6

The Lieutenant Nun

Catalina de Erauso (1592?–1650)—Soldiers' Tales and Virginity

"I kissed the foot of His Holiness Urban VIII and told him succinctly, and as best I could all about my life, adventures, gender, and virginity. His Holiness appeared to be astonished thereby, and graciously gave me permission to continue to lead my life dressed as a man, urging me to lead an honest life from now on."
—*Vida*, chap. 25

"News of this event spread everywhere very quickly, and people who had seen me before, and people, both before and after, who heard my story all over the Indies were amazed."
—*Vida*, chap. 20

Only a few years after the streets of Lima had filled upon news of Rosa de Lima's death, they filled again with onlookers as the now infamous Lieutenant Catalina de Erauso arrived in a litter escorted by ten men of cloth and six swordsmen.[1] After having disguised herself as a man for nearly twenty years and earned a reputation as a brave soldier and rogue on the frontiers of the Spanish empire in Chile, Catalina had been ordered to take the veil as a nun.[2] She had killed a man in a duel over a card game, and in order to protect herself from the law, she had confessed to a bishop and revealed her true identity as a woman who had once lived in a convent in Spain. The bishop spared her life under the condition that she return to her previous profession as a bride of Christ.

In her account to the bishop, Catalina reported having been born to a well-to-do family in the Basque country, entering her aunt's convent at the age of four. She escaped before professing her vows at age fifteen, donned male garb to serve as a page, and finally embarked for America, where she worked at various occupations, including those of merchant and soldier. Catalina also confessed to having maimed and killed many men. Thus, after years of battles against fierce indigenous tribes, duels over gambling and ladies, and quick escapes, the Lieutenant Nun (*La Monja Alférez*)—as she came to be known—entered a convent for several years. There she awaited official confirmation from Spain that she had been a novice but had escaped the convent before taking final and irrevocable vows, which carried with them mandatory enclosure for life. After letters crisscrossed the Atlantic and proof of her secular

status finally arrived, Catalina again rejected the nun's veil and put on trousers. Rather than take up her previous life on the frontier, she embarked for her homeland. She spent the next six years settling her share of the family estate, initiating a series of petitions, and dictating or writing her memoirs.[3] During these years she also sat for a portrait done by the well-known Spanish painter, Francisco Pacheco (see figure 6.1). In 1630 Catalina again set sail for America—this time to base herself in New Spain as a muleteer and small merchant, under the alias of Antonio de Erauso—and appears to have lived in relative obscurity.[4]

The admiration and astonishment expressed by the crowds that had gathered to witness Catalina's entrance into Lima and the religious authorities who heard her confession were mere preludes to the sensation her story caused in Europe. Although both canon and civil law prohibited cross-dressing, the highest ranking officials of the Catholic Church and the Spanish Empire granted Catalina's petition to remain dressed as a man.[5] The Monja Alférez's petition to the Crown, in fact, builds a case upon a dual argument: the merits of her deeds as a soldier and the singularity of her position as a woman fighting in the army.[6] The reactions of King Philip IV and Pope Urban VIII upon hearing Catalina recount her story, as recorded later in the first-person memoirs *Vida i sucesos de la Monja Alférez* (ca. 1625), confirm that it was indeed the uniqueness of her position as a valiant woman soldier—and, more important, an "intact virgin"—that brought her such acceptance.[7] Catalina de Erauso slipped through the cracks of Spanish society's roles for women and reemerged as a cultural phenomenon, due in large part to her successful negotiation of institutionalized codes for behavior and the remoteness of the American frontier.

Perhaps more than any woman discussed in this volume, Catalina's story highlights the contradictions between period rules and actual practices. In the very years that Rosa de Lima's case for sainthood was being questioned in Lima, Seville, Madrid, and Rome, Catalina's rebellion against being enclosed in the convent was given the seal of approval from church and Crown in these same cities. Although one woman came to represent the saint and the other the pardoned sinner, both were incorporated into the institutionalized aspects of the Spanish empire and Counter-Reformation Catholic Church. The lapses in Rosa's and Catalina's behavior—in particular, their refusal to be enclosed in a convent—were overlooked because their life stories demonstrated heroic virtue and astounding singular feats for their sex. In spite of her lapses in following Counter-Reformation guidelines, Rosa came to represent the universal qualities of saintly virtue. By rejecting the life of a woman, Catalina created an alternate identity—one that was both notorious and officially accepted because of its valor and singularity.

Key to both women's success was their manipulation of the rules governing the female body. Following medieval models, Rosa's hallmark for sanctity was her extreme penances, which highlighted the role of women's bodies as the vehicle for virtue and fame. Through suffering it was thought women erased female characteristics of sexuality and become virile, manly women.[8] Biographic and hagiographic tradition further promoted the idea that women needed to transcend their nature to achieve great virtue. Sacred biographies narrated the lives of transvestite women, including such popular sainted women as Margaret of Antioch, Eugenia of Alexandria, and

FIGURE 6.1 Portrait of Catalina de Erauso by Francisco Pacheco, ca. 1625 (From *The Nun Ensign* by James Fitzmaurice-Kelly, London, 1907)

Joan of Arc. A brief look at these life stories, recorded in the popular *Flos Sanctorum*, reveals that male garb helped women follow a virtuous Christian path. In another tradition, women were compared to the mythic Amazon warrior women. Since at least Teresa of Avila's time, biographers had employed the metaphor of the Amazon woman to signal the level of heroic virtue religious women achieved; they were warrior women for Christianity.

Catalina de Erauso's life drew on the central role of women's bodies for determining their life paths, but she inverted the tradition of the saintly transvestite and the manly warrior religious woman. Through cross-dressing, Catalina's life truly became like a man's, but her virtue was dubious at best. Catalina played the roles of a conquistador (for gold rather than souls) and lawless adventurer. A closer examination of the ways in which Catalina (and others) could "re-present" her life in legal petitions, first-person memoirs, and biographies exemplifies the flux found in seventeenth-century rules and society. Whereas Ursula Suárez and Sor Juana worked closely with the model of the *perfecta religiosa* in order to modify it and included roles for humorous saints and lettered women, Catalina de Erauso lived out a life that blatantly defied rules. Gender roles, narrative genre conventions, and geographical settings all contributed to the success of this alternate life story.

The Life and Adventures of a Wanderer

Catalina was born in 1592 to a well-established Basque family in northern Spain, one of nine children.[9] The first dozen years of her life do not differ significantly from other upper-class women of her time. Her earliest years were spent with her mother and father, Doña María Pérez de Galarraga y Arce and Captain Miguel de Erauso, both natives of San Sebastián.[10] At the young age of four, Catalina went to live with an aunt and several sisters in a Dominican convent in the same city. In this large, unreformed convent, she had access to a fairly lively life and a good education. Nonetheless, according to the account in her memoirs, as an adolescent she had a conflict with one nun, so she escaped the cloister and set out to see the world disguised as a boy. For about three years she stayed in Spain, despite several close encounters with family members. It is clear that Catalina received a fairly good education in the convent because she continually landed posts that required good writing and accounting skills; more than once she was entrusted with managing a shop. In another post, she served as a page to a high-ranking official in the king's court in Vallodolid. Another master, a university professor, recognized Catalina's facility for Latin and vehemently urged her to follow a university education. An offer that might have been snatched up by Sor Juana, was flatly refused by Catalina, who confesses to having an urge (*inclinasión*) to travel: "I had a taste for roving and seeing the world."[11] She soon embarked on a Spanish galleon headed for America. Following the paths of several brothers, Catalina set out to seek her fortune.[12]

Part of a well-connected, adventurous Basque clan, Catalina coincidentally landed on her uncle's ship; unbeknownst to him, he had hired his own niece. The ship was part of the Spanish enterprise in the Indies: the crew encountered enemies, and many Spaniards died before the vessel was loaded with silver and headed for Spain again.

But Catalina jumped ship to stay in America, where she would spend nearly two decades (ca. 1603–1623) moving from the center of the Spanish American shipping industry in the Caribbean to the more remote areas of the viceroyalty of Peru. Even in the New World, Catalina seemed to be well connected. Her memoirs describe how she was given a letter of presentation to the chief consul of Lima for a post (chap. 5). She served as a shop clerk until having a run-in with her employer—over a woman. At this point, Catalina decided to join the *entradas*, the mercenary soldiers hired in Lima to travel south 540 leagues to Concepción and Valdivia, Chile, to fight the rebellious Mapuche (known in colonial times as the Araucanians). There fate once again would bring Catalina close to family: she served as a soldier for her brother Miguel de Erauso, the secretary of war. He never recognized her in disguise, perhaps because he had left home when she was two years old. Another altercation over a woman—this time her brother's own mistress—would change the course of her life again. Catalina was banished to fight on the front line in Paicabí for three years. Enduring frequent invasions by the enemy, Catalina made her mark in Paicabí as a hero by recapturing the Spanish flag and being wounded. With this heroic act, she would receive the title of "ensign" (*alférez*). Soon afterward, she accidently killed her own brother in a duel and began years of wandering from city to city.

A period chronicle by an anonymous writer gives us a sense of the social flux in which Catalina lived in early seventeenth-century Peru. Many men lived as vagabonds or became soldiers as a way to make a living. According to the chronicle, the most ambitious went off to become soldiers in Chile, as Catalina had. The most lazy lived off of others and gambling. This is the life Catalina would live after her years as a soldier:

> There are other poor proud [men], who, as they are unable to bite, bark, and always go around with their head down looking for an opportunity; they neither wish to be controlled, nor is there any reasoning with them. This type of people are called soldiers, not because they are, but because they wander freely from one place to another, always with cards in their hands so as not to miss any opportunity of playing with whomever they may meet, and if by chance they encounter a greenhorn or a newly-arrived Spaniard who is not skilled and well disciplined in his own malice, or whose malice does not go so far [as to include] false cards, they best them and take away their money and their property. . . . They are boundless cheats, whose only concern is mastering the art of deception. There are many of this ilk who are wandering around Peru. And for the most part they are enemies of the rich, and live only for news and quarrels and trouble-making in the Kingdom, for thieving and getting their hands on goods they can only get by means of wars and strife. They are people who do not wish to serve. They are all well dressed, as they are never in want of a negress or an Indian woman and some Spanish women, and not necessarily of the poorest kind. . . . They are the greatest vagabonds in Peru . . . and they seek their living as best they can. Another type of people of lesser importance, who are less skilled and not as free in the art of flattery, and who lack the means to vagabond about from one place to another, and also because they are more willing to work and bear arms and eat the King's bread, these enlist as soldiers, as every year people in Lima are recruited for the kingdom of Chile. And they take them down there under their banners to fight the Araucanians. In Lima they give them two hundred pesos, with which to get a uniform. By these means the land is rid of them and people are sent against the indomitable Araucanians. Few of these soldiers return to Peru.[13]

As recorded in her memoirs and frequently confirmed by other petitions, Catalina's adventures took her across great distances, much of what today is Peru and Bolivia, from the desert Pacific coast across the Andes into the center of the Inca empire in Cuzco, to the mining town of Potosí and back again to Lima (chaps. 4–20). In the memoirs, these years are characterized by short stays in towns and occupations interrupted by the need to flee because of conflict over ladies or gambling. At one point, Catalina even toyed with a marriage proposal to a woman (chap. 7). At another, she faced the death penalty but escaped (chap. 17). The duel and resulting death of one opponent, however, finally led to her flight to Guamanga, where she was detained by authorities (chap. 20). A period letter describes how Catalina appeared armed and dressed as a man when she met with the bishop of Guamanga Fray Augustin de Carvajal.[14]

At this moment, Catalina's fate as a fairly anonymous adventurer changed forever; her disguise was uncovered, and news of her life spread to secular and ecceliastical authorities. As with all the women studied in this book, the moment in which a one-time nun or religious woman had to deal with a bishop's authority to judge her life and either authorize it as valid—and then promote it as exemplary—or censure it, was a pivotal one. If approved by the bishop, the woman's life was frequently institutionalized through autobiographical and biographical accounts. If censured, the woman could have her field of action severely limited, if only temporarily, as we saw in Sor Juana's and Ursula's cases. In Catalina's memoirs, the bishop is characterized as a saintly man who helped her. After questioning Catalina, he marveled at the singularity of her life story, saved her from being prosecuted by secular authorities, decided to place her in a local convent until her ex-convent in Spain could confirm her lay or religious status, and promised to protect her personally as long as he lived.[15] Upon handing Catalina over to the nuns in Guamanga, he required that they sign a statement agreeing to obey his orders when dealing with her. He died five months later, however, and Catalina went to a Lima convent under the supervision of the archbishop. But her fame had spread widely already: the viceroy requested that she dine with him first before entering the convent (chap. 20).

As mentioned, upon her release from the convent, Catalina embarked for Spain to begin a series of petitions. Beginning with the Consejo de Indias in Seville, moving on to the court of King Philip IV, and, finally, traveling overland—and being captured and accused of being a spy en route—to the Vatican, Catalina succeeded in obtaining the monies and licenses she sought. Soon after, she returned to life on the road, but this time as a muleteer transporting goods inland from the port of Veracruz, New Spain. Known as Antonio de Erauso, she apparently did not return to her lawless life. For the final two decades of her life (ca. 1630–1650) she obeyed

the pope's request "to lead an honest life from now on, and to refrain from offending my fellow man, reminding me of God's justice with reference to His commandment 'Thou shalt not kill.'"[16]

Although we have few details about these final years of her life, Catalina's notoriety was still intact enough that in 1653 a New Spanish publishing house reprinted a 1625 broadside about her life, as well as a new anonymous account about her life and death. Both publications highlight the sensational aspects of Catalina's life as someone who combined gender expectations. More significantly, the latter broadside claims the Monja Alférez as an officially recognized hero for New Spain. According to this apocryphal account, Bishop Palafox y Mendoza—the same bishop whose portrait circulated with Catarina de San Juan's—wanted to exhume Catalina's remains and rebury them in Puebla, Mexico, in order to honor her memory and to bring fame to his city. Bishop Palafox had left New Spain before Catalina's death (1649), but like other hagiographic works of the period, the account recognizes the power of invoking—even if falsely—a bishop's authority to promote local heroes for the colony.[17] Catalina's notoriety continued for at least the rest of the century in Spanish America; enough so that a satirist compared Sor Juana with the Monja Alférez.[18]

The Writing of a Hybrid Life

During Catalina's life and in subsequent decades, historical and literary works, as well as folk tales, flourished about the unusual Monja Alférez. Theatre, poetry, historical chronicles, and biographical broadsides proliferated in manuscript and published forms, and several were translated into Italian.[19] The most notable contemporary literary work, Juan Pérez de Montalbán's play, *La Monja Alférez, comedia famosa* (1626), highlights Catalina's cross-dressing and ends with her confessing her true identity as a woman. But while the woman Catalina had courted ends up marrying a man, following Golden Age theatrical plot convention, Catalina does not marry, and the play's final words report her actual whereabouts in 1626: "Where the play ends, so do the actual events, since today the Lieutenant Nun is in Rome."[20] Perhaps the most significant seventeenth-century historical texts that document Catalina's life are the aforementioned broadsides, written in installments and published in both Spain and Mexico (1625, 1653) and a chapter in a history by Diego de Rosales about the conquest of the kingdom of Chile (written ca. 1660).[21] As Stephanie Merrim and Rima Vallbona have shown, the history inscribes the Monja Alférez's story into hagiographic tradition, emphasizing the penitential nature of Catalina's deeds. In contrast, the broadsides, a genre often used to incite interest in noteworthy current events—anticipating the birth of modern journalism—highlight the sensational aspects of Catalina's life. In some regards, they follow the first-person memoirs of Catalina's life, *Vida i sucesos de la Monja Alférez*, a manuscript which was purportedly deposited in 1625 in the same publishing house where the broadsides were printed. But these memoirs, the mostly lengthy account of her life and attributed at least in part to Catalina, were not published until centuries later.[22] Because the *Vida i sucesos* is structured like an autobiographical *vida*, it is the central literary focus of this chapter.

Analysis of the textual representation in the *Vida i sucesos* of Catalina's life story, however, poses the perhaps unanswerable question. To what degree are these first-person memoirs historical fact or legendary fiction? After examining a number of manuscript variants—none of which are the autograph manuscript by Catalina—and secondary documents, most scholars agree on one point: Catalina at least had a hand in her memoirs.[23] Joaquín María de Ferrer's early twentieth-century edition, Rima de Vallbona's recent masterful edition, and Pedro Rubio Merino's edition of new archival versions take great pains to examine the authenticity of texts about a historical figure who so easily lent herself to legend. While Ferrer and Vallbona include a variety of related legal documents, such as the 1625–1626 petitions and sworn statements from character witnesses, these editions focus on the central literary-historical text of Catalina's *Vida i sucesos*. Most critics, and Vallbona in particular, provide a convincing case for Catalina having had a hand in composing the text, which may have been rewritten as she dictated it or was later elaborated on by another author. One of the points often made in the literary ghost writer theory, however, has been that Catalina did not have sufficient training to write such an accomplished piece on her own.[24] Recent studies about the nature of convent life reveal that Catalina probably was well trained, a fact supported by the reports about the posts she filled as clerk and about knowing Latin (*Vida*, chap. 1). In addition, conclusions that adduce that her lack of a formal education proves that her account was composed by a ghost writer do not take into account the power of oral storytelling, so common among soldiers and tavern-goers of the period. The quick, lively scenes of conflict and resolution with a precarious escape found in the *Vida i sucesos* are characteristic of popular storytelling. Vallbona herself points to the need to explore these oral genres in order to better analyze the memoirs and concludes that the issue of the authorship of the *Vida* will continue to be unresolved until the original manuscript is found.[25]

Although this uncertainty about the nature of the authorship of the *Vida i sucesos* limits the claims we can make, it functions to inscribe the memoirs firmly into colonial discourse which is frequently characterized by issues of historical truth and mediation.[26] As we have seen in previous chapters, colonial narratives are often a mixture of legal forms, literary topoi, historiography, and personal testimony, which typically reflect a high degree of mediation as judges, confessors, scribes, and editors altered accounts for political and religious ends. While the *Vida i sucesos* might undermine the notion of a single authoritative author, it reveals a dynamic discursive reconstruction of a life story, one based as much on "the historical record" as on religious, political, and literary codes as they were established in Spain and modified in America. Catalina's official petitions highlight her various roles as brave soldier on the frontier, loyal vassal to the king, pilgrim to Rome, and virgin: "She told the scribe 'she has spent 15 years in the service of Your Majesty in the wars of the kingdom of Chile . . . in defense of the Catholic faith in the service of Your Majesty.'"[27] Her unofficial memoirs, however, tell a story of transgressive deeds that entertain the reader and draw on the full range of narrative possibilities for a man or woman writing a full-length autobiographical life story. The basic facts found in the *Vida* and petitions generally coincide, yet the tone and focus diverge dramatically. The page-long petitions follow the forensic style and formulas of the reports of services and merits (*memorial de servicios y méritos*) in which the "I" peti-

tions a superior—usually the king—for reward after years as a loyal vassal who risked life and limb for the monarch's interest, although Catalina alters the conventions to include the uniqueness of her feats as a woman. Lengthier *relaciones* and *vidas* were often composed as a prolonged petition to place the service rendered in the context of an individual's life story, but in Catalina's case, the *Vida* shifts from tales of heroic courage to anecdotes of doubtful exemplarity.

In fact, most recent critics who study Catalina's case (Marjorie Garber, E. Juárez, Stephanie Merrim, Mary Elizabeth Perry, Sherry Velasco, Rima Vallbona, among others)[28] elucidate seventeenth-century legal, religious, and literary practices, and suggest that the Monja Alférez's life and texts capitalized on loopholes in what has largely been perceived by twentieth-century scholars as a rigid gender and moral code. Perry convincingly argues that Catalina's case slipped through the legal system because civic law reflected society's assumption that people would be prosecuted according to his or her biological sex, either as a man or a woman.[29] Both ecclesiastic and secular frameworks only allowed for two categories for adult whites' sexual identity. Catalina could not be prosecuted as a man for her misdeeds because she had been a nun; but neither could they process her as a woman because she had lived as a loyal soldier. In one of the few literary studies of Catalina's life and texts, Stephanie Merrim astutely argues that the baroque aesthetic, which prized singularity, marvel, and the unveiling of a reality that is not what it seems, serves as a key to understanding Catalina's success; her life had intrinsic literary and cultural value as an anomaly that mitigated the consequences of her transgressive acts. Catalina became a cultural icon through the manipulation of seventeenth-century concepts of gender and fame.

In a later rewriting of this study, Merrim convincingly argues that, in addition to the baroque aesthetic, Catalina's case demonstrates contemporary medical theories about the body. From at least the time of Galen and Augustine, the idea existed of women as incomplete men; women's bodies had lacked the heat needed to complete the process of turning the genitals outside of the body. As a result of this single-sex biological model, there was more slippage for women to become like men than vice-versa.[30] Augmenting this argument, Sherry Velasco analyzes the cultural representations of transgenderism in the Lieutenant Nun across four centuries. Of particular interest are her findings about the possibilities for hybrid identities in the designation of sexual characteristics in the early modern period (chap. 1). In one case I found in the Madrid archives, a contemporary account reports how a nun in a convent in Ubeda, Spain, had undergone a spontaneous bodily transformation and become a man.[31] The account is recorded by the priest in charge of the convent. The popularity of period accounts about transgenderism reveals people's fascination with the topic. Interest in linking these transsexual and transvestite stories with religious women is clear in a famous painting found in a Mexican Carmelite convent of St. Esofrina, who was said to have lived as a man in a convent for more than three decades; one of New Spain's most venerated Carmelites is depicted alongside the saint.[32]

With regard to the most enticing document about Catalina's life, the memoirs, all critics point to the unusual blending of a broad range of literary genres, including confessional literature, picaresque tales, soldiers' accounts, chronicles, and cloak and dagger theatre.[33] And yet, little has been said of the relationship this generic mixture

may have to do with the gender-blending life of Catalina. Critics tend to emphasize the transgressive tone of Catalina's *Vida i sucesos* and link it with the soldier's and male picaro's story, or period drama, but they overlook the role of the most prescribed genre for women's self-writing, the spiritual *vida*, and the fictional role of the female rogue. An analysis of the narrative construction of the *Vida i sucesos* helps us better understand how Catalina's life reflected Spain's encounter with the Americas—how the ad hoc nature of life in a new colony or on the frontier often pushed literary, historical, and societal conventions to new limits.

To unravel the intrinsic relationship between the sexual/textual, gender/genre cross-over in the Monja Alférez's narrative, it is important to recall that early modern self-narratives usually were written by men and women to justify their actions as in keeping with societal norms.[34] Whether recorded as an act of obedience to a confessor (as in the case of most spiritual autobiography), as a soldier's petition for remuneration for services rendered, or as a rogue's fictionalization and parody of the need to justify one's actions, the "I" reconstructed through these written forms inevitably engaged in dialogue with society's models for behavior and created its subjectivity by adjusting its image to the "community's gaze."[35] In this adjustment, historical subject became literary artifact. The dialogic dynamic between individual self-representation and institutional norms produced texts that were fraught with tension as authors acknowledged the centrality of real or inferred readers who in some manner judged the accounts according to recognized standards. The text thus inherently carries a petition—tangible or spiritual—and an *apologia pro vita sua*. As we have seen in other chapters in this book, the posturing often vacillates between the exemplarity of the self represented and the manipulation of the reader; the author attempts to implicate the reader in the process of the apology and to locate the conception of truth in her own reconstruction of self and world.

Just as important as the public nature of autobiographical accounts, period autobiographical and pseudo-autobiographical forms depended on whether the subject was a man or a woman; writing about the self was a highly gendered practice. The emerging awareness of the individual and his or her subjectivity, new definitions of gender roles based in part on Counter-Reformation teachings, and innovative narrative forms made possible the literary construction of new identities. Three main autobiographical modes inform the structure of Catalina's self-representation: the (male) soldier/conquistador's memoirs; the picaresque novel, which, as we saw in the last chapter, could have male or female fictional characters but was usually penned by a man; and the spiritual autobiography, which was a predominantly feminine mode of writing but men also wrote in this form.[36] A study of the inherent petition at the core of most autobiographical writing from the period and of the ideological impulse and gender-bound prescriptions that accompany each subgenre, reveals how Catalina's tale uses first-person narrative genres to fashion an identity that was particularly suited to her own lack of religious vocation and urge to see the world beyond the cloister. The reader witnesses a hybrid gender and genre as Catalina undergoes a transformation from a traditional Basque girl educated in the convent to a New World soldier and outlaw, and, finally, to a celebrated European hero. (In fact, the *Vida i sucesos* ends with her successful petitions to king and pope.)

Gender and Genre in the *Vida i sucesos*

As the account opens, Catalina's story is firmly inscribed into the literary form of the soldier's tale. Although *vidas de soldados* rarely were published in their own time, surely Catalina would have been familiar, after so many years in the army, with the form of the petition of merits and services and with the *relación*, which proliferated during the first century and a half of the Hapsburg Empire.[37] Like her comrades, the one-time *alférez* simply states the year and place of her birth, and her parents' names.[38] And yet, Catalina quickly departs from this explicitly male genre: she must deal with her biological sex in order to live and write a soldier's life story. Altering the conventional narrative sequence that moved from humble origins to a vagabond's existence before finding a military vocation, the author slows the narrative tempo and describes her escape from the female environment of the cloister, along with her process of gender reconstruction through a three-day sewing project in which she makes herself a set of man's clothing (chap. 1).[39]

Once outwardly transformed, Catalina returns to the conventional narrative structure, content, and tone for the soldier's tale. Generally boasting a streamlined anecdotal focus on the narrator, rather than the larger historical context, these narratives are structured according to episodic stories with a clear ending (*historias cerradas*), as the protagonist moves from place to place.[40] The style reflects oral paradigms first designed for telling the story to others in the tavern or camp, and later adding the type of information needed to make a petition, such as names, titles, monetary sums, and distances traveled. Control of information and a listing of life accomplishments dominate many accounts. Content generally echoes social and military codes for soldiers: tales of heroic deeds, short descriptions of places, and accounts of defending personal honor and status—often dealing with women, dress, and titles.[41] Critiques of church and society are frequently interpolated into these documents, but the biting satire and pessimism characteristic of period picaresque novels do not dominate.

Catalina recounts with notable economy several years of wanderings in Spain before embarking for America. Once there, leagues traveled, cities visited, posts held, and money received (and lost), as well as occasional ruses and vicissitudes, dominate the account. Movement is rapid—in both actual travel and narrative tempo—while description is slight. After several misfortunes as a clerk, Catalina admitted her wanderlust, and joins six hundred men to fight on the Chilean frontier against the Mapuche (chap. 5). There she was banished to the trenches for interfering with her brother's love life and, later, received the title of ensign for her heroism in one battle (chap. 6). In one of the few purely epic accounts in the narrative, Catalina describes:

> We all joined forces with him, and five thousand men camped on the open plains of Valdivia with a great deal of discomfort. The Indians captured and attacked said Valdivia. . . . Seeing them make off with it [the standard/flag], I and two other mounted soldiers went after it through a great multitude, charging and killing and being wounded in turn. Soon one of the three fell dead. The two of us kept on, and we got to the standard but a lance thrust felled my companion. I, with a bad wound in the leg, killed the cacique who had it in his possession, took the standard away and spurred my horse, charging, killing and wounding indiscriminately; badly injured, pierced by three arrows and with a very painful lance wound in the left shoulder, I finally reached our men and then fell from my horse. . . . I became the ensign of Alonso Moreno's company, the first captain I had known, and I was very pleased.[42]

In an epic-like rendering of the incident, Catalina became a heroic conquistador, demonstrating valor and loyalty to the Crown by risking life and limb for the flag.

After more than five years in Chile, Catalina left the battlefield, because she accidentally killed her brother in a duel. She headed for El Dorado, La Plata, Potosí, and Cuzco to make her fortune. Catalina recalls a near-death experience when crossing the Andes (chap. 7), working in transporting goods (chaps. 9 and 11), aiding sheriffs with law and order (chaps. 8 and 14), and defending Lima in a naval battle against the Dutch (chap. 17). Such heroic deeds, however, soon lead into stories about Catalina being forced out of towns, often after killing a man in a duel over a woman or a gambling dispute. As an outlaw, Catalina often took refuge in churches. Yet the narrator mocks church practices: She talks of it "raining priests" when at one point she is condemned to the gallows (chap. 12). Later she praises the Franciscans who taught her to hide the consecrated host (believed to be the actual body of Christ) in her hand in order to be moved from a jail to a church, where she could take sanctuary from the law.[43] Like other conquistadors, Catalina recounts her merits, but she does so with sketchy—and often dubious—detail and more than a touch of irony. She clearly shuns the colonization and evangelization projects of the Crown: "The governor wanted crops to be planted there in order to make up for the lack of supplies we had with us, but the infantry refused to do this, saying that we were not there to plant crops but to conquer and get gold."[44]

While maintaining the often lively, action-orientation of the soldier's *vida*, not yet a quarter of the way into her story, Catalina undermines the soldier's petition. Whereas many recount vicissitudes and failings, often criticizing certain aspects of society in the process, rarely is a soldier's tale so blatantly transgressive.[45] Randolph Pope argues that soldiers' stories evolved over time from the early modern didactic portraits of exemplary knights (*caballeros*) to the somewhat contradictory self-portraits by soldiers from the Thirty Years' War who variously embody characteristics of a loyal vassal and an unrepentant rogue.[46] In the opening pages of his memoirs, for example, Catalina's contemporary Domingo Toral y Valdés proclaims that he was "traveling through Spain like another Lazarillo de Tormes."[47] By Pope's calculation, twenty years after the completion of Catalina's *Vida i sucesos*, the first soldier's account written for pure entertainment was published. Estebanillo González's *Relación de vida* (1646) proposes to simply "give pleasure to the reader" and depicts a soldier as a buffoon who fills his account with satire.[48] The reader who sought entertainment increasingly replaced the superior who might have rewarded the narrator for exemplary service.[49]

Written in the midst of this paradigm shift from an account of services rendered to a collection of roguish stories, Catalina's *Vida i sucesos* may focus on the epic and transgressive aspects of her life story for the reader's delight. Her formal petition had been submitted, and perhaps granted, by the time this lively account was drafted.[50] This might further explain why Catalina's *Vida* has no clear petition or specific addressee and shares a good deal with her Madrid counterpart, the Thirty Years' War soldier, Alonso de Contreras, who wrote a story of his years as *alférez* and rogue.[51] Like Catalina, Contreras first presented his *relación de méritos* and then wrote his *Vida* within years of hers (ca. 1630), and there is no direct petition or addressee.[52] The ideology of exemplarity gave way to less didactic storytelling in these two soldiers, who, coincidently, may both have been in Madrid in 1624 and heard of each other. The effect of gender on the genre, however, changed the outcome of the protagonists' lives. Whereas Contreras was knighted into the military Order of Malta, Catalina no longer could follow a military career, in spite of demonstrating her capacity for it and being granted a license to live dressed as a man.

Like Contreras's brawling story, Catalina's describes a society in flux and a moral practice that did not match the one being promulgated by the Council of Trent. Indeed, in Catalina's case, the source of many anecdotes is the patriarchal formation of a society in which men all too quickly drew their swords because of pride and boasting, and women were seen as objects to be married off or to be kept safely enclosed from other men. As Michele Stepto points out, a substratum permeates the text, one that parodies masculine culture, especially men who make great claims without corresponding actions.[53]

In fact, the inherent petition for monetary reward or recognition in many soldiers' accounts is all but absent in Catalina's life as the language and content of the picaresque tale are intertwined with the story.[54] The narrator seems to ask for recognition of her cleverness in extracting herself from compromising situations. Writing when the picaresque was already a well-established genre, Catalina's *Vida* shares with it an emphasis on an unrepentant rogue. Although, as in Ursula Suárez's case, Catalina does not share the pícaro's story of illegitimate birth and life on the margins of society, the text echoes the genre's lexicon ("pícaro cernudo," chap. 12), ideology (the mockery of hard work in favor of "industria," or cleverness, chap. 10), and plot (the protagonist moves from master to master living by her wits). Much of the narrative plays with Catalina's hunger for adventure and sexual desirability that led to the need for a quick wit, sword, and escape, as well as the resulting hand-to-mouth existence. For example, Catalina's first master in the New World asked her to marry his mistress (chap. 3). Although reminiscent of the situation that the popular fictional rogue Lazarillo de Tormes found himself in at the end of his tale, the *Vida i sucesos* rewrites the model (perhaps because nature dictated it); Catalina rejected the offer and moved on to a new post and master: "One should know that this Doña Beatriz de Cárdenas was my master's particular lady, and he wanted to be sure of both of us: me to serve him, and she for his pleasure. . . . One night she locked me in [her room] and declared that in spite of the devil I had to bed her. . . . Later I told my master that there was no way I would marry her; not for all the world would I do it. He persisted in this matter and promised me mountains of gold."[55] Indeed, the author seems to purposely inscribe the action into the picaresque genre with two key elements: the discourse of poverty and the discourse of sexuality.[56]

Catalina's ambiguous gender role pushes literary conventions to new limits. As we studied in the last chapter, a male pícaro generally lived by his wits and actions. If he had rights to a woman, he often used her sexual desirability to better his economic situation, but rarely is his own sexuality directly at stake.[57] A pícara, on the other hand, lived by her wits and her sexual attractiveness in order to dupe men and advance her own situation. Drawing on both pícaro and pícara prototypes, the protagonist of the *Vida i sucesos* blends the female protagonist's use of sexual innuendo with the male's tendency to use women and fall back on quick action to escape a tight spot. Catalina became the object of sexual desire, like her female counterparts, but took action to remedy the situation, like her male counterparts. The ambiguity of her gender categorization and the genre's possibility for either a male or female central character allow Catalina, who in some aspects is both a male and female protagonist, to create a humorous tension in standard narrative genres.

Catalina's story fits surprisingly neatly into the rogue's tale, while also in some ways subverting the typical outcome. Avoiding the fate of most pícaros, who become the butt of their own jokes through the comic distance created in the narrative and, thus, remain firmly marginalized by society, Catalina became famous throughout secular and ecclesial society. Her story reached the archbishop and viceroy of Lima in the New World, as well as the Crown and the Vatican in the Old. In addition, she received her share of the family estate, an honorable title, and remuneration for military service.[58] And yet, in the end, Catalina chose to return to the road—a choice the pícaro rarely had. Catalina's trajectory was unique: her story began with enclosure in a well-to-do family and convent in the Basque region; it moved into the public arena of the tavern and military life in the periphery of the Spanish Empire; it jumped into the centers of power for the viceroyality of Peru and, after a brief hiatus in a Lima convent, the elite arena of the courts of Madrid and Rome. Ultimately, it returned to a relatively anonymous itinerant life in the Indies, when she chose to travel the roads between Veracruz and Mexico City as a muleteer. Was it only in the vast uncolonized areas between New Spanish city centers that Catalina could live easily?

Notably, Catalina in many ways can only borrow the pícaro/a's story to employ her transgressive acts because she lacks the essential keen sense of marginalization and pessimism that are key to the genre. Undermining the inherently conservative ideology of the genre, which was to maintain the status quo, Catalina de Erauso overcame financial straits and triumphed in her gender choice. Although several critics have read Catalina's success as completely dependent on her masculinist/macho rhetoric and her recapitulation of patriarchal society, one epitomized by the soldier's and rogue's tales, such readings overlook the reworking of these literary forms and, thus, their accompanying ideologies.[59] The author capitalizes on the ambiguity of truth that characterizes picaresque plot and discourse. Essentially an ironic mode, things are not what they seem, and multiple readings are possible in most situations. Language boasts its own unreliability in revealing any inherent, transcendent truth. As

we saw with Ursula Suárez, taking its form and structure from confessional literature, the picaresque turns convention on its head, secularizing the narrative, and creates a protagonist who repeats offenses rather than repents.[60] Catalina's tale suggests that the geography and politics of the Spanish colonies were fertile terrain for creating a hybrid gender and tale.

The final chapters of the *Vida i sucesos* flaunt a different type of gender-genre blurring, one based on the most popular feminine life writing form. With the exception of a few short stints in jail, Catalina escaped serious consequences for her illegal acts. But by about 1619, she came face to face with the bishop of Guamanga after killing "El Nuevo Cid."[61] (The name of the opponent itself suggests an honorable, heroic prototype that the Monja Alférez symbolically undermines.) Hard-pressed to seek sanctuary, Catalina began to confess—even after swearing off confession in a previous situation. The bishop had rescued her from the hands of the *corregidor*, and she now had to account for her actions. In a double movement of unmasking her true identity as a woman who had spent about ten years in the convent and a rhetorical echoing of the confessional *vida de monjas*, the Monja Alférez saves her hide. Interestingly, the narrative tempo slows dramatically in this account of transformation from outlaw to nun, underscoring the importance of the event. Whether from the pícara's appreciation of a newfound comfort or the nun's experience of an enclosed but well-cared-for life, Catalina describes meals, rest times, and comfort as time passes between visits to the bishop.

Catalina borrows elements from a nun's self-representation by capitalizing on its inherent tension for control over the interpretation of the story told. The account is at once apologetic and didactic, a petition for absolution of sins and an illustration of God's presence in her life. To understand Catalina's use of the genre, it is useful to recall from our discussion of María de San José that this popular autobiographical genre for women revolved around the dynamic of a triangular relationship between confessor as judge, nun as visionary scribe, and God as divine author on the one hand, and a somewhat linear structure of spiritual conversion, transformation, and progress on the other. Moreover, there is a clear focus on the role of the body in nuns' autobiographical writings. The account of epic struggles found in the male conquistador's writings transform into women's heroic battles against individual and community sins in the pursuit of divine union and salvation. Action and evangelization become renunciation of the body's passions in order to receive divine gifts and take on suffering for the good of the church as a whole. Spiritual conversion required a vow of chastity which, in turn, could lead to a religious life and great change. Written accounts of this transformation tended to emerge only upon request of the confessor who witnessed—albeit secondhand—evidence of possible divine gifts or demonic illusion. This spiritual focus and the very real mediation of the confessor set this genre apart from the previous two we have examined in this chapter. Moreover, since women were considered both more prone to being instruments for direct manifestation of the divine and more in need of supervision of these gifts, this is the only narrative genre dominated by women.

In the hands of a male author, spiritual autobiography could recount the wide range of roles men played in society, and, therefore, much of the focus is on exterior

transformation and individual autonomy.[62] The most famous male author of a Spanish spiritual *vida*, of course, is Teresa of Avila's contemporary, St. Ignatius of Loyola. In fact, both Spanish saints helped found or reform a religious order, both wrote spiritual accounts of their lives, and both were canonized in 1622. And yet, while Teresa's spiritual *Vida* was published and widely imitated in the years after her death, Ignatius's was only published in the nineteenth century and seems to have had few imitators. While women religious wrote frequently about their interior lives, few of their male religious corollaries wrote. When they did write, the accounts differ dramatically from women's. Ignatius, for example, brings together the *vida de soldado* with the spiritual *vida*. Ignatius's account begins with a fast-pace recounting of his military life and travels and his lack of compliance with local authorities. On more than one occasion, Ignatius refused to confess and was banished from a town or prohibited from confessing others until he had completed a series of studies at the university. Even when he was recounting his conversion and decision to transform his life, in order to create a religious order of "soldiers" for the pope (the Company of the Society of Jesus, also known as the Jesuits), Ignatius's narrative lacks the introspection found in nuns' accounts. Moreover, the fundamental structure of the *vida de monja*, of the woman as *escritora por obediencia*, is absent: Ignatius of Loyola dictates his stories to a scribe, and he does so at his own leisure.[63] As a result, the account lacks the immediacy of the first person; it is narrated in third person.

Most of Catalina's account follows the more masculine rendering of a life story in terms of its focus on outward action. Like Ignatius, she recounts in a lively fashion the movement from one town to another and her differences with local clergy; moreover, there is no direct clerical addressee. Like some of her military and roguish counterparts, Catalina plays with confession as a necessary life account before God's intercessor in order to achieve salvation. On three separate occasions she confronts confession for her misdeeds. In the first, she refuses, even as she is taken to the gallows (chap. 12). The next time, she reveals her identity as a woman to a priest who gives her sanctuary from the law and safeguards her secret as he nurses her back to health. But her account moves toward a more feminine rendering of a life story when she must finally reveal her true identity, make a sincere confession, and change her way of life.

A complex scene that mixes a true sense of recognition of the transformative power of confessing in the presence of God, vis-à-vis a holy bishop, with a highly condensed, parodic literary representation of an hours-long life confession (*confesión general*) leaves the reader both laughing and perplexed at the meaning of this central scene:[64]

> Sir . . . The truth is this: I am a woman, I was born in such-and-such a place, the daughter of so-and-so, and at a certain age was placed in a certain convent with my aunt so-and-so. There I grew up, put on the habit, and was a novice. When I was about to profess, for such-and-such a reason I left. I went to such-and-such a place, took off my habit, put on other clothes, cut my hair, went hither and thither; went aboard ship, put into port, went to and fro, killed, wounded, cheated, ran around, and finally landed here, at the feet of Your Most Illustrious Lordship.[65]

Catalina's account of her confession to the bishop borrows rhetorical elements from a nun's *vida* and capitalizes on its inherent tension for control over the interpretation of the story told. The prototypical protagonist of a nun's account—a repentant sinner overcome with cleansing tears and witnessing the manifestation of God's grace—is absent from this account. In fact, the usual formula is inverted; after listening to the Monja Alférez's three-hour account, the bishop's face streams with hot tears, and he encourages her to review her life and make a good confession: "The saintly man was all ears: he listened to me without speaking or batting an eyelash, and when I finished he said not a word, but wept bitterly. . . . He exhorted me to go back over my past and to make a proper confession."[66] Some of the elements of confession as a first step toward recognition and the need to write are present, but no true spiritual transformation or conversion is recorded.

The next scene further undermines the ideology and narrative conventions of a woman's spiritual autobiography. Knowing proof of her virginity will be her trump card, Catalina capitalizes on the bishop's marvel upon hearing her life, and she encourages him to have matrons examine her. They report her status as "intact a virgin as the day I was born." This proof of virginity clinches Catalina's fate. The bishop proclaims his full support of her: "I respect you as one of the amazing people of this world, and promise to help you in any way I can, to take care of your needs, and to do that to serve God."[67] In short, he protects her henceforth from the law. After she makes a sacramental confession with him, he absolves her and exhorts her to lead a virtuous life. Catalina's paradoxical situation as a sexually pure outlaw, however, mocks the church's insistence that sexual purity begets and reflects spiritual wholeness and virtue. The textual rendition of Catalina's confession meets the genre's requirement that transformation occur, but it subverts both its purpose and the outcome. Although Catalina states she was inspired by this saintly man and apparently ceased her life of brawls and stealing, much of the internal spiritual process of transformation is externalized and secularized in this confessional account. No longer strictly portraying a written record of reconciliation between individual and God, the narrative form becomes Catalina's safety net for her gender change. By echoing and yet radically altering the genre's central passage, the moment of conversion and confession that led to a return to the community's norms, Catalina's spiritual transformation becomes her gender (re)transformation. The confession to and absolution by the confessor-bishop is in many ways the narrative center of Catalina's life story. Confession both saved her from prison and, after a temporary reinstatement of the nun's habit, served as the springboard for legitimizing her gender choice. She records how this unmasking of her identity was the beginning of her fame: "News of this event spread everywhere very quickly, and people who had seen me before, and people, both before and after, who heard my story all over the Indies, were amazed."[68]

To emphasize further her inherent critique and manipulation of church and society's sexual and moral codes, several chapters later the author records the pope's own marvel and approval of her life and travels, gender, and virginity. According to a broadside about Catalina's life, which might be highly fictionalized, the pope even defended Catalina against a cardinal's criticism, saying: "Give me another Monja Alférez and I will give her the same [permission]."[69] The pope's only request was

that she observe the commandment "Thou shall not kill." The final chapter of the *Vida i sucesos* also mentions the rich and famous who wanted to catch a glimpse of the Monja Alférez; now more than just the plebeian crowds in the streets of Lima gathered round to witness the phenomenon of the manly woman. Whereas the conventional nun's account bore witness to how a lowly woman's life overcame the limitations of her sex and revealed the role of the divine in it for a confessor, the Monja Alférez's life rewrote that formula to bear witness to how a woman could undo "natural," God-given gender categories with approval by the pope himself. Recording circumstances like those in which her religious sisters confessed and wrote (the confession to the bishop), but having the written version be noncompulsory (the *Vida i sucesos*), Catalina is free to echo the genre's format and change its outcome. Her story—both in real life and in the text—is neither marginalized by society nor mediated by ecclesial superiors; through a creative use of her notoriety, the Lieutenant Nun slipped through established categories and constructed her own identity.[70]

As we have seen in previous chapters, nuns in Spanish America frequently manipulated the form of spiritual autobiography to redefine within the genre's limits a role for themselves in the church. Madre María de San José's fight for spiritual authority, Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz's argument for women's learning, and Ursula Suárez's presentation of a *santa comediante* reveal women who studied the genre and pushed its limits in order to critique the often straight and narrow path that Catholic Church hierarchy prescribed for religious women. All three nuns talk of God-given vocations (*inclinasiones*) and the Divine as the omnipotent author of lives (and, by extension, their texts). Catalina completely undoes these generic underpinnings: first by stating a purely secular "inclination" to adventure that required cross-dressing, and then by authorizing her life with human personages. While convent sisters remain cloistered, traveling only occasionally by mystic transport to evangelize or prophesize, Catalina exploits the power accorded to virgins, rewrites central elements of the conversion narrative, and returns to the Americas as Antonio de Erauso.[71] Some years later, a friar who met Erauso in Veracruz, Mexico, describes her: "In male garb, with sword and dagger, the sword guard of silver, a few limp hairs for a beard, and she was the boldest of the bold. She had a great mule train and blacks with whom she brought clothing to Mexico."[72]

In destabilizing the transcendent meaning of confessional literature, altering the male soldier's tale, and employing ruses common to both the pícaro and pícara, the *Vida i sucesos* goes beyond the simple blurring of literary and gender conventions and creates a complex, at times ambiguous, text. Competing motives undermine traditional paradigms with their narrow embodiment (both literal and figurative) of self-representation and identity. Although all autobiographical writing of the period tends to be a hybrid genre that moves between petition and authority, author and addressee, historical person and literary construct, the *Vida i sucesos* manipulates genres and their inherent gender-related rules to create a truly unique text, one that even has a first-person narrator who fluctuates between using feminine and masculine adjectives to describe herself or himself.[73] In the same years that the soldier-poet Alonso de Ercilla revised the epic tradition when talking about battles on the Chilean frontier and the ex-soldier Miguel de Cervantes parodied idealized literature by mixing it with more

realistic elements to create a new narrative genre, Catalina de Erauso's life story worked with European legal codes and literary genres to create a new identity and narrative type for the cross-dressed woman living on the American frontier.

Hagiographic Rewritings?

Upon her death in 1650, Catalina's story both continued in the same titillating vein as the *Vida i sucesos* and took a more didactic turn. As we saw in the publications of the 1620s, the popular contemporary literary response to Catalina's life was the retelling of the singular acts of her story in two broadsides while Montalbán's theatrical rendition of it focused on her cross-dressing and love triangles. In the mid–seventeenth century, a posthumous third and final broadside maintained yet reframed the transgressive focus of Catalina's tale, while a chapter that formally incorporated her biography into the historiography of Chile completely changed the facts.

This 1653 broadside is one of the few documents that recounts the final twenty years of Catalina's life. Whereas the first two broadsides unabashedly recount the first thirty-some years of her life and her singular acts as a cross-dressed woman, the third both borrows conventions for hagiographic biographies of religious women and centers on Catalina's audacity. The titles are telling of this shift: the first, *Relación prodigiosa de las grandes hazañas, y valerosos hechos que vna muger hizo en quarenta años que sirvió a Su Majestad...* [The prodigious relation of the great deeds and brave acts which a woman did in forty years of service to His Majesty], changes to *Ultima y tercera relación en que se haze verdadera del resto de la vida de la Monja Alférez, sus memorables virtudes, y exemplar muerte en estos Reynos de la Nueva España* [Third and last relation in which is truly told the rest of the life of the Ensign Nun, her memorable virtues and exemplary death in this kingdom of New Spain].[74] After announcing its hagiographic intentions—the telling of virtue and a good death—the narrative launches into the details of a prohibited love affair: Catalina purportedly fell in love with a woman, offered to pay her dowry and to enter the convent with her, and challenged the woman's other suitors to duels. While the text even documents the case by quoting a letter referring to the matter, next to nothing is said about other events during the nearly twenty-year period it covers; the broadside's central piece is a story of unrequited, prohibited love. The narrative ends with a single formulaic hagiographic statement about the Monja Alférez's fasts, penances, observance of sacraments, and virtue, and another about the bishop's recognition of her status as "marvelous woman."[75]

The title and brief conclusion contradict the substance of the story, revealing on the one hand a continued interest in telling an engaging tale so evident in the *Vida i sucesos* and on the other a clear attempt to frame it within conventional, posthumous biographical accounts of women. Perhaps times had changed, or, more likely, since the first *Relación* was republished in 1653 as well, the death of the biographical subject required a certain idealization or reincorporation of the individual into Catholic norms, to better institutionalize her story. In fact, as mentioned earlier, the broadside says Bishop Palafox y Mendoza tried to obtain the Monja Alférez's remains in order to bury them in Puebla. By the time Catalina died, however, Bishop Palafox had been recalled to Spain. This apocryphal account, then, further illustrates how

women would often be associated with an already institutionalized figure in order to promote their acceptance into the ranks of outstanding individuals whom could be promoted as symbols of identity.[76]

The Jesuit Diego de Rosales's *Historia general del reino de Chile* (chap. 37), leaves no ambiguity about the reinterpretation of Catalina's life; he rewrites nearly every event, casting her in the role of a *perfecta religiosa*, one with a true vocation but who goes astray before ultimately returning to the cloister and rejoicing.[77] Echoing conventional language used to describe the mystic brides of Christ that we saw with Santander y Torres's descriptions of Madre María de San José, Rosales transforms the woman soldier into the wounded lover found in *The Song of Songs*. She goes to the mountains to suffer monthly periods, wear hair shirts, and observe fasts and long for confession and renewal. Catalina is the wounded deer (*sierva herida*), wounded by the arrow of divine love, taken quite literally to be the near mortal wounds she suffered in battle. Unable to bear separation from her Divine Spouse after her sinful deeds, Catalina searches out confession, "like another Mary Magdalene." Inscribed into the traditional conversion narrative, this account contrasts sharply with the tone of this same scene in the *Vida i sucesos*: "Bathed in tears like another Magdalene, she departed, determined to pay no attention to the Pharisee's and the world's slander, to prostrate herself at the feet of Christ to wash them with tears from her eyes and dry them with her hair; she fell at the learned man's feet . . . and begged him with many tears to hear her confession; recounting the events of her entire life, weeping all the while, she resolved not to leave there until she was on her way to the convent."[78] After throwing herself at the bishop's feet, confessing her sins, and professing her faith, the Monja Alférez ends her days in the cloister observing a "holy life."

Why such a drastic rewriting of Catalina's life? Once again the ideology of the genre may have influenced the story's outcome. Montalbán's theatre piece, for example, follows dramatic conventions of the period: the love triangle in the *comedia de enredo* ends with a marriage that at least partially restores the status quo. Rosales's formal history adheres to church historiographical conventions and restores Catalina to prescribed behavioral models for women. As Stephanie Merrim notes, Catalina is remade into an exemplary figure; moreover, as a Jesuit who was writing about a woman that confessed first to a fellow Jesuit, Catalina's "marvelous" (*prodigiosa*) story is coopted for the history of the order's role in colonizing Chile.[79] Rosales follows the same pattern we observed in the Jesuit-authored hagiographic biographies of Catarina de San Juan and Sor Juana: their stories help establish the order's role in developing a strong Christian identity in the New World.

The Spanish American Frontier and Social Mobility

Studying the literary context and construction of Catalina's *Vida* and its rescripting in other sources reveals the encoding of life stories according to narrative purpose, addressees, and gender. But given the questionable authorship of the autobiography, it is debatable whether one can make claims beyond the literary realm—especially since new versions of the *Vida* have surfaced and more may appear in the future as scholars cull the Spanish archives. Previous texts examined in this book illustrate how

thousands of religious women lived and worked within church roles. Does Catalina's life story reflect a larger reality and response by women or society as a whole? Focusing on the outcome of Catalina's petitions, Mary Elizabeth Perry concludes that Catalina's life "can be analyzed more effectively as a symbol than as a person." Catalina's transformation from outlaw to hero was possible because her life embodied the values of patriarchal society that condoned a man's right to defend his honor.[80] But what of Catalina's initial decision to reject the options of marriage or the veil—options that were open to her as a well-born Spaniard, options her four sisters chose—and her subsequent choice to cross-dress and follow in the footsteps of her four brothers who left for America and held good military and administrative positions there?[81] And, how did the reality of establishing rule in a land thousands of miles from the Crown affect the roles of women? Surely, just as the reality of the Spanish soldier-poet, Alonso de Ercilla's years fighting the Mapuche influenced his epic tale, the reality of life on the frontier of the viceroyality of Peru influenced Catalina's story. No doubt it is significant that the majority of Catalina's tale as a secretly cross-dressed woman took place in nonurban areas of Peru, and that even after receiving papal permission to remain in male garb, she chose to return to America and, what is more, to a new viceroyalty and to a career that did not require permanent residency in a city.

In their searches to answer some of these questions, Perry and Merrim have turned up few cases of cross-dressing in Spanish historical records and see most of the cases in literary sources as a means to an end for women to regain honor or lovers.[82] Merrim also discusses how Spanish tradition and moral codes seem to have severely restricted cases of manly women, even as they flourished in England, particularly in the form of the female soldier.[83] In Spain, as Encarnación Juárez notes, Moorish women took up arms in the rebellion in the Alpujarras. Helen Nader's new work on the fifteenth-century Mendoza noble-women also is highly suggestive; it brings to light the variety of roles played by some Spanish women: she notes that women in this family held positions in the court, managed estates, and traveled to England in order to evangelize. Looking at the radically different context of the Americas, Susan Midgden Socolow gives a general background of a range of activities colonial Spanish American women participated in, while Carmen Pumar Martínez sketches portraits of women of Spanish descent who made their mark in the New World as colonizers, governors, explorers, and soldiers.[84]

Establishing rule in a land thousands of miles from the mother country created conditions that often allowed women to take over for husbands who died, as in the case of the *adelantada*, Isabel de Barreto, or to work alongside their lovers as nurses and soldiers (since wives were often absent), as in the cases of Inés Suárez and María Estrada who accompanied the conquerors of Mexico and Chile, respectively. However, Pumar Martínez only mentions one case of a woman living for years in complete disguise as a man: Catalina de Erauso.[85]

Other period accounts talk of temporary cross-dressing in Spanish America. Nuns in one of the large convents in Lima dressed as men for theatrical performances, despite the bishop's prohibition of such events.[86] The *Historia de la Villa Imperial de Potosí*, tells stories of women in the silver-mining frontier lands of Peru who exchanged

skirts for trousers and left home, although many were forced to return.[87] Perhaps as Julia Wheelright demonstrates in her study of women in the military, we don't have more accounts of women leading nontraditional lives because women often were erased from the historical record or portrayed as amusing freaks of nature. This is especially important to consider in conjunction with Diane Dugaw's observation that female warrior types flourished in England when the military was not centralized; with the more organized Victorian army, women began to disappear from the ranks.[88] On the frontiers of the Spanish Empire, the military was anything but centralized. Catalina's *Vida i sucesos* itself hints at the often ad hoc nature of conquest, defense, and rebellion quashing. At the turn of the seventeenth century, companies were raised and *entradas* (expeditions of volunteers paid around 200 pesos to set out and conquer or control new lands) were sporadically formed (chap. 5). Furthermore, the memoirs note how few people actually lived on the frontier, and, therefore, the welcome the soldiers received: "Because of the scarcity of people in Chile we were well received." Indeed, the Jesuit historian Rosales who rescripted Catalina's role in Chilean history complained bitterly in the text about the difficulty of controlling the large number of women who moved from camp to camp with the soldiers in Chile; soldiers brought along servants and lovers.[89]

Beyond the lax military organization and the sparse population in some areas, Spanish America also broke every rule set by Madrid regarding marriage, dress, caste systems, and other customs. For example, although canon law required a couple to be married before a priest, historians believe that almost 40 percent of Spanish American couples living together in the seventeenth century were not officially married. Recall, for example, that despite Sor Juana's illegitimate birth, she became part of the viceregal court and, later, the convent, although the latter in theory required nuns to be born to a married Christian couple. Likewise, according to the Spanish Inquisition, Catarina de San Juan's biography was to be banned immediately, but it took four years to go into effect in Mexico. As the final stages of conquest came to an end and Spanish Americans and native Americans set about organizing life in new racial, geographical, political, and religious contexts, much of society was in flux. Colonization and redistribution of power and resources often created a fluid society that contradicted period documents and edicts written by elite Spaniards who spoke of control and rigid legal and moral codes. Historians note the at times dramatic socioeconomic transformation of seventeenth-century Spain. And the further one lived from the centers of power, often the more fluid the social mobility and interpretation of the law.

Catalina, who for many years lived hundreds of leagues from the center of the viceroyality of Peru, which itself was not within easy reach of Madrid, may have found it more easy to pass undetected as a man, and may possibly have had female comrades who never made it to Madrid to tell their own stories and publicize them. Catalina's accomplishments as *alférez* and renowned outlaw, and her skill at manipulating the system, may have catapulted her into a position of telling her story and gaining fame, while other military women's lives may have never been documented. It took nearly twenty years for Catalina's true identity to be revealed to the authorities who would help publicize it. As the narrator of the *Vida i sucesos* boasts ironically

after a close call with the law: "Miracles like this often happen in these types of conflict, and more so in the Indies, thanks to refined cleverness."[90] Her account outdoes the roguish tales of many combatants in the Thirty Years' War; after nearly twenty years in America, Catalina's life reflected the lawlessness, rebellions, mobility, and search for riches that characterized early-seventeenth-century Peru.

Such social, religious, and political upheaval and flux lent itself to itinerant lives, changes in positions, and, perhaps, identity. In the end, given this fluidity, was Catalina's cross-dressing less of an anomaly in her times than we have believed until now? Only more archival research will help answer this question. The work done in the last fifteen years to restore the most famous colonial woman, Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz, to the context of New Spanish culture—in particular, illuminating her participation in a widespread convent culture—provides an encouraging precedent. By studying documents by many religious women writers, we have been able to appreciate Sor Juana's role in an active feminine textual context. If more stories of cross-dressed military women in the New World are found, they may reveal that Catalina opted for a path that other women followed out of necessity or ambition; we may also see that, like Sor Juana, her story stands out because of the circumstances that aided its sensationalization: a bishop's request, strong political ties through Basque comrades, combined with her own ambition, creativity, and adequate training to petition both king and pope.

While the actual number of female comrades in the military is pure conjecture at this point, we do know that in the first Chilean literature from the colony, Ercilla talks of guerrillas and Amazonian archetypes on the Araucano frontiers. And the popular sixteenth-century romances of chivalry often included cross-dressed women who temporarily donned men's clothing to restore their honor. In Europe, Queen Isabel La Católica dressed in armor to enter Granada upon its surrender and Christine of Sweden abdicated her throne to live as a Catholic in Rome, often dressed as a man. For its part, the church had sainted several women soldiers, such as Joan of Arc, who demonstrated patriotic Christian behavior.[91] Catalina's petition to the king for reward states that she fought for him and for the Catholic faith, against infidels.[92] In fact, as Stephanie Merrim notes, Catalina took quite literally Teresa of Avila's advice to her nuns to be "more manly" in their behavior.[93]

While legend credits Rosa de Lima with invoking divine intercession to defeat the Dutch fleet that laid siege to Lima's port in the first decades of the seventeenth century, Catalina's *Vida i sucesos* describes a cross-dressed woman soldier fighting on a flagship that was sunk in one of these naval battles. One with hands folded in prayer, the other with musket in hand, Rosa and Catalina soon received popular and institutional approval for their roles in defending the king's empire and aiding the Catholic faith—Rosa because of her holiness, Catalina because of her bravery and creative rebellion. In the end, Rosa had many followers—although most had to be enclosed in the cloister to gain recognition—while Catalina seems to have had few that have been documented. In the final analysis, Catalina de Erauso's life and text may raise more questions than it answers. Examined in all its nuisance and contradiction, it parades before us ambiguities about gender and genre and about legal and ecclesial codes. It suggests a relatively unstudied fluidity in Spanish American society and

institutions. The *Vida i sucesos* urges us to reexamine our assumptions that women had to follow the narrow dictates of moral and religious treatises on proper feminine behavior in the seventeenth-century Hispanic world.

Chronology of Catalina de Erauso

Note: There are many discrepancies between the dates given in the *Vida i sucesos* and other documents. The *Vida* states that Catalina was born in 1585 and embarked for America in 1602, but a baptismal certificate puts her birth around 1592, and another document states she sailed for America in 1605. See Rima de Vallbona's extensive footnotes in her edition of the *Vida*, which are based on her own extensive research and Ferrer's work.

1585/1592	Baptized Catalina de Erauso in San Sebastián, Spain.
Age 4	Enters the Dominican convent in San Sebastián where her aunt was prioress.
Age 15?	Escapes convent.
1602/1605	Embarks for America.
ca. 1605	In Lima enlists as a soldier to fight on the frontiers of Chile.
1608	Awarded title of Ensign (Alférez) after the Battle of Puren.
1615	Fights in the battle against Joris van Spilbergen in Lima's Port of Callao.
ca. 1619	Confession to Bishop of Guamanga, Augustín de Carvajal.
ca. 1620	Enters the Convent of the Santísima Trinidad in Lima.
1624	Returns to Spain.
1624 and 1625	*Relación verdadera*, published in Madrid and Seville.
1625	*Petition* to the Spanish Crown for reward; *Vida i sucesos* reportedly completed and given to an editor in Madrid.
1626	Pérez de Montalbán's play, *La Monja Alférez*, written and performed in Madrid.
1626	Goes to Rome and receives permission from Pope Urban VIII to remain dressed as a man.
1630	Returns to America and lives in New Spain as the mulateer Alonso de Erauso.
1650	Dies in New Spain.
1650 and 1653	Broadsides published in Mexico.
166?	Fray Diego de Rosales writes his *History* of Chile and includes a chapter on Catalina (chap. 37).
1784	Manuscript copy of the *Vida i sucesos* made by Juan Bautista Múñoz.
1829	First edition of *Vida i sucesos* published in Paris by Joaquín María Ferrer.

87. See a parallel symbolism of a dove and serpent in Santander y Torres, "Aprobación," *Vida.*

88. "Cuando referí esto al padre Viñas, me dijo: 'Y no tiene güesos'; yo le dije: 'Si se lo oí sonar.' 'No tiene güesos,' volvió a replicar. Yo callé y no le pugné más" (Suárez, *Relación,* 270).

89. "Díjome su Majestad: 'Repique ha de haber,' yo le dije: 'Y truenos también, para que esté buena la fiesta'" (ibid., 263).

90. "No me hables en latín ni me nombres a san Pablo ni me tomes en la boca la Biblia" (ibid., 262).

91. "Viendo tantas misericordias como de su inmensa bondad resebía, le dije: 'Señor y dueño de todo mi ser, mi solo amor y todo mi bien, parese quieres haser verdaderas mis locuras'; respondió: 'Profetisabas en ti'; díjele: 'Yo profeta en mi tierra?'; díjome: 'Contigo todo se dispensa'; díjele: 'Y cuando tengo de ser santa?'; respondió: 'Cuando estés callada'; díjele: 'Mucho me falta, que no puedo estar callada'" (ibid., 245).

92. Recall that María de San Jose's notebooks are carefully reordered and do not follow the chronology of composition; her *Stations* were recopied and circulated in manuscript form during her own life. Both were used later for the hagiographic *vida.* In Ursula's case, the opening title and chapter heading are clearly in a formal hand, and talks of Ursula are in third person: "Relación de las singulares misericordias que ha usado el Señor con una religiosa, indigna esposa suya, previniéndole siempre para que sólo amase a tan Divino Esposo y apartase su amor de las ciraturas; mandaba escrebir por su confesor y padre espiritual." The main body of the text is in a less careful hand, typical of many nuns' handwriting. Besides the paleography, the theory that the notebooks might be in Ursula's original hand is convincing, since there are blank pages in the manuscript that would typically not be in a manuscript copy.

93. There surely were written works after that date, as Abbess Ursula wrote many letters and Ramón conjectures that her extant notebooks probably represent a small portion of what she actually wrote. There is some discrepancy about the order of notebooks 10–13: they were composed as separate narrative units and have been ordered in several ways. I believe that the twentieth-century edition has misplaced the twelfth notebook, which contains a single anecdote about Ursula's wimple. The editors placed it in the middle of the chronological story about the 1711 election of the abbess (notebook 11), subsequent difficulties with the abbess and confessors (notebook 13), and the bishop's 1715 *sentencia* (notebook 14). The nineteenth-century copy places the twelfth notebook before this sequence (between notebooks 10 and 11), and it seems less disruptive there. See Podestá, "Editor's note to *Relación,*" 21.

94. Ibsen, for example, argues: "Like the *mujer varonil,* Ursula in the end is forced to defer to male authority, although with a decidedly unhappy, if not tragic, ending. Ursula Suarez's decision to end her narration with a dream that predates the time of writing by at least twelve years suggests the enormous pain of realization when this 'very happy saint' was forced by circumstances into silence" (*Women's,* 136).

95. Ibsen (in *Women's,* 134) discusses the role of a controversial Inquisition trial and Romero's transfer to Quito. In "Introducción," 36–43, Ramón argues that later notebooks were probably destroyed. My reading is based on the fact that in notebook 10 each of Ursula's previous confessors, and therefore possible addressees, are named.

96. "Díjome: '¿No se han leído casos de obispos que han tenido hijos?'" (Suárez, *Relación,* 234).

97. See Myers and Powell, *A Wild Country,* 217–226.

98. For example, a period notary cites in a 1735 document about a sale of property that Ursula was present with the abbess at the time of the purchase (Guernica, *Historia,* 126).

99. Although, the nun who won the position of abbess on two occasions did not die until 1745 (Guernica, *Historia,* appendix 1).

100. See Ibsen, *Women's,* 134.

101. "Señor mío, ¿por qué cuando usas de tus misericordias con las mujeres, anda la Inquisición conosiendo de ellas?" (Suárez, *Relación,* 252).

102. Ursula's confessor was fearful; she reports: "Teme por lo que susedió a fray Luis de Granada, y en estos tiempos de la Carransa" (ibid., 253).

103. See Guernica, *Historia,* 303 and 210–227. The bishop who was in power during Ursula's time as abbess, Fernández Rojas, also reinforced guidelines from the Council of Trent on enclosure of nuns and focusing on the spiritual life.

104. See Ibsen, *Women's,* 134.

105. For information about the 1730 earthquake, see Guernica, *Historia,* 115; for the position of abbess in 1732, see ibid., 241–243.

106. A funerary sermon of Madre Castillo was written, but there was no hagiographic biography. See McKnight's important study, *The Mystic of Tunja,* 125.

107. Routt, "Authoring Orthodoxy"; Arenal and Schlau, *Untold Sisters.*

Chapter 6

My thanks to Mary E. Giles, Amanda Powell, and Linda Curcio-Nagy for their valuable comments on an early draft of this paper, read at the Modern Languages Association in San Francisco, 1998. An abbreviated version of this chapter was published in Kathleen Ann Myers, *Writing of the Frontier,* ed. Santa Arias and Mariselle Meléndez (Lewisburg, PA: Bucknell University Press, 2002). All translations of Catalina's *Vida* are courtesy of Nina M. Scott.

1. "The nuns were beside themselves when they took their leave of me, and I was carried off in a litter with a retinue of six priests, four friars, and six swordsmen" (Stepto and Stepto, *Lieutenant Nun,* chap. 21). The translation of Catalina's title from "alférez" into lieutenant is problematic. According to the second *Relación* (1625), Catalina was promoted to Sargento Mayor, but Vallbona (*Vida i sucesos,* 165n12) says that official documents show she only received the title of *alférez,* or ensign.

2. During much of this time, she went by the alias of Alonso Díaz Ramírez de Gúzman.

3. The petitions are reproduced, along with notarized testimony from witnesses, in Vallbona's edition of *Vida i sucesos,* appendix 2. These documents, among others, are also reproduced in Tellechea Idigoras, *Doña Catalina de Erauso.* Both editions draw on Ferrer's *Historia de la Mónja Alférez* and Medina's *Biblioteca Hispano-Chilena,* as well as new archival material. The petitions include two separate ones to the Crown: one for remuneration for Catalina's military services and the other for compensation for a robbery that occurred when she traveled to Rome in 1626. See Merrim, "Petition of Catalina de Erauso" for a translation and study of the petition, which recounts her decision to cross-dress and be a soldier. The memoirs have been edited on a handful of occasions. The most recent, complete Spanish edition is Vallbona's *Vida i sucesos de la Monja Alférez.* See the bibliography in Vallbona for a complete listing of previous editions in English and Spanish. The only one not listed that is of some importance is Pedro Rubio Merino's recent *La Monja Alférez* (1995). The document about Catalina's share of her family estate is cited by Stepto from Lucas G. Castillo Lara, *La asombrosa historia de Doña Catalina de Erauso,* xlii (Castillo 318); Tellechea Idigoras's *Doña Catalina* reproduces many of the family's wills and estate documents.

4. One of the few documents that describes Catalina during these years is reproduced in Vallbona, *Vida i Sucessos*, 155. Another is the *Tercera relación* (Mexico 1653), discussed later in this chapter.

5. For more about cross-dressing in seventeenth-century Spain, see Perry, *Gender and Disorder*, chap. 6, and Merrim, "Catalina de Erauso: From Anomoly to Icon." See also Velasco's important new book, *The Lieutenant Nun*, chaps. 1–2.

6. This is Merrim's central argument in her study and translation of this document; see "Petition."

7. For a history of the manuscript and its nineteenth-century publication, see Vallbona, *Vida i sucesos* 2–3.

8. Bynum's *Holy Feast and Holy Fast* has been one of the landmark works on this topic. In the context of colonial Spanish America, see Routt's "Authorizing Orthodoxy" and Ibsen's *Women's Spiritual Autobiography*. For lengthier discussions of this topic with regard to Catalina de Erauso in particular, see Merrim, *Early Modern Women's Writing*, 13–18, and Velasco, *The Lieutenant Nun*, chap. 1.

9. For extensive, and often new, documentation on Catalina's family, see Tellechea Idigoras's *Doña Catalina*. Also consult my chronology and note there for more information about discrepancies about many dates for Catalina's life.

10. Captain Miguel de Erauso was part of the Armada, and served in various other positions as scribe and mayor; for more historical details on Catalina's family, see Tellechea Idigoras, *Doña Catalina*.

11. "Era mi inclinasión andar i ver el mundo" (Vallbona, *Vida i Sucesos* chap. 5).

12. For the full names of the sisters who entered the convent with Catalina and the brothers who went to America, see Tellechea Idigoras, *Doña Catalina*.

13. "Y también hay pobres soberbios que ya que no pueden morder ladran, y siempre andan con la cabeza baja mirando donde pueden hacer presa, ni se quieren sujetar ni hay razón con ellos. A esta gente tal llaman soldados no porque lo sean, sino porque son bien andantes de unos lugares para otros, siempre con los naipes en las manos, por no perder ocasión de jugar con cuantos topan, y por si acaso topan con algún novicio o chapetón que no está diestro y bien disciplinado en su malicia, o que no alcance su malicia con naipes falsos les dan mates y les quitan el dinero y la hacienda... Son grandísimos fulleros que su cuidado no es otro más que entender en el arte de engañar. Esta gente es mucha la que anda por el Perú. Y todos por la mayor parte son enemigos de la gente rica y no desean sino novedades y alteraciones y alborotos en el Reino, por robar en y meter en los codos en los bienes de que no pueden alcanzar parte sino con guerra y disensiones. Es gente que no quieren servir. Todos andan bien vestidos, porque nunca les falta una negra o una india y algunas españolas, y no de las más pobres... Es más la gente vagabunda que tiene el Perú ... y busquen su vida como mejor pudieron. A otra suerte de gente de menor cuantía y que no puede usar tan bien ni con tanta libertad la arte de la adulación ni tienen caudal para andar en vagabundos de unas tierras a otras, y también porque se inclinan más al trabajo y al ejercicio de las armas y a comer a cuenta del rey, estos tales se meten soldados, porque todos los años se hace en Lima gente para el Reino de Chile. Y los llevan debajo de sus banderas a pelear con los araucanos. Y les dan en Lima doscientos pesos, con que se visten. Con esto limpian la tierra y envían gente contra los indomables araucanos. Y pocos destos soldados vuelven a Perú" (*La inedita*, 69–70).

14. "Hallándola, la truxeron ante Su Señoría [el obispo], vestida [de] calzón y ropilla de perpetuam failesco y un ferruelo de cordellate pardo, sombrero blanco guarnecido de trencilla de oro la halda y el cayrel, valon de puntas, jubón de raso blanco trencillado, coleto de ante guarnecido, espada y daga dorada" (as quoted in Tellechea Idigoras, *Doña Catalina*, 61).

15. By most accounts these events took place around 1619, although the document that records some of the inquiry made by the bishop is dated 1617. Perhaps this is merely an error in the transcription of the document (see Tellechea Idigoras, *Doña Catalina*, 60–64). This document is particularly interesting because there are several discrepancies about Catalina's life, and it illustrates the sort of question and answer format of much period inquiry that informed autobiographical narrative structures, as discussed in the introduction to this book.

16. "La prosecución honesta en adelante, i la abstinencia en ofender al próximo, temiendo la ulción de Dios sobre su mandamiento, *non occides.*" (Vallbona, *Vida i sucesos*, chap. 25).

17. See Rubial, "Catalina de Erauso," 115–117.

18. The anonymous satirist exclaims: "Vive Apolo, que será/ un lego quien alabare/ desde hoy a la Monja Alférez/ sino a la Monja Almirante" (Romance 48 in Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz, *Obras*, 309).

19. For transcriptions of three broadsides—selections from a history, a play, and a poem—as well as information about the Italian translations, see Valbona, *Vida i sucesos*, appendices. Both Merrim, "Catalina de Erauso," and Perry, *Gender and Disorder*, analyze some of these works.

20. "Tenga fin aqui/ este caso verdadero/ donde llega la Comedia/ han llegado los sucesos;/ que oy está el Alferez Monja/ en Roma." For analyses of Montalbán's treatment of the manly woman character type in this play, see Velasco, *The Lieutenant Nun*, 60–70, and Perry, "La Monja Alférez."

21. *Relación prodigiosa* (Madrid 1625), *Segunda parte de la relación* (Madrid 1625), and Fray Diego de Rosales, *Historia general del Reino de Chile* (chap. 37). These are all reprinted in Vallbona's Appendixes. The broadsides also were reprinted in Mexico.

22. There are three versions of these memoirs; I use Vallbona's edition of the standard version, which is based on Ferrer's (*Historia*) first edition of the text. Ferrer, in turn, worked with Múñoz's eighteenth-century copy of a document in Seville; see Rubio Merino, *La monja*, 18. Múñoz's version is housed at the Real Academia de Historia in Madrid. This is a 1784 copy, which has eighteenth-century calligraphy but seventeenth-century orthography and morphosyntax. According to most critics, the account was completed between 1624 and 1626, then deposited in the publishing house of Bernardino de Gúzman in Madrid. Two alternate versions of the *Vida* were published for the first time in 1995 by Rubio Merino and are based on late-seventeenth-century copies housed at the Cathedral Archives in Seville. Of the two versions, M-I and M-II, only the first is complete. It covers the same years and anecdotes as Vallbona's edition, but there are significant changes in the narration of certain events. I discuss one of the most significant, the moment of confession to the bishop, later in this chapter (M-I, Rubio Merino; chap. 20 Vallbona). For more on the history of the manuscripts, see Medina, *Biblioteca Hispano-Chilena*; Rubio Medina, *La Monja Alférez*; and Vallbona, *Vida i sucesos*.

23. Several theories exist about the extent to which Catalina de Erauso had a hand in the writing of her own memoirs. Most critics agree that she was extensively involved but that the transcriber probably elaborated on her story either at the time of the original composition or later when it was copied. Vallbona sets out her theories in *Vida i sucesos*, 2–11, and Merrim in "Catalina de Erauso," 196.

24. See Merrim, "Catalina de Erauso," 195.

25. Vallbona, *Vida i sucesos*, 11.

26. *El Carnero* (1636–1638) by Rodriquez Freile and The *Historia de Potosí* by Arzans de Orsua (first part of the eighteenth century) for example, have been studied for their novelesque retelling of scaborous tales. Likewise, scholars point out the blurring of Sigüenza y Góngora's voice as transcriber with the first-person accounts of Ramírez's shipwreck in *Naufragios* and of nuns retelling the history of their convent in *Paraíso occidental*. For a more thorough discussion of these hybrid genres, see Ross, *The Baroque Narrative*. Many colonial scholars, such as González-Echevarría in "The Law of the Letter," note that period accounts often defy traditional definitions of literary and historical genres; the texts created a new type of writing.

27. See, for example, the documents in Vallbona, *Vida i sucesos*, appendix 2, and Merrim, "Petition," 37.

28. Garber, "Preface to Lieutenant Nun"; Juárez, "La mujer militar"; Merrim, "Catalina de Erauso"; Perry, "La Monja Alférez"; Velasco, *The Lieutenant Nun*; and Vallbona, *Vida i Sucesos*.

29. Perry, *Gender and Disorder*, chap. 6 "Sexual Rebels."

30. Merrim, *Early Modern*, 13–15.

31. See also the case discovered by Velasco and her overview of the popularity of female transvestitism in historical and literary works of the period, *The Lieutenant Nun*, 22–23, 32–40.

32. The painting is in the colonial art collection at CONDUMEX, Mexico City. My thanks to Manuel Ramos Medina for showing this to me.

33. Merrim, for example, briefly mentions the influence of the picaresque tone, the theatricality of the narration, and the lack of interiority or remorse characteristic of the soldier's life in "Catalina de Erauso," 181, 195. Garber mentions the complex mixture of literary forms from autobiography to pilgrimage and picaresque narrative structures in Preface to *Lieutenant Nun*, xxiii, xxxiv; and Rubio Merino does as well in *La Monja Alférez*, 43–44, 50, 88. In the most extensive study of genre, Vallbona divides the narrative according to the echoes from the picaresque (chaps. 1–5), the chronicle of conquest (chap. 6 and others), and cloak and dagger theatre and travel literature (chaps. 6, 11–20), as well as various popular story-telling influences throughout (chaps. 9–11). She also carefully footnotes passages reminiscent of these genres.

34. For how this type of writing derived from bureaucratic, legal, and ecclesial models, see González-Echevarría, "The Law of the Letter," 107–109; and Fernández, *Apology to Apostrophe*, chap. 1.

35. This is a term used by Fernández in his study of Hispanic autobiography, *Apology*, 22.

36. These categories also correspond to the three that Levisi in *Autobiografías del siglo de oro* says are the predominant forms during Spain's Golden Age (the memorial, picaresque, and confession).

37. Although generally they were not published until the twentieth century, these soldiers' accounts may have circulated in manuscript form. For twentieth-century editions of some of these, see Cossío, *Autobiografías*.

38. The text states her birth year as 1585, but the baptismal record states 1592; see Vallbona, *Vida i sucesos*, 151.

39. Ginés de Pasamonte's *Vida* (ca. 1604) (in Cossío, *Autobiografías*) is one of the few soldier's accounts that describes having a religious calling yet becoming a soldier because he did not have the necessary background and money to enter the religious life.

40. Levisi uses this term in her book that examines three soldiers' accounts, *Autobiografías*, 141.

41. Garber emphasizes the memoirs' frequent description of clothes and argues that Catalina is a transvestite; she fails to place this emphasis, however, in the broader context of soldiers' accounts, which often talk of clothing as it related to status. See Garber's preface to *Lieutenant Nun*. It should be noted here that the descriptions of cities in the memoirs often echo period chronicles, a genre not studied in this essay because it does not fit into the life-writing focus.

42. "Juntámonos otros quantos con él, i alojámonos en los llanos de Valdivia en campaña raza, cinco mil hombres con harta incomodidad. Tomaron i asolaron los Yndios la dicha Valdivia... Viéndola [bandera] llevar, partimos tras ella yo i dos Soldados de caballo por medio de grande multitud, atropellando i matando, i recibiendo daño: en breve cayó muertos uno de los tres. Proseguimos los dos. Legamos a la vandera, cayó de un bote de lanza mi compañero. Yo recibí un mal golpe en una pierna. Maté al Cacique que la llevaba i quitésela, i apreté con mi caballo, atropellando, matando i hiriendo a infinidad, pero mal herido, i pasado de tres flechas, i de una lanza en el ombro izquierdo que sentía mucho. En fin, llegué a mucha gentre i caí luego del caballo... quedé Alférez de la compañía de Alonso Moreno... i holgué mucho" (Vallbona, *La Monja*, Chap. 6).

43. "Mass was held in the jail, and when the priest had taken communion he gave it to me and turned back to the altar, and I instantly spat the wafer out into my right hand, shouting madly, 'I call on the church! I call on the church!' Complete bedlam ensued. The brothers were scandalized and kept shouting, 'Heretic! Heretic!' . . . The priests circled round me, along with a great number of townspeople—they lighted candles, unfurled a canopy over my head, and carried me in procession into the sacristy, where everyone got down on their knees and a priest pried the wafer from my hand and placed it in the tabernacle. . . . This was a scheme I had come up with thanks to a pious Franciscan, who gave me some words of wisdom when I was in jail, and took my last confession. The governor kept the church surrounded, with me under lock and key" (chap. 15). According to Catholic belief, the consecrated host became the actual body of Christ in the process of transubstantiation and could only be touched by the hands of a priest. Similar treatment of the church can be seen in Miguel Castro's parody of the canonical hours; see Pope, *La autobiografía española*, 197.

44. Catalina, *Vida*, chap. 9.

45. As we will see, Alonso de Conteras is the closest in tone. Others, such as Castro's *Vida* (ca. 1609) and Pasamonte's *Vida i trabajos* (ca. 1605) (in Cossío, *Autobiografías*), have elements of the picaresque, especially Castro's retelling of amorous encounters, but they also include a structure based on trials (and, therefore, deserving of merit). For more on the development of the genre, see Pope, *La autobiografía*, and Levisi, *Autobiografías*.

46. As an example of the first, Pope studies the account by Charles V's soldier Diego García de Paredes (1468–1533). Examples of more roguish accounts are Miguel Castro's story (ca. 1612) of swordfights and brawls, and the duke of Estrada's contradictory *Comentarios de el desengañado* (1614, 1633, 1642). According to Pope, by as early as the first decade of the seventeenth century in Diego Suárez Montañez's *Discurso verdadero* (ca. 1610), the soldier-autobiographer wished to satisfy the reader's curiosity, and thus the narrator incorporated elements of the popular picaresque form; he recounts his "naturaleza y inclinasión y curso de la vida, para enterar a los lectores de mis partes y vivienda, en el curioso que lo quisiere, aberigurar lo hallará así sin discrepar punto de verdad" (quoted in Pope, *La autobiografía*, 123).

47. Quoted in Serrano y Sanz, *Apuntes*, 485.

48. Estebanillo González, *La vida y hechos de Estebanillo González, hombre de buen humor, compuesta por él mismo*, Antwerp 1646; there were at least five other editions published in Madrid during the next hundred years. See Pope, *La autobiografía*, chap. 4.

49. Pope (*La autobiografía*, 140) sees this as manifesting itself as "la desadaptación" that was increasingly expressed after 1600, as a "perplejidad ante las nuevas condiciones sociales que los autobiógrafos que siguen resolverán adecuadamente con una abierta aceptación de la inseguridad y la aventura."

50. Catalina resubmitted her petition to the Consejo de Indias in August 1625, and in April 1626, after presenting a case to the king, she was granted remuneration for her services. For the chronology of these documents, see Vallbona, *Vida i sucesos*, 119, 121.

51. According to his own *Vida* (ca. 1630), Contreras (in Cossío *Autobiografías*) left home at a young age after killing a boy; he served in the army, was promoted to alférez and later captain, met both the king and pope, and became the subject of a famous playwright's drama. He also was a rogue, killed to protect his honor, and gambled. See the edition of his *Vida* in Cossío's *Autobiografías de soldados*. Lope de Vega's *El rey sin reino* is very loosely based on Contreras's life. Contreras lived with Lope from 1622 to 1623.

52. Only in later additions, once things no longer were going his way, is there evidence of a petition. Levisi (*Autobiografías*, 129, 130) discusses the 1633 and 1641 additions. See also Pope, *La autobiografía*, 148–164.

53. Stepto and Stepto, *Lieutenant Nun*, xl.

54. According to Vallbona's division in *Vida i sucesos*, 9, chapters 1–5 correspond to the picaresque.

55. "Es de saber que esta Doña Beatriz de Cárdenas era Dama de mi amo, i él mirava a tenernos seguros, a mí, para servicio, i a ella, para gusto... una noche me encerró i se declaró en que a pesar del diablo havía de dormir con ella... i dixe luego a mi amo que de tal casmiento no havía que tratar, porque por todo el mundo yo no lo haría. A lo qual él porfió, i me promtetió montes de oro" (Vallbona, *Vida i sucesos*, chap. 3).

56. See Cruz's use of the term, "The Picaresque as Discourse of Poverty," and Mandrell's discussion of sexual desirability in "Questions of Genre and Gender," 152.

57. In "La confesión en jerigonza," Rabell argues that much of the slang used in the Lazarillo text has sexual innuendos.

58. See the documents in Tellechea Idigoras, *Doña Catalina*, and Vallbona, *Vida i sucesos*.

59. See Stepo and Stepto, *Lieutenant Nun*, xl–xli, and Perry, *Gender and Disorder*, 135.

60. For a discussion of this dynamic in the Lazarillo de Tormes text, see Rosenberg, *The Circular Pilgrimage*, 75, 81–86.

61. Like many of the dates associated with Catalina's life, there is a discrepancy in different accounts. A letter recording the encounter with the bishop is dated in Tellechea Idigoras as 1617 (*Doña Catalina*, 61–65), but by other accountings this would have had to take place around 1619 because the *Vida* says the bishop died five months later.

62. For a study of these differences between men's and women's spiritual *vidas*, see Myers and Powell, *A Wild Country*, chap. 2, and McKnight, *The Mystic of Tunja*, 54–59.

63. It is interesting to note that in the last chapter, Loyola's transcriber mentions that he has added some of his own comments to the narrative.

64. It is important to note that one of the manuscript versions that Rubio Merino published in 1995 renders this scene in a very different light. The same biographical elements are present, but the more literary reworking of it is absent: "Preguntóme [el obispo] en forma quien era. De dónde. Hija de quien. Fuy respondiendo. Apartóme un poco y preguntóme si era Monja y la causa y modo de la salida del convento. Díxesela. Porfióme con preguntas sobre esto, porque no se podía a ello persuadir. Tornóme a decir que le dixesse la verdad y que ya vería yo que podía fiarme. Díxele: Illmo. Señor, no hay más que lo que he dicho y si V.S. illma. Es servido, nombre personas honestas que me vean, que llana estoy." She goes on to report the medical examination: "Yo me manifesté. Ellos me miraron y se satisficieron de que verdaderamente estaba virgen" (Rubio Merino, *La Monja Alférez*, M-I, 86).

65. "Señor... la verdad es ésta: que soi muger; que nací en tal parte, hija de fulano i sutana; que me entraron de tal edad en tal Convento con fulana mi tía; que allí me crié; que tomé el hábito; que tuve noviciado; que estando para profesar, por tal ocasión me salí; que me fui a tal parte, me desnudé, me vestí, me corté el cabello; partí allí i acullá me embarqué, aporté, trahiné, maté, herí, maleé, correteé, hasta venir a parar en lo presente i a los pies de Su Señoría Ilustrísima."

66. Catalina, *Vida*, chap. 2.

67. Ibid.

68. "Corrió la noticia de este suceso por todas partes, y los que antes me vieron y los que antes y despues supieron mis cosas en todas las Indias, se maravillaron" (chap. 20).

69. "Dame otra Monja Alférez, y le concederé lo mismo" (Vallbona, *Vida i sucesos*, 171).

70. Merrim, "Catalina de Erauso," discusses the role of fame in this construction.

71. For example, Ursula Suárez went to China, Madre de Agreda bilocated to New Mexico, and Madre María de San José had a vision of being in Rome.

72. "En hábito de hombre, con espada y daga, guarniciones de plata, algunos malos pelillos por varba, Y era el guapo de los guapos. Tenía una gran aría de mulas y negros con que conducía ropa a México" (letter from Fray Diego de Sevilla, as quoted by Rubio Merino, *La Monja Alférez*, 133).

73. Vallbona restored the fluctuation between feminine and masculine adjectives that is found in the original manuscript copy; the use of masculine adjectives, however, dominates. She also notes that the first two broadsides use the feminine, but there is fluctuation between the masculine and feminine in the third *Relación*. See Vallbona, *Vida i sucesos*, 2–5, 161n5.

74. These broadsides are reproduced in Vallbona, *Vida i sucesos*, appendix 3.

75. Vallbona, *Vida i sucesos*, 173, 174.

76. Palafox might have known Catalina, since she would probably have passed through Puebla as she transported goods from the Port of Veracruz along the Royal Road to Mexico City.

77. Rosales's history is based on Domingo Sotelo Romay's notes for a history of Chile. As a Jesuit chronicler, Romay had been chosen to write the history, but he never completed it. The history apparently was not published until the nineteenth century. According to Vallbona, this is the only document that completely changes Catalina's life; see Vallbona, *Vida i sucesos*, 181n4 and 183n5, and Medina, *Biblioteca Hispano-Chilena*, 221–225.

78. "Desecha en lágrimas como otra Magdalena se fue determinada a no hazer caso de la murmuración del fariseo, el mundo, a postrarse a los pies de Christo y labárselos con las lágrimas de sus ojos y limpiarlos con sus cabellos, y se echó a los pies del Licenciado... y le pidió con muchas lágrimas le oyesse de confesión, y descubriéndole todo el discurso de su vida, resulta en lágrimas, se resolvió a no apartarse hasta salir para el Convento" (Vallbona, *Vida i sucesos*, 182–183).

79. Merrim, *Early Modern*, 21. If the *Vida i sucesos* can be relied on, the priest to whom Catalina first confessed not only allowed her to continue being dressed as a man, but helped her escape, once he saw she was not inclined to return to the cloister (chap. 18).

80. Perry, *Gender and Disorder*, 131, 135.

81. Vallbona reproduces a document that includes a description of the patriotic roles of Catalina's brothers and father: "Alférez Miguel de Herausso y Francisco de Herausso que sirvió en la armada de Lima con don Rodrigo de Mendoza, y Domingo de Herauso, se fue en el armada que salió para el Brassil, y bolbiendo de allá fue uno de los que

perecieron en la Almirata de las Quatro Villas, que se quemó, que todos tres fueron sus hermanos" (1626 Petition, *Vida i sucesos*, 133). Stepto and Stepto (*Lieutenant Nun*, xxvii) also note that Catalina's father, a military captain, may have served in the American colonies and that Mariana Erauso married, while the other three sisters—Mari Juana, Isabel, and Jacinta—became nuns at the Convent of San Sebastian.

82. Perry, *Gender and Disorder*, 131–133; Merrim, "Catalina de Erauso, 185. Both studies base many of their conclusions on a variety of recent studies that examine the topic.

83. Merrim, "Catalina de Erauso," 185–186, cites Dugaw's work, *Warrior Women and Popular Balladry*. Wheelright, *Amazons and Military Maids*, and Shepherd, *Amazons and Warrior Women*, also touch on the topic. Davis, "The Reasons for Misrule," in *Society and Culture*, examines the extent of cross-dressing found in France during Carnival. See also Velasco's important new study on the topic, *The Lieutenant Nun*.

84. Juárez, "La mujer militar," 151. Socolow, "The Women" and Pumar Martinez, *Españolas en Indias*.

85. See Pumar Martínez, *Españolas en Indias*, 78–84, 85–94.

86. See McNamara, *Sisters in Arms*, 540–541.

87. Arzáns de Orsua, *Historia de la villa imperial de Potosí*, L. VI, c. 6; L. IX, c. 6.

88. Wheelright, *Amazons*, 18; Dugar, *Warrior Women*. "Fuimos bien recibidos por la falta de gente que había en Chile" (chap. 6).

89. Diego de Rosales complains, "como si en otras partes no se hiciese la guerra sin mujeres y sin ciradas, que si solamente sirvieran de criadas fuera tolerable; pero ni ellas ni ellos se contentan con eso, sino que usando de ellas para sus apetitos desordenados, va el ejército cargado de pecados... uno de las prinicpales desgracias y azotes de este Reyno es este desorden de amancebamiento con las criadas" (quoted in Salinas, *Las chilenas*, 19). In 1602 the governor of Chile, Alonso de Ribera, set up new rules for the military which aimed at standardizing the army and doing away with such practices, but they were not followed on the frontiers to the south of Santiago (see Salinas, *Las chilenas*, 19).

90. "Que estos milagros suelen acontecer en estos conflictos i más en Yndias. Gracias a la vela industria" (Vallbona, chap. 10).

91. See Merrim, "Catalina," 190. Interestingly, Christine of Sweden, who had helped the Counter-Reformation with her conversion to Catholicism and abdication of her throne, later caused the Catholic Church great embarrassment for her transvestite tendencies in Rome, but the church apparently did little to stop her.

92. "The Ensign Doña Catalina de Erauso, resident and native of the town of San Sebastián, in the province of Guipúzcoa, says that of the last 19 years, she has spent 15 in the service of Your Majesty in the wars of the kingdom of Chile and the Indians of Peru, having traveled to those parts in men's garb owing to her particular inclination to take up arms in the defense of the Catholic faith and in the service of Your Majesty, without being known in the aforesaid kingdom of Chile, during the entire time she spent there as other than a man" (as translated by Merrim, "Petition," 37).

93. "I would prefer, my daughters, that in no way you be women, nor resemble them in the least, but rather strong men, for if women behave as they should the Lord will make them so manly that they will inspire terror even in men" (as quoted in Merrim, "Catalina de Erauso," 188).

Conclusions

1. My thanks to Asunción Lavrin for explaining this practice to me.
2. For a study of this period, see Rubial *La santidad*, 42.
3. Rivas, "Gran cosa," 123n57.

4. See Rubial's excellent study of this process of secularization, in *La santidad*, 15–16.
5. In the case of Madre María de San José's convents, for example, they were affected by the reforms implemented by Benito Juárez in the 1860s. Nevertheless, her first convent in Puebla continued to operate in secret until the 1920s. See *Word from New Spain*, 10–11.
6. Rivas, "Gran cosa," 113–126.
7. Rubial *La santidad*, 86–87.