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# *Luisa de Carvajal's Counter-Reformation Journey to Selfhood (1566-1614)\**

by ELIZABETH RHODES

*Luisa de Carvajal y Mendoza, a wealthy Spanish noblewoman, lived as a missionary in London preaching, teaching, and doing charitable work on behalf of the Catholic underground from 1605 to 1614. Although the early loss of her parents and other close family members in rapid succession and the abuses she suffered at the hands of her guardian uncle might appear to have disadvantaged her, Carvajal transformed her misfortunes into advantages by using them to intensify her embrace of penitential piety and traditional Catholic virtues as exemplified by saints' lives. Her manifestation of those virtues inspired religious authorities to accept her as a missionary, against substantial odds. She thus provides evidence of how Counter-Reformation practices and beliefs facilitated some exceptional women's achievements.*

OVER THE LAST FIFTY YEARS, the usefulness of the terms "Reformation" and "Counter Reformation" has been examined by historians, who point to the over-simplification inherent in the words' explicit binary opposition.<sup>1</sup> The need to reconsider these two denominators in reference to sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Spain is particularly acute, as that country is traditionally assumed to have been the bastion of the Counter Reformation, the very picture of an empire on the defensive from the "heretic" affront, and more reactive than active in its religious agenda. The substantial amount of information now available about the fruitful Catholic reform in Spain during the late fifteenth and the first half of the sixteenth centuries has led to new understandings of how the Catholic internal reform was carried out before and after

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<sup>1</sup> Of the qualifier "Reformation," Bossy, 91, writes, "It seems worth trying to use it as sparingly as possible, not simply because it goes along too easily with the notion that a bad form of Christianity was being replaced by a good one, but because it sits awkwardly across the subject without directing one's attention anywhere in particular." Similar arguments have been made against the designation "Counter Reformation" by scholars such as Evennett and Hoffman; Jones, 4, admits to having entitled his 1995 Cambridge Topics in History volume as *The Counter Reformation* only because of the phrase's enduring market value.

Protestantism.<sup>2</sup> The first period is of particular importance in Hispanic studies because it fostered the careers of prominent religious leaders such as Ignatius of Loyola, Teresa of Ávila, John of Ávila, Luis of Granada, and John of the Cross, among others, individuals greatly influenced by early Catholic reform ideals who were accepted as exemplary figures during the Counter Reformation.

Although the continuum suggested by recent research would seem to argue in favor of releasing the Reformation/Counter Reformation dichotomy, such a move may debilitate the study of women during the course of the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Historically, women's voices have broken the prescriptive silence in which they have been normatively enclosed during precisely such periods as the one described by the term "Counter Reformation," when the dominant group's cause was under threat and marshaling all pertinent evidence in its own support. For example, JoAnn McNamara has shown a direct correlation between the authority attributed to women's religious voices in thirteenth- and fourteenth-century Europe and a desire on the part of ecclesiastical authorities to set forth as many arguments as possible against the Cathar heresy and the Great Schism. Similarly, early modern Spanish women's writings are relatively rare in the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, a period when Spanish Catholicism was generating its own reform movement more than responding to external pressure to change. By contrast, an impressive number of female religious writers' life stories and works were published and avidly read from the 1580s through the mid-seventeenth century, when Catholicism was fortifying itself against the Protestant offense. Although several factors produced this contrast, one of them was surely an interest in convening female voices as testimony for the Catholic cause, which was under severe stress and in great need.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Huerga, Olin, Sala Balust, and Coleman describe the reform environment, Di Camillo its interpretation. Individual case studies illuminate how rapidly the reform environment changed in Spain: Spach studies that of Juan Gil, a famous preacher whose bones were disinterred and burnt in 1560 when he was posthumously convicted as a Lutheran. Tellechea Idigoras's edition of Archbishop Bartolomé Carranza's 1558 *Comentarios sobre el Catechismo christiano* presents Carranza's seventeen-year inquisitorial trial in detail. Although they were on the 1559 Spanish *Index*, the Archbishop's *Comentarios* were later approved by the third Council of Trent. Francisco de Borja (1510-1572), whose reform efforts met with imperial favor during the 1550s, was fleeing Spain in 1560 for fear of being arrested as a Lutheran (he was canonized in 1671).

<sup>4</sup> Poutrin's catalog of seventeenth-century female ecstasies, although not a complete

Among the most remarkable individuals whose stories point to the conceptual importance of the Counter Reformation is Luisa de Carvajal y Mendoza, who lived from 1566 to 1614. Few figures of seventeenth-century Spain can vie with Carvajal's case of high drama and disturbing, zealous piety, documented in a rich panorama of autobiographical and historical texts by and about her. Singular Catholic missionary, expert Latinist, student of Protestant and Catholic theologies, and prolific writer, Carvajal accomplished all of her impressive life's work in the post-Tridentine period, an age whose constraining mandates may have limited her formal self-expression but actually fomented her activist vocation. Carvajal's story challenges scholars of women's history, who have documented the increasing restriction of women's public activities during these years, to acknowledge important nuances of presence and power.<sup>4</sup>

Carvajal was born into wealth and privilege in Jaraicejo, a small town in the province of Cáceres, in the western region of Extremadura. Only six when both of her parents died, she was separated from her brothers and sent to live with a maternal aunt, María Chacón, governess of Philip II's children in Madrid. With her aunt, Carvajal spent four

list, is telling. Works in Rodríguez's inventory of sixteenth-century religious writings are all by men, except for María de Santo Domingo's 1524 *Libro de la oración y contemplación*, which suggests that women emerged in numbers as published authors only after measures of religious repression were well established in Spain. Although more archival work needs to be completed before generalizations may be made, present studies indicate a great increase of interest in contemplative exercise in the second half of the sixteenth century and first half of the seventeenth—the product not only of the Catholic reform of the early sixteenth century, but also of the Catholic response to Protestantism. The relative participation of women and men in this increase has yet to be determined; the great presence of female authors of religious works where previously there were so few is nevertheless striking.

<sup>4</sup> Wiesner describes the process of women's increasing exclusion from the public domain, with ample bibliography (she mentions Carvajal on 197). In the following synthesis of Carvajal's life, I rely on the manuscript and published works related to her life in the archives of the Convento de la Encarnación in Madrid. The documents include her first-person spiritual life story, letters, confessional documents, the manuscript *vita* by her confessor, Michael Walpole, written shortly after her death, and evidence collected for her cause for beatification, now in process, including letters written by women who lived with her in London. In regard to Carvajal's biographers to date, I would call attention to the hagiographic echoes and confessional interests in works by and about her, such as her self-declared preternatural charity and inclination to bodily mortification at the late toddler age. Accessible biographies of her, based on the Walpole manuscript, include Muñoz, 1897; and Abad, 1966.

important years at court, from 1572 to 1576. The first two she spent in the household of Princess Juana de Austria, whose status as the only woman ever officially admitted to the Jesuits was at that time a well-kept secret, and whose strict, pious domain was absolutely formative in Carvajal's introduction to court life.<sup>5</sup> Under the tutelage of her own harsh governess, Isabel de Ayllón, Carvajal was trained in severe formalistic piety and the strictest of female propriety. At the same time, she enjoyed the resources of the best educated children in Spain, the royal offspring.

In 1576, the ten-year old Carvajal suffered another heavy blow when her aunt died suddenly, leaving her in the hands of an uncle, the important diplomat Francisco de Hurtado y Mendoza, Marqués de Almazán. Carvajal lived with his family on estates in Soria and Pamplona, still accompanied by Ayllón, whose harsh practices continued relentlessly. Describing her governess's control of her sleeping postures, she says of Ayllón: "She didn't permit me to lie on my left side, so no harmful humor would run easily to my heart, and she made me cross my arms over my chest in the form of a crucifix. And then, pulling my nightdress to my feet, she set a fold of it between my knees, and in summer she basted the sheets together on both sides of my bed, for my health and my modesty, to which she paid so much attention."<sup>6</sup>

Carvajal signals that the severity with which her governess treated her was unusual in her day by recording how astounded her cousins were that she was willing to endure such demeaning and strict treatment from a social inferior (the model of Catherine of Siena, with its emphasis on social reversals and submission to an abusive mother figure, is apparent).<sup>7</sup> Simultaneously, such endurance also increased Carvajal's exem-

<sup>5</sup> Rahner, 52-67, describes the delicate business of the Princess's Jesuit vows, arranged through letters with Roman officials in which she was referred to under the pseudonym of Mateo Sánchez. Bataillon, who does not mention Juana's Jesuit vows, cites reports of her court, which her contemporaries found distastefully pious. Juana died on 7 September 1573, at which point Carvajal was moved from the Descalzas Reales convent, where the royal children were being raised, to palace quarters.

<sup>6</sup> I cite Abad's edition of what he entitled Carvajal's *Escritos autobiográficos*, cited hereafter as *EA*, with modernized punctuation and spelling. However, in cases where Abad's transcription is faulty, I revert to the manuscript. All translations are mine. *EA*, 143: "No me permitía echar sobre el lado izquierdo, porque no corriese fácilmente algún humor dañoso al corazón, y hacíame cruzar los brazos sobre el pecho en forma de cruz. Y luego, tirando la camisilla hasta los pies, hacía que un doblez de ella dividiese las rodillas, y en el verano hilvanaba la ropa de la cama por los dos lados, por la salud y por la modestia, de que tanto ella cuidaba."

<sup>8</sup> Archbishop Francisco Ximénez de Cisneros commissioned a Spanish translation of

plary stature in her contemporaries' eyes, since submission and malleability were expected of good children: "If she found me involved in anything contrary to her desire, my arms paid the price, such that they were full of bruises and very large marks (for after I was no longer a baby, she didn't whip me), and she would say thus, 'I don't have to govern you by means of lashes, which is a childish thing' . . . I managed not to let anyone at the house know about the rigor with which she treated me, nor the other girls who were there, because the Marquesa took very badly even what little could be observed (which was the least of it). And the young folk said mine was like life in captivity, and they wondered why I endured that severity and punishment from my servant, or even obeyed her, being myself her mistress."<sup>8</sup>

While withstanding the rigors of Ayllón, Carvajal was learning Latin with the Marqués's daughters and was also being taught a very peculiar form of piety from the Marqués himself. Luisa's penitential excesses, perhaps the guilt-induced response of a lonely child observing a string of family members die around her, probably called her to the Marqués's attention. Although he had a daughter exactly Carvajal's age, and although Carvajal surely had her own confessor, don Francisco singled out his young niece as his own spiritual charge and exercised her in exaggerated piety, most notably re-enactments of the Passion, in which two servants were paid to undress, mortify, and physically abuse the adolescent girl in removed rooms of the mansion. The result was *imitatio Christi* at its worst, an unfortunate convergence of what had been a reformist Catholic ideal and misguided male dominion over a powerless ward:

Raymond of Capua's biography of Saint Catherine specifically for placement in convents so women could read it. First published in 1511, the book was extremely influential on female piety in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Spain, and it was recommended throughout the early modern period, by authors such as Pérez de Valdivia, 427, as suitable reading material for women. Quintanilla, 141, lists several other works Cisneros had translated for women to read. Catherine's submission to her abusive mother is described in the first two chapters of the 1511 translation.

<sup>8</sup> *EA*, 144: "Si me hallaba en cosa contraria a su deseo, lo pagaban mis brazos, de manera que los traía llenos de cardenales y señales grandísimas (que después que pasé de muy pequeñita, no me azotaba) y así me decía, 'Ya no la tengo de gobernar por vía de azotes, que es cosa de las niñas . . .' Procuraba yo no supiesen el rigor que usaba conmigo nadie de casa, ni las otras niñas que en ella había, porque aun sólo lo que se veía, que era lo menos, tomaba muy mal la Marquesa; y la gente moza decía era cautiverio, y para qué sufría aquellos rigores y penalidades de mi criada, ni la obedecía, siendo su señora."

There was in his household a devoted servant of God of sufficient spirit, ability to keep a secret, and sensibility, whom he ordered, under obligation of great secrecy, to be in charge of humiliating me with mortification and disciplines, and he commanded me to obey her in these things and to receive them as a healthy purge for the augmentation and fortification of my soul's health and imitation of the trials of Christ our Lord. There was a very convenient and secret oratory, and outside it other areas which were likewise secret, where she ordered me to await her various times. And entering, locking the doors, with a severe or at least serious countenance, she ordered me to bare my shoulders. And, naked to my waist, with a cloth pressed under my chin which managed to cover my chest in a decent way, and down on my knees, I offered that sacrifice to Our Lord as the hardest and most asperous I could be ordered to endure, in my opinion.<sup>9</sup>

Carvajal composed three different descriptions of these activities, all of which are in her collected manuscripts; her renditions of these events constitute the only section of her spiritual life story of which several versions remain. She apparently returned to the events to test various drafts, but once the "official story" was complete, she had difficulty relinquishing the sordid details that prudence had inspired her to edit from the final version, details which she left among her papers regardless. Among the passages not included in her finished copy but not destroyed either, one finds notable information:

The discipline being finished, many times she ordered me very haughtily to kiss her feet, and I, prostrate on the ground, kissed them. But in this I did nothing, nor in enduring the blows of a scourge made of guitar strings, not at all soft, so well delivered that I could hardly stand it. And so as not to show it outwardly, I had to exercise a great effort in my hands, squeezing my fists, when they were not tied in such a way that I could not close them, or push one down over the other, if the rope was holding them together . . . And many times it seemed to me that I wouldn't feel death itself any more, and more so, when she decided that the discipline would be from my feet to my head, with a towel around my waist such as one sees on a crucifix, and tied to a column that was constructed

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 162-63: "Había en casa una persona muy sierva de Dios y de suficiente espíritu, secreto y cordura, a la cual ordenó, bajo de obligación de gran secreto, que tomase a su cargo humillarme con mortificaciones y disciplinas; y a mí me mandó la obedeciese en esas cosas, recibéndolas como saludable purga para aumento y fortificación de la salud de mi alma y imitación de los trabajos de Cristo nuestro Señor. Había un oratorio muy conveniente y secreto, y fuera de él otras partes que lo eran harto, donde ella me ordenaba diversas veces que la esperase. Y entrando, cerradas las puertas con llave, con severo rostro, o grave por lo menos, me mandaba descubrir las espaldas. Y quedando desnuda hasta la cinta, con una beatilla presa debajo la barba que llegaba a cubrir el pecho en modo decente, y hincada de rodillas, ofrecía a nuestro Señor aquel sacrificio, como el más duro y áspero, en mi opinión, que se me podía mandar."

specifically for this purpose, and my feet on the cold ground, and a hemp rope at my throat, with whose ends my hands and wrists were tied to the column.<sup>10</sup>

Such passages are so overtly imitative of Christ's Passion as to suggest a meaning more symbolic than literal. However, the historical details with which they are punctuated, the most important of which is the Marqués's direct involvement in them, indicate that a literal reading is most appropriate. Although submission to such extreme mortification may have been heroic on Carvajal's part, the practices discredit her uncle and it is unlikely she would have implicated him inappropriately. Carvajal reports that he demanded detailed accounts of these exercises from her, including how she felt at each step of the process, and one cannot but wonder if he observed the spectacle himself, as he increased its intensity:

Later my uncle found another person among the same women of the household to serve in this, and at times he would order one [to discipline me], at times the other. And so, he would order at times that they lead me unclothed and bare-foot, with my feet on the extremely cold floor, with a cap on my head that only held my hair, and a towel tied to my waist, a rope at my neck, which sometimes was made of hair bristles and others of hemp, and my hands tied with it, from one room to another, like an evil-doer, until arriving at the last small oratory that was beyond. It was a closed room and removed from the rest of the house and in a very secret part, and in front of me, pulling lightly by the rope, went one of the servile people of Our Lord of whom I have spoken, and at times she uttered words of humiliation and shame.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., 181-82: "Acabada la disciplina, muchas veces me mandaba con mucho señorío que le besase lo pies; y yo, postrada en el suelo, se los besaba. Pero en esto no hacía yo nada ni en sufrir golpes de una disciplina de cuerdas de vihuela, nada blanda, tan bien dados que apenas podía sufrirlos. Y para no mostrarlo exteriormente me era necesario hacer gran fuerza en las manos, apretando los puños, cuando no estaban atadas, no de modo que se impidiese el cerrarlas o hacer fuerza una sobre otra, si la sogá las tenía juntas. . . Y muchas veces me pareció que no pudiera sentir más la misma muerte, y más cuando se resolvía en que la disciplina fuese de los pies a la cabeza, con una toalla puesta por la cinta de la manera que se pinta un crucifijo, y atada a una columna que para eso había hecha a propósito, y los pies en la tierra fría y una sogá de cañamo a la garganta, con cuyos cabos se ataban las muñecas y manos a la columna."

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., 183: "Después halló mi tío otra persona, de las mismas de casa, a propósito para esto, y a veces o ordenaba a la una, a veces a la otra. Y así, ordenaba algunas veces que me llevasen desnuda y descalza, con los pies por la tierra fríisima, con una cofilla en la cabeza que recogía el cabello solamente y una toalla atada por la cintura, una sogá a la garganta, que algunas veces era hecha de cerdas de silicio, y otras de cañamo, y atadas las manos con ella, de unos aposentos a otros, como a malhechora, hasta un último oratorio pequeño que estaba al cabo de ellos . . . y a veces me decía palabras de humillación y abatimiento."

The excesses were many. For example, don Francisco had the young Luisa kneel before him daily for several hours in his private apartments while he lectured and read to her from religious books; she also recalls how he would lock her in his oratory and forget she was there.<sup>12</sup>

To this day biographers stumble over how to reconcile such unseemly acts with the otherwise eminently imitable figure of the Marqués de Almazán, himself reportedly devoted to the Jesuits and extremely religious. In his 1966 hagiography of Carvajal, Camilo María Abad (SJ) concludes, "We must suppose that Divine Providence had chosen Luisa from among other souls of that age, and permitted those errors so as to dispose her to the most harsh mission to which it had destined her."<sup>13</sup> In any case, the traumatic nature of Carvajal's youth and adolescence produced in her an impeccably controlled will of iron, an intimate familiarity with the theological texts of her day, and an obsessive esteem for sacrificial ethics, which played their contradictory natures out throughout her adult life.

In 1591, when Carvajal was twenty-five, she obtained her uncle's permission to live in her own apartments in the company of a few servants, overtly modeling her behavior on those of Catherine of Siena, as described in Raymond of Capua's *vita*.<sup>14</sup> The next year both the Marqués and his wife died, leaving Luisa, as she herself said, "free at last." She then set about pursuing a lawsuit to gain access to her inheritance, which she willed to the Jesuits after a fifteen-year struggle in the courts. Although neither Carvajal nor her biographers specify why this lawsuit was necessary to inherit her share of the estate, it is possible that the profession she had chosen of holy woman — which entailed remaining single without entering a convent — kept her from it because her father had provided only for her marriage or convent dowry. Her family members were scandalized by Carvajal's embarrassing behavior during these years and shunned her at the same time that they challenged her rights to her father's money.

From 1592 to 1604, when she lived in Madrid and Valladolid, Carvajal enacted social reversals which she continued throughout her life: while under the formal spiritual supervision of the Jesuits, she vowed obedience to an abusive, ignorant servant, and began to mingle with the

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 185; 70-71.

<sup>13</sup> Abad, 39: "Y hay que pensar también que la divina Providencia había elegido a Luisa, entre otras almas de entonces, como víctima por los pecados de su época, y permitía aquellos errores para disponerla a la durísima misión a que la tenía destinada."

<sup>14</sup> Catherine's retirement to private apartments in her parents' house, including the extreme penitential exercises she performed there, is described in ff. ix<sup>r</sup>-xi<sup>r</sup>.

poor of the city, going so far as to beg for food at the portals of selected churches with the truly needy. Under these circumstances, her physical condition began to deteriorate, and she acquired the poor health that had become a hallmark of the Catholic holy woman centuries before. Her most intense mystical experiences date from this period, a time in which she also composed most of her extant poetry. They are verses laced with a vivid lust for and appreciation of suffering, not *for* Christ, but *as* Christ. Here, for example, the poetic voice of the shepherdess Silva speaks to herself of her beloved (Jesus): “and you shall believe yourself to be his slave / and your blazon shall be / to see yourself branded for him / to overcome difficulties / with which you shall be continually beset . . . // [and Silva sees herself] rewarded for the pain / which consumes and finishes her.”<sup>15</sup>

Between 1593 and 1598, Luisa de Carvajal took the four vows of poverty, chastity, obedience, and the pursuit of spiritual perfection. Finally, in 1598, she made an extraordinary pledge: “I promise to God our Lord that I shall pursue, to whatever extent possible, all avenues of martyrdom which are not repugnant to the law of God.”<sup>16</sup> This opened a window of opportunity for her to gradually set forth her greater plan, which she claimed to have been formulating generally since the age of fourteen and specifically after turning eighteen: to go to England in order to fulfill her last vow. In 1604, she made the Spiritual Exercises related to election, and in that context consolidated her 1598 promise, humbly but persistently declaring it was God’s will that she travel to London. Persecution of the Catholics by the Anglicans was extreme at that time and stories of martyred men, particularly Jesuits, circulated

<sup>15</sup> Carvajal, 1990, 67, lines 48-52; 59-60: “y te tendrás por su esclava / y que será tu blasón / verte por él aherrojada; / a romper dificultades / de continuo aparejada. / . . . // apremiada del dolor / que la consume y acaba.” She also composed a sonnet about her desire for martyrdom (*ibid.*, 169). On Carvajal’s poetry, see García-Nieto Onrubia and Cruz. In the documents collected immediately after Carvajal’s death for her cause, her devoted servant Isabel de la Cruz describes her mistress in ecstasy during this period, recalling how a disbeliever observing Carvajal in a mystical trance hit her on the leg without being able to rouse her; after recovering normal consciousness, so Isabel says, Carvajal complained of pain in that leg (cited in Abad, 117). Isabel’s story, however, is a little-altered borrowing from the prologue to Catherine of Siena’s *Epístolas y oraciones*, fol. [4]; the attempt to present Carvajal as an orthodox ecstatic is clear.

<sup>16</sup> *EA*, 245: “Prometo a Dios Nuestro Señor que procuraré, cuanto me sea posible, buscar toda aquellas ocasiones de martirio que no sean repugnantes a la ley de Dios.” All of Carvajal’s vows are in *EA*, 238-45.

around the Jesuit centers with which Carvajal was closely associated during the years she was formulating her plan.<sup>17</sup>

In a document dated 1606, written in London, Carvajal recalls how she arrived at the decision to seek out this mission, saying, "Nothing on earth [was] so attractive as to be able to convert myself to the golden age of the primitive Church, where the force of love found such grand examples. And life in England *came to me*, as the life most like what was possible for me." Importantly, Carvajal describes her decision as what came to her from God, or, as she says, *sin ayuda humana* (without human assistance).<sup>18</sup> Equally noteworthy is her description of her intentions as a return to primitive Christian practice. Disregarding the obvious problem posed by her sex, she claims not to be proposing anything new, rather she presents herself as reinforcing established ways and beliefs, and recovering something that had been lost.<sup>19</sup>

Carvajal's vow of martyrdom proved to be an ironic door to self-realization, for this act of complete renunciation of her own life for whatever God willed is probably what convinced her superiors, her king, and even the pope to support her mission. That vow and steadfast insistence that it was God's will that she go to England (and stay there, once she arrived) transformed her desire into a matter of conscience, which, once the appropriate discernment of spirits had been effected, no man was willing to violate during the turbulent and difficult years to follow. In retrospect, it is clear that by 1598 Carvajal had carefully forged a personal history which facilitated the blessing of her plans. Aside from wealth, education, and social status (which, in spite of her earlier rejection of it, served her time and time again in the bestowal of financial and

<sup>17</sup> Abad, 133; suggests that Carvajal read Joseph Creswell's 1595 *Historia de la vida y martirio que padesció este año de 1595 el P. Henrico Valpolo*. There were several texts available in Spain in the 1590s recording Catholic persecution in England, such as Rivadeneira's *Historia eclesiástica del scisma del reyno de Inglaterra* (an adaptation of Sanders' *De origine ac progressu schismatis Anglicani*), and that of Yepes, whose 1599 *Historia particular de la persecución de Inglaterra* was among the books owned by the Duquesa de Béjar, indicating some lay interest in the topic (see Dadson).

<sup>18</sup> EA, 223, emphasis mine: "Nada en la tierra tan apacible, como fuera poder reducirme a la dorada era de la primitiva Iglesia, donde la fuerza de amor halló tan grandes empleos. Y *ofrectaseme* la vida de Inglaterra, por la semejanza que con aquella tenía, como más posible."

<sup>19</sup> Female participation in apostolic activity was difficult in the seventeenth century, but not in the first century. On female activists in early Christian generations see Schüssler Fiorenza; and Reuther. Carvajal and her contemporaries had access to information about these heroines in the many *Flos sanctorum* published in Spain between 1550 and 1650.

political support), she had considerable credibility, greatly enhanced by her long history of submission to male authorities. Her dedication, endurance, and character had been tested by the difficult lawsuit which she had supervised herself and won, only to turn the settlement over to the Jesuits to found a college in Flanders.

The apex of this spiritual dossier was that Carvajal presented herself, like many women religious of her day, as being so completely soldered to divine intentions that to deny her was to deny God. At every step of her spiritual journey she represented herself as following God's will, and before she was mature enough to know God's will, she made it clear that she had submitted to men's. Her 1598 vow was the sum of her past and her intentions for the future, and her oath of fidelity to the Counter-Reformation Catholic cause. While promising to die for God, Carvajal never articulated a desire for anything except the fulfillment of divine will through her own body. Yet the prospect, not only of martyrdom itself but of the circumstances surrounding it, offered women such as her several things that were becoming increasingly difficult to obtain in seventeenth-century Spain, the lack of which is painfully evident in Carvajal's own vital experience until 1604: the chance to make a decision about one's own life, to uphold a personal conviction without compromise, and to break away from increasingly restricted, enclosed normative female behavior.<sup>20</sup>

Carvajal's promise to die for God, if given the chance, paradoxically reconciled self-determination and submission, and opened the door to a vocation only dreamed of by many religious women of her day: missionary work in a place where Catholics were in life-threatening situations. Teresa of Ávila's youthful pining for martyrdom is famous: "When I considered the martyrdoms the [female] saints suffered for God, it seemed to me that the price they paid for going to enjoy God was very cheap, and I greatly desired to die in the same way." She continued, tongue-in-cheek, describing the alternate plans she and her brother made: "When I saw it was impossible to go where I would be killed for God, we made plans to be hermits."<sup>21</sup> Fifty years of virulent religious history later, and deeper into the Counter-Reformation cult of the primitive Church, this playful discourse was made literal when Luisa de Carvajal realized an apostolic mission because of her promise to seek the

<sup>20</sup> Making a "choice" to die is an extremely vexed option, but one with a long textual tradition in Catholic hagiography. See Innes-Parker; and Wogan-Browne.

<sup>21</sup> "Como vía los martirios que por Dios las santas pasavan, parecíame compravan muy barato el ir a gozar de Dios y deseava yo mucho morir ansí"; "De que vi que era imposible ir adonde me matasen por Dios, ordenávamos ser ermitaños" (*Vida*, 35).

ultimate sacrifice and all that the promise held.<sup>22</sup> When asked upon her first arrest why she had come to England, Carvajal responded, "I had come to follow the example of many saints who voluntarily abandoned their homeland, friends, and families to live unprotected and poor in foreign lands for love of Our Lord."<sup>23</sup> Again, she made explicit her imitation of a consecrated textual tradition.

Because of the danger inherent in her plans, Carvajal was unable to tell anyone about her intentions, and her companion of many years, Inés de la Asunción, was not given permission to accompany her as intended. Although the intrigue may have been exhilarating, the extreme stress and solitude that Carvajal was forced to endure is what likely produced the grave illness she suffered just before leaving, from which she had not fully recovered when she left. The journey itself was fraught with difficulty: taking advantage of the Jesuit's need to secretly transport Michael Walpole (then her confessor in Spain) to England, Carvajal left Valladolid on 21 January 1605, in the dead of winter and with only a small band of servants, one of whom was probably Walpole in disguise. They traveled through Paris, then Flanders, where she spent Holy Week of 1605, and finally into England at an unknown later date. No less than Henry Garnet, the Jesuit Superior in England, personally took charge of determining the recusant households where Carvajal could hide, since the unfortunate timing of her arrival coincided with severe retaliations against anyone associated with the Jesuits.

Carvajal could not have arrived at a worse moment, entering England shortly before the Gunpowder Plot of November, 1605, in which eight Catholic English noblemen planned to blow up Parliament but were discovered on the eve before the deed was to be carried out. The event cost Garnet his life; he was accused as an accomplice in the

<sup>22</sup> There is ample testimony of seventeenth-century women who expressed desire to be martyrs. Inés de la Encarnación (1564-1634) wrote of her wish to join Carvajal, *ad maiorem dei gloria*, and of how she was refused permission (see Carvajal's *Epistolario*, 202, n. 24, cited hereafter as *Epist.*). Ana de Jesús, foundress of the first Discalced Carmelite convent in Paris, wrote in 1605 of her experience, "We came to suffer with Our Spouse where they are forever crucifying him," and said of her nuns, "They show great spirit and suffering and *they're dying to be martyrs*" (emphasis mine; cited in Manero Sorolla, 664: "Veníamos a padezer con Nuestro Esposo donde siempre le están crucificando;" "Grande ánimo hazen y padecen y *muérense por ser mártires*"). The rhetorical flourish is important; the same nuns lived in a sumptuous palace and were warmly received in France.

<sup>23</sup> *Epist.*, 271: "Había venido por seguir los ejemplos de muchos santos, que desampararon voluntariamente su patria, amigos y deudos por vivir con desamparo y pobreza en tierras extrañas por amor de Nuestro Señor."

plot, arrested on 27 January 1606, and was hung, drawn, and quartered that May. It was not a propitious time for a noble Spanish woman who spoke no English, had no ready money to support herself, and no clear sense of exactly what she was intending to do, to be reliant on the Jesuits, and two years passed before Carvajal was able to resolve any of those problems. Immediately, however, the incident of the Gunpowder Plot led the Spanish ambassador in England to hear of Carvajal's presence, and he moved her into his house, where she stayed, if impatiently, with her ear to much of the information at the ambassador's disposition, until she left to rent her own first house in December 1606. By then she was aware of what she called English ill will toward all Spaniards, and was determined to overcome it so as to accomplish her mission of supporting the Catholic cause there. To that end, as she wrote in 1608 of her first year in England, "I much desired to learn the language and pass so well as an English woman that neither the ambassador nor anyone else of my country should ever hear of me."<sup>24</sup>

Carvajal's years in England were characterized by high intrigue, secrecy, and drama. Most of her letters were written in code to mask the identity of those about whom she wrote, and she rarely failed to remind her correspondents to burn what she wrote after reading it. Within a year, she was receiving support for her apostolic work from a wide network of powerful people throughout Europe, most of whom were women. She learned English with much effort and, according to her, with little help from her two early English-speaking female companions. The language barrier did not hold her back long, however. By July 1606 she was sending a young recusant man to a friend in Brussels for placement in "a good Jesuit house."<sup>25</sup> By April 1607 she had learned how to identify the jails in which Catholic priests scheduled for execution were held, and had visited one to console and inspire the condemned man the day before his hanging, urging him to die rather than recant.<sup>26</sup> After acquainting herself with the geographical and political layout of the London area, she also began her public proselytizing.

Carvajal's apostolic work represents the essence of the Counter Reformation as the culmination of the optimistic, intellectual Catholic reform and the conservative trends of the Catholic response to Protestantism; in her the simultaneous progressive and regressive locution of

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 269: "Deseé mucho aprender la lengua y pasar por inglesa, sin que el embajador ni nadie de mi nación viniese a tener noticia de mí."

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 181. Carvajal continued as a patroness of recusants.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 216.

ideology and praxis are manifest. Her erudition on the one hand and her unswerving devotion to the Catholic cause on the other made her suitable as an instructor in the faith as well as a pre-execution counselor, and in the underground Catholic network of London she quickly became one of the people to whom new converts were sent for spiritual guidance and catechism.<sup>27</sup>

Living with various female companions in rented houses, first two doors down from the Spanish ambassador's residence and then on the outskirts of London, Carvajal formulated a female religious order that she named the Company of the Sovereign Virgin Mary Our Lady, for which she composed some spiritual objectives and an unimaginative draft rule, adapted from the Ignatian mission for men (complete with vows of obedience, poverty, chastity, and service to the pope).<sup>28</sup> Income for the company was to come from donations only, although Carvajal received a pension from the Spanish king himself throughout her stay in England. Prayer, needlework (to sell), and domestic chores formed the core of the theoretical day. Like Teresa of Ávila, Carvajal prescribed a prayerful, retired life for the women who followed her, in complete contrast to her own activities. Judging from the spiritual objectives and the rule she composed for the company, the sole purpose of the organization was to pray for Catholics in England and thereby mitigate divine wrath against that country. The only explicit thing that company members' lives were to have in common with that of their foundress was a vehement desire to attain "a violent and fortunate death for confession of the holy Catholic faith."<sup>29</sup> However, there was considerable discrepancy between the rules and their practice.

Perhaps out of prudence, Carvajal did not specify for her order's theoretical members the kind of activities which occupied most of her own as well as her actual companions' time; these activities included the consolation and instruction of imprisoned Catholics and other social outcasts, the disinterring of the drawn and quartered bodies of executed Catholics and the surreptitious forwarding of those "relics" to Catholic lands, and the teaching of Catholic dogma to anyone sent to her for instruction, as well as anyone on the street who would listen. Testimony of Carvajal's reputation as a prison counselor is evident in the inspirational remarks she is reputed to have delivered to Catholic martyrs just

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 270.

<sup>28</sup> The rule, with the holy office at its core, differed little if at all from the routine of cloistered nuns. The text is in *EA*, 325-29.

<sup>29</sup> *EA*, 319: "violenta y dichosa muerte por la confesión de la santa fe católica."

before their torments and death, soliloquies that sprinkle all of her biographies in hyperbolic, hagiographic style. She was also probably responsible for the exemplary death of the scandalous royal favorite in Spain, Rodrigo de Calderón, whose correspondence with her during her time in England survives.<sup>30</sup>

Carvajal's womanhood protected her from immediate arrest, since the powerful men around her seem to have doubted that a female could pose much danger to the Anglican Church and the English crown. She herself expressed sensitivity to the special mobility and freedom afforded her by her gender, observing in 1606 that "if I only could speak English, there are excellent opportunities to do good, and being a woman, many greater ones"; furthermore, she reported that the individuals responsible for her first arrest found it so hard to believe that she was a woman that they accused her of being a priest in female garb.<sup>31</sup> Nonetheless, the day arrived when the authorities could no longer turn their backs on the individual who managed to convince many Catholics to die true to their faith rather than take James I's oath of fidelity to the English crown, issued in May of 1606 (though not required of women until 1611).

Carvajal's first arrest resulted from her proselytizing in public: in 1608, she was imprisoned for four days at the local sheriff's house for talking about religion in a store where she had gone to buy fabric for an altar cloth. She says she spent a good two hours "chatting" ("platicando") about religious topics and the delicate matter of Anne Boleyn versus Catherine of Aragon, with her arm casually propped on the sill of the open shop door.<sup>32</sup> Documents related to this arrest testify how she had the habit of preaching while shopping and how she had bought anti-papal posters then being sold in London and proceeded to rip them up in public. Equally interesting is the anonymous declaration nested among her papers at the Encarnación, evidently composed by one of her companions at this time:

As she did use to go abroad many times to buy necessary things for the house, she did always speak little or much in matters of faith with the shopkeepers before she returned back here. [It] is unknown in this town how she converted

<sup>30</sup> Her first extant letter to him was written on 4 July 1609, and a letter to him was the penultimate one she wrote before dying; see *Epist.*, 480-81.

<sup>31</sup> *Epist.*, 154; 271: "Si la [lengua] supiese, bravas ocasiones hay de hacer bien, y por ser mujer, mucho mayores." She was also sensitive to the importance of class in the business of persecution, observing that servants and the poor were less sought after than the wealthy and noble, whose arrest, with its concomitant confiscation of property, would produce income for the English state (*Epist.*, 208).

<sup>32</sup> Her letters 96-99 describe her first prison term (*Epist.*, 255-75).

in this manner a very devout man. Also, the first time she was taken prisoner was for the same cause, disputing in the shops in Cheapside. It is a thing worthy to be noted, this imprisonment. She was in a shop in Cheapside speaking in the religion some four or three hours and there were many people about her harking with great attention.<sup>33</sup> At length there came the master of the shop and the other of the next shop. Who did rail exceedingly against [her] saying, "Go, go you gossip, you infidel hussies! Have you nothing to do at home in your house but that you must stand here prating and perverting the people?" Saying, "Get you going or we shall set you going," saying that she was the Pope.<sup>34</sup>

Two weeks later, Carvajal and her two companions were cornered on the street and escorted to prison. Although she was disappointed not to have been put in chains or manacles and was unhappy to have money thrust upon her by the Spanish ambassador's confessor, the arrest inspired her to obey her superiors' orders to stay out of sight for a few weeks after her release. As that release was negotiated, pressure was put on the Spanish ambassador to send her back to Spain, pressure which Carvajal, due to her connections, was able to mitigate temporarily.<sup>35</sup>

Documents written by the women living with Carvajal after her release from prison reveal a tension-filled existence during the final six years of her life, spent under constant surveillance by the English authorities. She did not reduce her activities out of fear; on the contrary, the longer she stayed in England, the more intense her political ambitions for the Catholic cause became and the more daring her own expeditions. In a one-page manuscript entitled "Points of my lady Doña Luisa, noted

<sup>33</sup> I have modernized the spelling but not the syntax, because it suggests, as does the lexicon, that French was its author's native language. In the previous sentence, for example, the syntax is romance: *Et c'est quelque chose a remarquer cette emprisonnement*. Here, French requires the article (*parler de la religion*), and the error in preposition indicates a non-native speaker of English.

<sup>34</sup> From the anonymous (uncatalogued) letter among Carvajal's papers in the Convento de la Encarnación archive, which begins, "This she would say many times." On its outer side, it contains this message for the person to whom it was sent: "I have sent you this paper because I have no commodity to keep it here for it is almost worn out with carrying it in my pocket. When it pleases God I come I shall tell you more. In the meantime, I beseech you, remember me."

<sup>35</sup> She needed the money because prisoners had to pay for their own food and other expenses while incarcerated. Carvajal had long endured pressure from friends and important men, such as the prominent Jesuit Luis de la Puente, to leave England and enter a convent. Although their letters to her are not extant, her responses to them make it evident that they accused her of vainglory and of compromising the Catholic mission in England. The English Jesuits wanted her to stay, for reasons made clear in Walpole's biography: she was able to accomplish innumerable services for the Catholic cause which Catholic men could not, not the least of which was to move about in public.

of her life in England," the anonymous author states: "as she did go through Cheapside, she would kneel down and adore the cross. Then all the people did cry out 'A papist, a papist! Hang her hang her!'"<sup>36</sup> Several attempts were made to enter her house under deceitful tactics, but Carvajal nimbly avoided them, in part by setting up her little company of women with two locking front doors, water piped directly into the house, and instructions to stay away from the windows at all times. From the period around her second arrest, in 1613, one of her companions documented the (female) porter's responsibilities at Carvajal's company: "When anyone had knocked at the door, she [the porter] must look out of the window to see who it was, then to tell her [Carvajal] that such a one was there . . . She must never go to the door without calling one of the other maids with her, for to shut the second door before she opens the first. And not without great cause was all this care, for now in these later years the *poursuivants* made many proffers for to get in, for they came in the habits [clothes] of saltpeter men for to dig. Sometimes by fair means, others by foul, but never could get their purpose, for she, with her great wisdom, prevented them."<sup>37</sup>

Carvajal thus continued her missionary activities, although a serious relapse into illness forced her to stay at home more and more after 1611. Her enclosure ironically made her more suspicious than ever to the English authorities and in October, 1613 the archbishop of Canterbury himself ordered her house broken into and Carvajal arrested. The anonymous author of "Points of My Lady Doña Luisa" recalls, "In the year of our Lord 1613, month of October, 18, the Bishop of Canterbury, being informed of her retired life, sent the Sheriff and the Recorder of London with many other officers to apprehend her at her own house."<sup>38</sup> Taken to the public prison this time, her three female companions were jailed

<sup>36</sup> The "Points of my lady" document is in Carvajal's papers at the Convento de la Encarnación.

<sup>37</sup> "Points of my lady," n.p.

<sup>38</sup> This document appears to have been written by an eyewitness. Walpole, 115, writing shortly after Carvajal's death in 1614, reports that she was arrested 23 October. Abad, 327, dates the same arrest as 28 October, the feast day of Saint Judas. Is the eyewitness or Walpole incorrect, or has the date been piously modified to make the tragic event fall upon the day belonging to the most famous saintly intercessor for those in desperate straits? Further hagiographic expansion occurred in the number of men reported to have attended the arrest, which escalates from the sheriff, the recorder, and other officers (author of "Points of my Lady"), to the recorder, sheriff, and sixty men (Walpole, 115); to sixty "wolves" armed with halberds, foot soldiers and horsemen (Muñoz, 456); to the recorder, the sheriff, with sixty armed men, foot soldiers, horsemen, and "a great multitude of the common people" (Abad, 327).

with the Catholics, but their mistress was put in the cell for heretics and common criminals. Upon hearing of this disgrace, the diplomats of Catholic countries mobilized, and a coterie of women sympathizers, including two important ambassadors' wives, clustered immediately around Carvajal's cell and refused to leave until she was set free. Three days later, she was released to the Spanish ambassador, contingent upon his promise to have her removed from England. She wasted no time in writing to the Duke of Lerma, then to Rodrigo de Calderón, asking both to intercede with Philip III so that she not be sent back to Spain. In the letter to the Duke, the last one of her life, she explained the two accusations brought against her by the English state: "one, that I have founded monasteries for nuns, and the other that I have converted many Protestants to my religion."<sup>39</sup> Both, in essence, were true.

On 14 November 1613, Carvajal wrote to her Carmelite friends in Brussels, referring to her imprisonment as "the lovely thing which has transpired."<sup>40</sup> Although her health rebounded in her emotional exaltation after her release from jail, by late November of 1613 she had again relapsed into her former illness which, combined with lung problems, produced a rapid decline in her physical state. Luisa de Carvajal died on her forty-eighth birthday, 2 January 1614. Had she not died then, shortly thereafter she would have received orders from the Spanish king, supported by a decree from the council of Castile, that she leave England.

What is most remarkable about Carvajal's English mission is that it happened at all. Although women were sent abroad from Spain to found convents — the Carmelites and reformed Augustinians were particularly active in this regard during the same period — Carvajal's declared design was to avoid cloister.<sup>41</sup> The importance of the privilege afforded by her class, an excellent education, and extensive political connections throughout the upper echelons of European society, cannot be underestimated. It may be as well that the general nature of her intentions when she left Spain — her idea was simply to die for God — and her willingness to perform whatever services were needed allowed her to succeed where others may have failed. For although she had been convinced

<sup>39</sup> *Epist.*, 416: "el uno, que he fundado monasterios de monjas, y el otro que he reducido con mi persuasión muchos protestantes a mi religión."

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, 413: "la linda cosa que ha pasado."

<sup>41</sup> In the document which begins "Leaving girlish things behind" [Dejando niferfás atrás], written in July of 1606, Carvajal describes her attempts to convince herself to enter a convent before her uncle died in 1591, which came to nothing, since she believed it was God's will that she remain in the world (*EA*, 223).

since age eighteen that God wanted her in England, she was less sure of exactly what she was supposed to do there, and expressed this doubt overtly as late as 1607, at the end of her second year in London: "I can't figure out what His Majesty might want from me in England, although it seems he wants me to persevere here, at least so far."<sup>42</sup> If her superiors were as aware as historians are today of the importance of women and domestic culture in maintaining the Catholic faith in England during this period, they were sensitive to the advantages of having a woman like Carvajal among their ranks.<sup>43</sup> In time, what emerged was a remarkable opportunity for her to teach doctrine, which indicated respect for her intellect and faith. Yet when contextualized, that respect looks short-lived: nine years.

Carvajal's mission predated the initiatives of other Counter-Reformation activist women by just a few years, women whose organizations had a longer life than hers, but none of whose original intentions to establish active female religious apostolates survived the seventeenth century intact. Mary Ward, who evidently knew of Carvajal indirectly, founded her Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary in 1616, and after a few substantial adjustments met with great success on the continent, only to find all of her houses closed by a papal decree in 1631 (Ward herself was arrested by the papal inquisition in Munich). Ward's initial plan was to have women missionaries comparable to the Jesuits working in England at the very time Carvajal died. Elizabeth Rapley describes official censure of Ward's initiatives, writing that "the reports of Ward's successes proved too much for church leadership, and she was ordered to stop all missionary work, for 'it was never heard in the Church that women should discharge the Apostolic Office.'"<sup>44</sup> In this environment, the odds of Carvajal's own "company" ever attaining normalized status were slim. Luise de Marillac's Daughters of Charity, founded with Vincent de Paul, met with more enduring success because it was a charitable organization structured as a confraternity and so a less-threatening novelty than groups of self-governing women doing missionary work comparable to men's.

It seems likely that, had Carvajal lived to see her Company of the Virgin into the mid-seventeenth century, it would have suffered the

<sup>42</sup> *Epist.*, 216: "No se me puede descubrir qué quiera Su Majestad de mí en Inglaterra, aunque parece quiere la perseverancia en ella, hasta ahora a lo menos."

<sup>43</sup> Willen and Rowlands discuss women's importance in recusant activities.

<sup>44</sup> Wiesner, 197, citing Rapley's summary of the bill, 31. Mary Ward's life is illuminated by her own writings (see Ward). Liebewitz discusses Catholic women activists of the Counter Reformation, including Mereci, Ward, and Marillac.

same fate as Mary Ward's Institute if it had continued with Carvajal's own zeal. The ongoing repression of Catholicism in England in the early 1600s, with its accompanying immobilization of male Catholic priests, produced a crack in the ecclesiastical monolith through which a determined woman like Carvajal managed to slip and, in her own way, prosper. As she herself observed, a female missionary caught the English authorities and populace off guard long enough for her to realize her ambition, if not fulfill her final vow. The desperate straits in which the Catholic church in England found itself explain her being permitted to do what other women, even those more intimately affiliated with the Jesuits, were not. Such was Isabel Roser, whose intentions to form a female branch of the Jesuits were vetoed by Ignatius himself in 1547 after a two-year trial. What distinguished Carvajal from Roser is that she was doing work that Catholic men could not do, at the time and place she was doing it; she was filling in, not taking over.<sup>45</sup>

Carvajal's initiative was made possible by her long association with the English Jesuits, whose cause she adopted as her own; moreover, her nobility, her money, and her flawless articulation of what the Catholic church needed witnesses for, in action and in words, further allowed for her activities. Carvajal might appear to be the martyrdom-seeking type of zealot, but hers was nonetheless a zealotry allowed to spring into action in a dangerous, not remote, environment. Significantly, she did not go to Japan, where the Jesuits were also being martyred at the time. She went to England, to *recover* lost souls, not to far-flung places where there were souls to *discover*, which suggests that the officially endorsed women's role in the Catholic church during this period was to reinforce the existing framework, not initiate new objectives.

The political efficacy of Carvajal's role in the Counter-Reformation force of Spain must also be factored into the reasons why her mission was allowed to happen. Her later letters articulate a vehemence exceeding that of the most devout monarchist. In them, amid hearty declarations of devotion to her king, she urged Philip III to arm Ireland and regularly accused him of making peace with France and the Netherlands at the expense of the Catholic cause. She wrote with great energy to Rodrigo de Calderón in September of 1613, just months before her second jail sentence: "The rocks and fields cry out for help in Ireland. With

<sup>45</sup> Roser took Franciscan vows in 1550 and died in 1554. Meissner's long section on her, 260-71, is weakened by his unawareness that the story Ignatius composed about a woman who spent her life cross-dressed as a monk and was accused of fathering a child — of which Meissner offers extensive psychological analysis in relationship to Ignatius and Isabel — is actually a faithful rendition of the *vita* of Saint Marina.

three or four thousand soldiers repeating the initiative there they would accomplish wonders, and would do so even without them, if given money for the munitions and soldiers they would seek out. Explain this to the Duke [of Lerma] immediately, for God will grant him many mercies for it. This should be done at the expense and with the support of the King our lord, hiding his hand; otherwise there will be no support for it in Rome."<sup>46</sup> Carvajal's was the baroque, Counter-Reformation support of God and King at all expense; hers was the perfect piety, uncompromising and selfless, for the Church and the State under duress.

There was no place for a militant woman to have an active religious profession in Spain, where the Spanish state, with its inquisitional arm, had more or less assured internal conformity to Catholic norms by 1559. Even Teresa of Ávila had effectively made a repeat of her own heroics impossible by imposing a level of enclosure on her daughters that she herself had scarcely lived. There was no adversary at home and Carvajal, a Counter-Reformation heroine, needed an adversary and knew it. Until 1604, she was well on her way to frustration and endless mortification in acceptance of the penitential piety through which many women exercised their considerable energies, often having been taught that violence against the self in the name of others was the only proper avenue for those energies.<sup>47</sup> Ironically, the confiscation of Carvajal's penitential instruments by customs officers as she entered England in 1605 signaled her liberation from powerless to empowered sacrifice, from selflessness to selfhood, accomplished by the intellectual, spiritual, and physical challenges she met while there. Intelligent enough to foresee certain doom written next to her name on the pages of a convent registrar, Carvajal spent twenty-five years crafting her profession, which the threatened Catholic Church in England saw blossom into a fullness that would not have happened anywhere else. Her embrace of the very ideals meant to restrain her — mortification, self-denial, and conformity to

<sup>46</sup> *Epist.*, 400: "Las piedras y campos claman por socorro en Irlanda. Con tres o cuatro mil soldados que entrasen de nuevo harían maravillas; y aun sin ellos, si tuviesen dinero para municiones y mantener los que ellos se buscasen. Representélo vuestra señoría al duque instantemente, que Dios le hará mucha merced por ello. A costa y persuasión del Rey nuestro señor se debía hacer esto, escondiendo su mano; en otra manera no habrá ánimo en Roma."

<sup>47</sup> An example of a woman swept up in this piety was Marina de Escobar (1554-1633), whose inner life acquired an ever more violent, self-destructive intensity the more her career ambitions were frustrated. Luis de la Puente's biography, allegedly based on Escobar's first-person spiritual life story, is a remarkable (and admiring) portrait of her potent self-denigration and spiritual excesses.

divine will — enabled Carvajal to transform them into vehicles of liberation.

Luisa de Carvajal and women like her restlessly strain the limits of typological classifications typically assigned “baroque personae.”<sup>48</sup> Not a missionary in the way a man was (although certainly a missionary), not a statesperson (although clearly influential in matters of state), and certainly not a nun or a *beata* (although vowed to monastic virtues), Carvajal beckons us to fine-tune the traditional nomenclature used to define professions of early modern individuals. Her case suggests that the women who exalted the very values which (one might assume) repressed them deserve most careful scrutiny, for they are the women who, precisely by embracing and articulating those apparently repressive values, were able to move through them and beyond them to self-discovery and realization. These are women who attained their goals not in spite of the Counter Reformation but because of it.

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<sup>48</sup> Specifically, her career is not represented by any of the professions included in the recent volume entitled *Baroque personae*: statesmen, soldier, financier, secretary, rebel, preacher, missionary, nun, witch, scientist, artist, bourgeois.

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