

Five themes in the poetry of the Castálida Flood¹ of the only poetess, muse tenth, Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz

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*"That I, lady, was born in abundant America
compatriot of gold,
countrywoman of metals,
where the common sustenance it's almost as good
that nowhere else the motherland is flaunted".*

Sor Juana Ines De La Cruz.

*"The last baroque poetess. With it closes the great poetry of the Spanish
Baroque, and at the same time it is advance and prophecy of modern
poetry. Hers, too, deals with a new theme: the poetry of knowledge".*

Octavio Paz

*"Of the seduction that this particular woman exercises, which is an organic
intellectual in the strictly Gracianian sense, which, as such, it ends up facing
the orthodoxy and the power in whose bosom it was integrated".*

Octavio Paz

Abstract

This article seeks to make an approach to the historical and social figure of Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz, making a characterization of her literary work through the Neobaroque concept and some recurring topics of her literacy work.

Keywords: Neobaroque, beauty, science, moral, woman.

1 Castálida Flood, that is, produced by the waters of the Castalia fountain, at the foot of Mount Parnassus, which gave inspiration to poets. Title given to the first edition of collected poems of Sor Juana Ines de la Cruz gathered by D. Juan Camacho y Gauna in 1689.

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Literature is a product of its time, of its way of interpreting and giving answers to the conflicts in which society is immersed, that is, it is found in large frameworks that together create images that reinterpret reality from the aesthetic sensibility of the Writer. It can then be said that literature creates its own maps, where regional boundaries, aesthetic discourses and cultural forms prevailing in a given historical moment are drawn. From this perspective, it becomes necessary for this essay to enunciate some aspects of Mexican society of the seventeenth century, since this paper will address aspects of the work of Sor Juana Ines de la Cruz and how it becomes one of the most important representatives of the Baroque Criollo or Illustrated Baroque, a literary movement that would transform American letters to the present. However, before speaking about what happened in America, the Baroque must be drawn, understood as a movement that was developed in Europe between the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, this being a reaction to the rigorous thought of the Renaissance (15th century); that was characterized by the taste towards the formal complication, the abundance of adornments and the extravagance in the use of rhetorical figures; transforming into an ornate and sometimes complex style that sought an exaltation of resources in pursuit of the senses; For this reason, the literary vision of the Spanish Golden Age in the works of Quevedo, Lope de Vega and Góngora as their representatives is characteristic of this period, especially the latter, which served as a source of inspiration for Sor Juana.

In America this tradition is received by the latter, arriving as a way of thinking that seeks to stir up the crisis of what happened in the Renaissance, mixing in its way of understanding the world, a form of bombastic mannerism, which at the same time is paradox; imitating and distorting the classic through an intellectual process, seeking to resemble life itself with its lights and shadows; and trying to give answers to their own questions about their time through reason, through amazement at the changes that were taking place in their socio-cultural context. In fact, multiple forms of prehispanic thought still survive, mixed with the rule of the Spanish empire, Catholic religiosity and the Inquisition, which reach the New World as a form of repression of thought. The first steps of the colonial city were being taken, with all that this implied: urbanization, the creation of new ways of inhabiting the space, the change of relations between the inhabitants of a new city; that is to say, the advent of the Creole society and consequently of the conflicts that this would entail for the construction of the new nations, already influenced in that century and in the following by the ideas of the Enlightenment.

In this way, the Baroque that begins to manifest in Mexico, has other components that although they owe everything to the conception of the Spanish Baroque, it begins to be versioned, to have unique and particular nuances; The New World as a gathering place for different European traditions, recreates in a particular way everything that comes from the Old World, providing a unique form of expression that will be understood as the Criollo Baroque, no longer as an extension of Spanish thought, but as a conscious colonial appropriation of its time and space. Thus, America is born with an adult Baroque and with a scopic look of itself, which no longer seeks to copy the extremes as is the aspiration of the traditional Baroque; now seeks to be configured from the stage of the mirror, which is when the subject has the ability to perceive "itself". as a unit inserted within a different social and cultural dynamics.

The Baroque of this period becomes a discourse of rupture, as Mabel Moraña affirms in her text *Viaje al silencio*. Explorations of baroque speech:

Before reaching a finished form and becoming a differentiated political project, baroque discourse is affirmed in the representation of the various forms of Creole marginality imposed as an epochal expression of imperial hegemony. It is from this representation that Baroque discourse is affirmed as a claiming discourse and, in this sense, as a founding discourse in the constitution of national identities (1998, p.60).

Thus, it is necessary to understand that the role played by the literati is crucial to understand the Colony, the Criollo, the intellectual Baroque that was lived in Mexico; in the words of Christ Rafael Figueroa in his work *The baroque Creole: meaning of a process*. Hernando Domínguez Camargo and Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz:

It can be said that the beginnings of the Creole version of the Baroque represent acquisitions of language, new forms of curiosity and search, mysticisms with other modes of prayer, tasting a vitality that was surely lacking in the daily life of the colonies, in short, refinement, stylization and poetization of a nature barely sensed, but intensely intuited and then forged from the word (1990, p.60).

The literary of this time, especially the poets, are responsible for reading and interpreting the new visions of his time: read, record, and re-symbolize colonial thought, transform and dialogue through his erudition with the dominant Spanish tradition and the feeling of the American dominated, creating a fabric of soul between its own origin and foreign thought, which places in relevance the deepest of its being and manifesting through the letters, the things of this world.

A clear example of this re-signification, of this new baroque fabric is found in Juana Ramírez de Asbaje, born in a place called San Miguel de Neplanta, almost in the southern limit of the state of Mexico, and later called Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz, which represents the first great figure of Creole and Baroque Hispano-American poetry. His lyrical work supposes a perfect assimilation of the poetic currents of the Spanish Golden Age, but with a new interpretation, with a great amount of stylistic subtleties: for her the attitude towards knowledge, has an illuminist character, transforming her poetry into a form of knowledge (unlike Góngora that is contemplation), which she assumes in her person in the presence of the literate intellectual, but at the same time transgressor, a learned woman, with an immense library, friend of the civil authorities of her time; it is in essence the greatest example of the Novohispanos, a syncretism of traditional Spain with the New Kingdom of Mexico.

This is how this religious is obsessed with knowledge, because this leads her to know God. Sor Juana becomes an intellectual, which was at the same time a problem for her time, since being a woman and, apparently, a very beautiful woman, was the stone in her family's shoes, since they did not have the necessary dowry in that moment. For this reason, taking the habits and get away from the madding crowd, served as an excuse to immerse in the world of letters and science, which even sparked more problems than praise. It is interesting

to note that she was accused of being heretic, lover, lesbian, impious and even blasphemous because of her writings and because of her close relationships with very influential men and women of the Colony.

It is worth making a special mention to a part of her work the Response to Sister Filotea de la Cruz, a prose letter in which she responds to what was written by the Bishop of Puebla, Don Manuel Fernández de Santa Cruz, where he exhorts Sister Juan Ines, not to enter into theological discussions, in addition to reproving her excessive dedication to profane letters. The writing is signed with the pseudonym of Sister Philotea de la Cruz, for which, the nun writes her response defending herself against the accusations against her, while recognizing the superiority of the divine letters over the profane, defends herself by claiming her right to the intellectual life and to its humanistic education in non-sacred literature. In this letter, she shows moments of her childhood and her youth, where she portrays her intellectual thirst, her readings of the classics and her handling of Latin, she also describes the varied problems with the malicious and those who try to help her, created harm instead. She in this singular writing, goes to the history of the feminine intellectualism and seeks different scholars, both secular and religious to argue her curiosity that never ceases: this led to more problems than joys knowing in advance that many of her writings were published only by order, being herself aware that the intellect is a cross and heavier even if one is a woman. Here is a sample of this rebellious act of intellectuality:

I would like, Venerable Lady, to send you works worthy of your virtue and wisdom; but as the Poet said: *Ut desint vires, tamen est laudanda voluntas*: make ego happy, *auguror esse Deos*³. If some other things I write, I always go to find the sacred of your plants and the insurance of your correction, because I have no other jewelry to pay you, and feel Seneca, who began to make profits was forced to continue; and thus he will pay you your own liberality, which only thus can I be worthily performed, without falling into that of Seneca himself: *Turpe est beneficiis vinci*.⁴ That it is *bizarria* of the generous creditor to give to the poor debtor, with which he can satisfy the debt. God did so with the world unable to pay: he gave his own Son to be offered for worthy satisfaction. If the style, venerable Lady of this letter, has not been as you are due, I ask for forgiveness of the homemade familiarity or less authority that treating you as a religious veil, my sister, I have forgotten the distance of your illustrious person, that to see you without veil, it would not happen like that; but you, with your sanity and kindness, will supplement or amend the terms, and if it seems incongruous to you, I have used it because it seems to me that for the reverence I owe you, reverence is very little, change it in the one that seems decent to you to what you deserve, that I have not dared to exceed the limits of your style or to break the margin of your modesty. (2013, p.274-275).

3 "Even if the forces are lacking, you still have to praise the will. I think the gods are content with her" (Ovidio, *De Ponto*, III, 4, 79-80)". (Ovidio, *De Ponto*, III, 4, 79-80).

4 "It's shame to be beaten in benefit". (*De beneficiis*, V, 2).

When speaking of the work of Sor Juana, it must be taken into account that this seems to be inscribed within the Gongora-inspired culteranismo and Conceptismo, tendencies that are characteristic of the Spanish Baroque, but the ingenuity and originality of her writing have placed her above any particular thought current. For example, in the poetry of Sor Juana there are numerous and eloquent profane compositions (redondillas, lays, lyres and sonnets). It is therefore worth approaching some of the most recurrent themes within his work, which are made manifest in any of Sor Juana's scriptural moments. In this sense, for this paper five specific topics will be traced, although it is very clear that the theme of human love was predominant in the first part of his work and then in his last times, as well as the observation about itself and its form to act in the world.

The theme of love

As a religious she was, divine love and human love are seen constantly in her work, although they are contrary; since divine love is total, it is not contradictory, it is not lost with it in the struggle to reach it, since it is not finite, so for Sor Juana Inés the love of God is perfected in the search and aspires to eternity:

While grace excites me⁵
 by rising to the sphere,
 more I plunge into the deep
 the weight of my miseries.

I'm the executioner myself.
 and I am prison of myself.
 Who saw what grief and pain
 own one thing?

Virtue and custom
 in the heart they fight
 and the heart agonizes
 while they fight.

I dislike the same
 that I would like most;
 and the disgust that I give,
 It's worth it in me.

And although it is the virtue so strong,
 I'm afraid maybe they'll beat her.
 that the custom is very great
 and there is virtue very tender.

I love God and I feel in God, and do my
 same will
 lof what is relief, cross;
 from the same port, storm.
 Suffer, God commands,
 more in such a way
 that if guilt is the punishment,
 Do not blame the penalties (2013.p.128).

Observe the speech
 between confused darkness
 Well, who can give me light
 if the reason is blind?

5 Romance at the same attempt (in which she expresses the effects of Divine Love, and proposes to die a lover, despite all risk).

Although the theme of divine love is less frequent than that of human love; it is interesting to observe how in Sor Juan Inés de la Cruz there are compositions of a deep lyricism in which love without hope, suffering and unrequited love appear, an example of this is seen here:

Stop, shadow of my elusive,⁶
image of the spell that I love most,
beautiful illusion for who glad dies,
sweet fiction for those who grieve alive.

If the magnet of your thanks,
attractive, serves my obedient steel chest,
Why do you fall in love with flattering
if you have to mock me then fugitive?

But to emblazon you can not,
satisfied, that your tyranny triumphs of me:
that although you leave mocked the
narrow tie
that your fantastic form held,
it matters little to cheat arms and chest
If you work with me, my fantasy. (2013,
p.189).

It is striking the use of proper names (Fabio, Alcino, Silvio, Lucrecia, Lysi) to talk about past or other people's love, how untimely love is in all manifestations, the complexity that involves loving, and how it leads to poem, is full of syllogisms, paradoxes, antithesis and other rhetorical complications.

Love begins with restlessness,⁷
solicitude, ardor and sleeplessness;
it grows with risks, lances and misgivings;
is strong in tears and in supplication.

6 That contains a happy fantasy with decent love. Compare Luis Martín de la Plaza's sonnet, "Amante Sombra de mi bien esquivo".

7 What consoles a jealous, epiloguing series of "Amores"

Doctrine it warmness and detachment,
it preserves being among deceptive veils,
until with grievances or jealousy
extinguishes with its tears its fire.
Its principle, its means and purpose is this:
Why, Alcino, do you feel the detour
of Celia, that another time well you
wanted?

What reason is there that pain costs you?
Well, I'm not cheating you love, Alcino
mine,
but the precise term came. (2013, p.195).

The theme of beauty

For all the classic poetry and especially the Renaissance, beauty, was an important part for the aesthetic creation, the beautiful, the pure, the sublime, in Sor Juana is in the subtlety, the beauty and the brevity of the rose, a metaphor of the beautiful and passing, of the life that accompanies death:

Divine rose that in gentle culture⁸
you are, with your fragrant subtlety,
purple teaching in beauty,
teaching snowfall to beauty.

Amago of the human architecture,
example of vain kindness,
in whose being he united nature
the happy crib and sad burial.

How proud in your pomp,
presumed, superb, the risk of dying disdain,
and then faint and shrunken,

8 In which gives moral censorship to a rose and in it to his peers.

from your deciduous you are withered
 signs,
 with that with learned death and foolish
 life,
 living you deceive and dying you teach!
 (2013, p.183).

The theme of the scientific look of the world and of life

Sor Juana reasoned in her verses, and due to her extensive knowledge of the scientific advances in her work, the references to her are evident in all her poetic construction, trying to rationally explain the mysteries of the world and of life. It concentrates on several branches of scientific thought, but three of the most striking are the physiological part (digestion, humors), physics (light, movement of the spheres, vision) and in mathematical terms (the proportions, the probabilities). It is in First Dream where a deep work is found in these aspects:

And to look at everything; I saw nothing,
 I could not discern,
 (bota⁹ the intellective faculty
 in so much, so diffuse
 incomprehensible looking species
 from him an axis on which rid
 the fickle sphere machine,
 the opposite pole)
 the parties no longer only,
 that everything is considered by the
 universe
 be perfect
 to their ornament no more belonging;
 but not even those who are members¹⁰

9 Dull.

10 The scholastic philosophy distinguished between integral (essential) and perfectionary (accessory) parts.

members are from your dilated body,
 proportionally competent.
 More like the one he has usurped
 diurnal darkness of objects
 visible colors
 if sudden assaults shine upon him,
 with the shadow of light it becomes more
 blind:

-that the contrary surplus effects
 in the clumsy power, that the fire
 of the sun admit then
 can not because of lack of habit,
 and the same darkness that used to be
 tenebrous in view impediment,
 of the grievances of light appeals
 and once and again with the hand cela
 of the weak eyes dazzled
 the hesitant rays,
 serving goes pious mediator
 the shadow of an instrument
 so that recovered
 by degrees are enabled,
 because after constant
 your firmer operation exercise. (2013,
 p.56-57).

The subject of moral philosophy

Very consonant with their time, philosophy and moralizing intention appear, which in Sor Juana Inés, as well as in her Spanish teachers, these verses sometimes seem to hide in the most insignificant poetry according to the critics; they are thoughts that seek to exhort, teach and direct those who read it; she uses the game of opposites, cause and effect, happiness and sadness, life and death, to try to convince others about the purpose of knowing, and the fact of clear references is also praiseworthy to his knowledge of the philosophers of ancient Greece:

Let's pretend¹¹ that I'm happy¹²,
sad thought, a while;
maybe you can persuade me,
although I know the opposite:
that only in apprehension
they say that the damages lie
if you imagine yourself happy
you will not be so unhappy.

Serve me the understanding
some time of rest,
and wit is not always
with the profit found¹³.
Everyone is opinions
of such different opinions,
that what the one that is black
the other test that is white.

To some it serves of attractiveness
what another conceives anger;
and what this one for relief,
that one he has for work.

The one who is sad, censure
the cheerful of light;
and the one who is cheerful makes fun
to see the sad suffering.

The two Greek philosophers
Well this truth proved:
well what in the one laugh,
It caused in the other crying.

Celebrate your opposition
it has been for so many centuries,
without which one was right, be
until ago found out;

11 Accuses the drop of much science, which fears
useless even to know and harmful to live.

12 Against the anguished baroque thoughts, another
vital attitude is proposed, albeit one based on pre-
tense.

13 Ingenuity and profit are not always in disagreement.

before, in your two flags
the world all enlisted,
as humor dictates,
everyone follows the side. (2013, p.76-78).

The theme of women

The vision of the woman in Sor Juana Inés is always liberating. The nun fought for her rights as a woman and as an intellectual fervently, all her life. Throughout his poetry a feminist tint can be found, where she criticizes the hypocritical attitudes of men before women, demystifying the Christian vision in which women are the inciters of evil since biblical times; she in one of her most famous Redondillas applies the most severe criticism and with lucidity and erudition, raises controversy to the macho vision of her time:

Foolish men¹⁴ you accuse¹⁵
to the woman without reason,
without seeing that you are the occasion
of the same thing that you blame.

If with unparalleled eagerness
you request their disdain,
Why do you want them to work well
if you incite them to evil?

You fight your resistance
and then with seriousness
you say it was lightness
what the diligence did.

14 It argues inconsequential taste and censorship of
men who in women accuse what they cause

15 The most popular redondilla of Sor Juana follows
the tradition of "polite feminis". along the lines of
Juan del Encina ("Against those who say bad about
women"), Bartolomé Torres Naharro (Comedia Se-
rafina and Comedia Justina), and part of the Eclogue
II by Garcilaso de la Vega.

Seem wants the boldness
of your crazy opinion
the child who puts the coconut
and then he is afraid of you.

You want with foolish presumption
find the one you are looking for,
for pretended, Thais¹⁶,
and in possession, Lucrecia¹⁷.

What humor can be weirder
that the one, lacking advice,
he himself fogs the mirror
and feel that it is not clear?

With favor and disdain
you have the same condition,
complaining, if they treat you badly.
(2013, p.160-161).

It is quite audacity, that a woman and also a nun, write this type of poems, facing men on their worldview, placing the two sexes on the same plane, the taste for being alive and sentient; Man and woman as a tension of giving and receiving. It is important in his poetry to emphasize again the Response to Sister Philothea, because in her is the deepest longing of her heart, the right to culture and to obtain knowledge.

But here is not your vision of women. In its evaluation of itself it shows the most profound intellectual and spiritual vocation, framed in the strictest rigor. She believed that the study and the letters had enriched the spirit of many women, but in turn believed that she herself had much less right to write because her knowledge was very scarce, she

16 Famous Athenian courtesan.

17 Prototype of conjugal fidelity, she commits suicide after being raped by Sexto Tarquinio while her husband Colatino was in the war.

felt unworthy, hence she searched so hard
for the to know:

When, Divine Numbers¹⁸,
sweetest swans, when
they deserved my carelessness
occupy your cares?

Where to me so much praise?
Where do I praise so much?
How far could the distance
add to my portrait?

How tall do you make me?
What Colossus you have carved,
that does not know the height
from the original what low?

I'm not the one you think,
If you have given me
another being in your feathers
and another breath on your lips,
and diverse from myself
Between your feathers I walk,
not as I am, but as
you wanted to imagine it

A lead yourself by reports,
I was not surprised so much,
I already know how much affection
He knows how to enlarge the sizes.

But if of my blots
you saw the humble features,
that of the most lost time
they were careless leisure,

What could move you to those
badly deserved applause?
So you can to the truth

18 In recognition of the inimitable writers of Europe, who made their works greater with their praise: that was not finished.

drag what is courtly?

To an ignorant woman,
whose study has not happened
of times, to the precise
wrong occupation stolen;
to an almost rustic abortion
of some sterile fields¹⁹,
that being born in them,
it makes them more exhausted;
to an uneducated education,
in whose childhood they occupied
the same cogitations
the office of the ayos,
praise is directed
of the clearest Ingenios
that in Pulpits and Schools
the World reveres sages? ...

... Who in my praise sees
occupy such high judgments,
What will he say, but taste

Do you have in the command mill...²⁰ ? ...
(1997, p.73-74).

Finally, it can only be said that there is a revaluation in the literary world of the work of Sor Juana Ines de la Cruz. Her life serves as inspiration for the new generations, the internal and external struggle of her being materialized in words, serves to find in it the deep feeling of the colonial baroque; because in it, there are "the subtleties of the conceptual, erotic, linguistic and imaginative gam". (Oviedo, 1995: 238). Sor Juana is the Novohispana woman who anticipates her time and projects herself into the future, taking knowledge as an intellectual tool that unites, to the poetry of the time with the classical tradition, and that makes her as a woman and poet in a lighthouse of knowledge that cannot be quenched, even after centuries and centuries of ignominy. The voice of this nun reverberates immortal in the history of enlightened thought.

19 It alludes to her birth in a farmhouse.

20 At this point the draft of the romance was left unfinished, which was found after her death. To all lights, this is the last work written by Sor Juana.



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