impurity cleansed. His two-faced account wins out in the world of the *comedia*. Nonetheless, the presence of a second version written in bloody handprints reworks the symbolism of impure female blood into an accusation of murder, leaving

interpretation of Mencía's death open for the audience to decide.⁵⁹ The elongated and gruesome execution of the undeserving Mencía put on stage, recorded by Ludovico, and brought to authorities as a misdeed trouble Gutierre's contrived narrative. Even Rey Don Pedro recognizes Mencía's death as disturbing, insisting that her corpse be covered as quickly as it is discovered: "Cubrid ese horror que asombra / ese prodigio que espanta, espectáculo que admira, / símbolo de la desgracia" (2876-79).

Having considered the significance of singular, heroic blood loss earlier in this dissertation, I here turn to medicinal bleeding in order to explore how the relationship between gender and blood affects social health and illness in *El médico de su honra*. By choosing the barber's lancet as the murder weapon and displaying Mencía's blood on stage for both characters and audience to witness, Calderón posits that the honor at stake in this honor play is a question of blood, the female body, and social pathology. He amplifies the tendency among political writers to somatize the socially-condemned like the adulterous wife; by focusing on tainted blood in particular, he alludes to the analogous social pathologizing of the *converso*. Gutierre's brand of vigilantism extends notions of *pureza* to a literalized extreme. Declaring himself "el médico de su honra," he looks after his *honra* personified in Mencía as if he were a physician; his honor, the ill patient; and Mencía's blood *in vivo*, the source of infection. In the play's final scenes as described above, Gutierre applies a medicinal therapy to what he perceives to be a social ill embodied: he purges and purifies his stained honor with his wife's blood.

This chapter elaborates on the view of recent critics that *El médico* looks critically

⁵⁹ The spilled blood of a murder victim able to exact vengeance on the murderer has origins in the Old Testament: Numb 35:31-34; see Gen 4:10-11; 9:6; Deut 19:10; Isa 59:3; Ezek 22:3-4; Ps 106:38. Likewise, in Greek and Roman mythology, the Furies (Erinyes), deities of vengeance, arose from the drops of blood from Uranus's castrated penis to avenge unjust deaths (Burkert 198).

at Gutierre's actions and the king's approval by examining the ambiguous presentation of Mencía's spilled blood. In the final analysis does murder cleanse or stain Gutierre's *honra*? This central interpretive question of the play illuminates not only early modern society's obsessive concern over female sexuality, but also the place of purity systems in how religious distinctions transform into biological difference in early modern Spain, the larger concern of this dissertation.⁶⁰ Calderón's *comedia* gives insight into, on one hand, the standing reliance on female sexuality and reproduction for the maintaining of social order and, on the other, the ways in which *limpieza de sangre* engages the discourse of female sexual purity, underlining the significant role of women in the development of race.

Gutierre and Mencía arrive at the *comedia*'s bloody end only after a descending spiral of suspicion, the misreading of signs, and an obsession with honor turned pathological on the part of Gutierre. *El médico* begins with an accident. Accompanying his half-brother Rey Don Pedro, Prince Enrique falls from his horse in the countryside on the way to Seville and, unconscious, is taken to a neighboring estate to convalesce. There Mencía, his former lover, receives the royal party with trepidation, knowing that her reputation is imperiled by the presence of the Prince in their house without her husband's permission. The jealous Gutierre allows not a whisper of suspicion to stain his reputation. (As we discover, previous to the timeframe of the play, he abandoned another woman, Leonor, because he believed that a suitor other than himself had entered her house and, by proxy, her bed.) To make matters worse, Enrique tries to rekindle their romance, pursuing Mencía in spite of her protests and continuing his flirtation in barely veiled

⁶⁰ A purity system, as will be discussed later in the chapter, is comprised of contingent communal, often religious, notions of dirt and hygiene, the anthropological study of which was inaugurated by Mary Douglas's *Purity and Danger* (1966).

terms before her husband. Enrique even returns at night to surprise her alone in her garden. Despite rejecting the Prince, Mencía chooses to hide the enfant's advances from her husband to limited success.

Although Gutierre never catches Enrique in a compromising situation with Mencía, he grows increasingly distressed over the royal's interest in his wife. He communicates his fears to the king, asking him in coded language to control his brother. When Don Pedro fails to assuage him, his reputation endangered by the suspicion that an adulterous dalliance would be made known, Gutierre takes matters into his own hands. In the play's final scenes, he forces Ludovico to murder his wife by exsanguination, blaming an incompetent bloodletting for her death. Rey Don Pedro, a self-doubting and compromised ruler, is obliged to overlook Gutierre's obvious guilt because he bungled his chance to intervene in advance of the crime.

El médico was first understood as a conventional play that reifies the notion of *honra* (reputation or *fama*) at all costs. Recent critics, however, have explored it as a pointed critique of the discrepancy between public reputation and private behavior. They argue that the work does not condone Gutierre's actions as Rey Pedro does, but rather points out the ambiguity and potential for abuse in the value system that produced them.⁶¹

Historians' discussion of honor as an analogue for blood purity has given rise to a related avenue of *El médico* criticism. In the mid-twentieth century, Albert Sicroff, Américo Castro, and Antonio Domínguez Ortiz articulated and explored the connection

⁶¹ While wife-murderers in other honor plays may be motivated by anachronistic views, I would counter that Gutierre is very much a creature of his time. Gutierre's impetus to kill arises from an established social value taken overboard: a preoccupation with sexual-racial purity.

between honor and *limpieza de sangre* in early modern society.⁶² Their work led literary critics to puzzle over why honor in *comedia*, the most disseminated literary form of the epoch, is almost exclusively put on stage as a question of marital fidelity, eschewing issues of lineage and religion that figure prominently in the broader cultural discussions of the time. Honor has a place in other subgenres of the *comedia*: comedic *galanes* are sensitive to insults to their honor, *doncellas*, frequently at risk of losing theirs; collective and *villano* honor, too, have notable exemplars. Nonetheless, wife-murder comes to be the principal mode for discussing honor in theater according to critics who see in uxoricide drama the stakes at their highest and the honor discourse at its most fraught.

Striking to critics like Malveena McKendrick and Georgina Dopico-Black is the way in which the dramatic representations of honor telescope into generic forms that pertain to women, either adultery in wife-murder plays or virginity in cape and sword plays, while in the world outside the text honor was principally an issue of male subjectivity in which women played a lesser public role.⁶³ As McKendrick points out, the emphasis on women appears counterintuitive. Honor drama, while set against a backdrop of public life, often the court, centers on the private relationship between husband and wife and the domestic sphere. What is depicted is not how *honra*, or reputation, operates

⁶² See Sicroff, *Los estatutos de limpieza de sangre*; Domínguez Ortiz, *La clase social de los conversos en Castilla en la Edad Moderna*; and Castro, *De la edad conflictiva: Crisis de la cultura española en el siglo XVII*.

⁶³ As in the principal English version of the wife-murder motif, *Othello*, the husband condemns the wife of adultery on the basis of false proofs and misleading evidence. But whereas Shakespeare's tragedy ends in the protagonist's recognition of error, Calderón's concludes in a more menacing and less cathartic fashion: Gutierre shows no remorse and the king condones his deed. Iago convinces Othello of Desdemona's betrayal and incites him into a murderous rage so as to obscure the inconsistencies in Iago's imagined narrative of the illicit affair. In contrast, Gutierre murders Mencía on a suspicion—whether he's right or wrong about it is incidental to him. Gutierre, indeed, shares more with Iago than *Othello* in the calculating, monomaniacal narcissism of his actions. At issue in the Spanish wife-murder plays is male subjectivity. Perhaps most uncomfortable to modern sensibilities is that the murderous husband of the so-called honor plays assassinates his wife not in an act of passion but one of cold calculation; Gutierre neither hates Mencía—one could argue that he continues to love her—nor regrets his actions.

in society, but rather how the threat of dishonor affects private life. We hear iterated in the plays that death is preferable to dishonor, but the exact consequences of dishonor are left mainly unexplored. Instead, uxoricide drama portrays the fear of losing social stature and, in more nuanced examples like *El médico*, how that fear corrodes morality.

McKendrick and Dopico-Black, along with John Beusterien and Margaret Greer, propose that the *comedia* does not comment on *honra* (and adultery) per se, but rather its close corollary, *limpieza de sangre* (and threats to bloodline). Castro posits that blood purity was unrepresentable on the early modern stage and thus, given its significance to early modern society, particularly available to literary treatment by proxy.⁶⁴ These literary critics suggest that adultery murder does not reflect a social phenomenon and, along with the popularity of honor plays, this lack of an extratextual reference evidences a displaced discourse.⁶⁵ McKendrick supports an explicit connection between *limpieza* and the honor plays, arguing for what she terms “mimetic transference” between blood purity in society and sexual purity in drama. Indeed the standards of purity, by the time of the play’s composition, suggestively define honor, lineage, and sexual discourses.

A “mujer limpia,” included in lexicographer Sebastián de Covarrubias’s definition of “LIMPIO,” is without stain (*mancha*) or speck (*mota*), that is, without suspicion of promiscuity. The definition traces an evolving association among purity, women, and race:

LIMPIO. Viene del nombre latino, no muy usado, *limpidus*, *da*, *dum*, por cosa

⁶⁴ See note 4.

⁶⁵ Critics have long debated what wife-murder drama suggests about murdering wives in early modern society without coming to consensus. McKendrick in “Mimetic Transference?” provides a common sense rebuttal to those who take theater as evidence of social reality by emphasizing that the law and public opinion were typically on the side of the suspected wife. Nonetheless, laws addressing the adultery of wives appear in Alfonso X’s thirteenth-century *fueros*, affirming death as punishment for the adulteress and her lover. (Adultery on the part of the husband was not a like violation of the marital bond.) (*Siete partidas* título 6, ley 2)

limpia, no tiene suciedad, mancha ni mota ni otra cosa que lo afee o turbe. Mujer limpia, mujer aseada [...] Limpio se dize comúnamente el hombre cristiano viejo, sin raza de moro ni judío. (767)

His designation of “pure” intimates that cleanliness is a quality of a man and a condition of a woman. Masculine purity (or impurity) refers to lineage whereas feminine purity, to behavior. This same standard of unmarked, unmixed purity holds true for ancestry with the advent of *limpieza de sangre*. Honor comes to depend on both wifely chastity and Old Christian ancestry.

In her analysis of literature on wives, *Perfect Wives, Other Women*, Dopico-Black suggests that the expulsion and forced conversion of Jews and Muslims led to attempts to read bodies for signs of impurity, corporeal vestiges of aberrant beliefs, a prosecutorial logic advocated by the Inquisition. Depictions of women, always available to symbolic appropriation, are here as in other instances employed to discuss the religious and ethnic alterity more broadly at issue in Counter Reformation Spain. With regard to Calderón’s play, she suggests, the dynamic between the protagonists rehearses this practice: Mencía acts as the body of the Other that Gutierre, in the role of inquisitor, seeks to interpret for coded heterodoxy and punish, in part to allay suspicion and examination of himself. Dopico-Black points to the ways in which the *comedia* challenges this inquisitorial impetus. Mencía’s body resists attempts to contain it and dictate its signification; the bloody handprints made by the barber undermine Gutierre’s efforts to control the symbolism of her death.

For his part, Beusterien in *An Eye on Race* pays heed exclusively to the material exhibition of blood at the end of the *comedia*, referring to it as a “blood display.” In his account of the emergence of race in early modern Spain through drama, he shows how

the bodily difference of the Jew is made manifest through this exhibition of corrupted blood. Further exploring Dopico-Black's assertions, Beusterien documents representations of bleeding reminiscent of circumcision and Jewish male menstruation invoked to condemn Jews and *conversos*. Calderón's text establishes the female body as correlative to the racialized body precisely through the representation of blood as impure and bleeding as therapy necessary to preserve the greater social whole. Beusterien considers the depiction of bleeding in *El médico* as an illustration of the means by which the hidden Judaism of *conversos* becomes "visible," in his term, and affirms "Jew" as a racial category—corporeal, unwilling, and, in its vestigial form of blood, unrelated to religious belief.

In her forthcoming study on early modern Spanish tragedy, Greer makes the point that, despite the discrepancy between literary and social reality regarding wife-murder, the uxoricide plot is a particularly effective literary structure for the period with social and ideological allusions. She offers a Lacanian explanation for the central conflict of wife-murder *comedia*: domestic abuse as a drama of national identity-formation, a divided subjectivity formed by simultaneously rejecting and incorporating an image of the Other, represented in the form of an adulterous wife (8-10). Greer clarifies that, in the Spanish historio-psychological process of national self-creation through exclusion, the Other must remain interior; Spanishness is predicated on keeping the non-self within but excluded.

McKendrick, Dopico-Black, Beusterien, and Greer offer nuanced understandings of adultery as a means of discussing blood purity's role in early modern subjectivity and society, the latter three acknowledging the paramount importance of blood itself in the

ideological forces explored in Calderón's *comedia*. (Wife-murder does not reflect social reality, but the murder of the "impure," couched as purifying, does.) My reading of Calderón's *comedia* seeks to build on the work of these critics investigating the meeting point of gender and race. I explore *El médico*'s concern with *limpieza* by considering that the connection between sexual and blood purity may be more than analogical, thus teasing out a genealogy for the concept of blood-as-race with origins in female sexuality and changing understandings of male subjectivity. I propose that the relationship between these two forms of corporeal purity is not only mimetic transference in *El médico*, but also that Calderón points to the intersection of the two, the way in which the hierarchy of female sexuality defines the discourse of *limpieza*. Thus the playwright demonstrates, through the exceptional and gruesome presence of blood on-stage in the final scene of *El médico*, that blood purity has become akin to sexual purity by the seventeenth century. The doctrine of *limpieza* establishes a purity system based on female sexuality, making use of the same terms of health, illness, cleanliness, and contamination. Calderón shows the dangers in linking male honor to women via the analogy between *honra* and *limpieza*. Amplifying the relationship between sexual purity, critical to female subjectivity, and blood purity, newly key to male subjectivity in the period of the play's composition, I make a greater claim for Calderón's critical program: he suggests the ways that the doctrine of *limpieza* makes men like women, subject to a standard of corporeal purity that reduces and essentializes them.

Honor and the Marital Body

Honor, at issue in honor plays like *El médico*, is fundamental to social interpellation and normative male subjectivity in early modern Spain.⁶⁶ Gutierre envisions honor as a physical property, making concrete the purity language used to describe it, that is dependent not simply on his wife's honor but more precisely on the "marital body." Given that honor varies according to gender, honor plays explore the point of intersection in which female promiscuity threatens to affect male social standing. The suspicion-of-adultery plot creates dramatic interest because here the categories of male and female virtue overlap. Gutierre's conception of the relationship between honor, husband, and wife is neither simple nor transparent. He understands a husband's *honra* as concretely embodied through his wife. His (or perhaps their) honor is in her—physically—and affected by her, but it is not in her control. This is why Mencía's innocence is irrelevant. Gutierre predicates his notion of honor—and his cure for stained honor—on the marital body, the incorporation of husband and wife into a single entity through marriage. Christianity has long supported the idea of marital unification, particularly in the writings of Saint Paul; however, early modern society turns this metaphysical conceptualization on its head by imagining the sacramental union of man and wife in material terms as an actual body.

Once understood as material, Calderón proposes, "su honra" can be subject to medical intervention—at least to Gutierre's distorted way of thinking. "Diseased," it can

⁶⁶ Studies on Golden Age honor are foundational to the discipline of Hispanic Studies, and the bibliography is extensive. See Taylor, *Honor and Violence in Golden Age Spain*, for an overview of scholarship up to the present, particularly interesting for its inclusion of anthropological theories on honor in Mediterranean societies.

be “cured” corporeally through restorative measures like bloodletting, the prime medicinal therapy of the age. Envisioning male honor as contingent on a dual male-female body paves the way for notions of racialization based on an internal differential: blood.

The first half of the seventeenth century was marked by a heightened cultural obsession with honor; coetaneously, understandings of honor itself were changing. This change is often characterized as a move from *honor* seen as a personal attribute to *honra* understood as a social or relational quality.⁶⁷ Donald Larsen contends that the hysteric pitch of the honor discourse was a reaction to Spanish imperial dominance unraveling and the resulting political, social, and economic insecurity, which lead Spaniards to cling to honor-derived caste status when their national status was threatened. The preponderance of honor as a motif in *comedia* of the period suggests its importance in a less direct fashion. Not surprisingly, this period also marks an upswing in honor, or wife-murder, drama with Calderón as its greatest practitioner.⁶⁸

Concerns about honor are at the forefront for *hidalgos*, but not for royalty or servants. In his pursuit of honor above all, the protagonist takes a reactionary social belief—that dishonor taints his status and marks her body—to its radical extreme: bleeding his wife to death to restore his honor. Not only Gutierre but also Mencía and Leonor show deep concern for honor. Enrique’s entrance into Gutierre’s house is met with Mencía’s immediate fears about her honor that will intensify in the course of the

⁶⁷ Hispanic Studies has long debated the difference between *honor* and *honra*, citing the former as virtue and the latter as the perception of virtue. While a distinction between the two can be made as above, they are often used interchangeably, particularly as the seventeenth century progresses. This is the case in Calderón’s play, which uses the two words in free variation. In this case, both connote relational honor or reputation.

⁶⁸ After a version by Lope of the 1620s, *El médico de su honra*, one of a trinity of wife-murder plays, written early in Calderón’s career, also includes *A secreto agravio secreta venganza* and *El pintor de su deshonra*. His later *El alcalde de Zalamea* confronts similar issues, but with distinct results.

play. In marrying, she explains, she kept her honor but lost love—of the prince whose rank made him an impossible match: “La mano a Gutierre di, / volvió Enrique, y en rigor, / tuve amor, y tengo honor: esto es cuanto sé de mí” (571-74). By the same token, Leonor has a single dramatic purpose: to rectify her honor lost when Gutierre, her betrothed, left her. (Although she makes a point of clarifying that they did not have sexual relations, he had freely entered her house, announcing to the outside world that they had.) Accordingly she asks justice from the king: “de parte de mi honor vengo a pedirlos / con voces que se aregan en suspiros, / con suspiros que en lágrimas se anegan, / justicia” (596-99).

A cultural value in Roman and medieval societies that saw a revival as part of Italian humanism, Renaissance honor corresponded to intrinsic virtue and right behavior of a person, a man. The merits that made up honor were multifold. Joan Lluís Vives makes a tidy summary of the qualities that comprise honor, fundamental to social emplacement: “For many things are required of a man: wisdom, eloquence, knowledge of political affairs, talent, memory, some trade to live by, justice, liberality, magnanimity, and other qualities that it would take a long time to rehearse” (85). Vives limits himself to personal attributes. Other commentators clarify an underlying assumption that he takes for granted: in the early modern, nobility was normally requisite to honor, a regular precondition although exceptions were made. In the normal order of things, *la sangre azul* was synonymous with admirable individual traits.⁶⁹

Significantly, honor helped determine rank in a political system predicated on an assumed correlation between moral rectitude and social position. For this reason honor and nobility were often understood as interchangeable. In concept, the oligarchy ruled out of intrinsic merit as rulers and as Christians. In medieval and early modern legal systems

based on patrilineal descent, status and accompanying property passed from father to son. Honor was a birthright for the aristocracy even if it is one that, in theory, could be lost by dishonorable conduct. Nonetheless, how the internal qualities of a man, his nobility of spirit, passed from parent to child troubles political as well as moral thinkers. Often this debate on the inheritance of ineffables was one of nature versus nurture: is honor taught by familial example, or an inherent and unchanging quality, irrespective of circumstance?

In the traditional definition of honor, the public recognition of virtue was significant, but ancillary to honor itself. However, honor underwent Machiavellian change in seventeenth-century Spain. It was no longer just and right behavior and beliefs, but rather the public recognition of one's just and right behavior and beliefs. The diminished "honor code" was a matter of urgent concern in the period. Moralists objected not to dishonorable behavior, whose existence in society is more or less a given, but rather the diminishment of the concept itself from virtue to the perception of virtue. In the increasingly unstable world of Baroque Spain, reputation became of paramount importance for those whose liminal social status, like the abundant low nobility who risked slipping into the emerging middle classes, made all signs of rank significant. Not only does this change mean that honor was no longer predicated on real thought, action, and beliefs, but it also means that an important element of social position was taken out of the hands of the individual and placed into those of the collective.⁷⁰

Baroque theatrical honor is relational, and much of the dramatic tension of the

⁷⁰ During the seventeenth century, a philosophical, artistic, and literary movement explained and even justified the resignification of the honor code. *Honor/honra* was a prime example of *engaño*, the deception of worldly appearances that required thinking people to discover what artifice was hiding and could itself reveal. This is exemplified in the work of Luis de Góngora and Juan Baltazar Gracián. For more, see Maravall, *La cultura del Barroco*.

plays arises from the struggle to control perception. One of Lope de Vega's wife-murder comedias, *Los comendadores de Córdoba*, offers a characteristic definition of the "honor code" in its cheapened form, articulated by the protagonist Veinticuatro de Toledo, who later in the play will kill his wife, her sister, their lovers, and household staff, to his henchman Rodrigo.⁷¹

Veinticuatro: Sabes que es honra?
 Rodrigo: Sé que es una cosa,
 que no la tiene el hombre.
 Veinticuatro: Bien has dicho.
 Honra es aquella que consiste en otro;
 Ningún hombre es honrado por sí mismo,
 que del otro recibe la honra un hombre [.] (2366-70)

Honra here consists of others' attitudes towards a man that correlate to their respect for his status in the form of public esteem, appropriate manners, and the like. Lope points out the irony in virtue made and bestowed by others. It cannot be possessed nor can it be earned. While *honor* in the older sense involves the will and choice of the individual (although it is not exclusively based on this), *honra* is societal. In its new definition it is out of the individual's control, creating intense anxiety about maintaining position: "Honor [...] is ultimately the property of the community at large and is subject to continuous affirmation or attack" (Sieber 96). Radically precarious, honor—and thus caste status—is always in play. Not only Gutierre but also Leonor and Mencía are portrayed as affected by deep-seated insecurity as a result. What the wife-murder plays get at is the condition that relational honor produces—vigilance approaching paranoia to

⁷¹ Greer explains the historical basis for the play based on a romance on the same theme. Veinticuatro Fernando Alonso of Córdoba massacred his wife, two *comendadores*, and two serving women in 1449. King don Juan II pardoned him, however, on the basis of Fernando Alonso having served Christian forces against the Muslims in Antequera in 1410. This historical example, she points out, was not the norm. (15)

maintain good repute.

Later in the same Lope play, Veinticuatro's interlocutor Rodrigo adds a critical criterion to the formula for honor presented above. Not only does one's *honra* consist of the perception of others, this perception is contingent on one's wife:

Rodrigo: Bien dizes que consiste la honra en otro,
 porque si tu muger no la tuuiera,
 no pudiera quitártela, de suerte,
 que no la tienes tú [...].⁷²

Who determines an individual's reputation is externalized in the collective—society—as is the basis for that reputation—wives. This leaves the normative subject, the male aristocrat, with little power to affect a critical element of his subjectivity, his honor.

Rodrigo makes clear that with the seventeenth-century emphasis on honor as reputation, the wife is integral to masculine honor, mostly through her negative ability to tarnish it.

In contradistinction to a man, a woman's honor is predicated solely on her chastity.⁷³ Vives, continuing the same quotation from above, articulates this single criterion for female honor as distinct from male:

But in a woman, no one requires eloquence or talent or wisdom or professional skills or administration of the republic or justice or generosity; no one asks anything of her but chastity. If that one thing is missing, it is as if all were lacking in a man. In a woman, chastity is the equivalent of all virtues. (85)

Although Vives insists that female corporeal integrity is as much a spiritual as physical quality, it is evident that, for worldly intents and purposes, the latter is more significant.

The partial subjectivity allowed to women as "daughter to" or "wife of" rests definitively

⁷² Greer indicates that in "Romance de los comendadores" by Juan Rulfo, Lope's source for his play, a like sentiment is expressed in farther-reaching terms: "[...] contra el precepto divino, / quedó el masculino sexo / muy sujeto al femenino" (34-37).

⁷³ Not only honor but most cultural roles open to women are determined by sexual and marital status.

on sexual behavior; female honor, in her body. Thus a family's *fama* depends on female virtue, that is, on the condition of the female body as chaste if married or virginal if unmarried. Dopico-Black explains how the honor play is a particular exemplar of how male status relies on female conduct: "[I]n nearly all the honor plays, [male] honor [is] radically dependent on [female] chastity—honor, then, as the site localizable on the wife's body, through which the husband's subjectivity is vulnerable to the wife's will" (16). *El médico* goes a step further to suggest that male honor is subject to more than wifely agency: it is also subject to the conditions of her limited subjectivity, the purity system of good and bad sexual behavior that governs her position. (Like her husband, a wife's honor is determined by the collective, based on public perception regardless of private reality.)

The emerging significance of *limpieza de sangre* as another determinant of social status also brings about changes in conceptions of nobility; new understandings of lineage affect both terms.⁷⁴ The idea of blood as equivalent to lineage (i.e., a familial bloodline) is new to the period, as Gil Anidjar points out, even though genealogy was always a site of distinction between and within societies. David Nirenberg argues that the role of lineage in determining character grows in importance as part of chivalric and aristocratic ideology in the decades following the Trastamaran civil war (1363-69).⁷⁵ Nirenberg asserts that medievals had many ways of thinking about the transmission of cultural characteristics that were not genealogical, but that, once taken in the fifteenth

⁷⁴ It bears repeating Gil Anidjar's thesis that the ideology of *limpieza de sangre* forms part of a large-scale transformation of the body politic as a whole, the invention of a new notion of kinship and a new community—a Christian community based not on belief or practice but on blood ties. Early modern critics of the novel religio-racial paradigm cite its contradiction of the messianic aims of Christianity, the efficacy of baptism, and the ideal of Church unity.

⁷⁵ This fourteenth-century war of succession for control of Castilla was between step-brothers Pedro I, the legitimate heir, and Enrique II, who successfully usurped the throne; both are depicted in Calderón's *comedia* in a time before the crisis.

century, the “genealogical turn” was powerful, in part because it appealed to “common knowledge.” (“Race” 80)

Of particular concern to proponents of blood purity is the danger of marriage and reproduction with *conversos*. Nirenberg cites as exemplar the *Alborayque* (ca. 1455-65), a treatise on moral attributes and cultural practices of the *conversos* told through an anatomy of the Qur’anic beast, part horse, lion, and snake. This sermon against unclassifiable and unnatural mixture created by conversion ends in a sermon against “intermarriage” between two newly defined groups, *cristianos nuevos* and *cristianos viejos*. The text signals out internecine sex as a particular danger. The critique of *conversos* as unholy combinations frequently slips into derogation of Jewish ancestry in general as mixed. The clean lineage of the Old Christian risks corruption through procreation with the intrinsically impure New Christian bloodlines. Alonso de Espina suggests that Jews descended from Adam’s union with animals; others point to his procreation with the demon Lilith to produce the Jewish bloodline. As meaningless as many medievals found the *Alborayque* and related arguments, Nirenberg notes, it nonetheless provides the basis for the *limpieza* doctrine: the view that the reproduction of culture is embedded in the reproduction of the flesh. (“Race” 81)

A second significant change in lineage is the idea that inheritance comes from both mother and father. Medieval Christianity emphasized the father’s alone as the influential legacy, and it was his nobility that determined caste standing. Martínez explores how this shift in early modern thought on descent influences the development of *limpieza*. Offspring necessarily result in a blending of bloodlines.⁷⁶ To this honor-

⁷⁶ Jewish law emphasizes genealogy in establishing Judaism of children, specifically the mother’s Judaism. Paradoxically, fundamentalist Christian ideology adopted a Jewish tradition for anti-Semitic ends.

obsessed age, both husband and wife had forceful potential to corrupt and be subject to corruption. Marriage and procreative sex became sites of danger to larger society, not just an individual family. The adultery of wives previously risked producing bastards recognized as legitimate offspring of the husband, that is, one man's children being taken for another man's children; in part this is a legal issue regarding the distribution of goods and property. With the rising importance of female bloodline in conjunction with fears about genealogical *impureza*, wifely infidelity risks more and on a greater scale: an adulteration of the Christian community that threatens to pollute all.⁷⁷

Within definitions of *nobleza* from the start were questions of inheritance. Given that nobility is predicated on honor, with the advent of *limpieza* "blood" grows to have an integral role in maintaining honor or evidencing dishonor. The debate between granted nobility versus inherited title also helped pave the way for an essentialized, body-centered understanding of nobility as materially "in the blood." Ibero-Christian (later Spanish) aristocracy was established during the Christian Conquest. Land and title were awarded to successful warriors as a means of extending Christian control over formerly Muslim lands. After 1492, the granting of noble titles remained a central mechanism for the monarchy to control the nobility. Selling titles also had become a reliable means to raise funds. Old nobility with acknowledged ties to the Christian Conquest disdained those who purchased their titles rather than won them on the battlefield. Nonetheless, legally-speaking, the distinction disappeared after a set number of generations: "de título" became "de sangre" with time, suggesting the constructedness of the supposedly immutable character of blood.

⁷⁷ Not everyone feared "interbreeding." Those who favored an encompassing integration of *conversos* and *moriscos* into larger Spanish society often promoted intermarriage. See Fuchs, *Exotic Nation*, Chapter 5.

As aristocratic and religious identities began to overlap, blood was central to the collapsing of distance between *nobleza de sangre* and *limpieza de sangre*. In her work tracing *limpieza* from its Old World origins to its part in the New World *sistema de castas*, María Elena Martínez makes the point that blood purity and aristocratic bloodlines, while initially distinct, become intertwined during sixteenth-century Spain to the point that they are sometimes hard to distinguish. *Cristiano viejo* grew as an honorific akin to noble while *cristiano nuevo* along with *converso* and *morisco* took on increasingly negative valence. At the same time, Anidjar explains that different bloodlines came to be seen as having different value. He elaborates: “Part of the mechanism of ‘social disciplining,’ every individual came to see him or herself as part of a bloodline, and to value it with different degrees of worth” (124). The spread of the “blood distinction,” again in Anidjar’s term, during the fifteenth century potentially provided every Old Christian Spaniard with an ill-defined nobility based on pure bloodedness in addition to noble pedigree. (Simultaneously, as mentioned in Chapter One, aristocratic families, often of *converso* ancestry, were obliged to prove their *limpieza* to retain standing.) More so than in other countries of the same period, Spain became a society in which all social levels adopted aristocratic concerns, above all a shared concern for personal honor. New standards of *limpieza* mapped imperfectly onto old hierarchies of caste and reconstituted terms. In this new context, blood was judged according to a two-access matrix of high or low and pure or impure.

In *El médico de su honra*, Calderón suggests the way in which the marital body, centered on the wife, brings together these two discourses of blood and lineage. The Christian sacrament of marriage is the total integration of the couple into a single self, a

kind of imperfect return to the Edenic union when Eve was made from Adam's rib. Significant is the "one flesh" paradigm in Mark 10:9: "This now is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh. Wherefore a man shall leave his father and mother and shall cleave to his wife, and they shall be two in one flesh," sometimes echoed in the marriage liturgy. Saint Paul in particular emphasizes the sacrament as a unification of man and woman, creating a metaphysical body and a single soul. While the Pauline idea of marriage as joining of man and wife gives precedent to the marital body I propose, the materializing impulse of early modern Spain distorts this essentially spiritual notion. Greer, following Dopico-Black, comments on the "insistent literalization of three sacraments" (7), of conceiving of baptism, Eucharist, and marriage as physical as well as spiritual changes of state in early modern Spanish culture as a whole. Likewise Anidjar points to the new model of community in early modern political theology in which the mystical body of the Church that defined the Christian society in Saint Paul was precisely inverted. It underwent a radical transformation to become the visible body of the Christian community.

Stephanie Coontz in her history of marriage describes the marital body, originating in Plato's *Symposium*, as idealized and erotically charged. She also points out that the one-body notion was never the single vision of marriage because it is unsupportable as a social institution; it always and everywhere existed as one of competing paradigms. While the perfect union of two halves making a whole described by the character of Aristophanes would appear to result from profound, obsessive love, the example of Gutierre and Mencía suggest that eros need not be at the heart of the one-

body model, but rather it can serve other purposes like social control.⁷⁸

Returning to Lope's *Comendadores*, the king tells Veinticuatro that marriage has made him and his wife inseparable: "Tu mujer eres tú mismo / uno solo sois los dos, / que así lo ha ordenado Dios" (1910-12). The sacramental joining at God's command has made them the same, a single whole, as reified by the monarch. The king's comment on marriage is meant as a warning, letting Veinticuatro know that her actions do more than affect him—they are his as well.

The protagonists of *El médico* demonstrate their understanding of the character of their marriage as a physical—but not simply sexual—union in the first act. Gutierre asks Mencía for her permission so he may follow Enrique to Seville to welcome the king:

Gutierre: Bellísimo dueño mío,
 ya que vive tan unida
 a dos almas una vida,
 dos vidas a un alberdrío,
 de tu amor y ingenio fío
 hoy, que licencia me des
 para ir a besar los pies
 al Rey mi señor, que viene
 de Castilla [.] (495-503)⁷⁹

His highly refined baroque language plays on pairs that become one to imply the couple's inseparability that results from their recent marriage. The single "vida" composed of unified souls suggests not only a shared existence in the sense of daily living side-by-side, but also the life of the body, of two souls bound in a single body. By detailing the joining of two souls into a single life, two lives into a single home, Gutierre creates an

⁷⁸ Indeed, love was only one of many reasons to marry, until recently ill-advised, difficult, or even taboo. Again, see Coontz, *Marriage*, for a history of marital beliefs and practices.

⁷⁹ Gutierre and Mencía speak to one another in a language of courtship, not marriage, a mix of passion, flirtation, and exaggerated sentiment that seems out of place given the grave tone of their asides and concerns. This kind of out-of-jointness does not bode well for their future happiness. If realism of character were a paramount concern for this literature, we would say they lack maturity; given that it is action and genre driven, their overly sentimental talk bespeaks a problem of genre. It violates literary convention, foretelling ruin.

equivalency between couple, home, and body. He employs a rhetoric of courtly love in which he attends to Mencía with exaggerated devotion. Here he speaks of her ownership of him; later, his imprisonment by and in her. He does so, however, in a way that is slightly off and a touch menacing. Mencía is his “dueño,” his possessor, not his “dueña.” The use of the masculine form of a noun, which normally corresponds to the gender of the referent, inserts an element of ambiguity. As will become apparent, he could be referring to his honor present in Mencía’s body as his real proprietor, the use of “dueño” here giving a clue to his true concern. Regardless, there is a nasty artifice in asking permission, perfunctorily, to take leave from a woman imprisoned in her house.

Gutierre offers a reworking of the terms of their partnership in the same scene, emphasizing again that a bodily connection defines their marriage. He describes his evening in prison without Mencía as a time in which his body and soul were divided, his body in the king’s cage, his soul imprisoned in Mencía:

Gutierre: [...] pues si vivía
 yo sin alma en la prisión,
 por estar en ti, mi bien,
 darme libertad fue bien,
 para que en esta ocasión
 alma y vida con razón
 otra vez se viese unida;
 porque estaba dividida,
 teniendo en prolija calma,
 en una prisión el alma,
 y en otra prisión la vida. (1200-10)

Gutierre alludes to a “cárcel de amor,” a fundamental trope of courtly love in which the beloved holds her lover’s heart prisoner, signaling a duality of body and spirit that are caged in double prisons. While this medieval erotic metaphor is usually based on a

physical prison for the body and a metaphysical prison for the soul (his soul subject to her soul), here the terms are different. He characterizes his homecoming to Mencía as a reunification of heart and mind, a return to wholeness, suggesting that he is not separate from but integral to her physically. For her part, Mencía describes their conjoinedness in terms of shared material effects, defining their relationship to one another by what is external to them bodily and effects them equally:

Mencía: Dicen que dos instrumentos
 conformemente templados,
 por los ecos dilatados
 comunican los acentos:
 tocan el uno, y los vientos
 hiere el otro, sin que allí
 nadie le toque [...] (1211-17)

Notably she goes on to depict the same quality in more menacing tones as husband and wife having a single body doubly open to threat:

Mencía: [...] y en mí
 esta experiencia se viera;
 pues si el golpe allá te hiriera,
 muriera yo desde aquí. (1217-20)

It is she—not he—who bears the mortal results of the blow. It is worth keeping in mind that woman is considered the lesser of the pair, a secondary and derivative creation. Significant to the notion of a marital body, women were associated with inferior corporeality in opposition to superior—and masculine—spirit.

In spite of the sweet nothings whispered to his wife, it becomes obvious in his asides that Gutierre views theirs as an instrumental union in which her body is adjunct to his in material terms. Most significant to this shared body, his honor is incarnated and housed in Mencía. From first mention, honor personified is not just a living entity but a

specific kind of person—an ill patient (or initially someone in danger of falling ill).

Interestingly, it is Mencía who first speaks about *honor* in anthropomorphic and pathological language when she takes action to keep Gutierre from discovering Enrique's presence in his house: "En salud me he de curar. / Ved, honor, cómo he de ser, / porque me he de resolver / a una temeraria acción" (1243-46). Mencía addresses honor embodied, treating it as a regular companion. By hiding Enrique, she stages a pre-emptive cure in her imagining—not prevention exactly but medicine administered to the still healthy. Gutierre likewise will consider his early steps as healing before illness.

Personifying *honra* forwards the progress of Gutierre's plot to kill Mencía. From the time of Enrique's late-night visit to Mencía's garden forward, Gutierre becomes more convinced of his wife's possible infidelity. Simultaneously, he begins addressing his honor openly: "¡Ay honor!, mucho tenemos / que hablar a solas los dos" (1401-2). Unlike his wife in the above, Gutierre travels to reach his honor—it is distinct from himself—whereas Mencía sees it being in close proximity to her. As he continues to speak to *su honra* in asides, he provides a more complete picture of his conception of it as a living entity that exists in his wife and is nourished by her.

Gutierre:	A peligro estáis, honor, no hay hora en vos que no sea crítica; en vuestro sepulcro vivís: puesto que os alienta la mujer, en ella estáis pisando siempre la güesa. (1659-64)
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It is women, not only Mencía, who endanger men's honor; they both nurture and imperil it. As the "prognosis" for his *honra* worsens, Gutierre, assuming the role of doctor, declares: "y así he venido / a visitar mi enfermo [...]" (1873-74).

While in legal terms a wife forms part of her husband's property in the period, in this context her relationship and subjugation to him is more complex. The *comedia* suggests that her material body is her husband's purview, but he is only incidentally and partially in charge of her soul. In the final act when Gutierre discovers Mencía writing to the prince, which he sees as the definitive proof of her infidelity, he leaves her a menacing note: "El amor te adora, el honor te aborrece; y así el uno te mata, y el otro te avisa: dos horas tienes de vida; cristiana eres, salva el alma, que la vida es imposible" (2496-98). He views her as essentially divided, as "alma" and "vida," and has a distinct relationship with her two parts. Honor despises her body while love cherishes her soul. We come to the understanding that the marital body is gendered female, almost synonymous with the wife's body but with a difference. He controls her, and she is his *punto débil* in traditional definitions of seventeenth-century masculine honor. But, going further still, the marital body, centered in Mencía, represents concrete, physical danger to Gutierre. Its precariousness instantiates her ritualized murder. Fatal bloodletting is a medicinal treatment to the marital body itself, a cure in which Mencía's bodily death is incidental; "muere curada," in the phrase of the time. Returning to the second *jornada* when Gutierre speaks to the king about Enrique, he threatens action but assures Rey don Pedro that he will not spill the blood of the enfant but his own: "No os turbéis; con sangre digo / solamente de mi pecho" (2099-2100). "His" heart's blood is, of course, Mencía's. Hers is the body shared; his, invisible.

A literalized marital body is useful in explaining the relationship of husband to the wifely body, transformed into a shared physicality, within the honor system of Baroque Spain because it has greater dimension than the notion of ownership or property.

Mencía's body has extraordinary influence over and importance to Gutierre, not at all the same as a horse or a tapestry. What the marital body also points to is the way in which wives were disaggregated, torn into pieces conceptually in a way that encouraged real violence against them.

“La hermosura y la pureza”: Appropriating Purity

Gutierre: [...] No hay quien pueda
 borrar de tanto esplendor
 la hermosura y la pureza.
 Pero sí, mal digo;
 que al sol una nube negra,
 si no le mancha, le turba,
 si no le eclipsa, le hiel. (1650-56)

As he struggles with his fears of Mencía's possible betrayal, Gutierre vacillates at first insisting that nothing could diminish the beauty and purity of his wife, then recognizing that even this “sun” of womanhood risks being stained, disturbed, eclipsed, frozen. He focuses on “la hermosura y la pureza” of Mencía, creating an equivalence between the terms that gives aesthetic properties to purity. At first mention, he seems to mean that she is “beautiful on the inside,” that is good, kind, of spiritual worth unrelated to appearance. Distinct from this contemporary idea, however, early modernity created a literal equivalence between the inside and the outside of the body, often unrelated to moral decency. *Pureza* as well as *impureza* were unseen but crucial qualities of the female body, correlative to physical beauty—in literary representation, at least—but not necessarily associated with ethical behavior. In patriarchal societies, a woman's purity spoke to her sexual wholeness or impenetrability, employing an age-old purity discourse

that equated pollution with forbidden physical contact.⁸⁰ The purity discourse focused on blood likewise depends on illicit touch, forbidden admixture, and unwilling contamination. Like a *mujer limpia* (reputable woman), an *hombre limpio* lives by his reputation because *pureza*, although a corporeal condition, goes unseen without marking the body in a perceptible fashion, leaving society to read traces, signs, or symptoms.

In early modern Spain, what anthropologists call a “purity discourse” came to classify blood and the lineage of men while it already defined the sexual status of women. Cultural attention to purity expresses fears of combination, of breaching categories, in these cases, “mixing” via sex and miscegenation, both forbidden for the danger they pose to “bloodlines.” In *El médico* Calderón locates the stain of adultery in Mencía’s blood; her alleged promiscuity lessens her in a precise fashion—it pollutes not just her body, but specifically her/their blood. The playwright thus suggests a relationship between *limpieza de sangre* and female sexual behavior as well as articulating the danger that blood purity poses to men. Examining Mencía’s bleeding allows us to explore how the intersection of caste and race plays out on female bodies, suggesting the ways in which the discursive construction of women contributes to the development of *limpieza* from religious to racial distinction through the appropriation of “purity.”

By the time of Calderón’s writing, ways of describing female sexuality and religious ancestry shared a lexicon and a body of imagery: *pureza o impureza*, *limpio o manchado*, *sano o enfermo*, a vocabulary of inclusion and exclusion, praise and condemnation. In her classic anthropological study *Purity and Danger* (1966), Mary Douglas investigates forms of cultural pollution across traditional societies, centering on

⁸⁰ Female beauty regularly connotes virtue (e.g., Sigismunda in *Persiles*) while ugliness corresponds to ignominy (e.g., La Celestina).

prohibited contact. Sexual mores come into play as well as food law and other forms of physical interaction with polluting substances like dead bodies. She argues forcefully for the power of purity language and its tendency to systemize, creating structures of acceptance and segregation centered on the body. Because purity systems mostly concern the life of the body and act to differentiate bodies, the development of a ethno-religious purity discourse—*limpieza de sangre*—marks a significant step in the development of racial ideas.

In purity discourses, impurity is associated with disease that moves beyond the individual to create a greater social risk—the spread of a toxic condition.⁸¹ It is exactly this conception of the danger of impurity that allows Gutierre's concern about honor to transform Mencía's possible adultery into a disease with blood as its source. After the discovery of Enrique's dagger below their marital bed, Gutierre visits the king to warn him in veiled language that his brother's advances towards Mencía will not be tolerated. If they continue, he plans to take action.

Gutierre: [...] así la curo [mi honor]
 con prevención, y procuro
 que ésta la sane primero;
 ...
 a mi honor desahuciara,
 con la sangre le lavara,
 con la tierra le cubriera. (2090-92; 2096-98)

Having already declared himself doctor of his honor, Gutierre employs a therapeutic vocabulary of “curar,” “sanar,” and “prevención.” Importantly, he defines his warning: he will make clean his honor with blood. It is interesting that Gutierre is not threatening a primitive form of justice, that is, shedding the blood of the man who (allegedly) injured

⁸¹ The emergence and diffusion of *limpieza de sangre* was linked to the increasing importance of ontological notions of disease as discussed in Chapter One.

him. After all the bloodshed described will be Mencía's, not the enfant's. Drawing on a purity lexicon, he envisions a bloodletting that will quit the *sangre manchada*. Its removal from the body will restore health—and repute—to the marital body. As we know, Mencía will not survive.

Douglas provides insights into the ways in which notions of dirt and cleanliness define bodily practices of community. “With us pollution is a matter of aesthetics, hygiene or etiquette” (92), she clarifies, but for other societies “pollution is a particular class of danger” (122), associated with physical and moral defilement. Purity and impurity are contingent; they never exist as objective categories with stable properties. Purity involves the maintenance of established categories, pollution their infringement. Dirt, she insists, requires a framework, a purity system, a taxonomy of place that can be contravened in order to exist.

Notions of cleanliness and defilement concern the limits of the body, household, and community, all of which were of special concern to early modern Spain. The safeguarding of a purity system involves “condemn[ing] any object or idea likely to confuse or contradict cherished classifications” (45) and “punish[ing] a symbolic break of that which should be joined or joining of that which should be separate” (140). Among the sources of impurity is the “[p]hysical crossing of the social barrier [which] is treated as dangerous pollution” (172). Adultery is an established polluting behavior; it violates the marital and familial bond. With the acceptance of *limpieza* as a social doctrine, adultery created the possibility of trespassing the community limit as well, inviting impure New Christian blood into Old Christian bloodlines. Adultery links chastity and *limpieza*, sexual and racialized purity. This intense social anxiety that Calderón invokes

in *El médico* concerns not just the author's present but the past, the possibility of unknown "impurities" that threaten to surface.⁸²

Pertinent to the representation of purity in *El médico*, Douglas and Jonathan Klawans speak to the relationship between the body, spirit, ritual, and moral impurity. "Pollution [or ritual impurity] rules, by contrast with moral rules, are unequivocal. They do not depend on intention or a nice balancing of right and duties. The only material question is whether a forbidden contact has taken place or not" (Douglas 162). Thus, for ritual impurity there is not a correlation between will and condition: "Pollution can be committed intentionally, but intention is irrelevant to its effect" (140). Bodily pollution is a condition caused by illicit physical contact, purposeful or not, that often can be resolved through ritual. For example in Judaism, which has a large body of purity law, handling dead bodies and childbirth are both sources of ritual contamination, cleansed through following a set of rules and practices like waiting a certain period before entering holy ground or bathing in a proscribed fashion. Moral transgression, a willed sin that may or may not have a corporeal dimension, is more grave and puts into question a subject's community status. Although the body tends to be subject to ritual impurity and the spirit to moral impurity, the relationship between physical and moral defilement is slippery, and both forms of pollution can be attributed to the body. For *conversos*, these two forms of impurity converged. They suffered a lasting state of moral degradation that was also polluting, physical, and so inheritable. Mencía is analogous to the *converso* in this critical respect; she is morally and ritually condemnable.

⁸² Douglas describes the danger of a wife's adultery in a caste-based patriarchy: "Females are correctly seen as, literally, the entry by which the pure content may be adulterated [...] Through the adultery of a wife impure blood is introduced to the lineage" (156). When paternity determines the inheritance of goods and social position, the female body represents the caste boundary.

Returning to the final scene of the play which opens with Mencía's exsanguinated corpse at center stage, we can now see the significance of the gendering of bleeding. Only Mencía's spilt blood will serve to cleanse Gutierre's honor. While in other wife-murder plays the husband also kills the suspected lover, here Gutierre makes no attempt to pursue the enfant. On one hand, the prince's position makes it impossible for Gutierre to exact revenge; on the other, and more importantly, the death—by bloodletting or otherwise—of Enrique would not serve to purify his honor. The ideological interpretation of the wife in *El médico* focuses on her material corporeality, culminating in the final spectacle of Mencía's bloodless corpse. Gutierre arranges Mencía's death to convert her body into a sign of his own devising. Blood acts as his vehicle for creating his chosen meaning in part because female bleeding carries particular semiotic weight. In light of the cultural preoccupation with hiding the female body, externalized female blood constitutes a trace of a vital but unseen interiority.

Marriage was the dominant early modern metaphor for joining and synonymous with intermingling; it was the point at which "blood" of two families mixes. The larger significance of the marital body was as the ideological conceit in which purity, both sexual and religious, intersects with lineage. Within the frame of the wife-murderer's exaggerated literalization of a known concept of marriage, the gendered bloodletting that ends this drama asks to be interpreted. It speaks in a way that Mencía, alive and intact, could not, suggesting the semiotic role of female bleeding as part of the overall propensity to read female bodies for signs of aberration, as Dopico-Black argues.

The *comedia* implicitly links the three central issues of blood in early modern

Spain—violence, contamination, and lineage. *El médico* sheds light on the way that marriage links *honra* with *limpieza*, showing up the ideological fallacies of the corporealization of honor by taking it to its radical extreme. Through Gutierre, Calderón suggests the ways in which the conflation of key social values of honor and *nobleza* with *limpieza* leads to the corporealization of all three: they all become like purity, essentialized qualities of body rather than spirit. In an age in which growing scientific understanding of bodies made them more transparent and less connected to the divine, this in-corporation of heretofore characteristics of family and of mind paves the way for secular, biologically-based forms of discrimination like race.

In early modern Spanish society where standing was predicated on honor and honor, in part, on female sexual conduct, the threat of adultery was much more than an emotional matter, and the private murder of a philandering wife, as much an act of social preservation as individual revenge. While the fixation with honor-*limpieza* grows, male subjectivity depends ever more intensely on female bodies. The introduction of *limpieza* into the honor question ultimately enfeebles male subjectivity in Calderón's portrayal. He shares the fundamental precariousness of woman's state and, as a result, the constant fear of a perceived slip, whether willed or not. Indeed the crux of the honor problem in seventeenth-century Spain is that complex male subjectivity, based on multi-faceted notion of honor, as Vives describes it, is often reduced to binary, insufficient female subjectivity. As honor becomes more and more associated with *limpieza* and thus more and more a question of bodies and bloodlines, the normative Spanish subject—Old Christian, aristocratic male—loses control over his social well-being, becoming more and more like the precarious role he has set out for women.

Centered on Mencía's body, once wholesome, then tainted, finally purified, the discourse of sexual-racial purity gives life to the medical motif of *El médico de su honra*. Attention to blood purity complicated the already vexed status of female bodies, often seen as a source of corruption and subject to regulation. The *comedia* articulates the central role of women, perpetually subject to purity rules, in the development of *limpieza de sangre*. Growing in prominence, "pure blood" as a racial marker overlaps and complicates quotidian bloodshed, viewed as feminizing and abjectifying. Lineage becomes embodied as blood purity, a corporeal quality like sexual status. Only embodiment allows for a medical solution to Gutierre's dilemma: exsanguination of the marital body (in material terms, Mencía's) to remove the offending blood and purify Gutierre's honor. Calderón's *comedia* gives insight not only into the standing reliance on female sexuality and its reproduction for the maintaining of social order but also to the danger that expanding the purity system poses to men.

EPILOGUE: BLOOD IN AN EMPIRE OF CONVERTS

Looking beyond the imperial center of the Iberian Peninsula at instances of discursive complexity centered on blood in the European Hapsburg Empire as well as the New World suggests that “blood” also figured into colonial themes of race and resistance. My on-going investigations into “other” discourses of blood in relationship, often opposition, to *limpieza de sangre* has encouraged me to extend the geographical and discursive boundaries of this research. The brief case studies that follow, one New World and one Old, identify instances of representational complexity centered on blood and build evidence for specifically colonial effects of the *pureza* discourse.

The first examines the imbibing of blood in culinary practices, religious food law, and ritualized consumption that point to the mutual influence of the American colonies on Spain and vice versa.⁸³ Whether in the form of a religious rite or the ideological food policy that grows up in support of the doctrine of blood purity, consuming blood was, in certain instances, a means of contesting Spain and Spanishness at the margins of the imperial body.

⁸³ Foreign blood also enters the body via transfusion, a phenomenon also worthy of further study. Development of empirical science led to experiments in animal-to-human blood transfusion, beginning in the second half of the seventeenth century, following William Harvey’s discovery of blood circulation.

Transubstantiation and the Conquered

Spanish imperial and religious thought found itself in a double bind with respect to the sacrament of the Eucharist and the recent converts to Christianity that made up much of the population of the new empire in the sixteenth century.⁸⁴ The mandatory baptism of Jewish and Moorish inhabitants of the Iberian Peninsula and the fervent evangelization of the indigenous peoples of the Americas put Catholic doctrine and practice in the fore. The sacrament of the Eucharist was the principal rite that defined the Catholic community according to the Tridentine Reformation, which also affirmed the doctrine of transubstantiation in the face of Protestant disbelief. Taking Eucharist at Mass created a community of practicing believers, all sharing this “prototypical meal.”

Spanish Catholic dogma on the Mass cut both ways, however. On one hand, in the Iberian Peninsula the Eucharist was a crucial practice of belonging to Catholicism in opposition to Islam, Judaism, and Protestantism. On the other, it became a disturbing point of resemblance to Amerindian cannibal cultures that called into question the unstable distinction between theophagy and ritualized anthropophagy. Further, the bread and wine of the Eucharist brought up larger issues of diet and ritual as determinants of group identity, given early modern attempts to put forward “Spanishness” as a cultural system defined in contradistinction to Semitic and, to a lesser degree, Amerindian beliefs and practices.⁸⁵ This research explores the prominence of transubstantiation in Spanish religious discourse, cannibalism in legal discourse, and related Islamic and Jewish dietary prohibitions, to the end of suggesting that consuming blood and its Old World

⁸⁴ This case study elaborates on themes introduced in the second chapter on Cervantes’s *Numancia*.

⁸⁵ See Deborah Root, “Speaking Christian,” and Madera Allan, “Food Fight.”

correlative, wine, becomes a fraught practice in early modern metropolitan symbology, possessing the power to cleanse as well as taint.

Blood and wine rather than bread and body are my focus here. Early modern Christian, Muslim, Amerindian, and Jewish cultures alike appreciated blood's vital link to suffering, birth, and death. All held blood in great respect in no small part because the Old World conceived of physiognomy, for the most part, through the lens of humoral theory. Where the cultures in question diverge, however, was over the issue of incorporation, specifically theophagy, or the eating of a god in effigy. More so than the transubstantiated host of the Eucharist, I contend that it was blood and wine that violated the greater taboo for baptized Jews and Muslims.

Beginning in the late fifteenth century, hotly debated questions arose as to whether compulsory baptism could effectively incorporate former heretics, both Muslims and Jews, into the Christian majority, and what that incorporation might mean. The Holy Office of the Inquisition was given the particular task of guaranteeing orthodoxy. Compelled baptism made all subject to its strictures, but the muscular presence of the *Santo Oficio* in early modern life suggests that, sacramentally-speaking, baptism was no longer enough and that the everyday Eucharist became a crucial proving grounds for conversion. As discussed in Chapter One, Hispanic Christian society was divided on the issue of acceptance and assimilation that Christianizing entailed. New Christians were stigmatized as at best insufficient and at worst dangerous, remaining *judeoconversos* or *moriscos* rather than enjoying fuller incorporation into larger society that their conversion promised.

In the same period, the Council of Trent affirmed that the sacrament of Eucharist was not merely commemorative. Instead, miraculous transubstantiation occurred at the moment of the priest's consecration, or as the consecrated host passed through the believer's throat; the holy foods transformed into the flesh and blood of Christ, both divine and human, although they retained the "accidental form" of food and drink.

Martin Luther mounted a forceful critique of the Catholic Mass, culminating in the Eucharist, which more radical reformers like Zwingli would extend even further. Trent replied by forcefully avowing the body, the embodied connection between God and man through the humanity of Christ and the necessity of the devout to embody His sacrifice through the Eucharist. William Cavanaugh points out that Luther condemned the sacrament in part because of the way in which it was being carried out; the late Medieval Church tended to reserve the Eucharist for priests, who received it in the semi privacy of the sanctuary, and only through them did laymen receive its benefits. Trent sought to reform the practice by assuring that all who have confessed merited the sacrament and that Eucharist may and should be performed at every Mass, re-materializing the connection between Church and community.

Performing the Eucharist could be especially troubling for the newly (or insufficiently) converted. Not only was it a public profession of faith, but its elements were problematic for reasons as much cultural as religious. In early modern Spain, drinking wine, particularly the imbibing of wine as blood during Mass, could mark individuals as genuinely Catholic in the seat of an empire of converts. Sacramental wine in its "accidental form" violated the Halal prohibition against alcohol and the Kashrut prohibition against wine made by gentiles. This is not to suggest that Iberian Muslims

and Jews were never wine drinkers, particularly during the worldly Cordoban Caliphate. Rather the strong ascetic traditions of both religions riled at the aggrandizing of alcohol as the fundamental drink of Christianity and the embodiment of God. The theological wrangling among certain Islamic scholars to justify wine made from dates as an exemption from the prohibition on *khamr*, presumably wine made from grapes, in the Quran evidence the deeply felt conflict within the Muslim tradition. Certainly, *morisco* (and also but less so *converso*) discomfort with wine drinking was intensified by its public, communal context of men and women when it would be more acceptable by men in the privacy of the home. Similarly both the dietary programs of Judaism and Islam evidenced a strong aversion to consuming blood, perhaps most apparent in strictures for meat preparation. Unsurprisingly, both also barred anthropophagia unlike Christianity, which had no such stated prohibition (Jáuregui ““El plato más sabroso”” 205).

In the mandated culture of Catholicism of early modern Spain, customs of all kinds, even those less associated with religious belief per se like language, dress, and cuisine, came under scrutiny and were lauded as orthodox or suppressed as heterodox. This policing of practice was left to the Inquisition. When the *Santo Oficio* arrived in city of town, its first act was to read a statement of the Edicts of Faith publically, a list of illicit beliefs and practices, and allow penitents to confess or witnesses to inform on neighbors and employers. Historian Charles Henry Lea describes the regrettable efficacy of the Edicts: “It rendered every individual an agent of the Inquisition [...and] made every man conscious that his lightest word or act might subject him to prosecution” (Vol. 2 91). Early on, they began as relatively short statements about belief, religious practice, and heresy. In the course of the sixteenth century, however, the Edicts began specifying

in detail condemnable customs, deracinated from belief systems. Many of these had to do with culinary practices and food as part of what Teresa de Castro calls the “Castilian food policy” that aimed to create a defined Spanish food system, to borrow Michael Pollan’s term, in opposition to Iberian Islamic and Jewish food ways. The following edict is from Cuenca, 1624:

[Inform the Santo Oficio if someone] has done or has said or has held any of the heretical ideas against what our Holy Mother Roman Church teaches [...] to wit who have porged or deveined the meat they are preparing to eat, soaking it in water to remove the blood [...] covering the blood with earth [...] or if they bless the table according to Jewish custom, or drink *Caser* wine, or make the *Baraha*, taking the glass of wine in their hands and saying certain words over it, then giving it to each person to sip. Or if they eat meat that has been slaughtered by Jews, or eat their food with them at their tables. (Lea Vol. 3 Book 8)

While sixteenth-century edicts focus on action rather than belief in general terms, the Cuenca Edicts meticulously prescribe how to identify the offending practices. In both cases, less attention is paid to mistaken beliefs—and none to their reform. Madera Allan argues persuasively that the Inquisition came to categorically privilege action over faith, often catching the insufficiently acculturated unawares. This was particularly the case with food as part of an attempt to define by negative example a “community of taste,” in Allan’s term. As to the above, porging meat was and is a central practice of Kosher and Halal butchering. By garroting, hanging, washing, and salting an animal carcass, discussed at length below, butchers rid meat of blood. The Cuenca Edicts also suggest a continuum between wine and blood, reiterated in the Eucharist, in Inquisitorial understanding at the least.

Conversos and *moriscos* were often brought up on charges related to eating and food preparation practices. Indeed, the refusal to eat the meat of a Christian butcher, undercooked (bloody) meat, or dishes made with blood like *morcilla* (blood sausage) was

proof of suspicion, requiring prosecution by the Inquisition. For example, in the Granada decree of 1526, Charles V forbade all slaughtering by *moriscos*, in places where there was an Old Christian butcher. Later Archbishop Ribera issued an edict prohibiting *moriscos* from eating meat that had not been slaughtered by an Old Christian. In 1579, Bishop Gallo of Orihuela reported that the *moriscos* would eat no meat slaughtered by Old Christians, except in a few places, under compulsion by their lords. In one reported incident, there was doubt whether a cow killed at Aspe had been properly slaughtered; the *moriscos* refused to eat it, for which the Murcia tribunal punished a number of them, leading to general legislation forbidding *moriscos* to follow the trade of butchers, or even to kill a fowl for a sick man. (Castro *passim*)

The close scrutiny of heretic food ways under the Inquisition in Spain criminalized the avowal of consuming blood, both materially and symbolically. Conversely, of course, the enthusiastic eating of unpurged meat, dishes made with blood, and most importantly the wine as well as the wafer at Mass was a means of declaring one's Old Christian affiliation and sympathies, as Allan and de Castro have argued. Nonetheless the symbolic imbibing of wine/blood is worthwhile to consider in a transatlantic context with respect to Spain's other conversionary project of the sixteenth century, bearing in mind Fuchs's calls for a study of empires that traces the ways in which colonies influence and transform the imperial center.⁸⁶ The Mass, particularly transubstantiation, in the New World complicates the Counter-Reformation stance on consuming blood in the Old.

In the same epoch as the Edicts of Faith, Castilla-Aragón conquered and colonized broad swaths of the Americas and framed its right to their possession under the banner of

⁸⁶ See "Imperium Studies."

evangelizing pagans. Cannibalism in Spanish America informed and complicated the metropolitan symbology of Eucharistic blood. Practiced by Aztecs and Incas among others, cannibalism proved a crucial mark of alterity as well as barbarity among the colonizing European nations in their justifications for conquest. Within Europe, Spain vigorously defended the literal reenactment of Christ's sacrifice through Mass to distinguish their Catholic nation from the Protestant north; however, the formal similarity between communion and New World cannibalistic rites and the ease with which the sacrament mapped on to the most pagan of practices undermined doctrine with respect to *conversos* and *moriscos* at home.⁸⁷

Though the course of the sixteenth century, blood sacrifices began to occupy a fundamental place in the European imaginary of colonial America. Spanish chroniclers like Blas Valera describe in sensationalized fashion the fierceness, godlessness, and lawlessness that cannibalism connotes to European observers. Along with ritual cannibalism, practiced as a means of revenge on enemies or to participate in a sacrifice to a god, other *cronistas* like Cieza de León and El Inca Garcilaso also portray examples of tribes that go even a step beyond by breeding children as food and deriving pleasure from eating human flesh.

However, while evangelizing priests and colonial administrators grew to better understand anthropophagy in the Spanish colonies as they sought to repress it, Amerindian cannibalism became an ideological problem for Counterreformation Spain because of its formal proximity to communion. Simply put, moralists worried when some Amerindians took up the Eucharist enthusiastically and with ease. Father Diego Durán in

⁸⁷ See Carlos Jáuregui, “‘El plato más sabroso’” and *Canibalía* for a fuller treatment of colonial Church authorities' fears about the resemblance of the Eucharist to Amerindian cannibalism.

Fiestas y ritos cites fundamental fears of false conversion: “muchos dellos [ritos mexicas] frissan tanto con los nuestros, que estan encuvieros con ellos” (71). Likewise they worried about adulteration: “nuestro principal yntento advertirles la mezcla que puede haver á casso de nuestras fiestas con las suyas fingiendo estos celebrar las fiestas de nuestro Dios [...] entremeten y mezclen y celebren loas de sus ydolos” (79). Some rites were so like the Eucharist that their similarity was impossible to sufficiently downplay. José de Acosta in his *Historia natural y moral de las Indias* describes theophagous ceremonies among the Inca of Peru in which priests shared:

[...] unos pequeños bollos de harina de maíz teñida y arrasada con sangre [...] de carneros [...] y daban a cada uno un bocado de aquellos bollos, diciéndoles que aquellos bocados les daban para estuviesen confederados y unidos con el Inga. (360)

He sees evidence of a principle of transubstantiation in this and other like ceremonies; Acosta and many contemporaries explicitly blame Satan for the similarity in form, a “diabolic plagiarism” in Carlos Jáuregui’s term. Jáuregui goes on to explain: “[A]nxiety is not produced by the perception of sameness in alterity (the *Other* has my characteristics), but rather the idea that Mexica traits are hidden below the false appearance of Christianity (the *Other* is hidden in the similarity, in the appearance of having been converted). [...] There is no epistemological space more terrifying than resemblance” (“Cannibalism [...] and Creole Subjects” 81).

Within Europe, Spain vigorously defended the Catholic Reformation. Tridentine reform and the mass conversion of Moors and Jews led to new emphasis on defining and policing religious practice, demanding adherence to a codified, performative form of worship and broadly-conceived-of “Catholic” behavior. In the context of Europe, the privileging of form in Spain served to distinguish Catholics from Protestants, who

believed in interior faithfulness and salvation through faith alone. As the competition for American colonies intensified, however, Catholicism's emphasis on the substantiality of forms and *imitatio* more generally posed difficulty with respect to Amerindian human sacrifice. While colonial apologists insisted that the similarities between Catholic and pagan rites were merely formal, the Catholic Reformation defined itself by stressing the importance of practice and appearance (that is, of form).

With the above understanding, I continue to seek out instances of representational difficulty in which the mirroring of the sacrament in Amerindian cannibalism ambiguated Eucharistic practice in Spain as it coupled Catholicism with the manifestly barbarous and, conversely, the rejection of wine and blood in Judaism and Islam with civility. As the next example also affirms, blood purity and alternate discourses of blood were ideological flashpoints in the dynamic between internal (that is, campaigns against Jews, Muslims, and *conversos*) and external colonization policies of the Spanish empire.

Butcher Shops, Jews, and Genre Paintings

The Black Legend relied on the symbolics of blood and the association of Spain with blood discourses, both in painting Spaniards as racially impure (*de sangre manchada*) and as bloody in the sense of inordinately violent and cruel.⁸⁸ While developed in large part by aspiring colonial powers like England to denigrate a principal rival, the *Leyenda negra* was in the European context available to appropriation as an anti-colonial stance. My second case study explores an example of how the

⁸⁸ To cite one example, the Duque de Alba's brutal crack-down on rebelling Protestants as governor of the Netherlands (1567-73) was referred to as the "Reign of Blood."

representational language of blood and its association with repressive colonial policy was employed in the Spanish Netherlands through genre paintings.

When paintings depicting butchers, butchering, cuts of meat, customers, and the interior of butcher shops first appear in the Seventeen Provinces in the mid-sixteenth century, the themes depicted are not wholly without precedent. The flowering of the pictorial subject and its spread at the margins of the Spanish Hapsburg Empire (the Netherlands and Northern Italy) in the following hundred years, however, suggest both the subject's new immediacy to the art-commissioning public and a relationship to the contested borders of imperial domain. Because of the significance of butchers and butchering practices to "Castilian food policy," used to distinguish Old Christians from recent converts throughout the European Hapsburg Empire, the development of the butcher stall theme outside Iberia, which otherwise closely leads or follows artistic trends of the time, suggests its potential as a kind of anti-colonial motif, or at least one that aims to distinguish itself from imperial iconography.

Northern art approaches the butcher topic in a distinct fashion from the work of Bolognese and Cremonese painters.⁸⁹ The extant paintings that may be considered part of the tradition in question flourish in two short periods during and after the Hapsburg regime in Holland, first in the 1550s and 60s, second in the 1640s and 50s; the two are separated by the beginning of the Eighty Year's War and the declaration of the Dutch Republic of 1581. While the earlier epoch establishes the foundational elements that will remain consistent over the course of a century—the pictorial space, the objects and

⁸⁹ The shorthand version is that the Italians paint the butchers, the Dutch, the meat. A well-known Italian example is Annibale Carracci's "Butcher Shop" (1586).

activities depicted—the later evidences a subtle shift in focus and iconography reflective of new circumstances.

Through a short examination of two paintings, Marten van Cleve's 1566 "Oxen and the Butcher's" (first period) and David Teniers the Younger's 1642 "Interior with Slaughtered Ox" (second), I suggest that a demographic phenomenon influences the development of the butcher shop theme: the diaspora of Jews from Spain and Portugal whose food practices, particularly kosher butchering, mark their new presence in the cities of Amsterdam and Antwerp.⁹⁰

The van Cleve painting of 1566 was completed under Hapsburg rule and before the large-scale immigration of Iberian Sephardim to Holland beginning in the 1590s. It is, other than the novelty of the place represented, a typical genre painting like those most familiar to us in the work of Jan Bruegel and Franz Hals: a scene peopled by low, anonymous types, often in prurient situations with a sometimes thick, sometimes thin overlay of moral condemnation. They are intended for an audience of urban, well-to-do burghers who appreciate the lustiness and drunkenness depicted as well as the implied disapproval.

The central figure, centered on the canvas and dominating the pictorial space, is the butchered ox, splayed and hung up on a rack, its chest cavity spread open by a rod on which hangs a pristine white cloth. Below is a bowl catching the blood as it drips from the corpse, and a small dog. A tub to its left contains the cow's flayed head with an axe, presumably the killing instrument, leaning up against it. In the background to the left are two adult figures, a man gulping down

⁹⁰ Another association between the Netherlands and Northern Italy along with butcher shop painting is an influx of Jews fleeing Spanish persecution in the late sixteenth century.

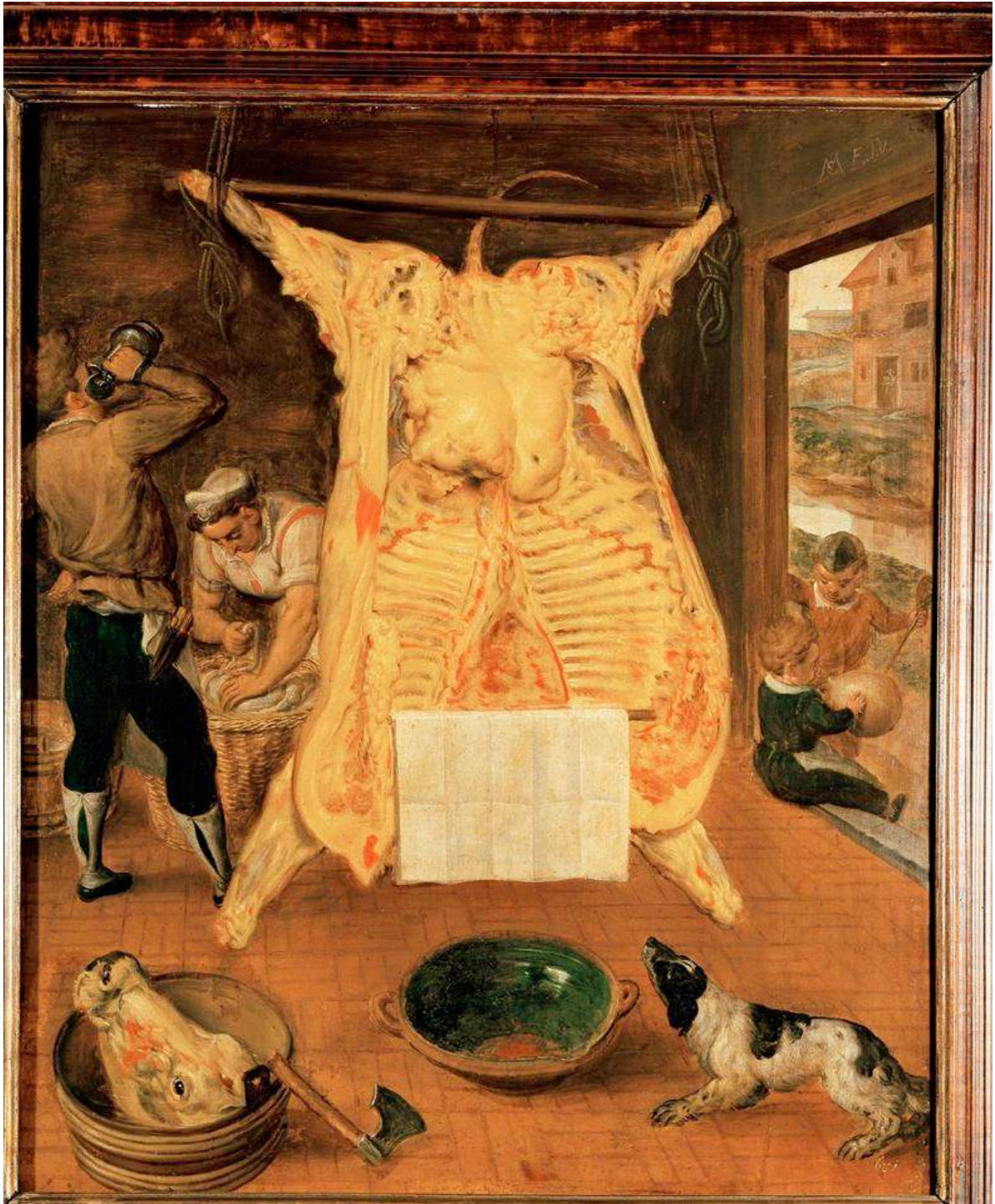


Figure 1. Martin van Cleve, *Oxen and the Butcher's* (1566), Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna

a bottle and a woman kneading sausages in a basket, and to the right through the open door are two children playing with a blown-up bladder, presumably the ox's.

Like other Dutch genre paintings and still lifes, the van Cleve includes a repertory of profane iconography that stems in part from the Northern Renaissance emblematic tradition. Art history has tended to read the objects and gestures of genre paintings—this one included—as symbolic of a litany of sins, and the painting in whole as having a satirical intent of moralizing against the excess, profligacy, and gluttony alluded to in the drinking man, available maid, and playful children. Related, there is a well-explored association between the slaughtered ox and the popular motif of the Prodigal Son. The ox is either taken as a sign of his prodigality before he returns to the fold or, more often, as the fatted calf killed to celebrate his return. In Christian typological reading, the ox serves as a figure of Christ, displayed racked, reminiscent of the crucifixion. In the second case, the pristine white cloth might allude to the veil of Veronica.

The Teniers painting is clearly a repetition of the same scene seen in van Cleve, an interior with a central slaughtered and hung ox, its decapitated head sits to the side, blood pools in a bowl below the body with a dog sipping its contents, and butchers are present. What is new here in the larger schema is the tone: the work is not overtly satirical, but mysterious, even meditative. Also new are the expansion of the interior space, the natural grouping of distinct vignettes, and the activities of the figures. The ox is forefront but not centered, making room for a



Figure 2. David Teniers the Younger, *Interior with Slaughtered Ox* (1642), Museum of Fine Arts, Boston

woman to share the first plane. She is not elbow-deep in sausages, but at work bent over the oxen meat with a knife and the water from the vessel as her side. At a distance, a turbaned male figure in an apron, presumably the owner, and another woman, perhaps a customer, speak in front of a warming pot while another butcher, also in an apron, stands looking outside, mostly shadowed in the doorway.

The development of butcher stall painting can be explained in part by larger ideological and artistic phenomena: the advent of still lifes, centered on the careful and realistic rendering of foodstuffs, and *métier* paintings, which depict the work of the urban artisan classes, in the whole of the Hapsburg reign. Equally, as Simon Schama proposes, representations of an overabundance of food may be attributed to a paradoxical prideful embarrassment at the riches produced by the Dutch mercantile state as it reached its apex. Nonetheless, unlike associated themes, butchering is a fraught political and religious matter under Charles V and Felipe II as they seek to differentiate a Spanish Catholic culture in contradistinction to the Jewish and Muslim faiths and customs widespread in the Iberian Peninsula. Not only are the Seventeen Provinces subject to like Inquisitorial regulations in the mid sixteenth century, intended to ferret out Protestant rather than Jewish acts, this specific issue is brought to the fore with the arrival of Jewish refugees from Spain and Portugal in the 1590s. The Dutch Calvinists have a documented interest in seeing themselves as the new Chosen People; at least initially, this leads to an embrace of the ancient Chosen People, particularly when their presence can be used to motivate anti-Spanish sentiment in the midst of the Eighty Year's War, offering another support to the Black Legend.

Kosher butchering comes under more and more Inquisitorial scrutiny. Jewish dietary law on meat is predicated on doing less harm to the animal, differentiating between the clean and the unclean—species as well as individual animals—and a strong aversion to consuming blood, the sacred essence of the animal. Sephardic cuisine centers on beef as the most prestigious and commonly eaten meat. The kosher butcher or *shohet* strives to minimize suffering of the animal and allow for the greatest exsanguination of its flesh in his killing method. Rather than using an axe, the butcher has a specially designated and very valuable knife, often passed from generation to generation. The neck of the animal is bent back, and the throat cut in one quick motion. The body is then hung facedown as quickly as possible to encourage the blood to drain out. The expelled blood is not collected to be used in puddings or sausages as Christians would do. Rather it is taken outside and covered with earth or ashes until it is no longer visible. Kosher butchering rids the meat of much of its blood, but not all. Therefore, the meat is then porged or deveined, washed several times, and salted to rid it of all red traces. While butchers are normally men, the preparation of the meat (that is, the porging, washing and salting) falls to women. For Jews of the period, dietary laws are universally obeyed at least some of the time. Thus kosher butchers and butcher shops always and everywhere accompany Jewish populations. Because Amsterdam never corralled Jews into a ghetto, kosher butcher shops were peppered throughout the city, and available to a Dutch painter's observation.

Returning to the paintings in light of historical evidence, it is hard to avoid what appears to be an exposition of Christian butchering customs in the earlier van Cleve: the prominent display of the axe, and the suggestion that the collected blood will be use to

make secondary products like the sausages in the basket of the female figure in the back. The later Teniers painting, however, intimates a reimagining of the butcher shop context, not as another site of merry-making but in more evocative and less satirical terms. And the locale even appears Jewish in some aspects. No axe is pictured in threatening proximity to the neck of the animal, only a knife in the hand of the foregrounded woman. Given the small size of the knife and her pose as if at work on a delicate task, she could be deveining and, with the vessels at her side, washing and soaking the oxen meat. Perhaps most striking is the male figure in the secondary plane who appears to be presiding over the shop. His beard and turban indicate at least partially orientalized garb attributed to Jews.

The benign pluralism of the Dutch towards the Jews is often lauded as an exceptional case in Christian Europe. (This was both true and not as true as one would like.) In terms of representational practices, at least some artists shunned the demonizing exaggeration of Jewish figures. Rembrandt and Jan Lievens, younger contemporaries of Teniers, evidence a thoughtful curiosity rather than fear or condemnation about their new Jewish neighbors. Even many ethnographic-style prints of Jewish life—synagogues, rites of circumcision, matzo cooking—take the same tact. Rembrandt famously uses Jewish figures and imagery “to enhance the narrative immediacy of Scripture painting” in Simon Schama’s phrase. Interestingly, he does not restrict himself to Old Testament characters like David, but equally New Testament Jews like St. Matthew and Jesus, who are not—as was custom—overwritten as Northern European and Christian. Throughout the Netherlands as well as the Iberian Peninsula, the Edicts of Faith issued by the Inquisition detail customs that constitute illicit cultural practice, emphasizing foodways as described

above. Not only does Teniers approach his subject similarly to other post-Diaspora painters by incorporating a respectful take on Jewish practice within butcher shop motif, he manages to give his painting an anti-Spanish cast by questioning Spanish cultural policy.

Blood, as an object of critical analysis, is slippery. It is a substance fundamental to human life and western culture, imbued with symbolic significance that moves beyond its physicality, but remains intransigently linked to materiality. Blood as understood in pre-modern Europe was an exceptional, multivalent boundary-crosser because of its connection to birth, death, and Christ as well as health and excretion. In early modernity, bleeding and imbibing blood complicated relationships in Christian society between interior and exterior, pure and polluting, crucial to the defining and maintaining of subjectivity. Blood became a term of difference, separating the children of former Jews and Muslims from the mass of “Old Christian” Spaniards, exactly because of its symbolic weightiness, its multiplicity of meanings in a multitude of contexts. Within three centuries, however, it was eclipsed in racial discourse for this same quality, replaced by a bodily distinction that differentiated visibly and had a less contradictory discursive heritage.

Underlying my organization of this project has been a rudimentary schematic, a three-part division of blood in relation to the body. With this model, I have meant to suggest that *limpieza de sangre* dominated the early modern understanding of blood in the body—unseen but present, vital, contained, and static. It made the interior of bodies incontrovertibly pure or impure. (That the status of blood purity was impossible to

authenticate in practical terms remained a distinct issue.) The mapping of religion and early notions of nationality onto the discourse of blood as lineage produced a means to classify new social groups in a way that conformed to the *estamento* hierarchy. By claiming that their difference was interior and corporeal, “in their blood,” it became a quality that, while invisible, was also absolute—that is, racialized.

At the same time, the exit and entrance of blood from the body permitted modifications in the supposedly immutable character of blood *in vivo*, change that was construed as toxic or healthful. Despite its prominent place in maintaining the dominant social order, blood also offered a site of potential resistance; its fraught, often contradictory symbolism created ambivalences, discursive breaches in the idea of Michel de Certeau, that authors like Cervantes and Calderón employed in creating counter-discourses to race.

Central to the development of the idea of blood purity was the role of gender. Understanding ethnic or religious lineage as coming from both or either parent put women at the core of questions of miscegenation. Female bodies, in particular wifely bodies, had increased significance as the liminal marker of the communal body, be it national or local. At the same time, the discursive framework of sexual purity, applied to women almost exclusively, both helped constitute *limpieza de sangre* and illustrated the danger it posed to male subjectivity.

Up to now I have avoided any discussion of vampires or AIDS, the most easily recognizable associations of blood in present society. In large part this decision was to allow the reader to grasp the many discontinuities between early modern and contemporary interest in blood. Nonetheless, in closing, it strikes me as worthwhile to

point out, speculatively, what past and present views on blood share. The first is not a characteristic so much as a quality; blood remains a subject of intense interest in postmodern life. Blood does not have the same visceral existence in daily life that it did before modern sanitation and contemporary health care, but it continues to be present in figurative language and popular representation. The lexicon of blood, which owes much to Galenism, remains even though biological science has long ago undermined any non-metaphorical referents: “hot-blooded,” “to get one’s blood boiling,” “blood relation,” “blue blood,” “blood and treasure,” and “flesh and blood” are but a few of many idiomatic examples.

A second continuity is the notion that blood is a kind of telling essence. It seems to me that this belief could be traced to *limpieza de sangre*. Contemporary popular culture in the United States often relies on blood as shorthand for truth, powerful and irrefutable. On television the forensic police procedural and hospital drama use the same epistemology in discerning the character of a crime or the pathology of an illness: ignore the participants and test the bodies. Truth will be found in the DNA or the pattern of blood splatter. The messy emotional lives and desire for self dissimulation of the characters can only be resolved when the discerning optic of science turns its gaze on the body, normally the blood.

Although predicated on deterministic elements and subject to flux and modification by personal habit and environment, the Galenic body was not in sum essentialist, but rather characterized by “radical individualism,” in Solomon’s terms. However, the racialized body, emerging in the early modern period, and marked initially by a difference of blood, was distinct in its fixedness and its identification with a group.

No change in language, culture, religion, or personal intent could alter what was—identity as a *viejo* or a *nuevo cristiano*. As we know, “what was” remained difficult to determine, and one’s status was perpetually under suspicion. Perhaps this is the diffused legacy of *limpieza* that comes down to us today: a belief in blood as a kind of fixed point that contains an illusive truth.

APPENDIX

“A una sangría de una dama” (Soneto 125) by Félix Lope de Vega y Carpio

Mano amorosa a quien amor solía
dar el arco y las flechas de su fuego,
porque como era niño, y al fin ciego,
matases tú mejor lo que él no vía.

El cielo ha sido autor de tu sangría
para poner a tu crueldad sosiego,
haciendo su milagro con mi ruego
nacer corales entre nieve fría.

Vierte esa fuente de rubíes puros,
¡oh peña de cristal! con blanda herida,
¿pero cómo podrán al hierro impío

mis tiernos ojos asistir tan duros,
pues vengándome a costa de mi vida,
la sangre es tuya y el dolor es mío?

SOURCE: Lope de Vega. *Rimas: Los docientos sonetos*. Ed. Felipe B. Pedraza Jiménez. Aranjuez, Spain: Ara lovis, 1984.

“A una sangría de un pie” (1595) by Luis de Góngora

Herido el blanco pie del hierro breve,
saludable si agudo, amiga mía,
mi rostro tiñes de melancolía,
mientras de rosicler tiñes la nieve.

Temo (que quien bien ama, temer debe)
el triste fin de la que perdió el día,
en roja sangre y en ponzoña fría
bañado el pie que descuidado mueve.

Temo aquel fin, porque el remedio para,
si no me presta el sonoro Orfeo
con su instrumento dulce su voz clara.

¡Mas ay, que cuando no mi lira, creo
que mil veces mi voz te revocara,
y otras mil te perdiera mi deseo!

SOURCE: Góngora y Argote, Luis de. *Sonetos*. Ed. Biruté Ciplijauskaitė. Madison, WI: Hispanic Seminary of Medieval Studies, 1989.

“De una dama que, quitándose una sortija, se picó con un alfiler” (1620) by Góngora

Prisión del nácar era articulado
(de mi firmeza un émulo luciente)
un diamante, ingeniosamente
en oro también él aprisionado.

Clori, pues, que su dedo apremiado
de metal, aun precioso, no consiente,
gallarda un día, sobre impaciente,
lo redimió del vínculo dorado.

Mas, ay, que insidioso latón breve
en los cristales de su bella mano
sacrílego divina sangre bebe:

púrpura ilustró menos indiano
marfil; invidiosa, sobre nieve
claveles deshojó la Aurora en vano

SOURCE: Góngora y Argote, Luis de. *Sonetos*. Ed. Biruté Cipliauskaitė. Madison, WI: Hispanic Seminary of Medieval Studies, 1989.

“A Lisi, desmayada por una sangría” by Gabriel Bocángel (1603-58)

En vivas ondas de ofendida grana
desata a Lisi procurada herida.
Menos siente la púrpura perdida
que el tener experiencias ya de humana.

Quedó cual rosa que expiró temprana,
tarde avisada de desvanecida,
a quien el viento ejecutó en la vida
aun sin dejarla escarnmentar de vana.

Pálido ofreces, Lisis, el semblante.
Nunca con más razón se tema el rayo
que cuando el cielo pálido se viere.

Contemple amor, por quien estás triunfante
en la fingida muerte de un desmayo.
Viva, ¿qué hará?, quien mata cuando muere.

SOURCE: Bocángel, Gabriel. *Obras completas*. Ed. Trevor J. Dadson. Pamplona: U de Navarra, 2000.

“A Aminta, que teniendo un clavel en la boca, por morderle se mordió los labios, y salió sangre” (1648) by Francisco Quevedo

Bastábale al clavel vencido
del labio en que se vio (cuando, esforzado
con su propia vergüenza, lo encarnado
a tu rubí se vio más parecido),

sin que, en tu boca hermosa, dividido
fuese de blancas perlas granizado,
pues tu enojo, con él equivocado,
el labio por clavel dejó mordido;

si no cuidado de la sangre fuese,
para que, a presumir de tiria grana,
de tu púrpura líquida aprendiese.

Sangre vertió tu boca soberana,
porque, roja victoria, amaneciese
llanto al clavel y risa a la mañana.

SOURCE: Quevedo, Francisco de. *Poesía completa*. Ed. José Manuel Blecua. Madrid: Turner, 1995.

“A una sangría del pie de una dama” by Catalina Clara Ramírez de Guzmán (1618-c. 1670)

Tributo paga en corales
 Belisa es la primavera
 Que con el pie la salud
 Asegura su belleza.
 Milagros obra en las flores
 Pues la materia les trueca
 Y hace que rojos claveles
 Produzca un pie de azucenas.
 Príncipe ya de la sangre
 Le han jurado las mosquetas
 ¡Quién en tanta pequeñez
 Ha visto tanta grandeza!
 Que es Infante Cardenal
 Dicen a voces las señas
 Si por lo pequeño infante,
 Cardenal por la librea.
 Del jardín de la hermosura
 Es fuente de pie su vena
 Y tantas rosas produce
 Con cuantas gotas lo riega.
 Golfo hermoso de rubíes
 Que en inundación sangrienta
 A tanto jazmín con alma
 En rojas ondas anega.
 Descomedido un desmayo
 De su beldad se apodera

Y a fuer de flor más hermosa
 Quedó Belisa traspuesta.
 Cortés, entonces ataja
 El humor rojo la venda
 Siendo de púrpura tanta
 Vigilante carcelera.
 Guarda el cabezal asiste
 A tan noble prisionera
 Y así interesado cobra
 En granates la asistencia.
 Cada nudo en su pie bello
 Es prisión que le atormenta
 Grillo hermoso de Cambray
 Que impide su ligereza.
 Jazmín penitente es
 Que túnica blanca ostenta
 Que devotos alumbrantes
 Pretenden tener la vela.
 De aquel éxtasis penoso
 Que a su vida puso treguas
 Volvió Belisa y volvieron
 A ser rosas las violetas.
 Cirujano con dos puntos
 La herida, el zapato cierra
 Que a haber sido acuchillado
 Debe aquestas experiencias.

SOURCE: Peraita, Carmen. “Catalina Clara Ramírez de Guzmán: ‘A una sangría del pie de una dama.’” *Seis siglos de poesía española escrita por mujeres: Pautas poéticas y revisiones críticas*. Ed. Dolores Romero López et al. Amsterdam: Peter Lang, 2007.

“En ocasión de auer dado un fluxo de sangre a la S[eño]ra D[oña] Leonar de Sylva y a la Señora D[oña] Mariana dela Cerda esta[n]do en el Salon viendo representar la comedia intitula[d]a las armas de la hermosura”⁹¹ (late seventeenth/early eighteenth century) by Sebastián Gadea y Oviedo

Al teatro deidades, que fiel trata
vuestras glorias dais púrpura vertida
no el impropio que el triunfo la despid[a?]
mirando que el trofeo la recata:

Quando des armas la beldad dilata
vuestro aliento del roxo humor [impida?]
que no puede explicarse bien la herida
de quien muere, en la sangre de quien [ama?]

Pero si a nadie la bendida gloria
de emplear vuestras armas se concede
proporcione el objeto la ventura.

La sangre a un tiempo dad y la victoria,
de vuestra hermosura solo puede
[...] despoxo ser vuestra hermosura. (BNE)

SOURCE: Gadea y Oviedo, Sebastián. “En ocasión de auer dado un fluxo de sangre.”
Mss 12955/43. BNE. Madrid.

⁹¹ Certain words in the poem are indecipherable in the BNE *pliego suelto* from which I made this transcription.

“A Filis, que habiéndose alterado al tiempo de bañarse el pie para una sangría, después no sintió la picada y rota la vena deseaba que saliese la sangre” by Diego de Torres Villarroel (1693-1770)

De un tirano sacrílego accidente
yace la hermosa Filis oprimida
y la que quita y da a cualquiera vida
contra su vida los peligros siente.

De grosero Ministro al fin consiente
en su cándido pie punta buida
y aunque el baño la altera, de la herida
desprecios canta generosamente.

La dulce vena rompe agudo acero
y aunque puerta los líquidos corales
tienen, salir resisten de su Esfera.

Desea Filis impaciente el fiero
raudal purpúreo y quiere en inmortales
iras, aún con su sangre ser severa.

SOURCE: Torres Villarroel, Diego de. *Juguets de Thalia. Entretenimientos del numen. Varias poesías*. Alicante, Spain: Biblioteca Virtual Miguel de Cervantes, 2009.

“A Clori, habiéndola mandado sangrar” (1752) by Diego de Torres Villarroel

Yo lo he de ver y permitir que fiero
bañe y toque, mi Clori, poco sabio
a donde no es decente el limpio labio
con sus manos lavadas un Barbero.

Mal haya, amén, el Médico grosero
que receta por bienes un agravio
y mal haya mil veces mi Astrolabio
que no previno tan fatal agüero.

Mas ya que vivas rosas desatadas
han de salir de venas tan lucidas,
haz, Bárbaro, roturas atrevidas.

No fallezcan a un tiempo las dos vidas,
pues a la proporción de las picadas
han de ser en mi pecho las heridas.

SOURCE: Torres Villarroel, Diego de. *Juguets de Thalia. Entretenimientos del numen. Varias poesías*. Alicante, Spain: Biblioteca Virtual Miguel de Cervantes, 2009.

“A una dama a quien recetó un médico la sangría de un brazo por temor de no malpariese” by Torres Villarroel

Una fuente al jardín de tu hermosura
abrió mano violenta, aunque piadosa,
y por su brazo de cristal rebosa
de coral destilado copia pura.

¡Hanme dicho, mi Clori, qué locura!
Que es por hurtarle la humedad dañosa
a un botón, que pendiente de esa rosa
le mendiga el calor a su frescura.

Así vierten las manos atrevidas
los grumos del clavel más sazonados
por dar vida a unas hojas presumidas.

¡O antídoto cruel o juicio errado,
que expones la certeza de mil vidas
por salvar un aliento imaginado.

SOURCE: Torres Villarroel, Diego de. *Juguete de Thalia. Entretenimientos del numen. Varias poesías*. Alicante, Spain: Biblioteca Virtual Miguel de Cervantes, 2009.

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