

Title: Duality of a Conventual Nun: A Philosophical Analysis of the Feminist Grassroots in Sor Juana's Literary Works

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The orthodox gender roles long enforced by Catholicism were transformed by the 17th New Spain writer and nun Sor Juana Inez De La Cruz through a feminist revision of epistemological philosophy. The Renaissance remained a force of new ideas between the 14th and 17th centuries, during which many contradicted the limits imposed by the Catholic Church. Through the rapport of the intellectual community, emerging scientific and cultural opinions were able to proliferate outside of Europe and into colonial lands, including New Spain (Nisbet 473). The Renaissance had an impact on almost all academia, particularly with Descartes, a French philosopher prominent in the 17th century who placed emphasis on a scientific understanding of existence--a new epistemology concerning the acquisition of knowledge (Bermúdez 743). The limits imposed on Sor Juana through gender roles enforced by the Catholic Church were reflected in her literature as she spearheaded feminism in the Americas, an effort catalyzed by Cartesian philosophy. The break from conformity is illustrated in Sor Juana's "Primero Sueño," a poem that transforms her feminist struggles into literature. Through the incorporation of philosophical thought, particularly the scientific perspective popularized by Descartes, the poem serves as a clandestine rebellion against the censorship of the Church. Sor Juana pioneered women's rights through her pursuit of knowledge as disclosed by a feminist analysis of her libratory poetry and her patriarchally dominated life narrative. Sor Juana's incorporation of philosophical thought in "Primero Sueño" cultivates feminist grassroots that challenge the roles for women propagated by the Church.

Works Cited

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