

4. Flight and Confinement

Female Youth, Agency, and Emotions in Sixteenth-Century New Spain

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Abstract

Based largely on a 1557 Inquisition trial from the kingdom of New Spain, this essay examines the trial of sixteen-year-old María de Ocampo, a member of Guatemala's Spanish elite who accused herself of demonic pact. The case emerges as a complicated blend of demonic fantasy, clandestine romantic entanglement, intimate connections among female youths of varying social status, and flouting of parental authority. Focusing on sexuality and mobility, two of the themes most relevant to the gendered lives of girls and women in early colonial New Spain, this analysis argues that attention to the emotional content of the case – particularly romantic fantasy, anger, and frustration with confinement – reveals both the distinct emotional worlds and the agency of early colonial female youth.

Keywords: colonial Mexico; New Spain; girlhood; demons; emotions; sexuality; spatial confinement; Guatemala; female youth

The intention of the Devil was 'that [I] not marry, because he wanted to take [me] somewhere where [I] would rule and be a lady'.¹ These are the words of sixteen-year-old María de Ocampo – spoken by her and recorded verbatim, as far as we know – and as such a rare artefact of great importance to the

¹ María de Ocampo, Archivo General de la Nación (Mexico), Ramo Inquisición (hereafter AGN, Inquisición), Vol. 35, Exp. 1, ff. 1–385. 1557–1571. 'Que no la casasen por que el la quería llevar a una parte donde ella mandase y fuse señora'. I have altered the pronouns from third person (as the notary recorded them) to first person for clarity. All translations of documents from the AGN are by the author.

history of youth.² This essay is based largely on a close reading of the 1557 Inquisition proceeding in which María, a member of Guatemala's Spanish elite, accused herself of demonic pact. María's case contains hundreds of pages in which the testimony of girls and female youths is recorded. That in itself makes the document noteworthy, since most historical records about children, as Mary Jo Maynes laments, do not record the voices of children themselves.³ For early colonial New Spain, Inquisition documents are one of the few sources in which the voices of children and youth, however mediated by the coercive power of the institution, can be found. In María's dossier we see a world of prepubescent and adolescent girls: girls who sleep and work together, watch each other's movements, talk intimately, and keep secrets from the adults around them, despite intra-household distinctions of class and ethnicity that reproduced those prevalent in the colony at large. The case provides not only unparalleled access to the voices of female youth, but also the opportunity to study female adolescence with particular regard to sexuality and mobility, two of the themes most relevant to the gendered lives of girls and women in early colonial New Spain.

Histories of Girlhood in New Spain

Latin American studies of girls and girlhood have been relatively scarce. In the 1990s, Asunción Lavrin surveyed studies of colonial Latin American childhood, identifying very few works; not much has changed since then. Many studies continue to focus on the family rather than on children per se. And where child-focused studies exist, as Sonya Lipsett-Rivera has pointed out, we know much more about *ideal* children – about how children were supposed to behave – than about real ones.⁴ Moreover, most studies have focused on childhood rather than girlhood or boyhood – though some scholars have limned at least some of the gendered distinctions within the category 'child'.⁵ Jorge Rojas Flores has provided one of the few in-depth studies of colonial Latin American girlhood in his case study using the recollections of a seventeenth-century Peruvian nun.⁶ Studies of Latin American girlhood thus remain rare, and where they do exist they tend

2 Maynes, 'Age as a Category', 117; see also Alexander, 'Can the Girl Guide Speak?', 133.

3 Maynes, 'Age as a Category', 117.

4 Lavrin, 'La niñez'; Lipsett-Rivera, 'Model Children'.

5 See, for example, Premo, *Children of the Father King*.

6 Rojas Flores, 'Ursula'.

to emphasize the modern period.⁷ For example, Kathryn Sloan's 'Defiant Daughters' argues that in the nineteenth century, adolescent girls in Mexico used elopement to escape abusive homes. Sloan traces a new attitude in the 1800s, expressed in law and culture: the new understanding divided childhood into distinct stages, allowing for the expansion of children's rights and, Sloan argues, for the 'discovery' of girlhood.⁸

But where does this leave early modernists in general, and scholars of New Spain in particular? Sources for female youth in the early colonial period are generally scarce. Using recollections of youth written by adult women may provide insights, but in New Spain, such writings are rarer than, for example, in England; and even the many *vidas* and chronicles of early colonial religious women, splendid sources though they are, may contain little or no information about youth. For example, as Electa Arenal and Stacey Schlau point out, Mariana de la Encarnación says nothing in her chronicle about her life and childhood except that she entered a Conceptionist convent at the age of nine. Other, late colonial sources seem richer, as in the *vida* of the Querétaro *capuchina* ('Capuchin nun') Madre María Marcela (born 1759), who recounted her hacienda childhood (including her abuse by her father) in great detail.⁹ Rojas Flores is perhaps the only historian of Spanish America to have effectively mined a *vida* for evidence relating to the lives of elite girls.¹⁰ For the early colonial period, nonetheless, youth seems muted in women's writings, themselves relatively scarce compared to those available for English-speaking lands. And of course, such works are still retrospective, the *recollection* of youth by women often many years distant from it.

Portraits are a valuable source, but of little avail to the historian of early colonial Mexico because they are virtually non-existent; only in the eighteenth century did female portraiture, and family portraiture in general, become widespread. The famous portraits of *monjas coronadas* ('crowned nuns'), often painted to commemorate an adolescent girl's entry into religious life, first appeared in the 1700s; so did (elite) family portraits, including those depicting girls.¹¹ In the absence of portraits, the most common representa-

7 Lavrin, 'La niñez', 41.

8 Sloan, 'Defiant Daughters', 365.

9 As a foundation chronicle, Mariana's text was focused on her adulthood and participation in the Carmelite foundation. An excellent new edition is now available; see Mariana de la Encarnación, *Relación*. See also Arenal and Schlau, *Untold Sisters*. For sexual abuse in late colonial families, see González Reyes, 'Familia y violencia sexual'.

10 Rojas Flores, 'Ursula'.

11 See Brown, 'Portraits and Patrons', 135.

tions of female youth in early to mid-colonial Spanish America were images of the childhood of the Blessed Virgin.¹² These paintings might show us something of the colonial world, as far as dress and décor, but they are idealized images and reflect very little of the emotional world and agency of real girls. The relative scarcity of Latin American studies on female youth and potential sources for the early colonial period makes the case of María de Ocampo even more interesting, not least for what it adds to our knowledge about how girlhood was constructed.

Constructions of and Prescriptions for Female Youth

Early modern Spanish offered varied terms for the phase of female life between infancy and womanhood. The terms '*moza*' and '*niña*' both correspond to the English word 'girl', but describe slightly different phases of life. In early modern Spanish, young girls were (and still are) more likely to be referred to as '*niñas*', adolescents as '*mozas*'. Both could also be *muchachas*, though in practice this word tended to describe older girls.¹³ Thus the varied Spanish vocabulary for girlhood usually connoted something about age. It is worth remembering, however, that youth-linked descriptors were also used to delineate social status; New Spain's convents contained '*niñas*' who might be either girls or adult women, and servants were often described as '*mozas*' well into adulthood. Thus there is little precision in this terminology, except its distance and difference from the term and category 'woman'.

Still, the Spanish world clearly recognized not only the distinct character of childhood, but also a period of transition thereafter. The *Siete Partidas*, the thirteenth-century legal code that formed the basis of law in Spain and its colonies, prohibited trying in court anyone under ten and a half; children above seven, however, were considered to possess reason.¹⁴ This has sometimes been assumed to mean that adulthood commenced after the age of ten – a belief easily disproved by the fact that legal minority continued until the age of 25. A transitional period, roughly corresponding to adolescence, was recognized in a number of ways, including by the two types of legal guardianship under

12 For a careful study of such paintings and their implications in the context of early modern Spain, see Villaseñor Black, 'Paintings of the Education of the Virgin Mary'.

13 In Esteban de Terreros y Pando's eighteenth-century dictionary, for example, '*moza*' is defined as '*muchacha, joven, o donzella*' ('girl, youth, or maiden'), corresponding to the Latin *juvenis*; '*niña*' is defined as '*muchacha*', corresponding to the Latin *puella* or *puellelula*. See Terreros y Pando, *Diccionario castellano*.

14 Premo, 'Minor Offenses', 118; and Lipsett-Rivera, 'Model Children', 55.

Spanish law. These forms of guardianship (tutelage and curatorship) established a distinction between young children (thirteen or younger for boys, eleven or younger for girls) and those between this age and 25. Both rules for prosecution and the form of guardianship for older youth recognized their liminal status as inhabitants of a state between true childhood and full adulthood.¹⁵

For girls, of course, full adulthood was elusive. Mexican girls were prepared for what might be called a life of perpetual minority, trained from an early age for the sole goal of matrimony, which overdetermined conceptions of female adulthood. In the Spanish world, as in other parts of early modern Europe, ideal womanhood was associated with, as the popular adage had it, 'a husband or a wall'. That is, marriage and conventual life were considered the only honourable options for women. But in Spain, and even more in Spanish America, formal entry into religious life was seldom possible for women of middling and lower social status. The vast majority of women were presumed destined for marriage, and it rather than monasticism was seen as the normal path for girls to tread. As Pilar Gonzalbo has written, adulthood was linked with marriage for *both* sexes, since 'the rupture with the parental home came when a man and woman united in matrimony'.¹⁶ But for girls, this break was far more important than for boys, who had other options and multiple markers of adult status. Deborah Kanter has argued that parental duty toward daughters was largely directed toward marrying them off, at which point many parents felt their duty had ended. Richard Boyer, for his part, has noted the 'monotonous' domestic pattern of girlhood training relative to that given to boys: 'girls [were] confined mostly to domestic settings, learning wifely skills such as sewing and cooking, rehearsing female virtues of modesty and subordination, and then marrying'. Boyer finds in women's recitations of their early lives 'a spare and narrow range of choices and opportunities'.¹⁷

Even when schooled, girls were constantly reminded of their destiny; according to Gonzalbo, the girls' curriculum was a weak echo of boys' studies, eschewing numeracy and competence in writing in favour of Christian doctrine and 'womanly' training in sewing, weaving, and embroidery. This tendency to a curriculum based on 'feminine' skills seems only to have strengthened over the colonial period – even depictions of the Virgin's education moved over time from depictions of reading to a focus on handiwork.¹⁸ The uniform future of marriage was presumed to await both non-indigenous

15 See Coolidge, *Guardianship*, 22; Mitchell, 'Growing up Carlos II', 199.

16 Gonzalbo, 'La familia'. Translation by the author.

17 Kanter, *Hijos del Pueblo*, 58–59; Boyer, *Lives of the Bigamists*, 44.

18 Gonzalbo, *Las mujeres*, 129; Villaseñor Black, 'Paintings', 117.

and indigenous girls, girls raised by their parents and those raised by others: all were united in their presumed singular path, despite, ironically, the great number of women in all classes who never married.¹⁹

Though canon law prohibited forced marriage and valorized free consent, the reality of colonial Spanish American marriage was quite different. Despite some regional variations (for example, the Andean practice of *servinacuy* or trial marriage, an indigenous practice at odds with strict parental control), parental selection was common. Throughout the colonial period, parents attempted to arrange suitable matches for their children, culminating in the strengthening of parental control (and concomitant late-colonial lawsuits over 'unsuitable' marriages) enabled by the Pragmatic Sanction of 1776. Both the nature of girls' training and its frequent terminus in an arranged marriage were made clear by Mariana Monroy, testifying in the late seventeenth century before the Holy Office on suspicion of bigamy:

She was raised in the house of her mother because she did not know her father; and she occupied herself in serving her mother, with whom she lived until the age of fourteen, and being this age she married a Spanish man from Spain [...] and she married him to please her mother, because her mother wanted it, but not of her [Mariana's] will.²⁰

Mariana had an obvious reason to emphasize her lack of consent to this marriage, of course, but the themes of parental domination and the inevitability of marriage are clear and believable. Still, youth of all social classes had their own desires. (As we shall see, María de Ocampo was no exception.) However, while clandestine marriages and elopements provided youth the possibility of circumventing parental objections, such strategies were arguably less common – particularly for girls – than compliance with parental wishes.²¹

If girls' futures were more determined by marriage than those of boys, and if parental compulsion was more likely to be exercised on girls, it is also true that the very definition of female adulthood hinged more on sexuality

19 Leavitt-Alcántara, *Alone at the Altar*; Vergara, 'Growing up Indian'.

20 Mariana Monroy, AGN, Inquisición, Vol. 441, Exp. 2, ff. 257–411. 1678; ff. 361–361v. 'Se crió en cassa de la dicha su madre por que no conoció al dicho su padre y se ocupava en servir a su madre con quién vivió asta que tubo catorçe años de edad y siendo desta edad se cassó con un hombre llamado Manuel de Figueroa Español natural de los reynos de españa que unas vezes le decía era de Sevilla y otras de Ayamonte y que se cassó con el por que quiso la dicha su madre y por darle gusto pero no de su voluntad'. See also Boyer, *Lives of the Bigamists*, 43–44.

21 The classic study is Boyer, *Lives of the Bigamists*; see also Gutiérrez, *When Jesus Came*; McCaa, 'Marriageways'; Seed, *To Love, Honor, and Obey*.

and marriage than was the case for males. Indeed, while the border between childhood and womanhood was prolonged and blurred, marriage and sexuality provided the clearest distinction between a girl and a woman. Even a twelve-year-old could be referred to as a woman if she were married. This was true, for example, in the case of María de Figueroa, who appeared before the Inquisition as a thirteen- or fourteen-year-old, and who had been married for the first time while under the canonical age of twelve.²² And even below the age of twelve, sexual activity provided a key marker of female maturity. Sonya Lipsett-Rivera has demonstrated that *malicia* (a term loosely translating to 'sexual awareness') was applied to girls as young as nine, exonerating rapists and eliding the boundary between prepubescent girls' bodies and desires and those of adult women.²³ This was more likely when girls were plebeian, indigenous, or *castas*, demonstrating that the greater mobility and 'freedom' of plebeian girls could be a double-edged sword indeed.²⁴ Bianca Premo, in her study of childhood and patriarchal authority in colonial Lima, has found – perhaps not surprisingly given the foregoing – that prepubescent girls were conscious of their sexual honour just as adult women were.²⁵ A key distinction between female and male youths is thus provided by the central role of sexuality in determining female maturity.

Closely related to sexuality, strictures on mobility were another hallmark of female youth, and another marker of the period between girlhood and womanhood. Confinement and control were, of course, hallmarks of ideal girlhood. Fray Luis de León, in his popular 1583 book *La Perfecta Casada* ('The Perfect Wife'), wrote approvingly that:

When girls are born, the Chinese twist their feet, so that when they become women they will not have them to wander on, and because, to walk in their own houses, those twisted feet are sufficient. As men are for the public, thus the women for enclosure; and, as speaking and going out into the light are for men, thus for them [women] enclosing themselves and covering themselves.²⁶

22 AGN, Inquisición, Vol. 370, Exp. 3. 1630. Del Comissario de Zacatecas con una causa de la Real Justicia contra María de Figueroa española por casada dos veces (From the commissary of Zacatecas, with a judicial accusation against María de Figueroa, Spaniard, for being twice married).

23 Lipsett-Rivera, 'Intersection of Rape and Marriage'.

24 Lipsett-Rivera, *Gender and the Negotiation of Daily Life*, 163 and *passim*. Note that *castas* were people of mixed race and African descent – those who were neither 'Spanish' nor indigenous.

25 Premo, *Children of the Father King*, 127.

26 Luis de León, *La perfecta casada*, 241. 'Los chinos, en nasciendo, les tuercen a las niñas los pies, por que quando sean mujeres no los tengan para salir fuera, y porque, para andar en su

As Fray Luis's reference to 'wandering' suggests, spatial confinement was central to the definition of woman, wifely duty, and the prevention of feminine sexual misconduct; and, according to the friar's influential text, it was never too early to start. Clearly, at the very least, girls in early colonial Mexico were not simply 'children', with concomitant implications of free movement. As Lipsett-Rivera and Premo have made clear, girls throughout Spanish America were expected to (and did) consider their modesty and sexual propriety; ideally, they would also comport themselves accordingly. At play, it seems clear that girls were monitored more closely than boys; one Portuguese advice book even went so far as to suggest that girls should never play outside after weaning!²⁷

On the other hand, these rules were highly variable according to social location. It is certainly clear that plebeian and rural girls enjoyed more mobility and less protection than did elite, urban girls. For example, the *vida* of the late-colonial mystic María de San José describes how as a girl she escaped the noise and bustle of her family life by retiring to a hut she had built outdoors (though still within the garden of her family's hacienda).²⁸ Girls who lived outside their parental households as servants or fosterlings might be ostensibly enclosed, but might also be vulnerable to sexual exploitation from male members of the household. As this suggests, one should not overstate plebeian liberty. The ideal of female enclosure, however difficult to achieve for non-elite girls, seems to have operated to some extent in all classes. Even in the most remote places and among plebeians, girls experienced much more constraint than did boys. María de Figueroa, the twice-married young girl discussed above, was clearly not a member of the elite, but she was nonetheless passed from paternal supervision to husband and back to her father's house before imploring a young mulatto man to spirit her away – which he did.²⁹

Still, there is little evidence that girls were subject to the full expectations placed on adult women. There is also anecdotal evidence that to some degree children were exempted from the rules of decency that applied to adults. For example, in the 1598 case of Marina de San Miguel, Marina

casa, aquellos torcidos les bastan. Como son los hombres para lo público, así las mujeres para el encerramiento; y como es de los hombres el hablar y el salir a luz, así dellas el encerrarse y encubrirse'. Translation by the author. This book, written as a guide to marriage for Fray Luis de León's niece, was in large part a defence of women and their proper roles; highly successful, it appeared in multiple editions in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

27 Sá, 'Up and Out', 24.

28 See Arenal and Schlau, *Untold Sisters*, 381.

29 AGN, Inquisición, Vol. 370, Exp. 3. 1630.

attempted to excuse her sexual behaviour by comparing it to the blameless sexual play of children. The claim failed to exonerate the adult Marina, but points to a shared conception of youths' limited culpability.³⁰ Finally, despite the persistent belief that premodern children were subjected to extreme rigidity and discipline, there is evidence that girls were at least sometimes indulged precisely to avoid emotional states judged dangerous to their health. For example, Rojas Flores describes the indulgent treatment Úrsula, the seventeenth-century Peruvian nun he studies, received from her grandmother. Úrsula wrote that 'everything had to be as I wished and nothing was not to my liking so that I would not become sad and become more ill'.³¹ In a period of high child mortality, parents wanted happy children because they were presumed to be healthier, and this may have led to relaxing behavioural strictures in at least some cases. In sum, though there is no reason to conclude that early colonial girls were considered 'mini-adults', sexual threat and propriety were presumed to apply to girls, with corresponding constraints on the movement and play of female youth that increased with age.

The Case of María de Ocampo: Girls' Emotions, Girls' Agency

The case of María de Ocampo, though exceptionally lengthy, is in some ways typical of the activities of the Spanish American Inquisitions, which by the second half of the 1500s had already begun to take a Tridentine form: that is, they focused on policing quotidian sinful behaviours and beliefs while only occasionally acting against 'heretical depravity and apostasy' (*heretica pravedad y apostasía*). The American Inquisitions faced a formidable if not impossible task: policing a diverse colonial population inhabiting a massive territory, the great majority of whose residents (that is, indigenous people) were exempt from the authority of the Holy Office. As a female penitent, María was far from a rarity, since females formed a substantial minority of those processed by the Inquisition throughout the colonial period.³²

When María denounced herself before Bishop of Guatemala Don Francisco Marroquín in September 1557, she revealed that fourteen months prior – that is, at the age of fifteen – she had first made contact with the Devil.³³

30 See Holler, 'More Sins'.

31 Quoted in Rojas Flores, 'Úrsula', 114.

32 For discussion, see Holler, 'Holy Office'.

33 Because María's case occurred before the Holy Office of New Spain was formally implanted (in 1571), it took place under episcopal jurisdiction. Dominican Tomás de Cárdenas acted as

However, her self-denunciation emerged in the midst of swirling rumours that linked her to Francisco del Valle Marroquín, who was suspected of seducing her using spells. The case suggests that María had no choice but to come forward, and that her primary strategy (if such can be discerned) was to protect her very human lover by constant reference to the Devil. Indeed, frequent glosses throughout the dossier suggest that Valle Marroquín was the primary target of the Holy Office's interest (and would remain so in years to come, when he and María would again come to the attention of the Holy Office). As his name suggests, Francisco was related to the Bishop; he is described by Robinson Herrera as 'one of Santiago's shadiest but most upwardly mobile professionals'.³⁴ Still, there is no reason to believe that the Devil was merely a stratagem introduced by María in her testimony. Other girls testified to many conversations with María in which diabolical activities and influences were referenced, and at least one girl claimed also to have experienced direct contact with the Devil.

Over her many months of detention (in a private home) and confession, María's testimony about the Devil's activities was recanted and reinvented repeatedly; she was examined by a midwife to ascertain her virginity (she passed); some of the girls who testified in her case were subjected to whippings by their guardians when they were suspected of lying; and eventually, almost in sheer exhaustion, the case concluded with María's sentencing to public penitence at Mass and the wearing of a *sanbenito* (a penitential garment used by the Inquisition) over her clothing for a period of four years.³⁵ The case emerges, in its hundreds of pages, as a complicated blend of demonic fantasy, clandestine romantic entanglement, intimate connections among girls of varying social status, and flouting of parental authority: a blend in which María's emotions are manifest.

In her first confession, María made clear that her emotions, gender, and youth were relevant to her behaviour, stating that 'with anger and sadness and passion and as a youth' (*con enojo y tristeza y passion y como moça*) she had one day offered herself to the Devil.³⁶ Clearly, María thought her youth and feelings significant. Women characteristically referred to themselves as 'weak women' or 'sinners' when expressing contrition or begging for

Inquisitor, and was present at María's self-denunciation. For Cárdenas's activities as theological advisor (*calificador*), see Nesvig, *Ideology and Inquisition*, 113.

34 Herrera, *Natives, Europeans, and Africans*, 211, n. 68. He nonetheless enjoyed a long and successful career in the Audiencia of Guatemala.

35 Her relationship with Valle Marroquín continued, however, and would see her involved with the Holy Office again almost 20 years later.

36 María de Ocampo, AGN, Inquisición, Vol. 35, Exp. 1, f. 5.

clemency. That María used the term '*moza*' to explain her actions points to a generalized belief that youth aligned with lesser culpability and, perhaps, heightened and less controlled emotion; adolescent girls in particular were judged vulnerable to melancholy, green sickness, and other disorders related to the retention of the menstruum.

The emotions of female youth were generated and expressed within a context of rules and regulations laid down by powerful elders; but girls also existed within their *own* emotional community,³⁷ in which they could and did express emotions judged illicit elsewhere: mockery of and anger toward parental authority, romantic desire and excitement, and intimate secrecy. In their emotional displays, female youth are revealed as agents inhabiting a world both inside and outside the category of 'women'.

One of the most striking emotions evident in María's confessions is her frustration with confinement, coupled with an impatient desire for mobility. The testimony in María's dossier cannot fail but make one attentive to the spaces of female youth, particularly as linked to social status. She referred almost obsessively to her house as her father's; more significantly, the dossier produces a claustrophobic sense of the house as the stage on which María's life was lived. María is framed and enclosed by the house in every bit of testimony. Witness after witness refers to María standing at a window, or standing by one of the many doorways that linked the dwelling either to the outside world (*la calle*) or to the more open and accessible (yet still walled) spaces around the house, such as the orchard and garden.

María's 'framing' within the windows and doorways of her father's house is an apt metaphor for the patriarchal surveillance that 'framed' her life as an elite girl. María's containment allowed not just her father, but all of the girls and women of the house, to observe her activities. This was made clear in one meeting described by María. She said that the Devil came to the door of the hall in her father's house and asked her to open the door, telling her that he wanted to take her 'someplace very nice' (*a una parte que hera muy buena*). As soon as she had sent him away, however, her mother and 'the [servant] girls' (*las muchachas*) entered the room. In the case,

37 Because of the important work of Barbara Rosenwein, we know that within the same temporal and spatial context (sixteenth-century New Spain, for example) there might exist multiple 'emotional communities', groups with different 'fundamental assumptions, values, goals, feeling rules, and accepted modes of expression'. So in a very loose sense early colonial New Spain might be said to constitute an emotional community; more precisely, however, we might discern multiple emotional communities, including the world of children and the further separated world of female youth. See Rosenwein, *Emotional Communities*, 24. For further discussion, see Holler, 'Of Sadness and Joy'.

solitude is rare, even in María's own bedroom, where she shared a bed with other girls. If solitude was hard to find, doors, windows, gates, and keys are omnipresent in the dossier – as are María's efforts to combat them. María's father was clearly the particular agent of containment, and his business trips to Central America were María's opportunity to sneak into the garden at night while her mother slept, or – as one girl reported – to tell her mother that she had diarrhoea so she could repeatedly slip outside to chat with a male visitor.

As the foregoing suggests, the wish to flee resonates throughout the dossier. Perhaps unsurprisingly given her enclosure, María's descriptions (fantasies?) of the Devil's activities involved both literal and metaphorical flight from the paternal home. For example, she described how the Devil first appeared after she offered herself to him, significantly by angrily expressing the desire that he should take her out of her father's house. She also detailed discussions in which the Devil told her of goings-on in other parts of the world that he had influenced, such as 'wars against the Pope' (*guerras contra el papa*) and the murder of a Roman woman by her husband. Another day, she reported, she challenged the Devil to prove his potency by bringing her grapes and apples from Castile; gone no more than half an hour, the Devil returned from Spain with six delicious apples, which she ate. Eventually, María said, the Devil took her out of the house altogether, taking her to the top of the church and to the door of another prominent resident of the city, at which point she became too frightened to go further and banged on the door until it opened and she was escorted home. Through these conversations and actions, it may be argued, María expressed a desire for the mobility and adventure generally denied to women.

Flight, of course, is one of the five themes identified by Magnus Lundberg in his recent work on contemplative women. From a gendered perspective, the 'flight' of religious women was a response to their frustration at their spatial containment – at not being able to do what male missionaries did. When religious women flew, they gained temporary access to the world of men, and 'a dramatic expansion of the restricted space in which they normally lived and acted'.³⁸ Similarly, María's metaphorical flights allowed her to temporarily escape the monotony of constricted youth for a world of news and mobility.

Because flight was only metaphorically possible, however, much of María's testimony also concerned her anger, particularly toward her father. Anger

38 Lundberg, *Mission and Ecstasy*, 224–26.

was often seen as illicit for girls and women,³⁹ but María and other girls within the household testified to their rage toward the powerful patriarch. (For example, teenaged Juana, an indigenous orphan who had been raised within the house, said that she sometimes hated María's father; unfortunately, she did not elaborate further.) Both María and other girls identified María's father, and particularly his control over María's future marriage, as the cause of her rage (and thus the Devil's appearance). María also claimed that the Devil had, at her request, played jokes on her father and mother, hiding keys and other important objects, placing a turtle in the water basin, cutting girls' hair while they slept, and generally causing trouble. María's desire to flout her father's authority is nowhere more evident than in her bizarre assertion that the Devil had sex with her while she lay in bed with her parents. What could be a more effective riposte to paternal authority than to engage in illicit sex literally under a father's nose?

The Devil thus became a proxy, in María's testimony, for the power of romantic love to defeat paternal power. As her story suggests, romantic and sexual excitement could, in the emotional world of girls, appear as resistance to patriarchal power. Desire for romantic love and erotic excitement are a key theme in María's confessions; they are not incompatible with resistance. In the lives of grown women, patriarchy tends to be most obviously embodied in husbands; and in fact, much feminist historiography has documented the nuances of this form of patriarchal power. But in the lives of girls – for whom fathers, not lovers, rule – romance is more likely to be framed as escape from constraint. This theme, which Kathryn Sloan sees as typical of the nineteenth century, is present in María's testimony from centuries earlier.

On one hand, marriage appears in María's testimony as something to be resisted. María alleged that the Devil wanted to carry her away from home so that she would not be married, because he himself loved her. She also claimed that he cautioned her that, since he had sown discord between husbands and wives, she should not marry. This antipathy toward marriage was noted by several of the girls who testified. But if María's anger and resistance to marriage are on display in her diabolic imaginings, so too is her desire for romance. María was clearly being courted by at least two men, to judge from the testimony of other girls, and had received gifts, letters, and frequent clandestine visits. Menciá, a *mestiza* thirteen-year-old resident in María's house, testified that María had mused about being married to

39 María de San José, for example, claimed that in her youth God had struck her home with a bolt of lightning after she swore in anger at another girl. The lightning strike was followed by the appearance of the Devil in the form of a naked mulatto, who told her 'you are mine'.

Marroquín Valle, whom she described as a rich gentleman; María apparently delighted in the thought of being 'a relative of the Bishop'. Antipathy to arranged marriage could thus coexist with romantic fantasies of marriage and social success. María's older sister, who confronted María after she had been seen talking to a man at the window, testified that María planned to marry clandestinely because their father would not give his consent.

In María's descriptions of her purported sexual acts with the Devil, there is also evidence of her romantic idealization of sexuality – and, perhaps, a good measure of ambivalence and inexperience. She claimed that demonic sex brought her 'much delight' as the Devil threw her onto the bed, kissing and embracing her. Obviously unacquainted with or uninterested in the more grotesque demonological imaginings of demonic bodies, María described the Devil's penetrative member as 'a handspan in length and as slender as a little finger' (*larga como un xeme y delgada como el dedo meñique*). While claiming that coitus had occurred, María insisted that after these acts 'it appears to her that she is still a maiden and a virgin when it comes to her body' (*a su parecer que esta donzella y virgen quanto al cuerpo*). Indeed, she explained that while the Devil was capable of bearing a generative organ of any size, he had selected such a delicate one to preserve her virginity. María's words point to the importance of sexuality in determining the boundary between girlhood and womanhood. In insisting that she was still a maiden, María de Ocampo was in some sense clinging not only to her respectability, but also to the only thing that made her a girl.

But these confessions also evince a sentimental romanticism. Indeed, María's imaginings of the Devil are immature and girlish – one almost thinks of today's *Twilight* phenomenon, where the monstrous and menacing vampire becomes domesticated through an inexplicable love for a mortal girl; the emotional investment of girls in this fantasy has been viewed by scholars as both capitulation and resistance to patriarchy.⁴⁰ Similarly, the Devil, in María's confessions, is a gentlemanly lover ('very gallant') and more a servant than a figure of authority (though he has his own emotions, and occasionally becomes angry with her). His promise that he will take María somewhere 'where she will rule and be a lady' seems almost poignant, a fantasy of romance as flight from domination rather than as another stage in its recapitulation. The Devil and romantic love thus constituted, for María and her friends, a zone of what William Leddy has called 'emotional

40 See Miller, 'Maybe Edward Is the Most Dangerous Thing'; but also Alberto, 'Love and Lust for FANg Culture'.

refuge': respite from the emotional norms and strictures of the time, whose principal law for girls was enclosure, constraint, and obedience.⁴¹

Indeed, María described her relationship with the Devil in terms of reciprocity that hint at resistance to the double standard of her era. She claimed that the Devil had told her he had other 'girlfriends' (*amigas*), older indigenous women with whom he had sex. She told him that 'since he had other girlfriends, then she too would take other boyfriends, and by this she meant men, not demons'.⁴² Similarly, she described giving the Devil a paper on which were written unusual vows, sealed with a drop of her blood: 'I am your girlfriend and you are my boyfriend, and I need not leave you until I wish'.⁴³ But María's fantasy of reciprocity and/or rule was doomed. Certainly, some young women did acquire their own houses and achieve independence; the young sixteenth-century holy woman (*beata*) María de la Concepción said she had bought her own house at such a tender age because her father was a 'tedious quarreller' (*trabajoso renidor*).⁴⁴ But for many female youth, and we may assume for María de Ocampo, dreams of ruling a household were just that, because – notwithstanding the considerable power that elite women exercised over servants, children, and slaves – they were ultimately junior partners of husbands.

Barbara H. Rosenwein has argued convincingly that emotions are an important source for historical change.⁴⁵ While María de Ocampo's case permits only a musing on, rather than a fulsome description of, the emotional world of colonial female youth, it does hint at, for example, the deep colonial roots of Sloan's 'defiant daughters' of the nineteenth century. Moreover, the case makes clear that the physical and emotional worlds of early colonial Mexican girls had distinct contours, particularly relative to the world of boys. The two most obvious manifestations of the distinction are enclosure and spatial constraint, which grew as a female youth matured, and the uniform destiny of marriage, which produced both desire and resistance. Inquisition cases, replete with information about childhood, offer much potential for further investigation of the youth of early modern women.

41 Reddy, *Navigation of Feeling*, 129.

42 María de Ocampo, AGN, Inquisición, Vol. 35, Exp. 1, f. 88. '[A]sí dixo a esta confesante que tenia otras tres amigas yndias y viejas las dos en amatitlan y la una en petapa y que se echava carnalmente con ellas e que esta confesante le dezia que pues el tenia otras amigas ella tambien tomaría otros amigos e que lo dezia por hombres no por demonios'.

43 María de Ocampo, AGN, Inquisición, Vol. 35, Exp. 1, f. 20: 'Yo soy vra amiga y vos soys mi amigo y no os tengo de dexar hasta que yo quiera'.

44 María de la Concepción, AGN, Inquisición, Vol. 48, Exp. 4. 1574.

45 See Rosenwein, *Emotional Communities*.

And the rarest materials within them – the impassioned and immediate words of early modern girls – offer historians the opportunity to engage with female youth as not merely a construction but a lived experience, and with girls and young women as historical actors in the fullest sense of the term.

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