THE ANNUNCIATION IN THE SPANISH BAROQUE AND ENLIGHTENMENT: BEAUTY OF MARY THEOLOGICALLY INTERPRETED THROUGH THE POETIC AND VISUAL WORKS OF LEANDRO FERNÁNDEZ DE MORATÍN AND FRANCISCO RICCI

by

MARIE IRENE JOSEPH

(Under the Direction of Dana Bultman)

ABSTRACT

The depiction of Mary in lyrical and visual art from the Baroque and Enlightenment in Spain, as seen through a theological lens comprising both the early Church fathers and modern authors, can greatly expand current viewpoints about beauty. This study examines Leandro Fernández de Moratín's *cántico* "La anunciación" (1813) and Francisco Ricci's painting *La Anunciación* (1663) as lyrical and visual components of the Annunciation, the moment in the Bible in which the angel Gabriel delivered the message from God that Mary was to be the mother of Christ. The analysis considers an interdisciplinary approach through theological, artistic, and literary references consulted within the framework of the study and achieves a more complete picture of the beauty of Mary during the Annunciation. This dissertation also serves as a bridge between the fields in order to create a space for dialogue, mutual understanding, and richness of knowledge. Therefore, by analyzing lyrical and visual art together, the exploration of Mary's beauty as discussed in theological writings and their counterparts in the arts will enhance current understandings of the Annunciation and question notions of modern beauty standards.

INDEX WORDS: Marian art, Catholic theology, Baroque painting, Spanish art, Enlightenment poetry, Catholic Reformation art, Mariology, the Annunciation, Beauty, Catholic Saints, Spirituality, Marian Studies

THE ANNUNCIATION IN THE SPANISH BAROQUE AND ENLIGHTENMENT: THE BEAUTY OF MARY THEOLOGICALLY INTERPRETED THROUGH THE POETIC AND VISUAL WORKS OF LEANDRO FERNÁNDEZ DE MORATÍN AND FRANCISCO RICCI

by

MARIE IRENE JOSEPH

B.S., San Diego State University, 1992

M.A., San Diego State University, 1995

A Dissertation Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of The University of Georgia in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

ATHENS, GEORGIA

2025

© 2025

Marie Irene Joseph

All Rights Reserved

THE ANNUNCIATION IN THE SPANISH BAROQUE AND ENLIGHTENMENT: THE BEAUTY OF MARY THEOLOGICALLY INTERPRETED THROUGH THE POETIC AND VISUAL WORKS OF LEANDRO FERNÁNDEZ DE MORATÍN AND FRANCISCO RICCI

by

MARIE IRENE JOSEPH

Major Professor: Dana Bultman

Committee: Elizabeth Wright
Thomas Peterson

Electronic Version Approved:

Ron Walcott
Vice Provost for Graduate Education and Dean of the Graduate School
The University of Georgia
August 2025

DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation to God Almighty,

the Holy Trinity and the Holy Family.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to my dissertation committee Dr. Dana Bultman, Dr. Elizabeth Wright, and Dr. Thomas Peterson for their invaluable guidance. Each one provided an incredible support that encouraged me every step of the way. I would also like to thank Dr. Shelley Zuraw for sharing her expertise and the world of art history with me. I would like to acknowledge the financial support of the Department of Romance Languages at the University of Georgia for awarding me the Dolores Artau Scholarship and other financial assistance for research and conference presentations. Also, the University of Georgia's Graduate School funded travels to present in conferences, the University of Georgia's Willson Center for the Humanities and Arts that awarded me the Willson Center Graduate Research Award to begin to work with theological writings at the John Paul II Institute for Studies on Marriage and Family in Washington, D.C., and the Mellon Global Georgia (Early Modern Cluster) to enable me to travel to become a member of the Mariological Society of America to familiarize myself with current research in the field of Marian Studies. I would like to thank the members of the Mariological Society of America for their support and insights into the field of theology. I would also like to thank María Victoria Atencia as her thoughtful responses to my questions about her Marian poetry that inspired the way I approached this study. Many thanks to my professors, friends, and colleagues in the Department of Romance Languages that contributed to my personal and professional development. And lastly, I wish to express my gratitude for Our Lady, beloved Mary herself, for inspiring this study with her exquisite beauty and gentle love.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Page

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS v

LIST OF FIGURES vii

INTRODUCTION 1

CHAPTER

1 THE COMPONENTS OF BEAUTY 30

"Behold Thy Mother" 63

2 THE BEAUTY OF MARY IN POETRY AND PAINTING 72

3 SPANISH INFLUENCES IN POETRY AND PAINTING IN THE BAROQUE AND ENLIGHTENMENT 96

4 MARY'S BEAUTY IN THE ANNUNCIATION WORKS OF LEANDRO FERNÁNDEZ DE MORATÍN AND FRANCISCO RICCI 122

CONCLUSIONS 192

CODA 201

WORKS CITED 204

LIST OF FIGURES

Page

Figure 1: *L'Immacolata Concezione* (1540) by Giorgio Vasari 29

Figure 2: *Madonna di San Sisto* (1512) by Raphael 95

Figure 3: *L'estasi di santa Cecilia* (1515 – 1516) by Raphael 121

Figure 4: *La Anunciación* (c. 1663) by Francisco Ricci 186

Figure 5: *La Inmaculada Concepción* (1628 – 1629) by Peter Paul Rubens 187

Figure 6: *La Inmaculada Concepción* (1767 – 1769) by Giambattista Tiepolo 188

Figure 7: *La Anunciación* (?) Anonymous, copy of Vicente Carducho's *La Anunciación* 189

Figure 8: *La Inmaculada Concepción* (c. 1650) by Alonso Cano 190

Figure 9: *Ratto d'Europa* (1559 – 1562) by Titian 191

INTRODUCTION

Hark! He calls to you from heaven: "O' most beautiful among women, give me to hear your voice." If you let Him hear your voice, He will enable you to see our salvation.[1]

- Saint Bernard of Clairvaux

Although Mary lived just over two millennia ago in an age without cameras or video, artists have sought to portray her likeness in manners that continue to inspire fascination with this iconic figure as well as lyrics in praise of her perfect beauty. While it has been acknowledged to some extent that the *Salus Populi Romani* attributed to Saint Luke shares his rendering with the world, if poets and painters had ceased to create their renditions because there was nothing new to add to the field, Western culture would be at a loss. Nevertheless, celebrated artists throughout history have sought to capture her likeness to provide viewers and readers with a glimpse of God's masterstroke. The seventeenth-century Mariology of Saint Louis-Marie Grignion de Montfort (1673–1716) describes Mary as a pièce de résistance: "Because, as she is the masterpiece of the hands of God, as well here below by grace as in Heaven by glory, He wishes to be glorified and praised in her by those who are living upon the earth" (Montfort 21). Thus, Mary is said to represent the glory of God in a merging of heaven and earth, and as such, her depiction poses even greater challenges owing to her relationship with her son Jesus the Christ. Timothy Verdon, in *Picturing Mary: Woman, Mother, Idea* (2014), states: "Mary also was seen as perfecting that which was formerly imperfect … Theologians have pointed out that whereas Eve's "no" to

[1] See Bernard of Clairvaux, *Sermons of St. Bernard of Clairvaux on Advent and Christmas*; Anthem Publishing, 2020, p. 67.

God brought death into the world, Mary's "yes" brought Christ, who is life" (Verdon, "Picturing" 19).

Nonetheless, Verdon ponders the complexities surrounding Mary's portrayal in art:

> A woman invested with so many and such exalted functions was not easy to "picture"—to imagine—in ordinary terms: her life was too singular. The fragmentary facts provided in the Gospels offer glimpses but not the comprehensive overview that believers increasingly sought. Thus from an early period—perhaps already in the second and third centuries, and certainly in the fifth and sixth—pious efforts to fill in the gaps gradually created parallel accounts (apocryphal gospels) that present what may be dimly remembered as historical truths in a literary style typical of legends. The ultimate purpose was to create a narrative framework capable of bearing the theological weight of the facts revealed in scripture. (Verdon, "Picturing" 20)

However, as the Scriptures had already been written, no other source confected by Mary's supporters would have the credibility of inspiration of the Holy Spirit. Verdon continues to state that the Church regarded apocryphal texts as "legends" that had a greater importance in the Middle Ages than now, but this "parallel storyline" would have been a factor in medieval viewer's understanding of Marian art (Verdon, "Picturing" 20).

Thus, a heavy burden falls upon artists to depict God's glory—a momentous and, at the same time, daunting task. However, throughout the centuries the notion of beauty has provided a path forward. Johann G. Roten in "Mary and the Way of Beauty" (1998) quotes Pope Paul VI's (1897–1978) speech to the International Marian Conference on 16 May 1975:[2]

[2] Paul VI, "Ailocutio. In auditorio Pontificii Athenaei a Sancto Antonio in Urbe ob coactos Conventus, VII Mariologicum atque XIV Marian urn, 16 maii 1975," in *AAS* 67(1975): 334–449, quoted here according to *Marianum* 37 (1975): 491–94, esp. 493.

> According to Paul VI the stupendous and mysterious doctrine about Mary and the Spirit leads *into* the way of beauty. He could have said more bluntly, "leads to beauty," for Mary is the all beautiful *(tota pulchra)* creature, the mirror without stain, and the supreme ideal of perfection. She is also, in the pontiff's words, the "woman clothed with the Sun" (Ap. 12:1), in whom the pure radiance of human beauty meets the tremendous but accessible beauty of divinity. (Roten 109–10)

Thus, Mary as *tota pulchra* can be seen in the image from *The Song of Songs* in which King Solomon sings to the beloved: “Thou art all fair, O my love, and there is not a spot in thee” (Song 4:7).[3] This passage above from Pope Paul VI not only highlights the tremendous nature of Mary’s beauty, but also notes that by her example, she leads humanity toward God and salvation. Saint John Paul II (1920–2005), in The Encyclical Letter of John Paul II: Mother of the Redeemer *Redemptoris Mater* (1987) puts forth that “the Blessed Virgin Mary continues to “go before” the People of God” (John Paul II, *The Encyclical* 9) which “leads into beauty” as she was the first to receive “new life” with the coming of her son. In section ten of this encyclical, John Paul II touches on this view when he quotes Dante Alighieri’s (1265–1321) *Paradiso* Canto XXXIII line 1 in which Saint Bernard of Clairvaux (1090–1153) addresses Mary: “Vergine Madre, figlia del tuo figlio” (Dante, *Paradiso* XXXIII 370), which speaks of Mary as the first disciple of her son, and says that by the merit of her virtues, she was chosen to become the daughter of her son the Christ. In this manner, both popes present the essence of Mary’s incredible radiant beauty and how she shows the way forward.

However, it can be challenging to understand this idea when the reader and/or viewer encounters Marian poetic and visual art. To this end, Melissa R. Katz, in her chapter entitled “Mary, the Mirror: Sacred Imagery and Secular Experience” in *Picturing Mary*, comments that modern viewers can find religious art daunting and opt for more recent works “where

[3] All references from the Bible in this study are from the Douay-Rheims version, Baronius P, Ltd., 2015.

they won't be assaulted with the goods and chattels of a religion that they don't understand, or a faith to which they do not adhere. Others might have no problem with the subject matter, but despair of its ubiquity … Decontextualized in the modern museum, such works require translation for a society that no longer sees art as didactic or belief as uniform" (Katz 51–52). Katz, however, views Marian art as having "… a long history of engaging with viewers, devotees, and skeptics on their own terms" (Katz 51–52) and, as Miri Rubin notes in "God-Bearer and Woman: Christian Traditions of Picturing Mary Throughout History": "Mary was a human closely involved with the divine, who had contained and nurtured it" (Rubin "God-Bearer" 28), drawing our attention to Mary in her role as a mother responsible for the Son of God. As a result, viewers then can engage with Marian art, her beauty apparent in her different portrayals, some of which they may be able to identify with or understand.

Yet, what can one say about beauty and our fascination with it? According to Gerald O'Collins in his work *The Beauty of Jesus Christ* (2020): "what is strikingly beautiful proves itself richly meaningful; it is inexhaustible in yielding fresh significance and new insights" (O'Collins 5). And, for example, according to the author, "[Saint] Augustine knew the importance of beauty in the human ascent to God and the divine beauty constitutes the supreme and holy 'mystery' (O'Collins 6). This "human ascent to God" begins at the Annunciation, when Mary as God's masterwork led the way for humanity to follow through a quality that encompasses all the others that she possesses: her beauty.

Thus, merit lies in considering the development of artistic representations of the Annunciation to greater understand Mary's beauty as she "*goes before*" to guide humanity toward God. Tina Beattie's chapter "Mary in Patristic Thought" in *Mary: The Complete Resource* (2007) wrote of the development of Marian beliefs throughout the centuries:

> The earliest Marian theology focuses on the significance of Mary's virginal motherhood for our understanding of the divine and human natures of Jesus Christ

> (Christology), and on her biblical significance as the New Eve with regard to the meaning and scope of salvation in Christ (soteriology). Only gradually did her personal holiness become a focus for theological reflection and veneration, so that, from the late fourth century, she began to acquire the kind of status that would make her a universal figure of devotion for Orthodox and Catholic Christians throughout the medieval and modern eras. (Beattie 75)

Undoubtedly, Mary's role in society has changed from the early Church era and medieval times. Paolo Prodi, in his introduccion to *Discorse intorno alle imagini sacre e profane* (2021), originally printed in Bologna in 1582 and authored by Cardinal Gabriele Paleotti (1522–1597) draws attention to art from a historical lens: "In contrast to the unitary reading of what the Middle Ages saw as the two books written by God (nature and the Bible), the Tridentine Catholic Church and the Protestant churches come to opposing, yet to some extent parallel, conclusions, with the expulsion of theology from whole sectors of the human spirit" (Paleotti 3). Paleotti continues with religious art as purposeful through the Middle Ages and into the Renaissance:

> The traditional doctrine of images [in visual or figurative arts] was that they were meant to function, and always had, as a sort of primary catechism for the illiterate folk who made up the bulk of the population. But the art of the Renaissance was acquiring a new significance, a new capacity to involve the spectator, just as nature and theology were coming to their parting of the ways. (Paleotti 3)

Thus, Paleotti argues that views of religious art shifted during the Renaissance into the realm of human-centered thought, increasing the relevance of theology within the human experience.

Nonetheless, the influence of Mary on art has had great significance for centuries. "For twelve hundred years—from the sixth to the eighteenth century—among the most important

subjects in Western art was a young woman: Mary, the mother of Jesus," writes Verdon (11). "She was seen as embodying our human potential for divine life, for she carried God's son, Jesus, in her womb; and she was thought to symbolize the purity and intensity of women's love for men, for she had embraced the baby Jesus and held the crucified Christ in her arms" (Verdon 11). This statement also applies to the poetic arts, in which the beauty of Mary's qualities was praised in Dante's works, Francesco Petrarch's (1304–1374) *Canzoniere* 336, as well as in Spain in *Poema del Mío Cid* (c. 1140), Alfonso X's (1221–1284) *Cantigas de Santa María* (1270–1282), Gonzalo de Berceo's (1298–c. 1264) *Milagros de Nuestra Señora* (c. 1260), and other Golden Age works by writers such as Fray Luis de León (1527–1591), Santa Teresa de Jesús (Saint Teresa of Ávila) (1515–1582), San Juan de la Cruz (1542–1591), Félix Lope de Vega y Carpio (1562–1635), and Pedro Calderón de la Barca (1600–1681) amongst many others. In this manner, the art of Catholic Counter-Reformation (1545–c. 1700) was rich in artistic representation.

Elizabeth Lev, in *How Catholic Art Saved the Faith: The Triumph of Beauty and Truth in Counter-Reformation Art* (2018), observes that, "[a]s in the post-Reformation era, people today are accustomed to understanding and believing through the gift of vision" (Lev 7). However, Cardinal Gabriele Paleotti writes about the importance of artists' visual endeavors:

> For if orators are awarded the most egregious and excellent praise for their ability to sway the emotions of others this way or that with the faculty of speech, who can doubt that Christian pictures accompanied by spiritual beauty can accomplish this all the more efficaciously and nobly in that by their nature they are more fitted for that task with respect to the universal coarseness of common folk, and the end toward which they advance … is much more sublime and glorious? (Paleotti 118)

Paleotti explains that images present access to knowledge of "necessary things" by means of the senses, which is a faculty given to humans (Paleotti 117). Hence, one of the true gifts of a

painter lies in the noble origins of their creations and the ability of their depictions to attain a "sublime and glorious" end through a goal that serves society. As Verdon puts it: "In a similar fashion, Christian art represents Mary as fulfilling what had formerly been only a promise [in the Old Testament]" (Verdon 19). In this manner, the artists themselves become an instrument for salvation.

Therefore, in the spirit of knowledge of "necessary things" towards the advancement of all peoples, this study's methodology began with the sermons of Saint Bernard of Clairvaux (1090–1153). In *Missus est* (1120), Bernard offers a compelling interpretation of the interaction between Mary and the angel Gabriel during the Annunciation and as such, the search began for a representation in Catholic Counter-Reformation art in Spain that would represent the visualization and bring Bernard's ideas to life in sight and song. Thereafter, an exploration of the theological writings both on Mary and on beauty led to considerations of how the modern observer might be encouraged to look at these seventeenth and eighteenth-century works in a different light, both in terms of the Annunciation and Mary herself. This study will propose an alternate viewpoint and perhaps prompt reexamination and expansion of the notion of beauty within contemporary Western society, such as exemplified in Hollywood films and on social media. This dissertation examines current considerations of pulchritude through the lens of theological views on Mary's beauty at the Annunciation, utilizing the lyrical and visual arts of Leandro Fernández de Moratín (1760–1828) and Francisco Ricci (Rizi) (1614–1685) to illustrate a more comprehensive view of beauty that unites both physical and spiritual elements.

In this fashion, this study involves an examination of Moratín's lyrical work together with Ricci's visual work[4] during and after the Catholic Counter-Reformation in Spain and employs

[4] The Museo del Prado possesses two of Ricci's works entitled *La Anunciación.* Both paintings are thought to be altar pieces from around the same year, c.1663. This study will concern itself with the Museo del Prado's catalog number P001128.

theological theories of beauty to enhance an understanding of both. Contemporary culture currently relies heavily on visual attractiveness in many sectors of society, including feminine beauty; thus, a small number of sources concerning beauty standards and their psychological effects on women in our contemporary society were consulted as a sort of 'temperature check' to identify a possible need for a recovery of a theology of beauty within the media at large and social media. Poetic words of inspiration describing Mary capture her image from a place of creativity and devotion. This thesis investigates the mysteries of Mary's beauty from different vantage points, such as that proposed by the theories of Esteban de Arteaga (1745–1799) in *Investigaciones filosóficas sobre la belleza ideal considerada como objeto de las artes de imitación* (1789), which outlines the author's ideas about what should be considered beautiful in the arts, or that of modern-day entertainment, such as television programming or social media interaction.

For this reason, the theological perspectives are meant to complement the discussion, while the artistic works enable the reader/viewer to better interpret these perceptions. Then with some new understandings of Mary herself during an important moment in her life, the analysis will bring into focus Mary's extraordinary qualities at the time of the Annunciation through the lens of theological writings dedicated to beauty. By examining beauty as inspiration as found in the visual and the lyrical, a greater appreciation of its nature as proposed by theologians can expose readers to a deeper resonance of its qualities moving toward a more profound perception of its complexities. However, this investigation mostly likely will not lead to a comprehension of the mystery of beauty in its entirety or solve the eternal questions surrounding it, but rather will focus on its creative expression in visual and poetic form to reach the hearts and minds of the observer through her fine qualities, as Mary "*goes before*" to show the way for humanity.

In such a manner, the proposal of Mary as the perfect woman will be addressed though the writings of Saint Augustine of Hippo (354–430), Saint Ambrose of Milan (c.340 –397), Saint Hildegard of Bingen (1098–1179), Saint Bernard of Clairvaux, Saint Thomas of Aquinas (1226–1274), Saint François de Sales (1567–1622), Archbishop of Bologna Gabriele Paleotti (1522–1597), Saint Louis Marie Grignion of Montfort, Saint Alfonso Maria de Liguori (1696–1787), and more recently, Saint John Paul II, Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger (Benedict XVI) (1927–2022), and Hans Urs von Balthasar (1905–1988), together with Dante Alighieri and Francesco Petrarch, amongst other literary sources contributing a view of Mary's beauty to challenge limiting views of personal beauty that reduce it almost entirely to the physical form. Furthermore, these sources will present theories and ideas from many different eras and will not limit themselves to the exact period of the artists nor to what theological writings would have been known or familiar to them. Rather, theological writings beginning with the Church fathers until the twenty-first century will be of value, as Catholic theology can be considered to be undergoing development and refinement throughout the ages. In this manner, this passage from Ratzinger draws attention to the advancement of Catholic doctrine over time: "The Church is not a manufactured item; she is, rather, the living seed of God that must be allowed to grow and ripen. This is why the Church needs the Marian mystery; this is why the Church herself is a Marian mystery" (Ratzinger, *Mary the Church* 16–17). Ratzinger's observations illustrate the potentiality for Mary's intrinsic nature to be in a sense deepening as the theologians of each era have new revelations and build upon the theories of the generations that have preceded them.

Regarding this study's artistic works, a deeper understanding of the Annunciation through the lyrical and visual art of Moratín and Ricci can provide a gateway to the Marian mysteries and to knowing Mary herself as the most beautiful feminine figure in history. Von Balthasar further explains the multiple approaches to understanding Mary and her role of salvation on

earth: “Undeniably, the very fact that the Marian mysteries are so many-sided makes it difficult to talk about Mary and occasions the risk of one-sided formulations” (von Balthasar, *Mary the Church* 100). Consequently, the theories presented will not be considered absolute resolutions of the divine intentions behind the Annunciation, but rather theological viewpoints revealing new considerations and exploring them in depth. This study of Spanish Baroque and Enlightenment portrayals of the Annunciation as theologically interpreted through the poetic and visual works of Leandro Fernández de Moratín and Francisco Ricci offers a more comprehensive approach to the arts and a more profound understanding of Mary’s exceptional beauty in our modern times.

Chapter 1 puts forth the reasons why another perspective on beauty is necessary and then discusses beauty through a theological lens, subsequently introducing Mary as the focal point of the investigation. Chapter 2 explores the significance of Mary in the poetic and visual arts, beginning with an examination of beauty in Western art followed by a brief survey of the field of Marian art. Chapter 3 presents the ideas of religion in Spain, Italian influences, and finally, the specific experiences of Moratín and Ricci, presenting a context for the analysis of their artistic works. Chapter 4 offers an interpretation of Moratín’s *cántico* “La anunciación” (1813) and Ricci’s altarpiece *La Anunciación* (c. 1663) at their points of intersection from the view of the sermons of Bernard on the Annunciation and other theological and literary perspectives on Mary and her beauty. Lastly, the conclusion presents a summary that further strengthens the connection between how the artistic works function effectively from a theological perspective in view of Mary’s beauty and the coda suggests avenues of additional study and significance for the viewer of today.

Accordingly, both mediums, the lyrical and the visual, as separate studies have much to offer the observer. However, this study proposes that the thoughts and images in combination complement and aid the appreciation of the moment of the Annunciation in Mary’s life,

which can then be interpreted even more comprehensively through theologians who not only wrote about her often through revelations after many hours of contemplation, but also passionately loved her. Although Mary's beauty has been apparent in art for centuries, through these combined works we can focus on such aspects of humility, obedience, and faith by which she is able to receive the gift of the Holy Spirit and become the mother of Christ. By means of these, this study hopes to present the riches of Mary's beauty in her nature as well as her physical beauty, to provide a model with which to view beauty, and challenges some current notions evident in purchasing trends, time spent on social media, and the emotional health crisis women suffer as a result. The work *The Marian Option: God's Solution to a Civilization in Crisis* (2017) by Carrie Gress proposes that Mary is the medicine for our times: "But like a good mother, she also brings order, beauty, and peace wherever she is welcomed. We see it in the soaring heights of Chartres Cathedral, the sublime beauty of Michelangelo's *Pietà*, and the delicate touch of Botticelli's *Madonna of the Book*" (Gress xvii–xviii).

Once a general body of knowledge about the artistic works has been established, this thesis attempts to illuminate the communicative properties of human representation and its sensorial experience through Catholic theological writings chosen to reveal Mary through some of her exemplary qualities. This study seeks to reveal a richer and deeper manner of considering artwork devoted to Mary through readings of Mariological writings, which in turn will determine the aesthetic qualities and iconographic meanings within both the *cántico* and painting. Further, this study seeks to create a sweetness and melodiousness in experiencing Marian art through a theological perspective that could not be achieved without the lens through which centuries of Marian theologians communicate their extensive studies and meditations on her beauty. Verdon remarks that

> For most of Christian history, Mary has served the church as an "ideal figure"—as a vehicle, that is, and at times a coagulant—for ideas derived from the scriptures, theological reflection, human experience, and imagination; the New Testament itself presents her in this way, articulating the historical features of her story in scriptural and theological language. Artists, picturing the woman presented in this way, often make her ideal function explicit, showing Mary in ways that invite meditation, stimulate musing, and prepare illumination. (Verdon, *Picturing* 17)

And Gress writes that "Mary is the masterpiece of God, which explains why when Marian devotion flourishes, so too does culture" (Gress 26).

Hence, this approach will serve to complement a discussion in the humanities that has thus far often been based on historical, social, and political events and motives: the study of artistic expression and the lives of the artists. This interdisciplinary focus will consider the rich tradition in Catholic theology in regard to Mary as well as its theories on beauty, which have not been thoroughly addressed from such a vantage point within the field of the humanities. Therefore, this dissertation hopes to bring together through Mary the arts and theology that seem to have lacked an interconnectedness for hundreds of years.

This bridge between disciplines is important for many reasons. First, in contemporary Western societies, there is much evidence of division and dualistic mentalities. In his Discourse 17 "The Glories of Mary for the Sake of Her Son" in *Discourses Addressed to Mixed Congregations* (1907), John Henry Newman (1801–1890), a convert from the Church of England, wrote over a century ago of the attitudes in post-Reformation England: "Son and Mother went together; and the experience of three centuries has confirmed their testimony, for Catholics who have honoured the Mother, still worship the Son, while Protestants, who now have ceased to confess the Son, began then by scoffing at the Mother" (Newman). Gress notes that historically, persons or groups who have believed that Mary is too highly regarded

fail to truly understand the articles of faith of the Catholic Church (Gress 104). Ratzinger wrote of how "Western mentality" has developed in an immoderate fashion: "It is, I believe, no coincidence, given our Western, masculine mentality, that we have increasingly separated Christ from his mother, without grasping that Mary's motherhood might have some significance for theology and faith" (Ratzinger, *Mary the Church* 16).

This study proposes that Mary as a figure has been marginalized in Western society, and her role as the mother of Christ can eclipse the notion Mary as the ideal woman or the valuable feminine figure in world culture. Second, and in relation to the first, opinions of Roman Catholic theology within Western culture have been routinely interpreted through a societal lens, often failing to understand Catholicism's deeper truths and regularly misrepresenting its doctrine. Consequently, inaccurate views essentially become accepted within society, and as a result, unfortunately, remain unchallenged. Third, as stated above, there is much benefit from considering the beauty and depth of Marian art from a spiritual perspective in analyzing these works of poetry and painting. Therefore, significantly developed theologically based thought on Mary will strengthen the discussion and create a more rounded and complete perspective in order to more fully understand Marian art within Western culture.

Moreover, this is an important moment at which to devote scholarly work toward an interdisciplinary and more unified view of Mary. Gress writes that some feminist writers have declared Mary is "too outdated" and that "no modern woman can relate to her": "As a result, hymns, art, statuary, and so on should all be restructured to accommodate the "new" contemporary view of Mary–minus obedience, docility, and meekness" (103). This current, modernized view of Mary as a woman and historical figure may very well have had its origin during the late 1970s through Marina Warner's popular work *Alone of All Her Sex: The Myth and the Cult of the Virgin Mary* (1976). While this publication provides an interesting historic

account due to the extensive investigation by the author, it falls short of true understanding of the Virgin Mary in Christianity. For example, Warner refers to the Immaculate Conception and presents her interpretation of Marian devotion: "But a great problem arises for non-Catholic Christians, Greek Orthodox and Protestants alike, when they contemplate the mystery of the Immaculate Conception. For under that aspect Mary is worshipped alone" (251). There, a fundamental problem in Warner's logic arises, which is that Mary is to be venerated with devotion (*hyperdulia*), but not in the sense of worship (*latria*), which is reserved alone for the Holy Trinity. As such, from Catechism of the Catholic Church (2nd edition 2016) paragraph 6 of "Mary—Mother of Christ, Mother of the Church," Section II "Devotion to the Devotion to the Blessed Virgin" states:

> From the most ancient times the Blessed Virgin has been honored with the title 'Mother of God,' to whose protection the faithful fly in all their dangers and needs…This very special devotion…differs essentially from the adoration which is given to the incarnate Word and equally to the Father and the Holy Spirit, and greatly fosters this adoration. (971)[5]

Nevertheless, oftentimes the concept of Mary as a model is misunderstood when her sanctity is not admired as a pathway to progress in human spiritual aspirations, but as an aspiration that a person finds difficulty in attaining. Warner proposes at the end of the chapter mentioned above that

> As the icon of the ideal, the Virgin affirms the inferiority of the human lot. Soaring above the men and women who pray to her, the Virgin conceived without sin underscores rather than alleviates pain and anxiety and accentuates the feeling of sinfulness…Any symbol that exacerbates that pain runs counter to the central

[5] See *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 2nd ed., Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2016.

> Christian doctrine that mankind was made and redeemed by God, and, more important, it is a continuing enemy of hope and happiness. (254)

As previously proposed, Mariology is considered an intrinsic part of Christology. Consequently, the Bull *Ineffabilis Deus* (1854) states: "… that the doctrine that maintains that the Most Blessed Virgin Mary, at the first instant of her conception, by the singular grace and privilege of almighty God and in view of the merits of Jesus Christ, the Savior of the human race, was preserved from any stain of original sin …" (Hauke 240). Because Mary was chosen to be the mother of Jesus the Christ, it was by "the merits" of her son, free from sin, that she received this grace. This contention should in no way inspire pain or anxiety in others who are not the Mother of God, because in this capacity Mary needed to be completely pure in order to give birth to the Redeemer. Nonetheless, the type of thought put forth by Warner demonstrates a dedication to the self and its own personal wants and desires rather than an alignment (completely as in the case of Mary) with divine will.

Louis de Montfort, in his work *True Devotion to the Virgin Mary* (1712), presented a fitting response several centuries earlier to Warner's idea of Mary's lack of sin as something that "underscores rather than alleviates pain and anxiety and accentuates the feeling of sinfulness." Outlined in the section entitled "On false devotion to Our Lady," Louis de Montfort writes: "… in order to be truly devout to our Blessed Lady, it is not absolutely necessary to be so holy as to avoid every sin, though this were to be wished; but so much at least is necessary, and I beg you to lay it well to heart …."[6] This presents an apt description of Louis's emphasis that the devotee need not be perfect in their worldly ways, but rather should approach Mary from an 'interior' place "that comes from the spirit and the heart" and is "…full of confidence in her, like a child's confidence in his loving mother. This confidence makes the soul have recourse to her in all its bodily or mental necessities, with much

[6] Saint Louis Montfort, *The Saint Louis de Montfort Collection*. Catholic Way Publishing, 2013, p. 79.

simplicity, trust, and tenderness" (81). However, in so doing, one must avoid placing Mary at the level of other women and/or persons in general who do not have the same role as she does through "the merits of Jesus Christ." It would be considered an error, and most likely a sense of false pride, to compare oneself with the mother of Jesus in his plan for the salvation of humanity. This is an honor bestowed on Mary through divine grace after exercising her free will to make every one of her actions in agreement with the will of God, which shall be further discussed in Chapter 4. Nevertheless, as Louis de Montfort establishes, the devotion to Mary does not require a lack of sin but rather meditation on what acts a person has committed that were not in agreement with the God's law. However, for this there exists Reconciliation, a means of reconnecting a person back to God for forgiveness and healing the pain of sin, to which Warner possibly refers. Unfortunately, the lack of understanding by means of Warner's *Alone of All Her Sex* continues to permeate the humanities as being authoritative on the subject of Mary even though the author arrives at conclusions through superficial efforts to penetrate Marian mysteries and speak about Catholic teachings. The present study hopes to demonstrate the value of turning our gaze to Mary on a more profound and richer level to better view and understand her role in leading humanity toward her son.

Besides playing a fundamental role in the salvation of humanity, Mary personifies the Christian values of faith and obedience to God. John Paul II states in *Redemptoris Mater* that

> Mary believed in the fulfilment of what had been said to her by the Lord. As Virgin, she believed that she would conceive and bear a son: the "Holy One," who bears the name "Son of God," the name "Jesus" (= God who saves). As handmaid of the Lord, she remained in perfect fidelity to the person and the mission of this Son. As Mother, "believing and obeying…she brought forth on earth the Father's Son…" (60)

This passage speaks to Mary's merits, but in no way does her belief in the word of the Archangel Gabriel, or does her faith create a situation where she is "[s]oaring above the men

and women who pray to her," as stated by Warner. This would be completely misinterpreting her role to help and guide humanity in great humility, as evidenced by the angel's words: "Hail full of grace, the Lord is with thee…" (Luke 1:28). Mary indeed serves as a model due to her own merits "in perfect fidelity" to her son and his mission while maintaining "her profound humility."[7] If one can approach Mary with a childlike openness and "lay it well to heart," as Louis de Montfort proposes, one will see her as an inspiring figure who comforts the saddened and heals the wounded, because much of humanity has not reached the point of a life dedicated to living in faith as she has. On the contrary, how wonderful to be shown a model to inspire humanity to expand the depth in our hearts and minds, without which it would surely be difficult to know how to set our steps.

Catholic feminist writers such as Carolyn Osiek, in her 1986 work *Beyond Anger: On Being a Feminist in the Church*, seems to echo Warner's lament that Mary presents a model too difficult to attain, thus making women feel inadequate. In addition, Dorothy Ann Lee, an Anglican theologian and Anglican priest, claims in her 2019 article "How the Cult of Virgin Mary Turned a Symbol of Female Authority into a Tool of Patriarchy" that

> […] belief in the eternal virginity of Mary has also inflicted damage over the centuries, particularly on women. It has distorted the character of Mary, turning her into a submissive, dependent creature, without threat to patriarchal structures. She is divorced from the lives of real women who can never attain her sexless motherhood or her unsullied "purity."

Thus, both Osiek and Lee seem to support the idea of a "new Mariology" that may have taken root in the Council of Vatican II, which, according to the Society of Saint Pius X, was in the "the ecumenical spirit which impregnated the Conciliar Mariology" ("Guiding

[7] This and the other qualities that Louis de Montfort outlines in *True Devotion to the Virgin Mary* (1712) will be addressed further in a more extensive description of her beauty, to follow.

Dogma for our Age: the Assumption"). Aldo Rossi, in "Guiding Dogma for our age: the Assumption" (2014), writes that the Society of Saint Pius X put forth

> […] a new Marian spirit, made official at the Council, [which] was designed to achieve a false reconciliation with the separated brethren by establishing a minimal common ground. This common ground would be a defense of the essential facts only, and would be an opportunity for understanding amongst the various schools without exaggerations or the creation of "needless" divisions.[10] This was an attempt to "humanize" our Lady in such a way that she would no longer constitute an element of division as in the past. (Rossi)

According to Rossi, at the heart of "new Mariology" two underlying ideas eroding Mary's role have become increasingly prevalent: that Mary should no longer oppose the enemy but rather acknowledge "ecumenical difficulties," and that she should reduce her role that she should not be "'too' exalted in her privileges" (Rossi). This study will argue to the contrary that the qualities embodied by Mary are the highest attributes a human can possess and therefore an integral part of her inner beauty.

Additionally, misconceptions about Mary within religious circles, albeit mainstream Catholic ones, are common in modern society. Gress signals how, even within the Catholic Church, the current view of Mary seeks to meld her image into a relatable figure instead of a model of the highest aspiration for human potential: "Even in mainstream Catholic circles, Mariology has been reduced to trying to see Mary through a more human lens, such as a believer, disciple, or friend, minus the deeper theological strings. Few Catholics in the pews know of her relationship to the Church, the rich understanding of her as the spouse of the Holy Spirit, or what it means to be "full of grace" as the Mother of God" (Gress 103). Thus, in the important work of reconnecting the figure of Mary once again with the radiance of her life devoted to God, her beauty becomes vitally important. In accord with Gress's statement

that “Mary has become untethered from the rich, fruitful, and beautiful teachings about her that have punctuated the work of saint after saint over the centuries, dating back to the apostles and the catacombs” (Gress 104), this dissertation asserts that it is necessity to recover these valuable writings in literature.

This study will take the position that our modern society has strayed far from idealizing Mary’s qualities, with a detrimental effect on our perception of beauty. Through analysis of both visual and poetic art, this study seeks to illustrate the beauty found within her both through the Scriptures and theological writings. The selected depictions of the Annunciation, both lyrical and visual, can provide a better and more thorough understanding of Mary’s qualities representing perfection. The *cántico* and painting in combination have been chosen to reflect a momentous moment in Mary’s life, and the analysis will examine how each complement the other’s message with respect to Mary’s beauty to create a more complete description through a theological understanding. Relevant theological theories of beauty will be sought to heighten and deepen the combined lyrical and visual imagery, just as a song that enhances the enjoyment of the painting, and a visual representation can increase the enjoyment of a poem. This study posits that both forms of art will reveal Mary’s beauty on a more profound level that may challenge the modern reader/viewer’s ideas of beauty and that the experience of Marian art, along with corresponding theories of her beauty, can instill a sense of wonder.

In regard to a historical timeline, the Catholic Counter-Reformation (1545–1648) represents great achievement in artistic expression. Nevertheless, from our modern perspective it can be challenging to understand art and its importance from a particular age well before our own. For example, during antiquity and into the Middle Ages, sacred art often conveyed meaning through the symbolic acts of their viewers, and religious images were known to have charismatic powers and perform miracles. Hans Belting, in *Likeness and*

Presence: A History of the Image before the Era of Art (1994), writes that the medieval image "was the representative or symbol of something that could be experiences only indirectly in the present, namely, the former and future presence of God in the life of humankind […] the image reached into the immediate experience of God in past history and likewise ahead to a promised time to come" (Belting 11).

Even so, Belting explains that images lost their 'lost' their authority during the period of the Reformation, and the theology of the period was challenged by the Calvinists who rejected images and the Lutherans who adapted them (Belting 2). Giovanni Miegge, in *The Virgin Mary: The Roman Catholic Marian Doctrine* (1950), writes: "The Reformation did not make the Virgin Mary a particular subject of research or polemic. It dropped Mariology entirely and the cult connected with it as not justified by Holy Scripture" (Miegge 98). As previously alluded to, Belting clearly explains the place of religion in the modern age as having a "shrinking hold on life" and although "It fought for the place that it had held before, but it ultimately was assigned the segregated area in society with which we are now familiar." Further, Belting states that art ceased to be "a religious phenomenon in itself" and responded to the new culture's appetites for secular images (Belting 458). Belting also suggests the merit of a study of the art of antiquity: "With the new distance, our perception of the old situation is sharpened" (Belting 259). This study intends to engage "the distance" of the art after the Catholic Reformation in order "sharpen" the modern eye to its value. The poetic component of this study, much in the same manner, will bring forth a more comprehensive view of religious aesthetics of the Catholic Reformation era.

Art of the Catholic Reformation/Restoration has had a great influence and visual impact in the Western world. For this study, el Siglo de Oro (1492–1659/1681), or Spanish Golden Age, has particular relevance, as does the Renaissance in Italy (14th to 17th centuries), and above all the Catholic Reformation as discussed at the Council of Trent in 1545.The art of the

Catholic Reformation was a "fruit of conflict" (8) and as a result, these exquisite works have been enjoyed for five hundred years, often serving as iconic representations of the biblical scenes and the lives of saints that they portray. Some examples include Guido Reni's *The Immaculate Conception* (1627); Bartolomé Esteban Murillo's *The Immaculate Conception El Escorial* (c. 1665), as well as his *Saint Anne Teaching to the Virgin* (c. 1655) and *The Good Shepherd* (1660); Gianlorenzo Bernini's *The Ecstasy of Saint Teresa* (1647–1652); Peter Paul Rubens' *The Immaculate Conception* (1628–1629), Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio's *Supper at Emmaus* (1601), and Francisco de Zurbarán's *La Virgen de las Cuevas* (1655).

In the lyrical arts, Catholic Reformation in Spain has left lasting effects in the genre of religious poetry. José María Aguado, in his introduction to *Camino de Perfección*, a mystical account Santa Teresa de Jesús' (Saint Teresa of Avila) (1515–1582) own spiritual journey, comments on the lasting impression of her works: "Todos Podemos decir con fray Luis de León: "Yo no conocí ni vi a la Madre Teresa de Jesús mientras estuvo en la tierra, mas ahora que vive en el cielo, la conozco y veo casi siempre en dos imágenes vivas que nos dejó sus hijas y sus libros" (Santa Teresa de Jesús ix). Interestingly, this passage refers to "images" of Saint Teresa, vivid descriptions through which she paints metaphoric and symbolic pictures of her personal experiences and which Fray Luis de León notes, reside with the reader even after the reading is finished. However, this study acknowledges the difference between a *cántico* such as the one considered in this study and mystical writings. While both come under the umbrella of religious writings, mystical writings can be highly personal, whereas verse need not be, but both can be seen to be inspired by divine thoughts to praise and share with the world, or to offer as assistance to others who seek to commence their journeys. Saint Teresa and her dear friend Saint John of the Cross (1542–1591) represent a generation of mystical poets that were able to capture what is generally considered ineffable through their own lives and present it in a manner similar to "images," or perhaps mental paintings.

Thomas Dubay, in *Fire Within: St. Teresa of Avila, St. John of the Cross, and the Gospel on Prayer* (1989), quotes the prologue to Saint John of the Cross' *Living Flame of Love* (1618) in relation to mystical writings: "There is no way to catch in words the sublime things of God which happen in these souls" as "everything I say is as far from the reality as is a painting from the living object represented" (Dubay 44). Yet, the image remains in the mind, and often will seem as genuine, even considering it is a representation.

However, over the centuries, the effects of the Enlightenment (1685–1815) and its emphasis on rational knowledge and criticism of the Church ("Ilustración") are evident. This period could be considered a point of diversion between the religious daily life and the exploration of the mind as Man's possession instead of God's creation. This division between the secular and the religious continued through the 1960s, when secular ideas invited both men and women to depart from traditional perspectives on family and the role of women. As such, the legacy of the humanities, or of the anthropocentric ideas of the Renaissance and reason as the predominant lens for understanding the world, have been a constant influence within a Western society that perpetuates the vision of Man himself (or Humanity) as center of the universe. Notwithstanding, this dominance of human-centered vision comes at the detriment the traditional God-centered focus that was customary from the years of the early Church to the Middle Ages.

Hans Belting writes how images were not as popular during this human-centered schism and how they became greatly associated with the artists themselves (Belting 470–471). Then, the theory of painting was developed in Italy, where the image, instead of representing a "a visible manifestation of the sacred person," became the artist's rendition or creative "fantasy" in accordance with the natural and optical considerations governing the representation of a work of art on canvas. Painters such as Raphael depicted so much of themselves in their art and left such an impression at the time of their death that their creations seemed to keep them

alive even after their creator was no longer. Belting states that "[n]othing could express more clearly how much the image was now the work of the artist and a manifestation of art" (Belting 471). This reinforces the point above that a human-centered disposition disassociated the work of art from God and revealed the "creator" of the artwork as completely acting on their own accord, perhaps to a degree that made the artist ultimately the important figure in bringing the subject to life. Additionally, personal and subjective renditions of a subject came to be associated entirely with human capabilities.

However, the art of the Catholic Reformation was lovely and effective. Elizabeth Lev writes that "the Catholic Church of the Counter-Reformation … unleashed a wave of glorious examples of holiness as well as beautiful sacred art in opposition to the ugliness, confusion, betrayal, and loss rampant in that era" (Lev 2). The spiritual beauty found in the saints seemed to inspire the Mannerist artistic school's approach, which could be summed up as "art for art's sake." According to Alois Riegl in *The Origins of Baroque Art in Rome* (2010) Italian Mannerism (1520–1600), originating in Florence and Rome, often demonstrated lasciviousness and prideful skillfulness, focusing on a decorative effect that would appeal to the viewers of the Catholic Reformation. In addition, Mannerists exaggerated the qualities of proportion, balance, and absolute beauty foregrounded during the High Renaissance (1520), while portraying instability and a style of artificial, unnatural refinement. The Church confronted challenges throughout the Mannerist era but continued to empower individual artists, sending them forth as visual preachers who were rewarded with status amongst their peers as well as entrusted with the health of the souls of viewers of their works (Lev 5).

The Baroque style (1600–1750) that ensued originated in Rome in the early seventeenth century and spoke to its observers through its striking effects of contrasting colors and elaborate detail communicated dramatic, emotional moments. The Baroque is said to be a reaction to Mannerism, which displayed unbalanced composition in "vain virtuosity" and

"masking the sacred image" by artists that were "enamored of their own prowess" (Lev 3). In addition, according to the article "L'arte barocca," Marian art of the Baroque responded to Protestant attitudes: "In questo periodo perciò si intensificano le rappresentazioni di scene sacre soprattutto si dipingono quei soggetti che erano contestati dal pensiero riformatore, per esempio il culto di Maria" (L'arte barocca). This introduces the perspective that the Catholic Reformation and Mary represented a reaction to the Protestant Reformation and thereby a strong affirmation of the Catholic faith, which was seen in Baroque art.

Notwithstanding, the ecumenical debate of the time often involved Mary. Ratzinger, in *Mary: The Church at the Source* (2005), explains a major issue with solus Christus, which lies in an exaggeration of the exclusion of "the feminine from biblical message" and within this reasoning, "[…] there could be nothing meaningful in the feminine line of the Bible stretching from Eve to Mary" (43). Further, Ratzinger states that "[i]t is necessary to maintain the distinctiveness of Marian devotion precisely by keeping its practice constantly and strictly bound to Christology" and "[i]t must be open to the whole breadth of the [Christian] mystery and become itself a means to this breadth" (35). Ratzinger focuses on the balance of the masculine and feminine within Christianity: "…that the recognition of the feminine does not diminish Christology, but that the truth about God and the truth about ourselves can appear only when the correlation of the two is correctly appreciated" (44). Hans Urs von Balthasar in the same work writes that "[t]his quality ["freedom from all hesitation"] of Mary's Yes [at the time of the Annunciation] is wholly a function of the requirements of Christology […] Her virginity, on the other hand, guarantees a Christological fact: Jesus acknowledges only one Father, the one in heaven, as his own" (105). Thus, von Balthasar reveals how Mariology is not a competitive branch of theology, but rather a branch within Christology completely connected to it without overshadowing the whole of it: "Conversely, we need this Marian reading in order to deal adequately with the anthropological challenge of our time" (45).

Subsequently, the Catholic Reformation provided an opportunity to redefine some aspects of Church teachings. During and after the Council of Trent (1545–1563), the Church would reexplore Catholic instruction in general, and with respect to the arts, some in the higher echelons of the Church questioned whether to continue financial support because of growing sentiment that many of works of art created during this era were "merely profane delight instead of a stimulus toward piety and eternal salvation" (Lev 3). Fortunately for the art world, on December 4, 1563, during the final session, the Council agreed to uphold the particulars about the relationship between faith and art, as stated in Nicaea in 787 (Lev 3).

By 1564, the artists were ensured patrons for their creations, but there were no specific directives on executing them. Here, perhaps the depiction of the Immaculate Conception can shed light on the practical issues that faced painters of the day. It was Giorgio Vasari (1511–1574), painter and writer of *Le Vite de' più eccellenti pittori, scultori, ed architettori* (1550), who related in detail early in the Catholic Reformation the difficulty that he had in painting Mary as the Immaculata in his own work, *L'Immacolata Concezione* (1540) (figure 1). This could have been a result of the dogma still in formation in the Church and the fact that Vasari found himself in a group of innovators responding to the new directives. Additionally, the creation of the works dedicated to Mary was of thematic importance to Francisco Pacheco (1564–1644) in his treatise *El arte de la pintura* (1649), and in particular, the chapter dedicated to "Pintura de la Purísima Concepción de Nuestra Señora" in Volume II (208–212). This section of Pacheco's work references the woman of the Apocalypse (*Mulier Amicta Sole Apocaliptica*),[8] as this painter created at least three renditions on the subject. As a censor for the Inquisition (179), Pacheco, explains that this type of painting is "más conforme a esta sagrada revelación del Evangelista, y aprobada de la Iglesia católica con la autoridad de los

[8] Apocalypse 12:1: "And a great sign appeared in heaven: A woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars."

santos y sagrados intérpretes …" (209–10). Furthermore, he advises his painter colleagues to "Hase de pintar, pues, en este aseadísimo misterio esta Señora en la flor de su edad, de doce a trece años, hermosísima niña, lindos y graves ojos, nariz y boca perfectísima y rosadas mexillas, los bellísimos cabellos tendidos, de color de oro; en fin, cuanto fuere posible al humano pincel" (Pacheco 210) and that as her raiment she wear "túnica blanca y manto azul" (211). If this description raises an important question about the representation of Mary in regard to the beauty and perfection of the subject, and Pacheco decidedly settles the matter with the quintessence of Mary's beauty: "…despues del hijo, fue la criatura más bella que Dios crió" (Pacheco 210). Likewise, Pacheco occupied the unique position, given his work with the Inquisition, which enabled him to guide other painters at a time when religious artwork was evangelizing the masses and bringing clarity to Catholic teachings. Therefore, the politics of the era revealed artists' motives for taking up religious themes: "L'arte di questo periodo, nata come risposta al protestantesimo, assunse un ruolo dei grande importanza per la diffusione al popolo delle idee controriformista e benne usata come mezzo per ricondurre il popolo allá dottrina católica" ("L'arte barocca"). As such, Counter-Reformation art not only reaffirmed the importance of the fundamental beliefs of the Catholic faith but also emphasized its doctrine, particularly in representations of the Virgin Mary.

Accordingly, the Church supported painters' religious endeavors through artistic treatises published at the time. Paleotti viewed this tendency as way to transform painters into "tacit preachers" with the "office to delight, teach, and move" (Paleotti, 309). Thus, these artists had a calling to diffuse the Word of God and, according to Lev, in exchange "[t]he artists were offered the status they craved from the time of Leonardo da Vinci, but with that power came great responsibility in the care of those souls entrusted to their talents" (Lev 5). In this manner, art drew people together through the Church's promotion of the faith and inspired devotion during pilgrimages, all of which reached its zenith around the mid-1700s.

Furthermore, as Lev highlights, "[t]he language of art affirmed Church teaching but also delighted the faithful and enjoyed universality, thanks to the attraction of the beautiful" (Lev 6). Yet, although many of the sources mentioned thus far have related to the visual arts, this discussion can also encompass lyrical works, in that they audibly "delighted the faithful" in lovely sounds of praise to Mary, which Chapter 2 will expand upon further in its look at Mary's beauty in poetry and painting. This universality continues to appeal to later generations of viewers through the uplifting qualities of its presentation. This approach to biblical teaching by means of attractive attributes persists because "[i]n a world of ambiguity and confusion, art allows for the serene discussion of different interpretations of events but can also provide guidance—the tradition of belief and the tradition of beauty go hand in hand, ultimately meeting in transcendentals: truth, beauty, and goodness" (Lev 6). In this manner, "Catholic churches during the Reform period found renewed value in the material splendor of their faith, as something that not only energized their liturgical practices but also now set them apart" (Katz 52–54). The "attraction of the beautiful" (Lev 6) was well represented in Spain, which "produced magnificent art to reinforce Catholic tenets—particularly Marian teaching …" (Lev 8). Nonetheless, however strongly expressed in Spain, Marian art possesses a fruitful tradition worldwide and through the centuries.

Both taken individually and in tandem, Catholic Reformation art inspired poets for centuries to write works that provide the reader a space for inward contemplation and spiritual care. This study's focus on Moratín's poetry reveals how such artistic expression invites a close, personal encounter with words of wonder and devotion. In this manner, the Marian poetic experience intertwines with the visual aspects of Ricci's painting, converging on the reflection on the perceptible appearance of Mary in Enlightenment poetry and Baroque art and creating a space of more profound insight into the lyrics dedicated to Mary's intrinsic aspects of beauty and inner qualities of human perfection. Chapter 1 will delve further into an

evaluation of pulchritude through the writings different theologians and then apply these to Mary herself with the purpose of expanding current ideas about attractiveness. And in this respect, Mary leads the way.

Figure 1. *L'Immacolata Concezione* (1540) by Giorgio Vasari, Galería Uffizi, Florencia

CHAPTER 1

THE COMPONENTS OF BEAUTY

O honored name, Mary blessed forever,
Work of art, giving praise to your noble Artisan.
Sweet maiden, as the angel's precious speech relates,
You possess gifts of beauty beyond those of all men.

- Venantius Fortuntus (d. ca. 600)[9]

Too late have I loved you, O Beauty, ancient yet ever new.

- Saint Augustine of Hippo (354–430)[10]

What is beauty, and what does our society today have to say about it? Martha Laham, in *Made Up: How the Beauty Industry Manipulates Consumers, Preys on Women's Insecurities, and Promotes Unattainable Beauty Standards* (2020), points to the challenges of its identification: "You've probably heard various sayings on beauty, such as "Beauty is only skin deep," "Beauty is in the eye of the beholder," "Beauty is as beauty does," and "A thing of beauty is a joy forever." These maxims seize on whatever aspect of beauty is affecting to the observer, which makes beauty difficult to define with any precision" (Laham 63). Moreover, Laham suggests that certain concerns about beauty's nature come into question depending on the time period in which the viewer lives. The author speaks briefly about the Greek notions of beauty and quotes Aristotle's *Metaphysics* on beauty being "order and symmetry and definiteness," as the Greek description for beautiful (*kalós*) can refer to things as objects, as well as concepts such as "noble," "honorable," and "good." In lyrical poetry the

[9] From the work *In laudem sanctae Mariae,* cited in Luigi Gambero's *Mary and the Fathers of the Church: The Blessed Virgin Mary in Patristic Thought,* Thomas Buffer, trans. Ignatius P, 1999, 364.
[10] Augustine of Hippo, *The Confessions of Saint Augustine*. Paraclete P, 2015, p, 220.

idea of *kalokagatia* or "beauty-good" and how ethics and aesthetics were considered together to express maximum goodness. However, David Konstan, in *Beauty: The Fortunes of an Ancient Greek Idea* (2015), determines that the term *kállos* is the nearest to today's conception of beauty and signifies physical beauty, especially that of "erotic attraction" (Konstan 31–35). It is both interesting and concerning how the definition of beauty has changed over time, and perhaps without society's general knowledge. Laham pinpoints the focus of beauty in contemporary society: "Whether in fairy tales or in real life, the importance of physical appearance and the fulfillment of expected gender roles are inculcated into women from an early age. This is especially true for my generation of women, who came of age during the 1960s" (Laham 2). As such, what is the impact of our notion of beauty in today's world? In *Medical News Today*, Mandy French published an article titled "What Is the Connection between Beauty Standards and Mental Health?" in May 2024 that calls attention to beauty standards in Western society that are imposed upon both men and women. French writes of body image concerns that are a growing issue due to social media and television because these are affecting a great number of people, but French's article mainly concerns itself with the mental health of women and young people. French defines beauty standards as "the ideals and perception of beauty that society and culture place on people. They determine what is considered "beautiful" and can include height and weight, facial proportions, and body shape" and that U.S. women

> …are exposed to messages about how they should look from the moment they are born. Teens and young girls are also more likely to be given praise for how they look rather than for their actions or thoughts. They are also constantly shown images through the media of unrealistic standards. Many of the images have been altered using technology, causing these young females to strive for body ideals and beauty that do not actually exist. (French)

Moreover, these messages can lead to eating disorders, anxiety, depression, and social isolation (French). In another study, Ben Knight from the University of New South Wales Sydney specifically identifies the correlation between TikTok and mental health. In his "TikTok and body image: idealistic content may be detrimental to mental health" (2023), Knight identifies the narrow perception of what is considered beautiful in the physical appearance. While this is not a new idea, the short videos of TikTok are a medium for the focus on one's appearance, which, as mentioned above, can be manufactured and often present. According to Dr. Jasmine Fardouly of UNSW Science, this represents "something unrealistic or completely unattainable" that can be traced to girls as young as six years old expressing unhappiness with their bodies and dieting to lose weight. While the study did not look to social media as the source or only cause of this problem, it did propose that there are more opportunities to internalize the images presented therein. The research was conducted when 211 women aged 17 to 28 were shown images or videos from Instagram and TikTok featuring young women that were influencers reflecting societal beliefs about ideal appearance and then utilized "appearance-neutral content" (without people) to assess the difference by means of comparison. The researchers at the UNSW School of Psychology found that "…appearance-ideal short-form video content on social media, regardless of the medium, can have adverse effects on appearance satisfaction, negative mood, and self-objectification among participants" and upon viewing ideal content, they judged themselves as "less attractive, negatively impacting their mood and increasing body dissatisfaction." Additionally, the exposure to the video content was only one and a half minutes, but "… that was enough to have harmful impacts," stated Dr. Fardouly (Knight, "TikTok"). Whereas, in another article by Knight, "Small exposure to body positive content can improve body image" (2023), research performed by the School of Psychology at UNSW Science and published in *Body Image* seemed to suggest that contact with social media featuring different

types of appearances or "body positivity" can lower dissatisfaction with body image in small increments per day (Knight, "Small Exposure"). In this fashion, these findings offering a possible reversal of the negative effects of a person's daily visual intake on social media and the like are quite encouraging.

So, what do these studies have to do with Mary, art, poetry, and theological writings? Doesn't the solution to more body positivity present itself in Knight's article "Small Exposure"? While the findings of the study in question look promising, they may only address part of the issue of women scrutinizing themselves and society's valuation of them based on physical appearance. For this reason, this chapter investigates the components of beauty to arrive at a more comprehensive, theology-based view that hopefully will apply directly to the artistic portraits of Mary discussed in subsequent chapters. This will allow for a richer understanding of the art, but also a more expansive vision of beauty to challenge current views such as "Beauty is only skin deep" or "Beauty is merely x," which reinforce the stereotypes and objectification of both men and women, promote dissatisfaction, and greatly affect mental health. Then, the next section of the chapter begins with some current theological ideas on beauty. In this manner, by bringing forth theological voices, both from Church fathers and modern literary and religious writers, this study addresses the underlying issues that would impede a more complete consideration of beauty today. Subsequently, this study will take the position that beauty is more than "only skin deep" and encompasses elements such as the virtues and the soul of a person and can be complemented with an attractive physical form. Therefore, the historical view of beauty within philosophy will be presented and may assist in understanding why from today's perspective there is a feeling that something "went wrong." Then, the concept of beauty will be addressed in different components within the theories of Aquinas, Plotinus, Augustine, von Balthasar, John Paul II, and other literary voices. The goal is to recover these theories that, in aggregate, will reveal

the necessity of a more comprehensive position on beauty in preparation to move on to the forthcoming chapters on Mary in poetry and painting, Baroque and Enlightenment trends, and an examination of Mary's loveliness in the art of Moratín and Ricci.

To commence the discussion, herein lies a glimpse into how the ideals of beauty were formed in Western culture. Patrizia Bettella, in her *The Ugly Woman: Transgressive Aesthetic Models in Italian Poetry from the Middle Ages to the Baroque* (2005), observes that

> Italian literature of the pre-modern era, which contributed considerably to the formation of the Western canon, provided models of feminine beauty still influenial in both modern literature and culture as a whole. Today's paradigms of female beauty include attributes such as youth, blond hair, delicate features, and well-proportioned bodies, all characteristics that were already glorified in medieval and Renaissance Italian literature. (Bettella 3)

Bettella mentions the predominance of Plutarch's Laura as the "perfect beauty of the Renaissance lady" (Bettella 7) in Italian lyrical art, which included her "moral dignity" and elegance. However, it is important to note that Laura's physical beauty was never entirely described in Petrarch's *Canzoniere* (1327–1374) and includes only certain facial features and parts of the body. Interestingly, we can see some similarity to our modern-day approach to beauty as focusing on the period between the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Bettella reveals that the ideal was a flawless physical form that "leads to an orderly and detailed anatomization of the woman's body in descriptive praise or blazon" (Bettella 7).

Here also, we find the development of anti-Laura poetry that opposed the ideal whilst "rigid and abstract" descriptive aesthetic was upheld by Petrarch and the poets that followed his style. Anti-Laura poetry sought to examine the appearance of peasant women through a negative lens: "Scorn for the peasant and her non-canonical beauty allows the elite to reaffirm their aesthetic and cultural supremacy" (Bettella 7–8). Unfortunately, this tendency to

criticize women's appearances began centuries ago. Although this subject provides ample grounds for discussion, it goes beyond the intended scope of this study. However, suffice it to say that these tendencies are extremely prevalent today and assuredly there are concerns about the psychological effects they have on women. Interestingly, the archetype of the peasant woman and her physical deviation from an established model of beauty presents one of the first figure the modern era to be targeted and labeled as "other." She receives disapproval and condemnation for her exterior, which creates a vein of criticism that may have established itself in the psyche of Western women.

John Paul II, in his *Man and Woman He Created Them: A Theology of the Body* (2006), posits that human sight has been darkened, dimmed, or altered because it sees not in "fullness," but rather with a vision that has been expressly limited (John Paul II, *Man* 177–178), which can accord with the examples of the psychological studies mentioned above. In this sense, this study proposes that theological writings can offer assistance with understanding that there is a fracture of the interior spiritual and corporal unity (John Paul II, *Man* 243-244) and offer alternatives that provide more a harmonious balance in our view of beauty.

However, due to the notions that have arisen from manufactured standards of beauty, women have been criticized for not living up to these standards. Indeed, Warner expressed a sense of dissatisfaction in her discussion of Mary (in the passage from her work quoted in the Introduction) expressing possible discontentedness or frustration about not being able to attain an unreachable ideal: "As the icon of the ideal, the Virgin affirms the inferiority of the human lot" (Warner 254). Warner's sentiment of "something unrealistic or completely unattainable," although written the 1970s, seems just as pertinent today. In fact, Laham speaks about the importance of women's appearance and the role of advertising and "unrealistic beauty standards" since the 1960s (Laham 2–3). There may be benefit in

considering these points in tandem: How a woman thinks of herself in relation to the messages of the media, advertising, and now social media could very well influence her to believe she does not measure up both physically and spiritually.

This study argues that it is important to address these issues, as the conversation about beauty seems to have arrived at a place, at least in the case of women, where what is considered beautiful is equivalent to the attractiveness of the body. However, this standpoint only addresses one aspect of the components of beauty. Theologians throughout the ages have established a more inclusive view that does apply directly or can be applied to the most beautiful Mary. Anticipatively, by means of the renditions of Mary through visual and lyrical art, the need for a deeper understanding of beauty will emerge and be brought to light by theologians who outline what true beauty is and comment on its individual elements.

Melanie Susan Barrett, in *Love's Beauty at the Heart of the Christian Moral Life: The Ethics of Catholic Theologian Hans Urs von Balthasar* (2009), draws attention to von Balthasar's idea that "we in the modern world have lost our natural human capacity to perceive beauty (Barrett 9), and in fact, von Balthasar wrote at fifteen-volume trilogy on theological aesthetics, dramatics, and logic with the objective "to restore to theology the vision of the beautiful; to complement the vision of the true and the good and restore a proper balance"[11] (Barrett 10). Then, in *The Glory of the Lord: Seeing the Form,* vol. 1 (1983), von Balthasar speaks of the consideration of beauty in today's world which suffers from "our modern aesthetic blindness" caused by "an inability to do the good" (Barrett 11). Barrett in turn explains some of von Balthasar's viewpoints, such as "Without beauty, the good is no longer attractive, so we are not motivated to pursue it" (Barrett 11). That point resonates in Agnes Heller's publication *The Concept of the Beautiful* (2012), where she writes, in her Introduction entitled "What Went Wrong with the Concept of the Beautiful?," that

[11] *The Glory of the Lord*, vol. 1, 9.

"Something indeed went very wrong" with it and insists that the concepts of beauty and ugliness are philosophical questions. Heller states that from a philosopher's vantage point, the "Real, True Beauty" is found in a more exalted world that lies beyond common, everyday life. In this manner, humans live in the reality of our world but also inhabit one of myths and fairy tales, which are distinct yet connected spheres of existence. The author then shares an outline of beauty's fate within modern philosophy and claims that after Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel (1770–1831), "the true, the good, and the beautiful simultaneously become problematic (insofar as all three undergo substantial changes from the deconstruction of metaphysics) … With the triumph of the new mechanical, scientific worldview and the correspondence theory of truth, the ancient idea of truth is transformed into the idea of true knowledge" (Heller xxxix–xl).

Thus, the modern idea of truth or true knowledge is tested through methodical approaches in which negation does not continue as part of the concept of truth. Heidegger then rescues negation in truth and finds a place for it within true knowledge. However, this undermines the good, where "[n]egation became inherent not just in content, but in the structure of everyday ethical attitudes and everyday moral utterances … since the dawn of modernity" (Heller xl–xli). Hegel discusses this in relation to morality, but unlike Kant,[12] who maintained a difference between moral law and phenomena or nature, Hegel's approach is

> to assume the attitude of morality means to say no to the institutions, laws, and ways of life which cross our interests, limit our self-development, and reject our conceptions of the good … The modern world lives from constantly negation every current concept and description of the good. It can incorporate the evil and thrive on it. (Heller xli)

[12] Immanuel Kant (1724–1804)

Thus, “the good entered a state of demise” and truth enjoyed “an ambivalent success story” but beauty’s history “… it is rather a story of a seemingly unmitigated demise … Lived experience, after having been eliminated from metaphysics, took the concept of the beautiful to its early grave” (Heller xli–xlii). As Heller notes, there is no high regard for the beautiful within Descartes, Hobbes or Spinoza, and British empiricists assumed that the notion had already collapsed and then aided in its death (Heller xlii). Therefore, much can be said about modern philosophy’s deconstruction of the good within the concept of truth. As a result, the concept of the good suffered “a state of demise” and beauty a definite fatal end.

Consequently, the idea of a singular place from whence beauty originates becomes difficult when there is a belief that there is no God. Then, as Heller explains, the source for all beauty must be sought amongst creation according to “human judgment, convention, and taste … A shift from God to human faculties anticipates the coming demise of the concept of the beautiful” as “[t]he early modern “grand” rationalists dismiss the suspect beauty from the pantheon where for a while the true remains in place and the good lingers” (Heller xliii). Seemingly, humanity in the modern world interprets the beauty it sees, hears, or perceives in different ways and determines it through the lens of this age in order to label it in an everyday expression, minus the concept or part for which there is no longer an understanding due to the limitations placed upon it.

On the other hand, when the source of beauty originates with “the ultimate Creator of all things, the single and the absolute Beauty, the source of all beauties, of all the heterogeneous things that can legitimately be called beautiful” and when Divine Beauty does not “become an empty metaphor” (Herrer xliii), there exists a release of its tidy understanding, minimization, and/or dismissal in favor of a sense of balance, order, and organization. The beautiful can be observed and enjoyed without having to qualify, judge, classify, or determine

it for ourselves. It is something greater and beyond human abilities, and there exists a freedom and wonder in its enjoyment.

Nonetheless, modernity has done something new with beauty. Heller calls attention to the clarity of the traditional Platonic model when organized as the source as the Highest Principle and when this is discarded it becomes difficult to find a source of beauty within its pluralistic nature. However, the author informs that a new manner to unite something needed to embody the heterogeneous nature of beauty and at the same time "affect the 'whole human person'" has become works of art. This, Heller puts forth, is "a perfect, and perfectly modern solution" that incorporates all that which is depicted "All those heterogeneous things are presented and represented in works of art without a single exception. They participate in beauty insofar as they are incorporated by the evocative power of the work, insofar as they are properly formed" (Heller xlv–xlvi). Then, "[h]eterogeneity and homogeneity, difference and total effect, are brought together under a single constellation … this win also became the downfall of the concept of the beautiful" (Heller xlvi). Hence, beauty is not seen as coming from an outside source, but from the works themselves. In this perception, diversity of form and total effect are reduced, and a created work of art determines the degree or quality of the beautiful with which it has been endowed.

Although much more can be said regarding beauty, its history, the concept of the beautiful and beauty and art, the sources above inform our understanding of the decline and reassignment of beauty to art as well as the elimination of the spiritual in its evaluation and how, in basic terms, that came about. This overview is important in the approach to religious art as well as the poetic work presented, as the works originate from a spiritual, or God-centered, orientation that perhaps some contemporary readers may not be as familiar with and helps us to understand the differences from a philosophical perspective.

A God-centered position seems appropriate when utilizing religious writings to appreciate religious artistic works and can facilitate the understanding of this type of methodology from the standpoint of a modern secular-based society. Additionally, the progression and, according to Heller, demise of the concept of beauty today contrasts with how Baroque and Enlightenment poets and artists portrayed the beautiful from a spiritual perspective. Umberto Eco, in his "Sviluppo dell'estetica medievale" in *Momenti e problemi di storia dell'estetica* (1959), conveys that "[t]he Medievals did in fact conceive of a beauty that was purely intelligible, the beauty of moral harmony and of metaphysical splendour. This is something which only the most profound and sympathetic understanding of their mentality and sensibility can restore to us nowadays" (Eco, "Sviluppo" 5). Eco's observations on the medieval understanding of beauty as something to consider, as contemporary society views it through the prism of early modern truth, correlating to scientific truth, and art as the beautiful without "moral harmony" and "metaphysical splendour." The medievals had not decided that the source of beauty was amongst them within a man-made object and had not yet traded the "beautiful soul" or, in other words, a simple and virtuous soul, for "the soul of emotional over-refinement, receptivity, and good taste" (Heller xlvi), as occurred in the early modern era. This understanding of the medieval mindset can be useful in understanding religious art as generally God-centered, with the "beautiful soul" as a prime objective for the viewer as exemplified in the scene before them or read or heard in a lyrical poem. It is important to recall in this approach that this beauty is a reflection of the Creator and is not admired as its source. Thus, this approach requires a lack of emphasis on "emotional over-refinement" and does not seek the source of the sacred in art itself, the physical creation. This is necessary to recognize an experience of the beautiful that provides an opportunity or invitation to discover every day as something more than just a mental exercise. In this manner, through our senses, our bodies engage with experience, thereby engaging in a more holistic perception.

Additionally, a theological approach, from a logical perspective, coincides with the often-lifelong dedication of theologians to the nature of Mary and her role for humanity. John Paul II remarks on the philosophical themes in Aquinas' writings:

> Aristotle and Plato follow the same path, but in a different manner. *The Christian tradition before Thomas Aquinas,* and therefore before Augustine, was tied to Plato, from whom it nonetheless rightfully wanted to distance itself … *The theology of the* [Church] *Fathers,* especially in the East, broke away more and more from Plato and from philosophers in general. Philosophy itself, in the Fathers, ends up in theology … Saint Thomas, however, did not abandon the philosopher's approach. (JOHN PAUL II, *Crossing* 28–29)

Furthermore, Aquinas' theories, as presented by Christopher Scott Sevier in *Aquinas on Beauty* (2015) and Armand A. Maurer in *About Beauty: A Thomistic Interpretation* (1983), may be a complete and viable manner through which to explain how the perception of beauty effects the senses. As the writings of the saints can testify, this is important because it employs more than the mind to reach conclusions about Marian mysteries that are not meant to be understood by the intellect alone. In his work *On Loving God* (1881), Bernard speaks of the connection between the senses and does so by quoting Luke 10:27 ("He [Christ] answering, said: *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, and with thy whole soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind: and thy neighbour as thyself*")[13] and explains: "For here the heart must take thought for the body, and the soul must energize the flesh, and the strength must guard itself from impairment. And by God's favor, must seek to increase" (Bernard, *Honey* 34).

Likewise, the Marian mysteries can comprise, as in the object of this study, the Annunciation, moments or episodes in Mary's life that, upon contemplation, do not reach an

[13] Here Jesus is quoting Deuteronomy 5:6.

end nor a conclusion through strictly intellectual methodologies. These episodes contain lessons, revelations, considerations that move to deeper and deeper levels, insofar as the person who meditates on them is ready to include their heart, soul, body, and mind in the process in order to reach understand and "increase."[14] Equally, the saints either devoted to Mariology or having dedicated their writings to Mary spent numerous hours pondering Marian mysteries in order to explore her nature due to its closeness to God. In this manner, this study embraces such Mariological writings while reflecting on Marian art, thereby involving these learned scholars and those that have devoted their lives and writings to Mary in the conversation.

Through the writings of the authors on Aquinas, Sevier, and Maurer, Marian art can speak to the viewer and reader through beauty within the framework of Thomistic theory. Does devotion mean absolute truth in the sense that the saints that devoted themselves and their writings to her are correct in their theories beyond question? Not necessarily, but the mystics speak of contemplation, in this case on the Marian mysteries, without ulterior motives, thoughts of self, or personal gain creating an entrance into higher levels of truth and understanding in approaching God. Similarly, these come from a higher source, not an inducement of mental understanding or knowing that result by reaching alternate states of consciousness through the consumption of illicit substances. Contrarily, this involves doing the spiritual work to come closer and closer to the source of all good through self-denial and purification. This undertaking often involves what Saint John of the Cross (1542–1591) called "the dark night of the soul," which can be extremely emotionally painful, as Saint Teresa of Avila (1515–1582), Saint Angela of Foligno (1248–1309), and Saint Catherine of Siena (1347–1380), amongst many others, have attested to in their spiritual accounts.

[14] "Increase," meaning "The concept of "increasing" in the Bible often refers to growth, multiplication, or enhancement in various aspects of life, including spiritual maturity, wisdom, faith, and material blessings" ("Increasing").

Sevier asserts that although Aquinas did not put forth a work dedicated to the subject, beauty is a prevalent topic in his writings. Sevier states that he found it necessary to "piece them [his collected views] together from a variety of passages in disparate texts" to gain a composite view of Aquinas' opinion on the nature of beauty. For this reason, both Sevier and Maurer provide interpretations of Aquinas' theories of beauty. What is appealing about these Thomistic notions is the balanced, proportional model they provide, which includes notions of beauty beyond physical appearance that can be applied to Marian art.

Sevier proposes the relation of the object, or representation, to what is being represented: "Insofar as beauty is likened to a property of the Son with respect to *proportio,* Aquinas says that the Son is "the express image of the Father" (Sevier 109).[15] The idea that "[t]he beautiful image "fills the measure of that of which it is the image" in respect of which it is "made equal to" (*coaequatur*) that of which it is the image" originates with Augustine (Sevier 110). That is to say that both saints would propose that the image becomes its representation for the observer. Thus, Gerald O'Collins in *The Beauty of Jesus Christ* (2020) asks "…is beauty necessarily perceptible, something we take in through our five bodily senses? Is beauty to be met only in something which is material and wonderfully proportioned? In short, is beauty reducible to physical beauty?" (16). We can find answers in Aquinas as well as an absence of reduction: human beauty is not comprised exclusively of its physical beauty, for human intelligence and can be referred to as attractive 'spiritually,' and together with the idea of divine beauty, are found beyond that which the five senses can recognize. Thereby, an image of beauty becomes its representation, but not merely its physical expression, as "God is utterly perfect, harmonious, and radiantly splendid, *the* Beauty itself reflected in earthly beauty" (17). Therefore, the experience of beauty does indeed include the five senses but is not limited to them or reduced to the physical and the source of which all beauty is given

[15] *Summa Theologiae* I.39.8 co.

forth. Sevier further comments on Aquinas' considerations of aesthetic delight: "for a thing is not beautiful because we love it; rather, because it is beautiful and good, it is loved by us; for our will is not the cause of things, but is moved by things" (Sevier 115).[16]

The Book of Wisdom speaks of God as the source of all beauty and the author of all beautiful things, as opposed to the worship of a created thing: "With whose beauty, if they, being delighted, took them to be gods: let them know how much the Lord of them is more beautiful than they: for the first author of beauty made all those things" (Wisdom 13:3) and continues "[f]or by the greatness of the beauty, and of the creature, the creator of them may be seen, so as to be known thereby" (Wisdom 13:5). The Psalms also speak of one of the components of beauty, light or radiance, emanating from God, particularly in Psalm 104:

> "Bless the Lord, O my soul: O Lord my God, thou art exceedingly great. Thou hast put on praise and beauty: and art clothed with light as with a garment" (Ps 104:1–2)

and in Psalm 50:

> "From the rising of the sun, to the going down thereof: out of Sion the loveliness of his beauty" (Psalm 50:1–2).

O'Collins also notes how the glory of God is "equivalently, the beauty of God" in Psalm 19:

> "The heavens show forth the glory of God, and the firmament declareth the work of his hands" (Ps 19:1).

"One can describe 'glory (*kabod*)' as the light streaming from God …" (O'Collins 19). "Human beings, while they cannot see the deity as such, can perceive the beautiful glory that symbolizes God's presence" (O'Collins 20). That is why, continues Sevier, in the *Summa Theologica* (1265–1274) Aquinas posits that the beautiful and the good in essence the same, coming from the same form (Sevier 112–13). Sevier states that Aquinas' views on aesthetics

[16] From Sevier's notes: *In librum beati Dionysii de divinis nominibus expositio, IV*, lec. 10: *non enim ideo aliquid est pulchrum quia nos illud amamus, sed quia est pulchrum et bonum ideo amatur a nobis; voluntas enim nostra non est cause rerum, sed a rebus movetur* (Sevier 138 (note 99)).

"provide a critical connection between the aesthetics of antiquity and modernity" by conserving ancient Greek theories called the "great tradition" and "foreshadows innovations that will not be seem again until Kant" (Sevier 1).

In turn, Maurer explains that the Thomistic consideration of beauty begins in the senses. He compares the necessity of beauty to coincide with the actuality of the thing in question and utilizes the image of the bud of a flower to exemplify an initial state being of the thing as "incomplete and potential beauty." Thereafter, the opening of the flower reveals the fullness of its conception created by God, and in its actuality or the fulfillment of its potential beauty, it is then able to identify itself with beauty. Maurer provides a further example of a preliminary sketch of a painter that draws interest from the viewer, but hardly to the same degree as the finished painting in full color. This is the point where the beauty of the painting comes into existence, and so it seems, occurs when it has reached its fullest potential. Maurer explains that "the first and most profound sense of actuality according to St. Thomas is existence … so the actuality of existence is the source and origin of the whole being, including its beauty" (Maurer 7). However, surely this is not to state that a rosebud or a sketch of a painting do not possess beauty, but rather is it the realization of the full potential of their design that makes them truly beautiful in accordance with their divine 'blueprints.' Paul Evdokimov, in *The Art of the Icon: A Theology of Beauty* (1990), writes:

> The Creator, like a divine poet, in bringing the world into being out of nothingness, composed his *Symphony in Six Days*, the *Hexameron*. After each one of his creative acts, he "saw that it was *beautiful*." The Greek text of the biblical story uses the word *kalon*-beautiful and not *agathon*-good; the Hebrew word carries both meanings at the same time. In addition, the Hebrew verb *to create* is conjugated in the completed mood. That is to say, the world "has been created, is created, and will be created" until

its fulfillment. Even at the moment it leaves God's hands, the sprout of creation is already beautiful, but this very seedling points to its evolution …. (Evdokimov 1–2)

Thereby, Evdokimov's examination of translation seems to explain that what one might think of as the progression of a flower realizing itself to 'become beauty' outside of time, as in the completed mood in Hebrew; one might say that it is good and beautiful in its existence.

Moreover, Aquinas proposed that harmony and proportion are necessary for beauty, and referred to this as *consonantia*, or how the elements sound collectively. Maurer provides the example of musical notes, which likely can be extended to the words expressed in poetry as "concordant, that fit together, are harmonious and pleasing to the ear. Words have their beauty when they are arranged in a suitable order and the light of reason shines through them." Next, in addition to radiance and proportion, *integritas* (integrity or "wholeness") is essential, as it "lacks nothing" (Maurer 11). Hence, form provides the ability for the thing in question to have its own unique and distinctive beauty. Maurer draws attention to the Latin root of beauty *formositas*, originating from *formosus* (adjective) meaning well formed: "This suggests that the beautiful is the well formed, the well shaped; and because *forma* means not only figure and shape but also appearance and 'look', the beautiful is also the well appearing and the good looking" (Maurer 8). Form, then, can be applied to the representations of the rose in bloom and the finished painting due to the beauty within their respective proportions. Thus, the artist's attention to the sense of proportion and space come into effect within the category of form to present a work pleasing to the observer in ways they may not necessarily notice.

Form distinguishes the different types of things so as to render them recognizable. Form then becomes the way to perceiving and/or comprehending the thing. Maurer continues to detail how form also has its own radiance or glow (*claritas*) extended to it that exists both in sensible and intelligible forms. The sensible form is perceived with the senses, such as the colors or proportions of a bird, which in this case involves seeing the radiance, whereas the

mind recognizes an intelligible form such as a theory or an equation. In this manner, a radiance's relation to a form "is not univocal but analogous" (Maurer 19), and bodily form is not equally spiritual form, but they are comparable in their value or importance to the whole. "Each kind of form determines and specifies a being in its own way, different from every other; and so too it imparts its own kind of radiance to the being: now a sensible radiance, now an intelligible or spiritual radiance. But because each being has its own form, it has its own distinctive "light" or splendor" (Maurer 10). Johann G. Roten, in "Mary and the Way of Beauty," employs the notions of Sapiential theology, which is oftentimes equated with circular methodology "meaning the same realities are mulled over continuously" and relates an affinity between object and subject or "splendor of form and committed spectator," which is love or *ens et amor convertuntur* (Roten 122–23).

Beyond an understanding of form, there exists an action component to which the latent abilities need to submit in the process of the creation of beauty. As Maurer explains

> Action completes the actuality of existence and form. A painter is actually a painter because he exists and possesses the art of painting. A dancer asleep is still a dancer, but he is most completely a dancer when he actually dances, or perhaps the action of the rosebud becoming the rose in bloom. If, as St. Thomas suggests, beauty is found in actuality in the fullness of beauty will be found in action. (Maurer 8)

Hence, for Aquinas, the existence, form, and action are the basis of the beauty of a thing, and its mystery is found in the combination of these elements. While the existence of a thing is usually assumed or not considered to the same degree as the form that captures the attention with its pulchritude, it is the deep, inner "secret source of all the perfection and actuality of a being, including its beauty" (Maurer 9). Thus, according to Aquinas, one could say that beauty in the poetic and visual arts requires the completion of the harmonious parts of its form and the action that brings them from the innate into the actuality.

However, Sevier notes that Plotinus believed that proportion alone could not comprise the entirety of beauty. Plotinus then proposes light, color, or "radiance of life" as an element, as well as that beauty reveals symmetry and not the inverse. In *Enneads* (c. AD 270), Plotinus asserts that life is a quality showing that which is living to possess to a greater degree "the Idea of the Good" or "glow of the light of the Good" that "awakens and lifts the soul and all that goes with it." "He refers to visible light and color as being but physical manifestations of The Good, on account of which they incite desire. It is the Idea of The Good that illumines intelligible reality and by which objects are intelligible and beautiful, whether alive or inert" (Sevier 111). Referring to sculpture, and which certainly could as well present an argument for painting, Plotinus advances that "[t]he beauty of a sculpture is a borrowed beauty, one dependent upon the sculptor's ability to capture and reproduce in his chosen medium the unique radiance of a living person, which is the expression of the form human in the material body." Plotinus continues to propose that a comparison between two portraits will render the one that is "more living" as "more beautiful" (Sevier 112). Sevier explains that Aquinas may not have read *Enneads,* from whence the theory of the importance of life in accounting for attractiveness, but Augustine may have very well been a source. In this passage of *Summa Theologiae* Aquinas refers to Augustine's idea that chastity makes a person more receptive to seeing beauty because "venereal pleasures most of all weigh the mind down to sensible objects," and thus, Aquinas proposes that the beauty in "a certain clarity and due proportion" is ultimately identified in the reason where "both the light that makes beauty seen (*lumen manifestans*), and the establishing of due proportion among things belong to reason" (Sevier 112). Hence, *claritas* becomes a component of beauty for Aquinas. However, Aquinas also proposes the existence of beauty "in the moral virtues by participation to the extent that the moral virtues participate in the order of reason," thereby connecting beauty to luminosity and moral virtues by way of reason and then "… this seems to cement the close linkage to virtue,

and it most clearly establishes that one of beauty's essential constituents is the communication of something intelligible" (Sevier113).

Thus, it could be said that Hans Urs von Balthasar (1905–1988) in his *Theologic I: Truth of the World* (2000) (*Theologik: Erster Band: Wahrheitder Welt*; 1985) aids in continuing the idea of the "secret source of all the perfection and actuality of a being" from the understanding of the theories of Aquinas on beauty and expands these thoughts to art:

> By the same token, worldly truth, by God's gift, often appears to contain an intrinsic gleam of God's eternity and infinity, an irradiation of something more than it could contain simply on account of its creaturely truth. This mysterious "more"[…] is the uttermost filling of the vessel of the worldly symbol with the divine content. This explains how a kind of plenitude can invade a moment of time, making it seem to be an immediate appearance of eternity, or how a work of art can be so perfect that it seems to have the quality, no longer of an earthly, but of an immediately divine idea. (235–36)

Hence, von Balthasar puts into words the "mysterious 'more'" that comes from God in observing beauty. Plentitude, form, and *claritas* then come together in God's design. Here as well von Balthasar identifies art that seems to have the qualities necessary to originate in divine inspiration, as the psalmist points to the source of beauty: "I have loved, O Lord, the beauty of thy house; and the place where thy glory dwelleth" (Psalms 25:8).

Furthermore, von Balthasar explains the idea of beauty: "Beauty is the pure irradiation of the true and good for their own sake. It is the simultaneity of self-being and self-outpouring characteristic of communication. It is an elusive, indescribable joy that shares in the groundless joy of the irradiation of being, which, as was said, carries its own ground in itself" (von Balthasar, *Theologic* 224). Von Balthasar's statement calls to mind the "indescribable

joy" of the beloved in *The Song of Songs*: "How beautiful art thou, my love, how beautiful art thou ! thy eyes are doves' eyes, besides what is hid within" (Song 4:1).

Francisco Garrote Pérez, in *Pensamiento y naturaleza en España durante los siglos XVI y XVII* (1981), remarks on the great significance in a God-centered approach in attempting to reach a divine vision of beauty in art: "Luego la razón es industria, arte, habilidad … es decir, es el *método* para conseguir una obra bella, para lo cual se requiere esfuerzo y trabajo. De ahí que la razón sea guía para el artista que quiere aproximarse al ejemplar de belleza que existe en la mente de Dios …" (Garrote Pérez 127). Emmanuel Chapman, in his *Saint Augustine's Philosophy of Beauty* (1939), in turn, relates what could be the pinnacle of the unity of components of beauty: "God Who as Supreme Unity is also Supreme Being and Beauty is the source of all participated beings which possess beauty in the measure that they have unity, and the greater the unity attained the greater the degree of being and beauty attained" (Chapman 53). Therein lies a pertinent factor, that of unity within creation to compose a thing of beauty from the Great Beauty.

However, even with an understanding of the components of beauty, it can still seem so elusive to determine. Von Balthasar writes about 'beauty':

> Beauty is the last thing which the thinking intellect dares to approach, since only it dances as an uncontained splendour around the double constellation of the true and the good and their inseparable relation to one another. Beauty is the disinterested one, without which the ancient world refused to understand itself, a word which both imperceptibly and yet unmistakably has bid farewell to our new world, a world of interests, leaving it to its own avarice and sadness…We no longer dare to believe in beauty and we make of it a mere appearance in order the more easily to dispose of it. (von Balthasar, *The Glory* 18)

Thus, the ills of today's society could possibly be related to a disbelief in beauty. Von Balthasar touches on the "mere appearance" of it, thereby limiting or diminishing its capacity to express itself in radiance and completion. Where is the something "more" factor that defies explanation and inspires awe?

Von Balthasar continues:

> In a world without beauty—even if people cannot dispense with the word and constantly have it on the tip of their tongues in order to abuse it—in a world which is perhaps not wholly without beauty, but which can no longer see it or reckon with it … In a world that no longer has enough confidence in itself to affirm the beautiful, the proofs of the truth have lost their cogency." (von Balthasar, *The Glory* 19)

These statements seem to provide a possible theory explaining the dissatisfaction women feel in the studies mention at the beginning of this chapter. Von Balthasar proposes that in our society we no longer feel capable or qualified to determine beauty, and thereby "abuse it" through possible misunderstanding, negligence, or lack of respect for it: "Man's habit of calling beautiful only what strikes *him* as such appears insurmountable, at least on earth … May we not think of the beautiful as one of the transcendental attributes of Being as such, and thereby ascribe to the beautiful the same range of application and the same inwardly analogous form that we ascribe to the one, the true, the good?" (von Balthasar *The Glory* 38). However, von Balthasar proposes something encouraging: "… the Fathers regarded beauty as a transcendental and did theology accordingly. This presupposition left a most profound imprint on the manner and content of their theologizing, since a theology of beauty may be elaborated only in a beautiful manner" (von Balthasar *The Glory* 39). Thus, as suggested here, what would a "theology of beauty … in a beautiful manner" comprehend? Von Balthasar expresses a connection between natural beauty and "the necessary, internal and

living relationship between the expressive form and the self-expressing life-principle is the presupposition for the understanding of natural beauty" (von Balthasar *The Glory* 444). Evdokimov cites Saint Gregory of Nyssa on human closeness to God and the beauty that results:

> It is in being "in his likeness that man manifest the divine Beauty."[17] The liturgical services speak of a certain category of saints as "those who have a striking resemblance." In the same way, the *Philocalia*, or "love of beauty," a collection of ascetical writings, indicates by its very name that an ascetic, a spiritual person, a person "taught by God," is not only good—that goes without saying—but that he is also beautiful in that he radiates the divine Beauty. (Evdokimov 11)

Chapman proposes a more integral approach, "… as the splendor of being delightfully illuminating the mind with its two powers of knowing and loving, beauty can be stated in terms of unity which is the form of all beauty" (Chapman 55) and that the resulting unity of mind, will, body, intellect thereby encompasses the senses and finds a greater unity of man with the object, as well with the "Perfect Beauty" of God:

> This unity of truth and goodness issuing in beauty can be further brought into unity with man who, in his experience of beauty, enjoys the unity of intellect and will, mind and body. In the experience of beauty not only is the unity of the object involved but also the larger whole of man and the object. These two in their turn involve the still larger whole of the object, man, and God Who alone is Perfect Wholeness, Completeness, Unity, and hence Perfect Beauty. (Chapman 54–55)

Thus, according to Chapman, beauty encompasses the experience of it through the intellect, will, and senses. Thereby a unity in beauty is achieved in "the larger whole of man and the object" (Chapman 55). Then the object and man form a greater completeness within the

[17] *The Art of the Icon* p. 11 references St. Gregory of Nyssa's *De opif. hom*., 18, 192 CD.

encounter of beauty when joined with God, who is 'Perfect Beauty.' This connection, found in two levels of unity, could, in the case of Marian art, have the ability to link heaven and earth. This would entail viewing the unity of Mary's "intellect and will, mind and body" in alignment with divine will, revealing the beauty of her nature.

Von Balthasar explains how it is possible to see the essence of something in its appearance:

> What arouses aesthetic pleasure is, not simply the correspondence between essence and appearance, but rather the totally incomprehensible observation that the essence really appears in the appearance. But it is precisely this eternal comparative that comes to expression in the positive degree …Beauty is the pure irradiation of the true and the good for their own sake … This also accounts for the unbegrudging self-abandonment that we associate with beauty: beauty's radiance overspreads all who behold it, just as the sun overspreads a landscape. (von Balthasar, *Theologic* 223–24)

Here von Balthasar begins to delve into the radiance within beauty as something disinterested and possessing a brilliance outside human control. He mentions "the totality incomprehensible observation" that makes it something of wonder, which appealing in German the word for beautiful is "wunderschön," or "wonderfully nice." The wonder of beauty radiates the object, the observer by "overspreading" its truth and goodness from the source of Perfect Beauty.

Ratzinger in *Introduction to Christianity* (2004) sheds light on why this radiance is sometimes not so apparent:

> Characteristic of our contemporary scientific attitude, which molds whether we like it or not, every single individual's feeling for life and shows us our place in reality, is the limitation to "phenomena", to what is evident and can be grasped. We have given up seeking the hidden "in-itselfness" of things and sounding the nature of being itself;

> such activities seem to us to be a fruitless enterprise; we have come to regard the depths of being as, in the last analysis, unfathomable. *We have limited ourselves to our own perspective, to the visible in the widest sense,* to what can be seized in our measuring grasp. (Ratzinger. *Introduction* 58) (my emphasis)

Here again, the limitations imposed on beauty become apparent and rely on human understanding. In this manner, beauty can be immeasurable from a human viewpoint and exist in the sense of von Balthasar's something "more." Beauty can be quite the opposite of a scientific proof of value, and could represent a counterbalance, or at least a counter-perspective, which would integrate both the mathematical and the logical with a sense of awe and wonder at the radiant "overspreading" of something beautiful. Then, according to John Paul II, is a search for "integral beauty, for purity free from stain: it is a search for perfection that contains, I would say, *the synthesis of human beauty, beauty of soul and body*" (John Paul II, *Man* 584). Although John Paul II was referring to the spousal relationship between man and woman, this beauty emerges through the body in combination with the soul, or the soul's light. This purity, again, might be found not in our own limited perspective, but in the integrity of the body, encompassing the mind and heart, and the soul as a microcosmic oneness that exists in the macrocosm of God and His creation.

The chapter "The Biblical Vision of Beauty" Evdokimov's work adds integrity to the discussion that was begun by Plato about an integration of truth and the good: "At the highest degree of synthesis, that which is found in the Bible, truth and goodness offer themselves for our contemplation. Their living union, symbiosis, denotes the integrity of being from which beauty springs forth" (Evdokimov 1). Once again, this notion is mentioned as the interrelation of beauty, truth, and goodness toward God-like qualities but specifies that their highest expression is found in the Bible, wherein truth and goodness in a "living union" are that from which is birthed beauty. But here as well the Bible will lead the seeker to God-like

qualities, a holiness or sanctity within life, but truth and goodness are found in "the integrity of being" that reside in a person, creating a state where beauty can emerge. They therefore find their highest expression in a person who has given their life over to the will of God and thereby has within them not just God-like qualities but the maximal manifestation of God, having no interior place for a will of their own. Again, Evdokimov expands on the attestation of oneness with God: "According to St. Paul, glory appears where the form and the idea of God, which inhabits it, become one. This is especially true where form becomes a place of theophany, where the body becomes the temple of the Holy Spirit" (Evdokimov 12), as in the case of Mary at the Annunciation and during her lifetime.

Evdokimov speaks of an intersection between the aesthetic and religious experience upon witnessing a work of art, where they both involve contemplation, but the difference lies in "the way each experience grasps its object, or rather is grasped by that object" (Evdokimov 19). Maurer mentions the Greek philosophers that saw the experience of beauty as disinterested, but in relation to the good:

> The call of the beautiful is different. In this case what delights us is not precisely the thing itself but the sight of the thing. The beautiful attracts us to look at it, but not to possess it, except in order that we might look at it more often and more attentively. In contrast to the desire of the good, the experience of the beautiful is disinterested. (Maurer 18)

However, Maurer references Kant in how "[t]he subjectivity of beauty and ugliness is a legacy to modern philosophy from Immanuel Kant" (Maurer 25). According to these standards, beauty, is then judged by means of personal taste and what was pleasing produced "disinterested pleasure" (Maurer 25). Maurer points to how Kant proposes in his *Critique of Judgment* (1790) a relation between a person's subjective judgment of beauty in terms of how it relates to their personal enjoyment, not as within the existence of the object itself: "If the

relation is one of disinterested pleasure, we call the thing beautiful. The ground or basis of beauty, consequently, cannot be in the object, but only in the subject who experiences beauty, for the feeling of pleasure is only in the subject" (Maurer 25). Thus, Man lies at the center of the experience of beauty, which can be ascertained as limiting within the framework provided by Aquinas. Kant's ideas function within the cognitive processes that perceive the sensorial experience and come to subjective conclusions.

Maurer furthers his analysis within the example of art in the objectification of beauty through human judgment:

> The sensation of pleasure Kant associates with the harmonious activity of our faculties of imagination and understanding; and since these are the same in all men there is a basis for universal aesthetic judgments. When I judge a masterpiece of art to be beautiful, I am not only expressing my own taste but I expect everyone with equal art experience to make the same judgment. This leads me to objectify beauty, to think of it as a quality or property of the object, and to call the *thing* beautiful. (Maurer 25–26)

Hence, the creation of the tendency to establish beauty standards for everyone from within a mental framework leads to its consideration as an object. Once again, Kant's ideas make known the desire for pleasure, not in amazement, but within human understanding, such as a mental exercise of appreciation, and reveals the limitations of such. Although the purpose of this study is not to present a lengthy philosophical debate on the distinctions among modern schools of thought on the subject, perhaps Kant's theories can communicate how the modern perception of beauty has shifted and our appreciation for art can be said to have diminished or lessened. By placing the object or thing under our own personal gaze to determine its value according to our personal subjectivity, we are using ourselves to filter our experience, but are we actually seeing the object, or the reflection entirely of ourselves? If that is the case, then we are not truly beholding it, nor deriving the fullness of the experience that lies within it.

How many times have we heard a conversation at a museum that sounds something like "Well, I don't care for it" or "I like how the artist…," statements that reveal a need to judge a work of art according to our own taste. This study does not propose, however, to return to simpler times, such as the medieval period, in order to experience an astonishment of creation, but rather to consider the theories such as those of Aquinas, von Baltasar, and others that can offer more richness and depth to our perception of beauty.

In terms of a God-focused approach, Evdokimov sustains that "[w]hat is even more important is the affirmation that the idea of the beautiful is interchangeable with the idea of being; this means that beauty is the final stage of the progression toward fullness of being; it is identical with the ideal wholeness and integrity of being" (Evdokimov 19). This integrity would necessarily possess a biblical orientation of truth and goodness, expressing beauty in an intention of alignment with the God's commandments. Hence, a "wholeness and integrity of being" allows for the presence of God within and differentiates itself from any sort of 'disinterestedness' or rather detachment from its true purpose within creation.

Consequently, according to Evdokimov, the artist uncovers "fullness of being" of an object that permits the viewer to perceive the admirable qualities in its perfection and "opens the way toward the Mystery of Being" and within this process exposes "a depth which is logically inexpressible." Then, it could be noted that this mystery defies the exclusive use of the logical mind towards its comprehension. As such, a "disinterested" or detached approach of admiration would not be enough to reach deeper than logic can obtain. Evdokimov continues: "The beautiful is present in the harmony of all its elements and brings us face to face with a truth that cannot be demonstrated or proved, except by contemplating it. The mystery of beauty illuminates external phenomena from within, as the soul radiates mysteriously on a person's face" (Evdokimov 20). Thus, this study preserves God as the

source of all beauty, the illumination of the soul, expressed as the "light" [*claritas*] in Aquinas' theories, creating a mystery surrounding the beauty perceived on the outside.

Furthermore, the author presents how, through the aesthetic experience, the viewer or reader, as in the case of painting and poetry, can "commune with the beauty of a countryside, with a face or with poetry in the same way we commune with a friend. We feel a strange relation with a reality that seems to be our soul's homeland, once lost but now found. Art 'dephenomenalizes' present reality, and as a result the whole world opens up to mystery" (Evdokimov 21). To this end art draws attention to the mystery by making the observer aware of differences, similarities, feelings of comfort, and belonging or delight, amongst others. Nonetheless, the author explains that this is where the esthetic experience stops and goes no further (Evdokimov 21).

Evdokimov resumes the discussion on God within the conception of beauty and states that "[g]uided by the hand of God, man in spite of himself breaks through the ceiling of the æsthetic and ethical stages" (Evdokimov 22). He then provides an example from the nineteenth century of the philosophy of Søren Kierkegaard (1815–1855) that "remains *in front of God* and not *in God.*" Evdokimov states that the biblical mystery (or miracle) at the wedding at Cana[18] "is beyond Kierkegaard" as a more contemporary example of philosophy than this study's chosen artistic works from the Baroque and the Enlightenment but serves to illustrate an intellectual understanding of God and His creation. Evdokimov states that this type of perception cannot move into the realm of the miracle, as in the case of docetic Christology where "God's absolute otherness is projected onto the other ness of man's whole being; Spirit bearing love is thus impossible to attain. This negative relation, created by distance, ends up in absence …," as in Kierkegaard's works (Evdokimov 22). Although other researchers have looked more toward Kierkegaard as contributing to a kenotic Christology or

[18] *John* 2: 1-12

the notion that Christ's divinity was lost or decreased upon coming into human form, the type of Christology most similar to Kierkegaard's belief system is not at issue and will be left to those experts in this field. However, understanding Scripture and teachings on an intellectual level of a theologian, such as Kierkegaard, who can position themselves in contemplation, like Kant, "in front of God," which can be taken to mean ponder His nature, can mean understanding the workings of His creation, even attempt to understand His mind. Yet a difference can be ascertained between a theologian's proposal of ideas from "*in God,*" that is, within a contemplation of His divinity through self-emptying, or releasing all to divine will, and the readiness to be guided by God and reach heights of understanding that the mind alone cannot. Augustine wrote that only through faith can one approach truths as they are presented to him, and man will only ever sufficiently arrive at an understanding of these through dedicated contemplation: "Unless you believe, you will not understand" and "… no good can be perfectly known unless it be perfectly loved" (Conley 14–15).

Aquinas' construct of wisdom, which might be taken as a goal in being "*in front of God*" or as the result of being "*in God*," is three-fold: natural reason, Christian reason, and the gift of the Holy Spirit. Thus, a rational mind will lead the theologian and the observer of art to an understanding that will reach a contemplation before God, but the gift of the Holy Spirit will come once the person sees as God, in love. Thus, Kieran Conley in *The Theology of Wisdom: A Study in St. Thomas* (1963) reveals a fourth element within the Thomistic consideration of wisdom, which is "the dimension of affectivity involved in wisdom, abstracting from the latter's particular realizations" (Conley 20). This is the point where the experience of beauty can contribute to the acquisition not only of knowledge, but also of a true desire for wisdom by means of art. Likewise, in regard to this study, wisdom can arise from contemplating Marian art and delving further into the mysteries to find truths previously hidden from ideas anchored exclusively to reason. Aquinas proposes in *Summa II* (1467): "the ultimate

perfection of the human intellect is divine truth; other truths perfect the intellect as ordered toward divine truth." As Conley writes, "[a]ll human knowledge is meant to lead man to knowledge of God" (Conley 101) and thereby not necessarily be constrained within intellectual compartmentalization.

Therefore, in the work of John Paul II *Man and Woman*, two of his General Audiences numbers 27 and 28 entitled "Man Alienated from Original Love" and "'Immanent' Shame" in May 1980 concern the ability to see beauty in another and how it can be affected by our ability to see ourselves. John Paul II also introduces the notion of shame as shaping our perception of ourselves and others through a , of somatic and spiritual unity, remarking upon the notion of shame that originates in Genesis 3:7: "and when they perceived themselves to be naked, they sewed together fig leaves, and made themselves aprons" and in Genesis 3:10 when Adam answered God: "I heard thy voice in paradise; and I was afraid, because I was naked, and I hid myself." This does not simply refer to sexual shame before another and the Creator but involves much more than this. John Paul II writes that these feelings "*seem to express the awareness of being defenseless,* and the sense of *insecurity* about his somatic structure *in the face of the processes of nature that operate with an inevitable determinism"* (John Paul II, *Man* 242). Therefore, this insecurity causes feeling of powerlessness in the world around a person and then skew or distort their perception of themselves and others: "That *shame, whose cause is found in humanity itself,* is both immanent and relative: it manifests itself in the dimension of human interiority and, at the same time, it refer to the "other" (John Paul II, *Man* 243).

Although Saint John Paul II refers specifically to the man-woman relationship, this idea can be suggestive of humanity at large. Being as such, the result is "… a certain constitutive fracture in the human person's interior, *a breakup, as it were, of man's original spiritual and somatic unity*" (John Paul II *Man* 243–44), which would explain, at least in part, the modern

tendency to not look far beyond the physical when determining beauty in another. This fracture then, in time and under the influence of technology that offers visual representations that increasingly expose viewers to beauty ideals involving plastic surgery and air brushing or editing, as well as social media posts that fosters competition and false images of a people's lives, would grow increasingly large and alter the way a person sees themselves and others. It is not inconceivable, then, that people would require a type of 'reset' of their vision in order to be able to perceive beauty in a more integral and balanced manner, or rather not heavily weighted on the physical nor the sexual, in order to bring the admiration of physical form into a place of respect and dignity in union with its spiritual aspects.

With John Paul II's answers in mind, this section presents a counter perspective by way of the theories on beauty of Esteban de Arteaga (1747–1799). An ex-jesuit exiled in Italy and friend of Leandro Fernández de Moratín, Arteaga wrote *Las investigaciones filosóficas sobre la belleza ideal* in 1789. This work focuses on beauty in art as an imitation –not a copy that reproduces with all of the imperfections that lie there within, but rather "purifica la naturaleza de sus imperfecciones por medio de la belleza ideal, que genéricamente puede definirse "el arquetipo o modelo mental de perfección que resulta en el espíritu del hombre después de haber comparado y reunido las perfecciones de los individuos" (Arteaga 55). Thus, a unity in viewing beauty is found in Arteaga's work in the spiritual guidance that reflects and perfects our own vision of beauty. However, referring to the fine arts, Arteaga proposes that ideal beauty is "el modelo mental de perfección aplicado por el artífice a las producciones de las artes: entendiendo por perfección todo lo que, imitado por ellas, es capaz de excitar, con la evidencia posible, la imagen, idea o afecto que cada una se propone, según su fin e instrumento" (Arteaga 55). Therefore, as P. Miguel Batllori relates, there is, according to Arteaga's theories, within each work of art an ideal beauty in its thought and another in its making or production. Furthermore, Batllori identifies Arteaga's theories as common amongst

neoclassical Italian aesthetes (Arteaga XLIX). Arteaga arrives at the notions he presents through a process: "…me detendré únicamente en el examen de los efectos como suceden en nuestra constitución actual, y procuraré recogerlos, combinarlos y compararlos, seguiré su influjo en las respectivas artes y haré que la experiencia, práctica y ejemplo de los grandes artífices sirvan de basa a mi teórica" (Arteaga 10). Arteaga's logically and scientifically motivated methods, which he applies to the various forms of fine arts in his work, are based upon mental activity employed to compare works to form a mental idea of perfection and then attempt to implement or create it. Considering the theological theories already put forth from Aquinas et al., Arteaga's approach, again, concerns the mind in exclusion to the spirit and/or inspiration that comes from outside man's own sphere of influence. Arteaga's example from the Enlightenment demonstrates the demarcations in the concept of beauty but also creates space for more inclusive views found in theology from the medieval age to our modern period.

"Behold thy mother" (*John* 19:26–27)

When Jesus gave these instructions to the apostle at the end of his earthly life, we can be assured that their significance was fertile with richness of meaning. At the very end of his earthly life, Christ presented to the disciple John, and thereby to the whole of humanity, Mary as a spiritual mother to all peoples. Indeed, John Paul II wrote in *Redemptoris Mater* about this moment: "One can say that if Mary's motherhood of the human race had already been outlined, now it is clearly stated and established" (John Paul II, *The Encyclical* 33). John Paul II further proposes that within this "new motherhood of Mary" established at the foot of the Cross, "is the fruit of the "new" love" and forms part of Christ's love for humanity as the Redeemer. As such, we can assign a very personal meaning to this verse, as when John "the disciple took her to his own [home]" (John 19: 27)[19] by taking Mary into our own homes, or rather, into own our hearts.

Thus, these instructions from Jesus, like all his recorded words in Scripture, possess an incredible wealth of significance to encourage reflection. Additionally, one might argue that to continue to delve into the profound meanings of the words of Christ in order to seek revelation often can require preparation on the part of the reader. For this, Jesus himself shows us the way in Matthew 18: 3–4: "…become as little children" and "humble himself as this little child, he is the greater in the kingdom of heaven." In this manner, by approaching the words of Jesus with the unpretentiousness and innocence of a child, revelations can arise like a key that unlocks the entrance to the mysteries held within. For example, by its nature

[19] The Jerusalem Bible in English renders this verse: "This is your mother" (Jerusalem Bible…) The George Ricker Berry Interlinear Literal Translation of the Greek New Testament (1897) renders "ἴδε ἡ μήτηρ σου" as "Behold thy mother" (304). Likewise, Saint John Paul II entitled Chapter 3 of his Encyclical Letter of March 25, 1987, Redemptoris Mater "Behold your mother", this study will adhere to the word "behold" as of the Greek origin.

"Behold your mother" can be taken as an identification of John's new spiritual mother, ensuring that Mary was provided for after the Christ's death on the cross. Yet on a more universal level, it is the moment of the birth of the Catholic Church and the "continuity of Mary's motherhood" (John Paul II, *The Encyclical* 34) by means of Jesus' gift, and thereby Mary becomes a mother to all humanity. Also, it can be quite literally a beholding of Mary at the moment of the Annunciation that invites the viewer to truly contemplate and consider Mary's exceptional qualities to better know her and emulate her virtues.

If we look to Mary herself a source of inspiration, she emerges as a human being and mother who guides her children toward becoming more like Christ during this earthly life. Louis de Montfort provides in his work *True Devotion* a guide to Mary's remarkable qualities that we will consult when taking the measure of Mary's inner beauty later in this study. However, perhaps the word "Behold" specifically refers to an actual view of Mary herself. Here, a consideration of how we behold Mary merits additional interpretation, as a combination of visual rendering via artistic representation in painting and written description by means of poetry would provide the observer a means through which Mary can be "beheld" in the nature of beholding someone in front of you, which would seem logical as Mary was a historical figure embodied in human form on earth and can be regarded as such. This would not be an attempt to separate the mother of Jesus from Christology nor his mission on earth, but rather to follow his own instructions in order to better understand her as a unique person in her own right and to attempt to view her with the apparatuses and lenses at our disposal at this time.

René Laurentin, in *Court Traité sur la Vièrge Marie* (1968), remarks on an integration of Mary's beauty that results in the absence of stain, or sin "C'est en elle qui commence la Sainte Église et c'est ainsi que dès l'origine Dieu peut lui dire, non selon une figure poétique mais en toute vérité : 'Tu es toute belle et il n'y a pas de tache en toi'" (114). Chapman

proposes that Augustine saw that beauty shines forth through esthetic objects in their form, unity, order and number, and that " … his philosophy of the beautiful contains principles which can bind together into an organic whole the brilliant fragments of a broken synthesis from which reason has been separated from beauty, beauty from all the arts except the fine arts, and art from morality" (Chapman XII). Further, for Augustine, beauty is the wholeness that arises through the proportion of its components and their harmonious integration. Chapman observes Augustine's preferences for soft and bright tones as well as the harmonious balance of different parts as well as light, "the queen of colors—bathing all that is beheld, adds its color"; Augustine was profoundly moved by how light illuminated his world (Chapman 50). Chapman continues: "Beauty is had when both the unity and the order of a thing, that is to say, its ontological truth and goodness are manifested" (Chapman 54).

Jean-Michel Fontanier points out that Augustine's philosophy finds itself within the Platonic ideas of the "ontologisme du bien"[20] and that the difference resides in Plato's positing of good outside of a being, while Augustine places it within a being. However, Augustine determined that the components that comprise the aesthetic, such as number, form, order, and unity, must be related to illumination and expression to create meaning. The combination of these components makes the attainment of beauty possible, and in the case of the human body, its "symmetry in its various parts and beautiful proportion that one is at a loss in deciding whether in the creation of the body greater regard was paid to utility or to beauty" (Chapman 46–47). Augustine expresses wonderment for creation when considering the human body's great beauty, its symmetry of the totality of its parts that. Chapman further speaks of the beauty of the human body as not limited to the colors or specific parts in harmony "but [due] to life itself which gives living bodies their beauty" (Chapman 51). Here

[20] One source for Plato's philosophy of the Good can be found in Raphael Demos' article in *The Philosophical Review* No. 3, Vol. XLVI, May 1937 (245–75) who notes that Plato's preference for speech let only a few references even though as being "of all topics the one most important to man" (Demos 245) in *Republic* VI and VII, the *Philebus,* and the *Timaeus*.

the emphasis on the life force or Aquinas' *claritas* emerges. Chapman notes Augustine's *De Quantitate Animae* XXXIII: "The beauty of man's body has already been commented on, but the soul of man with the added powers of knowing and loving reveals a still higher unity and hence more beauty" (Chapman 52). Fontanier cites Augustine on the fleeting quality of corporeal beauty in *Confessions* "toute beauté vieillit et meurt" and "la beauté convoitée abandonne son amant" (Fontanier 86), and the author recollects the ancient aesthetic notion that the beauty of the soul is "supérieure à celle du corps" and thus true beauty lies herein (Fontanier 86). The life force, the radiance of the soul as even superior to the physical appearance presents an intriguing perspective to further expand the considerations of beauty in light of our modern-day perspective.

Chapman notes an important part in Augustine's *De Diversis Quaestionibus* LXXXIII: "The virtues have beauty" (Chapman 52). The beauty of the soul is expressed through virtues that may not be apparent to the eye if the viewer is looking only at the physical appearance: "The exterior eyes can fix themselves of sensible beauty. It is the interior eye which sees the beauty …" (Chapman 52). In this way, by understanding that other forces are at work in the perception of beauty that may not entirely involve physical appearance, it is "the interior eye" that will then perceive virtues beyond the body – von Balthasar's something "more," Aquinas' *claritas*, and Augustine's notion of beauty through the integration of the soul, "a still higher unity and hence more beauty" (Chapman 52) – and thereby the observer can truly "Behold" Mary.

Augustine rarely employs *forma* in "the sense of beauty," but rather more as a vehicle that brings forth an emotion or desire (Fontanier 34). Portrayals of Mary in art were a manner of bringing forth beauty rather than the painting itself as being her beauty, or rather, a manner of revealing beauty without stopping at the painting as the totality of meaning. The viewer receives the beauty of the paintings through colors and composition that come from the minds

of the painters, and they function as a way to delve into deeper considerations of Mary's beauty. Louis de Montfort remarks on the Annunciation in his *True Devotion* that

> It was for that moment that Mary had been lifted out of nothingness, made the subject—as St. Augustine says—of an eternal deliberation and a divine preparation, upraised to a sublimity of grace incomprehensible, unsearchable; so that, though faith and heroism far beyond our ken are needed to ensure a decision favourable to us, nevertheless all is sure. The words proceed from her lips which accomplish the greatest event of all time; the Redeemer is now amongst men. (314–15)

Fontanier explains how Augustine saw the soul as gaining its form and thereby its beauty through "conversion" or turning to God (Fontanier 100–01). And in Mary's life, the Annunciation is the moment when she is "upraised" to meet God, uniting heaven and earth. As such, that which is hidden to the sight guided by the mind can be revealed to the heart on as level "far beyond our ken." A more thorough discussion of Mary's virtues will occur in the formal analysis of the artistic works in Chapter 4.

In contrast to Augustine, Ambrose saw the significance of man as the image of God; however, for Ambrose, that the human essence is not corporeal, but rather man is his soul (Fontanier 90). Fontanier notes while Augustine sees the ability to reason as part of man's essence, Ambrose's theological perspective relies heavily on the soul, at the other end of the spectrum from today's consideration of beauty. Perhaps Ambrose's concept can be seen in practical terms in Saint Peter's words from his First Epistle. Although Chapter 3 of the epistle relates to how wives should behave with their husbands, this study posits that in a pragmatic manner, it can relate both to the theology of Ambrose and as a guide to understanding Mary's beauty: " Whose [wives] adorning let it not be the outward plaiting of the hair, or the wearing of gold, or the putting on of apparel: But the hidden man of the heart in the incorruptibility of a quiet and a meek spirit, which is rich in the sight of God" (1 Peter 3:3–4). This passage

speaks to the value of the inner being in the eyes of God, and Ambrose's idea of man as his soul (Fontanier 90) touches upon being pleasing to God in the way that Mary was "full of grace" (Luke 1:28). Gloria Dodd in "The Marriage of Mary and Joseph" writes that the angel Gabriel greeted Mary in "… the Greek *kecharitomene,* a word that is better translated as "having been fully graced." Gabriel had greeted Mary as if *kecharitomene* were her proper name" (Dodd 87). Dodd's observation speaks to Mary as a pure embodiment of the graces of God while exercising her free will to consent to God's plan for the salvation of humanity. Her trust in God and not herself reveals a devotion and faith, and thereby incomparable beauty of the soul. Through Ambrose's view of the beauty of the soul, as exemplified in the First Epistle of Saint Peter's words to wives to adorn there inner being with God, the beauty of God's favor in Mary can be better understood in relation to a view strictly tied to the outer appearance.

The Psalms declare the source of all beauty and henceforth Mary's radiant glow: "The God of gods, the Lord hath spoken: and he hath called the earth. From the rising of the sun, to the going down thereof: out of Sion the loveliness of his beauty" (Ps 49:1–2). Johann G. Roten writes of Paul VI's connection between Mary and the [Holy] Spirit as Scripture from the Annunciation (Luke 1: 26–38) attests, and "derives from it not only beauty but also the purity and perfection of creaturely being" (Roten 110). Roten notes that Pope John VI's address to the Mariological Congress held in Rome on 16 May 1975 introduced the idea of the *via pulchitudinis,* or 'way of beauty,' depicting Mary as "the all beautiful (*tota pulchra*) creature, the mirror without stain, and the supreme ideal of perfection" (Roten 109). [21] Roten continues to explain that John VI makes the connection between Mary's beauty and Spirit, wherefore its origin in Spirit expresses purity and perfection of a created being: "Mary's beauty is first and

[21] Note Wisdom 7:26: "For she is the brightness of eternal light, and the unspotted mirror of God's majesty, and the image of his goodness."

foremost a modality of her being in and through the Spirit. Paul VI's intent was not so much to propose a new method based on theological aesthetics, as to point out that a Spirit-centered Mariology invariable leads to a theology of beauty" (Roten 110).

This point related directly to the Annunciation, as it is the first time that the relationship between Spirit, or the Holy Spirit, and Mary, is revealed, and Roten directs the reader to the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (721–26): "Mary, the all-holy ever-virgin Mother of God, is the masterwork of the mission of the Son and the Spirit in the fullness of time. For the first time in the plan of salvation and because his Spirit had prepared her, the Father found the *dwelling place* where his Son and his Spirit could dwell among men" (721). In other words, Mary's beautiful preparation by the Holy Spirit as "[s]pirit creates the masterpiece called Mary of Nazareth" (Roten 111), which created a beautiful dwelling place by which she was chosen to be the mother of the Son of God. Roten calls Mary's beauty "the beauty of beginnings and new beginnings" that begins God's New Covenant with humanity. She begins with her son his ministry and at the foot of the Cross the beginning of the Christian era of civilization (Roten 111).

Thus, as Roten suggests, the masterpiece of God lies in Mary's preparation by the Holy Spirit: "she was conceived without sin, full of grace, and most capable of receiving the ineffable gift of Self from God Almighty … We may call Mary a masterpiece of God, because in her we detect a surplus of the divine—the overflowing presence of God's goodness in an earthen vessel" (Roten 111). And to perhaps better explain how this translates into a person, Mary, "overflowing" with the presence of God, "[…]is the juncture where the *communion* between divinity and humanity effected by the Spirit occurs" (Roten 113). Thus, Mary as "a masterpiece of God" would be not lacking beauty in any way, be it physical or spiritual, but this might look different than what one might expect from a Hollywood film or a fashion magazine. However, as something to marvel at, a "masterpiece" must then

translate to her actions, as in the saying Laham invokes: “Beauty is as beauty does”: “Ingrained in the very concept of Mary’s beauty, we find the idea of service and mission. Paradoxically, but not surprisingly, Mary radiates the beauty of the servant or handmaid. This is how she understands and defines herself, and this is how she figures in God’s plan for salvation” (Roten 112). In this manner, Mary’s humility and self-service are beautiful, and her faith expressed in the Annunciation as placing herself in God’s hands as His handmaid, would be of pleasing service to Him.

Thereupon, as Roten argues, “[i]f beauty is holiness, if we may speak of the beauty of the Spirit, then beauty is not an exclusively visual category” (Roten 116). Moreover, this point then applied to Mary as God’s masterwork; she possesses an abundance of all types of beauty, her spirit matches her physical beauty, her actions are equally selfless in service, and all of these qualities translate into a creation beyond comparison as Maurer’s metaphor from the writings of Aquinas, a rose in full bloom in body and spirit.

And so, in more than one way, Mary’s beauty is the beauty of beginnings and new beginnings. She embodies a new beginning of God’s covenant with humanity, and in this manner, Mary as icon of the beginning of man’s salvation must, in theory, be translatable in terms of her physical and spiritual presence. Nevertheless, Mary as masterpiece of God, perfection in physical form, would essentially pose some difficulty, as Francisco Pacheco will later comment with respect to the Immaculate Conception in painting in Chapter 4. The challenges in portraying the most famous and most painted icon of humankind have perplexed artists over time, but they undoubtedly must respond to Mary’s traits as beauty, icon, and masterpiece and set them in the context of moments of her life to reveal the extraordinary. And thus, Mary’s beauty becomes a space to enliven and uplift the observer, as Horace (65 BC–8 BC) likens to a lyrical work: “… so a poem, whose birth and creation are for the soul’s delight …” (Horace 481).

This chapter has argued that there is a need for a recalibration of our society's vision of feminine beauty, returning to Aquinas, Augustine, as well as some theological voices of our time for a more comprehensive view of beauty embodied in the figure of Mary, and thus recovering a beauty not heavily weighted on the physical or sexual. Mary's inner light is manifested in how her spirit shines forth, as theologians describe, and artists depict "for the soul's delight." What is more, Mary represents the ideal woman; as Thomas A. Thompon in *The Mother of the Lord: Memory, Presence, Hope* (2007) writes, Mary is "all beautiful," "without spot," and "the supreme ideal of perfection" (Thompson 24), as will be further discussed in Chapter 3. Therefore, the next chapter will further translate artistic visions of Mary into poetry and painting.

CHAPTER 2

THE BEAUTY OF MARY IN POETRY AND PAINTING

O santo padre, che per me comporte
L'esser qua giù, lasciando il dolce loco
Nel qual tu siedi per etterna sorte,
qual è quell'angel che con tanto gioco
guarda ne li occhi la notra regina,
innamorato sì che par di foco"[22]

—Dante *Paradiso XXXII*

Vergine sola al mondo senza exempio,
che 'l ciel di tue bellezze innamorasti,
cui né prima fu simil né seconda,[23]

—Petrarca *Canzone 366*

Where do we find feminine beauty in art and what makes it beautiful? If we look to the visual arts, we might consider the iconic examples of women throughout history portrayed as exquisite muses, such as the natural, innocent beauty in *Birth of Venus* (*La Nascita di Venere*) (1485–1486) portrayed by painter Sandro Botticelli (1445–1510) or the *Mona Lisa* (*La Gioconda*) (c .1503–1505) that draws the viewer into the eyes and the mysterious expression of Leonardo da Vinci's (1452–1519) subject. Over the centuries, these visual works of artistic expression have fascinated viewers as they speak to the imagination while in contemplation the feminine figure portrayed on canvas in front of them. Similarly, the lyrical conveyance of an idea speaks in a manner that the reader can spend an intimate moment pondering the combinations of words and sounds that communicate deeply enriching ideas of beauty

[22] Alighieri, Dante. *La Vita Nuova*. Edited and translated by Stanley Appelbaum. Dover Publications, Inc., 2006, p. 364, lines 100-05.
[23] Petrarch. *Petrarch's Songbook: Rerum Vulgarium Fragmenta*. Translated by James Wyatt Cook, Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies, 1995, p. 412, lines 53 -55.

manifested in the heart and mind. Horace proposes in *Ars Poetica* (19) that "[i]t is not enough for poems to have beauty: they must have charm, and lead the hearer's soul where they will: As men's faces smile on those who smile, so they respond to those who weep" (Horace 459). Therefore, a work of poetic art must not only demonstrate beauty in its choice of words, sounds, and symbols, but cause the reader to "smile on those who smile" or "respond to those who weep," thereby striking a chord within the reader of loveliness put to lyrics and feeling in (*pathos*) the discovery a greater beauty within the work.

To facilitate discussion of particular works of Marian poetry and painting, a general overview of the field would be helpful preparation for investigating specific works in greater detail. Thus, this chapter will consider inspirations of beauty in Western art as well as the more specific cognitive processes involved in the experience of beauty in poetry and painting, focusing in particular on Solomon's *The Song of Songs* as well as the lyrics of Dante and Petrarch as influences on Hispanic poetry. Then, the chapter will conclude by discussing religious images and some of the challenges in painting Mary as well as the factors determining this study's focus on the two Spanish artistic works dedicated to the Annunciation.

First, Chapman gives insight into how beauty is effectuated within poetry: "In a work of art, a poem for example, the syllables are heard one after another until the end is reached, and in this way the form and beauty of the whole is achieved…" (Chapman 72). Thus, according to Chapman, the richness of beauty is brought about in both the sounds and syllables that advance until a fullness is reached, such as an exquisite description of the beloved in *The Song of Songs*, which with every line draws nearer to a completeness in its expression. Chapman continues to discuss the radiance of the mind within the process of poetic creation: "Considered in its strictest and most formal sense, art consists in the regulation of the mind by the creative rules of the work to be made. These rules, far removed from the dictates of

convention imposed from without, are the necessary laws of art itself illuminating the mind from within" (Chapman 75). Art shows the mind the way to see beauty, and the 'illumination' that happens within the mental processes is not exterior. In this manner, art serves as a type of roadmap to seeing beauty. Chapman notes in Augustine's *De Magistro* XII (c. 389) that "[t]hese regulative ideas, at the opposite pole from the sterile academic rules, can be taught only by an interior teacher who illuminates the deepest recesses of the mind" (Chapman 75). Chapman thereby reinforces Augustine's theory:

> Without the illumination of the artist's mind by the regulative ideas or archetypal forms, no beautiful work could be made. Works of art are the material counterparts of the Divine Ideas embodying their intelligibility. The work of art is the sensible realization in matter of the illumination seen more or less clearly by the mind and embodied more or less successfully in the objects in which it shines out visibly. (Chapman 75)

In this manner, a work of art is not comprehended exclusively on an intellectual level but rather through the illumination of divine ideas. This illumination that Augustine points to may be called in modern terms "inspiration"; however, Augustine goes further with the idea that they are the material expression of the Divine Mind in art. In addition, Thomas Gilby, in *Poetic Experience: An Introduction to Thomist Æsthetic* (1967), states that "Rational truth is not the only truth; in poetry a deeper knowledge is engaged, of which passion and phantasy is the matter, but truth the form. The mind has other acts besides judging and reasoning and thinking" (Gilby 88). Gilby enters further into Thomistic thought: "Reason and poetry may be set in opposition. But the reason is not all the mind, and though—or rather because—the most useful part, it is not the noblest or most delightful. Its concern is rather with means than ends. Over-asserted, didactic verse is the result, not poetry pure" (Gilby 88). Gilby cites *Summa Theologica* (1266–1273):

> *Loving draws us to things more than knowing does.*[24] Whereas the reasoning mind takes a form into itself and there views it invested with the qualities of spirituality, necessity and universality, the will is occupied with the thing as it exists in itself, and desires it not for its mental but for its real and physical mode of existence … the abstract satisfies reasoned knowledge, but not love. Thus love may push beyond the requirements of knowledge; in fact, *love takes up where knowledge leaves off.*[25] Reasoning bears directly on the abstract, but love on the concrete. (Gilby 34–35)

The relevance here lies within Aquinas' arguments on the limitations of reason for judging an object, therefore, in order to truly view the object, the approach must be different, or rather, more inclusive. Gilby continues to make this distinction:

> Not only is there this contrast in the activities of reason and will, but at the root of both there is a difference as regards the presence of the objects. The object is present to the reason as a representation existing in a spiritual way, but *this is not enough for love, the likeness of its object must at least be present in a physical manner of existence*[26]" and that "*…love is simpler than knowledge, nobler too, and more powerful.*"[27] (Gilby 35–36)

While, as Gilby points out, the *Summa* can come under the category of 'argumentative' theology that refers to a process, but not necessarily as something that would be employed as a method (Gilby 43), Aquinas' theology could not be a formula to test on literary and visual art but rather utilized as a tool to explore a broader view of reason and love. Then these concepts become implications for understanding Marian art through beauty that is essentially love which is "simpler than knowledge, nobler too, and more powerful." Beauty is the cause of the desire, as "*The lover is not content with a superficial knowledge but strives to enter*

[24] From *Summa Theologica* Ia-2ae: XXII: 2.
[25] Ibid., 2a-2ae: XXVII: 4, ad I.
[26] Ibid., XXII de Veritate, I, ad 3. Cf. Ia-2ae: XI: 4. Ia-2ae XV " I, c. & ad 3. *Ia-2ae: XVI: 4.*
[27] Ibid., XXII de Veritate, II, ad 5 & 7.

into everything that belongs to the beloved; he does not rest with an external and superficial attachment, but craves a perfect and intimate possession[28] *… For the mind to attend to itself and to what goes on inside it, a representation is not necessary. It is enough that the essence of the soul is present to the mind and is perceived through its activity*[29]" (Gilby 51–52). Then, could not Aquinas' "essence of the soul" relate to the illumination of the mind proposed by Augustine?

Nevertheless, according to Gilby, the process itself is difficult to determine: "An exact description of the [poetic] experience in rational terms is out of the question, partly because it is so much a matter of the natural desire and the non-notional life of the mind, and partly because it is essentially a single and whole activity of a complex subject" (Gilby 83). In this way, Gilby reveals how within Aquinas' writings, reason is contrasted with the poetic experience, as the aesthetic experience differs from normal thought processes: "Just as the soul's self-sensation is of a personal and particular fact, so the poetic experience, follows the same process, bears on the unique reality which awakens it" (Gilby 84). According to Gilby, Aquinas proposes that the poetic experience defies rational thought in its complexity and is personal in nature while possessing a "unique reality." These notions truly broaden the considerations of the poetic experience of reading or hearing a poetic work, as in the components of beauty in Chapter 1, enjoys more of an integral nature, not in its elements, but in the sense of finding itself unfettered from such heavy reliance on the intellect. Insofar as it is of an individual nature, and articulating the poetic experience often leaves much unexplained: "In the poetic experience there is a similar sense that here is a thing, but as for describing it, well, only with the very fortunate man does it spill over in words, sounds, colours, and produce sublime art and deeds. But even so we are given only hints and

[28] Ibid., Ia-2ae: XXVIII: 2.
[29] Ibid., *X de Veritate, 8.*

suggestions, and more often the experience must remain unexpressed" (Gilby 84). This notion helps in the completion of Augustine's theory of the illumination of the mind and Aquinas' concepts of the soul's essence, as in considering both, the process can then free the reader/listener to enjoy the symbols, sounds, and words within the subjective and personal experience without the need to use cognitive processes. Additionally, Gilby sustains the connection between the mind and the senses as it relates to knowledge: "The highest form of intellectual knowledge is usually described as vision" and "both *sight and hearing are the senses nearest to reason*" (Gilby 85). This notion can create an even greater involvement in the experience of beauty in poetry and painting, as they involve engaging the mind in a way that does not limit the scope of the comprehension of the experience, but seems to include more sensory participation. Furthermore, Chapman's writings on Augustine's *De Vera Religione XXIV* summarize the relation of beauty and the rational intellect: "The contemplation of beautiful works of art is not a frivolous distraction nor the satisfaction of vain curiosity. While enjoyed in themselves, beautiful objects are so many rungs upon which the soul ascends to self-subsistent Beauty" (Chapman 75). In this fashion, the experience of beauty comprises much more than an exclusively rational experience such as a riddle to solve, as vision and hearing are involved in the ascension of the soul into loftier places, and, in particular, when the subject is Mary, God's masterpiece and the mother of Jesus, this ascending to beauty has infinitely greater possibilities.

In order to put into practice, the forementioned theories, a grand occasion for the soul to ascend to new heights is the timeless expression of poetic beauty from *The Song of Songs* (4: 1–7) where the beloved is described in all her radiance:

> How beautiful art thou, my love, how beautiful art thou!
>
> thy eyes are doves' eyes, besides what is hid within,
>
> Thy hair is as flocks of goats, which come up from mount Galaad.

Thy teeth as flocks of sheep, that are shorn,
which come up from the washing,
all with twins, and there are none barren among them.

Thy lips are as a scarlet lace: and thy speech sweet.
Thy cheeks are as a piece of pomegranate,
besides that which lieth hid within.

Thy neck is as the tower of David
which is built with bulwarks:
a thousand bucklers hang upon it,
all the armour of valiant men.

Thy breasts like two young roes that are twins,
which feed among the lilies.

Till the day break, and the shadows retire,
I will go to the mountain of myrrh,
and to the hill of frankincense.

Thou art all fair, O my love,
and there is not a spot in thee. (Douay-Rheims, *The Song* 4:1–7)

How satisfying is this declaration of an admirer, someone who knows the beloved as a friend and that sees her as perfect and "all beautiful." King Soloman's joy in loving his beloved

extends beyond her physical radiance as well to include what must have been her melodious voice that emerged from her – "Thy lips are as a scarlet lace: and thy speech sweet" – in a devoted familiarity that increasingly seeks her presence: "I will go to the mountain of myrrh, and to the hill of frankincense." Here the interpretations of feminine loveliness offer a harmonious mingling of words that aid in creating mental images of the beauty in question, and yet, going further into the inner beauty of the women to draw the reader to her spiritual object of virtue within: "Thou art all fair, O my love, and there is not a spot in thee." Here King Solomon speaks wonders about the ideal beloved, and in this way, reveals the excellence of beauty when the reader enters Aquinas' "unique reality" to experience the "words, sounds, colours" through the senses. Appealingly, *The Song of Songs*, within its interpretation throughout the centuries by the saints and later as inspiration in lyrical love poetry over time, has developed an affinity with Mary, many of her qualities, and the praise given to her. *The Song of Songs* seems to be an early source for descriptions and invocations of her in poetry, and later in the development of lyrical descriptions.

Consequently, beauty in literature, and specifically here quoted in the Bible, has the power to excite and awaken love within. O'Collins explains: "Beauty attracts us, evokes our wonder and joy, and arouses a flood of delight and inconsolable longing…We fall in love with beauty, sing its praises, and want to stay in its presence … Beauty works on us and transforms us" (O'Collins 10). These reactions to beauty outlined by O'Collins speak to the amazing, sometimes indescribable feelings we have in the presence of beauty that actually brings us under its influence in our desire to "stay in its presence" and to discover more "besides that which lieth hid within" (Song 4:3).

Rubin enlivens the discussion evoking *The Song of Songs*' poetic winsomeness:

> When considering the language of love, the religious learned to use rich biblical possibilities of the *Song of Songs* (or the *Song of Solomon*). Jews had interpreted the

> book as an allegory of God's love for Israel; later, early Christians saw it as an allegory for the love of Christ for his church. An early medieval tradition was revived in this period to offer a language of Marian love, too. It abounded in invocations of water, honey, roses, and dew. (Rubin 31)

In this way, *The Song of Songs* becomes a type of expression of Mary, the beloved, and quite possibly rouses the senses where her appearances in the New Testament can leave the reader with a desire to know her more intimately. And as such, the combination of symbols, images, and sounds causes a sensorial experience in its depth and complexity.

Leslie K. Twomey, in *The Serpent and the Rose: The Immaculate Conception and Hispanic Poetry of the Late Medieval Period* (2008), relates how *The Song of Songs* inspired Marian depictions in Spanish poetry of that era:

> The Song of Songs inspired poets in their descriptions of Mary as unblemished and sinless, providing many biblical prefigurations of the Immaculate Conception, but it was also to inspire another important element of how she was characterized in poetry. It was to inspire the way in which she was depicted as completely and perfectly beautiful. (Twomey 139)

Twomey cites Rupert of Deutz (c. 1075/1080–c. 1129) with the first interpretation of *The Song of Songs* and Bernard, who also dedicated eighty-six sermons to this scripture, in which he names different interpretations of the beloved: the love of Christ for the Church, the individual soul, his fellow monks, and Mary. The preface to *The Song of Songs* from the Douay-Rheims Bible explains that "the happy union of Christ and his spouse [the Church] … more especially as to the happiest part of it, viz., perfect souls, every one of which is his beloved, but, above all others, the immaculate and ever blessed virgin mother" (Douay-Rhimes 691). However, Twomey cites René Laurentin,[30] who sheds light on the difficulty in

[30] See Laurentin, René. "L'Origine Immaculée de Marie." *Stella Maris,* 282, 1-4.

understanding the sexuality of the young beloved as relating to Mary as eternal virgin by first asking: "Comment dont l'épouse adultère a-t-elle pu devenir une fiancée sans tache?" Laurentin explains that the love of God for a sinful humanity is one of the most difficult notions to understand. The chosen people had not been faithful to God, as they had turned to idol worship, and yet God was faithful in His love for them. Then, God takes "the adulterous wife in the last days as a pure bride to be" (Twomey, *The Serpent* 107). Laurentin concedes that his treatment of *The Song of Songs* first represents Israel, the chosen of God, then the Church, and afterwards Mary, which is "troubling" (Twomey *The Serpent* 107). However, Laurentin does make an important point: Mary became the Church's first member, and this holy establishment by God can truly be acknowledged in "Thou art all fair, O my love, and there is not a spot in thee" (Song 4:7). Even so, some careful time to access Aquinas' notion of the "unique reality" of the poetic experience, and in particular that of the reading of *The Song of Songs*, would help the reader to consider from the "non-notional life of the mind" that all of these connotations – Israel, the Church, Mary, and no doubt even more – are contained within its multiple messages. M. Corneille Halflants explains, in his introduction to Bernard's *Bernard of Clairvaux on the Song of Songs*,[31] (1971), that Bernard's sixty-six sermons put forth that this Scripture

> … depicts this drama of the soul's relations with God in terms of the love that unites a bride to her bridegroom. It is true that Bernard often applies to the Church the words that are addressed to the spouse in this canticle of love … Also at times he tells us that the Virgin Mary is the only creature in whom this privileged union with God is perfectly realized. (Bernard of Clairvaux, x)

As such, Bernard aids the reader in the understanding of the levels of meaning as the soul progresses in her union with the Divine with Mary as its guide. Thus, *The Song of Songs* can

[31] Bernard of Clairvaux's sermons on *The Song of Songs* were written over eighteen years from 1135–1153.

provide a valuable tool toward the understanding of Mary's perfection before God and how her beauty is an intricate part of this process. By means of this, the study proposes that *The Song of Songs* will hopefully enhance and enrich this discussion and seek to reach a greater extent of appreciation of what Mary can bring to the expression of beauty in the arts.

Turning to a literary interpretation with the purpose of a dialogue between Scripture, theology and literature, Italian poetic inspiration from *The Song of Songs* has much to offer. In his 1970 dissertation, "Dante and the Song of Songs," Paul L. Priest speaks of Mary's association with the Canticles throughout literary history and how the large dissemination of her devotion in the twelfth century was instrumental in connecting *The Song of Songs* with secular love lyric. Priest mentions Saints Ambrose and Bede (c. 673–735) as having first referenced Mary in their commentaries on *The Song of Songs*, "but in the twelfth century it began to be applied to her principally and throughout, notable by Rupert of Deutz (1070–1129), Honorius of Autun (1090–1156), and Alan of Lille (Alanus de Insulis) (1120–1202)." This is an interesting notion given the limited references to her in the New Testament, considered a main/primary source of knowledge about Mary. Further, the author follows the line of theologians to Dante through his friend the poet Guido Cavalcanti (1255–1300) who wrote within the Dolce Stil Nuovo in his Soneto IV:

> Chi è questa che ven ch'ogn'om la mira
>
> e fa tremar di chiaritate l'a're,

As Peter Dronke writes, the first line of the sonnet originates from *The Song of Songs* 8:5:

> Who is that
>
> rising from the desert,
>
> her head on her lover's shoulder

Priest continues to explain that " … the rest of this sonnet contains the purest, most spiritual praise that Cavalcanti ever wrote, speaking of "umiltà" and "salute" exactly in the manner of

[Dante's] the Vita Nuova" (Priest 44–45). The author signals the explanation of the spirit of Solomon to Dante in *Paradiso* XIV 37–60 about the resurrection of the body, suggesting that the love of *The Song of Songs* is spiritual "but will not be fulfilled until the body also shares it" (Priest 46). Here as well Dante references the Annunciation of the angel to Mary:

> E io udi' ne la luce più dia
> del minor cerchio una voce modesta.
> forse qual fu da l'angelo a Maria (*Paradiso* XIV: 34–36)

Charles S. Singleton notes in his *Commentary to Paradiso* that the "light" is Solomon and *The Song of Songs* "celebrates the union of the divine with the human, the resurrection of the body" (243). These concepts will be further explored within the analysis of each of the visual and artistic works in the following chapters.

In addition, Priest touches on the notion of Dante's Beatrice as the Bride [of *The Song of Songs*], although there is not a great consensus of this position;[32] however, Johan Chydenius claims Dante as "one of the re-discoverers of the immediate sense of the Canticles" (139). Peter Dronke, in his work *Medieval Latin and the Rise of European Love-Lyric* (1968), mentions that Immanuel of Rome wrote a commentary on *The Song of Songs* and was later recognized among Dante Alighieri (1265–1321) and his acquaintances (89).

In the *Divine Comedy*, Dante first identifies Beatrice upon the chariot in the Earthly Paradise as well as repeats twice "Veni. sponsa. de Libano" (Purg. XXX: 11) (Priest 41) from *The Song of Songs* 4:8: "Oh come with me, my bride, come down with me from Lebanon." Thus, as *The Song of Songs* has appeared as an inspiration in the Italian poetic tradition through Dante and Guido Calvalcanti (1255–1300); however, it is beyond the scope of this study to mention the entirety of its influence in Italian Medieval poetry.[33] Having traced the

[32] Here Priest cites Johan Chydenius.
[33] Please see Bronke, Peter *Medieval Latin and the Rise of European Love-Lyric.* Oxford U P, 1969.

influence of the *The Song of Songs* through the beginnings of the wide-spread cult of Mary in the twelfth century then to Cavalcanti and Dante, this study proposes that Mary emerges as a figure of the beloved in Western literature.[34]

Of particular interest as well are Hispanic writings before the medieval era. Marcelino Meléndez y Pelayo (1856–1912) informs us that Saint Ildefonsus (607–667) wrote "…el primer monumento literario exclusivamente consagrado entre nosotros a la devoción de Nuestra Señora; el libro *De perfetua virginitate*," which contains "la excelencia estética del tipo de la Virgen Madre" (Meléndez y Pelayo 325). This work is exceptional, as it is said to be the paramount work of patristic Hispanic Marian literature.

In conversation with the reflection on the enigma of the perfect woman recounted in *The Song of Songs*, Lesley K. Twomey draws attention to how the iconic image of the beautiful young woman inspired Hispanic poets to assign these incomparable qualities to Mary (*The Serpent* 8). Twomey explains that *The Song of Songs* inspired Hispanic poets during the late Medieval period to relate Mary as "unblemished and sinless," thereby demonstrating the biblical sources of the Immaculate Conception, and this gave rise to her depiction in medieval poetry as "completely and perfectly beautiful" (Twomey 139). For example, Twomey mentions Fernán Pérez de Guzmán (1377–1460) in his "Himno a la virtud de Nuestra Señora" as describing Mary's beauty ("Señora, pulcra e decora') in relation to *The Song of Songs*:

> virgen santa
>
> de quien canta

[34] For instance, Mary appears in poetry about the admirable ideals of the feminine in the works of Dante and Francesco Petrarch (Petrarca) (1304–1374). Dante's *La Vita Nuova* (1293–1295) written in prose-and-verse combination as a love story portraying "that most noble lady" and Petrarch in his *Canzoniere* (1470), which deeply contemplates the inner world of the soul, dedicates the last *canzone*, 366, to the Virgin Mary. Petrarch's *canzone* 366 in relation to Moratín's *cántico* and its Petrarchan influence will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter 4.

salamon… (Twomey, *The Serpent* 98)

The invocation of the qualities of the Spouse of *The Song of Songs* to describe Mary greatly aids in her lyrical depiction. This was deemed necessary by some of her devotees, giving rise to the popularity of the Apocryphal Gospels of the third and fifth centuries, as mentioned previously, which sought to add to the existing references to Mary in the New Testament. Nevertheless, theologians such as Ratzinger have posited that the Old Testament and the New Testament form a continuum, that "The whole New Testament is rooted in the Old … in a certain respect Mariology ties the knot joining Old and New" (Ratzinger, *Daughter* 31). Notwithstanding, this study focuses on Mary's recorded words in the New Testament and will cite the Old Testament through *The Song of Songs* and other scriptural passages while acknowledging the connections between Mary some feminine figures of the Old Testament, such as the woman of Wisdom.

Furthermore, Twomey notes a secondary reason for the Apocryphal Gospels, as Mary's readers hoped to ensure her place among the saints (Twomey, *The Serpent* 11). Popular romantic accounts of her life, such as the description in the Gospel of Luke of the early moments in her life and the Crucifixion, "was not enough to satisfy popular interest." As a result, writers created "legends to complete the early life of important historical figures is a phenomenon often associated with the epic" (Twomey, *The Serpent* 241). These texts intended to fill the gap where Scripture has provided few historical details about Mary, in lieu of a dedicated practice of contemplation in the search for Marian truths.

Although a historical timeline of Mary's place within social, cultural, and religious contexts throughout the millennia could be considered too broad of a scope for this study, one point that Rubin mentions regarding the eleventh and twelfth centuries in Europe is that "[t]he pervasive cultural framework—the set of ideas and practices by which people understood themselves and their place in the world—was Christian, and it touched every

aspect of life." While Christianity in today's Western culture has been compartmentalized and as has been noted, views of Mary are often relegated to a peripheral position, this contrasts sharply with everyday life in the Middle Ages when "…every topic intersected with considerations of the Virgin Mary" (Rubin, "God-Bearer" 31). Thus, through this perspective we can understand the art depicting the medieval and into the early modern era in which daily life was an experience of Mary and the richness that her motherly presence and influence would bring.

With the intent to understand Mary in visual art, Archbishop of Bologna Gabriele Paleotti (1552–1597) offers some compelling inspirations on the art of painting. Paleotti in his work *Discourse on Sacred and Profane Images* [*Discorso intorno alle immagini sacre e profane*] (1582) explains that "[a]nd therefore, just as words are like messengers bearing our concepts to others through the ears, painting represents our meanings to the minds of others through the eyes, which is why the same word in Greek means both "painter" and "writer" (Paleotti 159). The painter-writer connection in Greek is useful to understand the integration of the visual and lyrical arts presented in this study and how the perceptions of the senses, as outlined above, involves an enriching experience.

Thus, turning to the visual image, in order to gain a more comprehensive understanding of Marian art it is worth mentioning the purpose of religious art through both Scripture and theological writings. Bernard of Clairvaux remarks:

> The soul at prayer should have before it a sacred image of the God-man, in his birth or infancy or as he was teaching, or dying, or rising, or ascending. Whatever form it takes this image must bind the soul with the love of virtue and expel carnal vices, eliminate temptations and quiet desires. I think this is the principal reason why the invisible God willed to be seen in the flesh and to converse with men as a man. He wanted to recapture the affections of carnal men who were unable to love in any other

> way, by first drawing them to the salutary love of his own humanity, and then gradually to raise them to a spiritual love. (Bernard of Clairvaux 152)

Although this sermon is Christologically centered, the idea can very well extend to religious art in general, and to Marian art in particular, as a manner in which God can "recapture the affections of carnal men" through the visual, and thereby make Himself, through Christ or his mother Mary, who guides the faithful to him, seen and reflected upon. This image then must "bind the soul with the love of virtue" and consequently "gradually […] raise them to a spiritual love." Melissa R. Katz, in *Picturing Mary*, makes an interesting point concerning plentitude of Marian images throughout history: "While the abundant repetition of a single subject matter can seem mildly disconcerting today, whether in a museum exhibition or a devotional context, it makes an authentic theological point: all the faithful could shelter under the protective mantle of this archetypal mother, fitting into her embrace, no matter the number" (Katz 58). Thus, both authors have provided valuable insight to why an image of Mary is important to inspire virtue and love, especially spiritual love, and why a multitude of her depictions serve an important purpose of receiving her embrace through its contemplation.

In his *Discorso*, Paleotti dedicates Book 1 Chapter 23 to how Christian images encourage upright living through teaching. As the author notes, in addition to the delight felt upon viewing visual arts, further effects often present themselves that reach beyond that of the reading of books through the "ease, facility, brevity, stability" (Paleotti 114) prevalent in images. This notion from the late sixteenth century echoes the popularity of visual stimuli today, whether it be through videos, social media photos, Internet searches, or slide presentations. In this manner, Paleotti's perspective from the 1500s of the "ease, facility, brevity" of the image that has become commonplace in our modern times presents interesting ideas toward understanding its timeless appeal.

Paleotti quotes Saint Gregory:[35] "Whereas the species [appearances] of external things are drawn into us, whatever we cogitate while studying artificial images is virtually painted right in the heart" (Paleotti 119). Paleotti states that "our imaginative faculty being so receptive to such impressions, there is doubtless no stronger or more efficacious instrument in causing this than life-like images, which practically catch the senses of guard and overwhelm them" and also gives examples, and one from Plutarch, of how women have given birth to babies that looked like statues and other images that they had displayed in their homes (121). Paleotti also discusses the conversion story of Saint Mary of Egypt (344–c. 421) who entered a temple in the midst of her dishonest life and then gazed upon a cross and an image of Mary and "felt darts penetrate her heart": "Horror and paralysis of the soul filled me, and I was completely overcome with trembling and consternation" (122). Paleotti continues to discuss how often miracles are the result of "… how much satisfaction the divine potency takes in images in such marvelous and stupendous things" as curing infirmities and saving in the midst of danger of those who place themselves in the hands of God before the images. In such instances these images have survived perfectly preserved threats of fire and defended against the onslaught of invaders "in all sorts of miraculous ways" (Paleotti 120).

However, this is not idol worship, as it is sometimes misunderstood in the use of religious or sacred art or images. This study contends that idol worship is when true believers or non-believers feel compelled to adore the image itself, instead of what it represents. Idol worship stops at the image or art, whereas, as Paleotti argues: "among us [Christians/believers] ever since the light of the holy gospel shone forth, there is no one so coarse that he does not know that a marble figure of Saint John the Evangelist is one thing and the saint in heaven is another" (140). Paleotti further points to the use of reason in not confusing the two, and

[35] It is not stated by the author whether he refers to Saint Gregory the Great (c. 540–604), Saint Gregory of Nyssa (335–394), or Saint Gregory of Nazianzus (Gregory the Theologian) (329–390). However, the manner in which the reference is listed in the index of this edition seems to indicate Pope Gregory I (Gregory the Great).

although in prayer Christians often feel as though they are speaking to or kissing a statue or the like of Christ, Mary, a saint or martyr, there is a clear difference, as the believer does indeed know that the image is a representation (Paleotti 140–41). Thus, a few examples, both ancient and modern provide additional perspectives regarding the power of religious images. Subsequently, a richer analysis of Marian art requires an understanding of the attraction towards the image itself. The manner in which the beholder is drawn to the image, and in this case, the beauty of Mary, does then lie in its poetic or visual description. Hence, just as Chapter 1 related the components of beauty, the next section of this chapter will outline how Mary's beauty translates into painting itself.

Thus, returning to the discussion on painting, Paleotti states that visual images are important, as they are open to everyone who views them, yet do not need an interpreter or teacher. While this is true when the person therein finds *diletto* in the likeness and possesses prior knowledge about the scene portrayed, much can be gained from greater understanding of the significance of the subject. Paleotti contrasts the image with books and the impressions that they leave on the viewer:

> What often happens with books, moreover, is that what you have learned with much difficulty you may forget with great ease, whereas images sculpt what they teach into the panels of memory so firmly that it remains stamped there for many years. That is not all: images encompass the broadest and gravest concepts in a confined space, with no hunting through volumes or page turning, as we see in the mystery of the annunciation of the glorious Virgin, or the crucifixion of our Redeemer, or the advent of the Holy Spirit. These and similar subjects, when portrayed on a panel[36], even a small one, substitute for many volumes, revealing the greatness of the potency,

[36] Paleotti notes that the images that greatly serve the people are ones not distorted by the painter (115).

wisdom, justice, and mercy of God and the sum of all the celestial virtues in a single point." (Paleotti 115)

As such, given they "greatness" that images make known, the viewer can benefit from historical knowledge of the works themselves, set them to music with a lyrical selection to bring words into the image, and a superior understanding of the significance of the scene as the psalmist states "As we have heard, so have we seen" (Psalm 47:9). According to Paleotti, pictures or painting should be "well grounded in design" and express "the true knowledge of the thing to be imitated," and in regard to emotion, they serve to "stimulate the senses and excite spirituality and devotion" (310). Mary assists as subject to "win the mind and reverence of everyone even more" in the depiction of moments of her life that are known as "mysteries," to delve into without ever finding an endpoint. That is not a statement meant to discourage the truth seeker, but rather to posit that the spiritual cognition knows no limits with a subject declared by Martin Luther as the "highest woman and the noblest gem in Christianity after Christ…She is nobility, wisdom, and holiness personified"[37] (Lev 119).

But Lev notes that Luther's followers regarded Mary in a passive role, in contrast to their Catholic counterparts who viewed her is continually working for the salvation of humanity: "In Catholic teaching, her fiat had grown beyond a submissive yielding to the divine will into an active trust in and cooperation with God and the intercession for others" and "anchored her life in two supernatural events: her Immaculate Conception—being conceived in the womb of her mother without the stain of original sin—and her bodily Assumption into Heaven" (Lev 119–20). Miri Rubin writes: "In turn, in reaction to this onslaught" referring to Protestant objections to the cult of saints and their relics, the attachment to miraculous images, pilgrimages to shrines–of which Mary had a strong role,

[37] *The Complete Sermons of Martin Luther,* vol. 7. Baker Books, 2000, 209-220.

"Catholic devotion to the Virgin Mary was defended, refined, and expressed in powerful new ways" (Rubin 37).

Consequently, a visual representation of Mary to attract a viewer "was not easy to "picture"—to imagine—in ordinary human terms…" (Verdon, *Picturing* 20). Johann G. Roten, in his article for *Marian Studies* "Mary and the Way of Beauty" (1998), provides a modern outlook and some more direction that surely would have appealed to the Catholic Reformation painters: "As *masterpiece*, Mary is a direct reference to the divine *artifex*: she is part of the creative manifestation of God's marvelous deeds" and specifically that "Mary's beauty is a beauty of promise and hope" (Roten 111). Carrie Gress in *The Marian Option* (2017) promotes further guidance toward the conception that follows artistic inspiration:

> Marian culture, then, as an extension of Mary's virtues, isn't art for art's sake, or beauty for beauty's sake. Like Mary, it points to something—or, in this case, someone—beyond itself. To see the material elements of Marian culture, such as art, music, architecture, and literature, the viewer doesn't simply bask in its beauty or cleverness for its own sake but enters into the story of Christ. (Gress 30)

Gress' comment sheds light on the goal of Marian art which leads the reader/viewer into a deeper relationship with Christ, or God's love. In this manner as well, Hans Belting in *Likeness and Presence: A History of the Image before the Era of Art* (1994) points to a theory from Leonardo Da Vinci's (1452–1519) *Treatise on Painting* finds a higher purpose for art that can be seen at the moment it is revealed: "…the divine conception of the painting (*Iddea*) appeared as if alive, being the divine person (*Iddio*) in the ideal of beauty (*idea*), thus uniting religion and art in one" (Belting 481). He considers Raphael's Sistine Madonna (1512) (figure 2) with the element of curtains visible to frame Mary and the Christ Child, through which suggests that "The curtain is drawn aside to show a vision that makes visible both the idea of the divine and the idea of beauty, symbolizing the perfection of art" (Belting 488),

which is also a feature in Ricci's rendition of the Annunciation which will be discussed in detail in Chapter 4.

Yet, during the second part of the fifteenth century and before the time of the Catholic Reformation, there was an excess of religious images that lacked true religious conviction. According to Renato Pisani in *Maria nell'Arte: Iconografia e iconologia mariana in venti secoli di cristianesimo* (2000) these images "offendevano la morale religiosa del tempo" while Marian iconography was limited to the power of nature or physical beauty to inspire: "Le Madonne rischiano di divenire un esercizio su belle donne, serene, che pongono in ombra i lati dolorosi della vita cristiana …"[38] (Pisani 83). In this manner, the spiritual element is excluded from the perception of Marian artwork, and thereby it loses a profundity that would lead its consideration beyond the physical appearance as it is essentially reduced to a pretty face and/or figure, or a sweet mother with her child. Pisani then provides some insight to the issues of the age as the Catholic Church would take on the task of reforms simplifying of certain theories and religious practice via the Council of Trent (1545–1563). This answer to the Protestant Reformation confirmed the importance of Catholic tradition and its foundations through their diffusion by means of the didactic and devotional purposes of religious images (Pisani 83).

This chapter has briefly outlined Marian art in poetry and painting to provide an appropriate introduction of this extensive genre that spans millennia and comprises an immense œuvre. Therefore, the points presented hopefully will enhance the discussion in Chapter 4 in terms of a more general focus in preparation for the examination the works themselves. However, before this, Chapter 3 will discuss the historical conditions in Spain and the social attitudes that distinguish it as a country from other European nations, in order

[38] Pisani quotes P. Amato's entry *Arte/Iconologia* in "Nuovo Dizionario di Mariologia", ed. Paoline, 1985, p. 147-148.

to better identify and appreciate the unique Spanish approach to art within the respective eras. Then, brief biographies of the authors themselves will illustrate their personal experiences and methodologies. The chapter ends with an overview of the genre, eras, artists, and beauty of Mary that they portray in preparation for Chapter 4's formal analysis.

Thus, as a final note in preparation for the forthcoming chapter, the discussion here will conclude with a more of a focus of the intentions of the individual painter that prove of considerable importance in the perception of their art and thereby provide relevant points to consider during the discussion of Moratín and Ricci's short biographies in Chapter 3. Consequently, in 1582, Paleotti relates the effect that religious images can create in the observer:

> In sum, there is so much abuse in this area today by many who are esteemed leading painters, that we cannot refrain from charging their consciences and recalling to them the example of a devout painter of our time who, before starting to paint the image of any saint, read his life diligently and tried, from the concept he had acquired of his virtues, to represent him in such a way that upon viewing him, he [the painter] was moved to compunction, and others were aroused to devotion. (Paleotti 314)

In this way the conscience of the artists themselves can be very important elements in the experience of the artwork created. Paleotti seems to infer that the approach of the artist, and similarly, the poet, would depend to a certain degree on the preparation or study of their subject before beginning a work. In this case, the artists would need a familiarity with Mary to write and paint a likeness of her virtues and that the viewers and readers or listeners of their works would be "aroused to devotion" by means of the beauty they portrayed.

Roten points out that through theology and culture, Mary's beauty prompted her image in sacred art, which is in alignment with the *Catechism* if it portrays its subject in a manner true to its vocation "which is to evocate and give praise to the transcendent mystery of God" and

this focus aligned with pre-modern times in that beauty was identified with being. However, during the Age of Enlightenment, the view of the world was no longer "the many-splendored form of God's creative genius" but rather "the sum total of human experimentation and productivity" (Roten 125). Good and evil were no longer judged at the time of death but instead were given to the recorders of human history and the importance of progress and "self-redemption." Art, then, substituted religion to provide a distraction from the difficulties of life, "… it was to become a moment or state of grace in a world without eschatology" as "Art is expelled from the realm of beauty and is relocated in that of truth (truth understood as personal truth)" (Roten 125–26).

On that final note, Chapter 3 will move into the unique Spanish historical view in regard to the Church, Italian cultural interconnectedness, thereby creating a place from which Moratín and Ricci situate Mary in "the realm of beauty."

Figure 2. *Madonna di San Sisto (the Sistine Madonna)* (1512) by Raphael, the Gemäldegalerie Alte Meister, Dresden, Germany

CHAPTER 3

SPANISH INFLUENCES IN POETRY AND PAINTIING IN THE BAROQUE AND ENLIGHTENMENT

> La presencia de María ha ocupado—y ocupa—un lugar de preferencia no sólo en el pensamiento de los teólogos y en la oratoria sagrada, sino también en la iconografía y expresión artística en general…[39]
>
> - Feliciano Blázquez
> *Santa María, La Virgen: Antología de poesía mariana en lengua castellana*

The significance of Spain's cultural history and its effects on the Spanish cultural perceptions, particularly after the Catholic Reformation, will be of great interest in positioning this study's artistic works within a historical framework. Especially, the influence of the Church in Spanish culture was quite different from other Catholic European countries. Moreover, the cultural exchange with Italy throughout the centuries proved to be very relevant part of both the lives of both artists in their lyrical and visual art. This chapter will look into these influences and events to gain a deeper appreciation of the tendencies and circumstances that would have influenced each artist. This outline, whilst not a part of the formal analysis of the works nor the theological insights introduced in the next chapter, situates the works within Spain, in the context the general historical and religious influences of the artists, and provides a very brief introduction to Mary in Spain. This chapter, then, can serve as an introduction to the formal aspects and focus of this study, progressing from a

[39] Blázquez, Feliciano. *Santa María, La Virgen: Antología de poesía mariana en lengua castellana*. Biblioteca de Autores Cristianos, 2006, p. xiii.

discussion of Mary in the arts to contextualizing the authors in Spain in preparation for the more in-depth treatment of their works.

Firstly, as a beginning in this study's historical timeline, according to Francisco Garote Pérez, the Baroque in Spain inherited thought from Greek and Medieval cultures which "impregnaba y daba un sentido concreto al pensamiento hispano" (Garrote Pérez 10). This occurred when the Christian cosmic worldview was added to Greek perspectives by way of reason by means of Plato, Aristotle, Stoicism, and Neoplatonism. This then formed the basis for the patristic theology of the Catholic Church (Garrote Pérez 12), while Humanism, and the Renaissance forged a comprehensive change in European thought. Garote Pérez further explains:

> La discontinuidad relativa con la época anterior y el deseo de descubrir y conectar con la antigüedad griega y latina es un hecho evidente. Sin embargo, España adopta una postura peculiar, consistente en una clara continuidad cultural y en la pervivencia de los valores recibidos. Lo antiguo y lo moderno se unen en una simbiosis nueva, distinta al resto de los países europeos y llena de posibilidades en el ámbito del pensamiento hispano. (Garrote Pérez 14)

Thus, Spain presents a unique position within Europe where traditional values were not completely discarded in favor of the newness of a human-centered societal focus. One explanation for this is Spain's societal composition at the time. Garrote Pérez cites Américo Castro's work that proposes that what was given attention in Iberian Peninsula was the efforts that were concentrated on the Reconquest in Spain (722–1492):

> …[l]a España medieval es un país separado de las grandes cuestiones culturales del momento europeo, encerrado sobre sí mismo, y dedicado a conquistar el territorio perdido, con lo cual sus energías se traducirán en una gran capacidad de mando y de eficacia en el combatir y, consecuentemente, sus manifestaciones culturales se

> encaminarán hacia la épica y la literatura cultural y jurídica, quedando al margen de la magna cuestión discutida en Europa acerca del problema de los universales o la lucha entre realismo e idealismo, lo mismo que de la armonía entre fe y razón. (Garrote Pérez 14–15)

This view seems to point to a Spain that, while being otherwise engaged with internal matters, developed in manner distinct from other countries of Europe—indeed, not necessarily slower in its progress, but rather focused on multi-cultural issues. Garrote Pérez further states that the effects of the Reconquest in España helped create a deep desire for unity within its territory. Consequently, "el peso del pensamiento judío es tan grande en la cultura y en la convivencia de los españoles" (Garrote Pérez 15) that it gave rise to the establishment of a biblical theocracy, which maintained the Medieval ideal of the king as a representative of God on earth. Later, as a result of the Catholic Reformation, there is also an acceptance of Neo-Scholasticism in the eighteenth century. Amongst this new theology and philosophy based on Aristotelian logic and the works of the early Fathers of the Catholic Church, Aquinas Aquinas' *Summa Teológica* (1274) situated itself as predominant while the scholastic conceptions were reformed to apply Aquinas' theories to Catholic Reformation in Spain (Garrote Pérez 15–16). Neo-Scholastics assured a preservation of Medieval thought and secured a traditional orientation that pervaded every sector, as well as a strong Christian faith. Hence, this faith would be tried by the Humanist influence of Erasmus and other mystics, but here the Medieval characteristics found within Spanish society would prevail. As Garrote Pérez puts forth: "De este modo el pensamiento español, sin dejar de ser tradicional, es moderno al mismo tiempo" (Garrote Pérez 17). The author mentions Fray Luis de León (1527–1591) as an example of the synthesis of Medieval thought and the new Renaissance tendencies and Marcelino Meléndez y Pelayo in *Historia de la ideas estéticas en España* (1883) discusses mystical writers such as Juan de Dueñas, Pablo de León, Francisco de

Osuna, Francisco Ortiz and Alonso de Madrid as some of the most admirable of the epoque. He especially highlights within this group of "first phase" of Spanish mystics Alonso de Madrid as "superior a todos" and "… que nos dejó una verdadera joya literaria, en su bellísimo *Arte para servir a Dios*" (1551) (Meléndez y Pelayo, vol. 2, 82) in which Madrid speaks of the will of God and how it is manifested in Mary: "porq~ lo vno y lo otro es dado dela magnifica mano de dios y delo vno y delo otro fe goza ygualmẽte fu mageftad y no deue fer otro nřo gozo, fino en dios y en el cõplimiẽto de fu volũtad. Affi fe gozava el sfpiritu dela virgen nueftra feñora en dios fu falud y nueftra" (Madrid Segunda Parte F vi–vii). While an in-depth consideration of Mary's character and qualities will come in Chapter 4, Madrid's words can serve to illustrate Meléndez y Pelayo's point and also provide an example of a mystical writing mentioning Mary that might have been known to both Ricci and Moratín, considering the date of publication. This genre of Spanish mystical writing could very well have inspired both artists in their respective portrayals of Mary in their works, which would present her in a spiritual light, completely in alignment with the will of God or "y no deue fer otro nřo gozo, fino en dios y en el cõplimiẽto de fu volũtad."

Furthermore, the amalgamation of the traditional Medieval understanding can possibly apply to later schools, as evidenced in religious poetry that finds a place within Enlightenment thought and Moratín's own works. Nonetheless, Garrote Pérez draws attention to the Spanish comfort with dualism, such as concepts from both Plato and Aristotle, rational and natural thought, as well as the utopic and spiritual in Platonic writings which "favorecían maravillosamente la inclinación española a lo divino y teológico" (Garrote Pérez 18). Importantly, this point is discerned importantly within faith and reason, as well as the distinction between divine and carnal love, which Spanish artists, such as the two which this study will center itself, Moratín and Ricci, give the impression of having a level of familiarity with the religious subject of their works. This idea of naturalness with the subject of the

artwork, in this case the Annunciation, may be supposed as the treatment or representation of something so familiar, whilst at the same time, not opposing rational thought. Ultimately, this allows for its unfolding into a deeper awareness in the religious and forcibly reaching levels of understanding that may not seem to be hindered by the acute, logical mind. Garrote Pérez asserts that the certain brand of faith found in Spain was created by merging the centuries old traditional faith and that of the reformist piety that came from foreign lands. The fruits of which fashioned Spain into an ardent supporter of the Catholic Reformation through deeper religious concerns coupled with a determination for reform within in the parameters permitted by Catholic dogma or "una renovación dentro de la continuidad." Garrote Pérez informs that these basic observations predisposed Spanish culture and religion to a distinctive nature, and in contrast to Italy that lead to "aceptar un Renacimiento marcado por la incompatibilidad entre fe y razón" Spain "lo recibió y pasó por el crisol de sus propios postulados y convicciones" (Garrote Pérez 23–24).

Interestingly, further consideration of Spain and the unique Spanish religious inheritance—which may well distinguish it from its fellow Mediterranean country, Italy—centers around the point that in Italian culture, and in particular, the philosophy of the Renaissance, strongly clashed with Aristotelian Scholasticism. Thus, Spain's distinctive incorporation of the Renaissance Neo-Scholasticism together with traditional culture resulted in a belief system not far from Aristotelian and Thomistic views tightly connected to God: "El Humanismo español, siempre de acuerdo con sus deseos de renovar la fe y llegar a conseguir un hombre netamente religioso, el «totus homo» de Vives[40] adopta, por lo general, una postura cristiana" (Garrote Pérez 20–21). A comparison of Italian and Spanish thought also leads to their cultural integration, which is significant in the lives of both artists: for instance, Moratín

[40] Vives, Juan Luis. *Introducción a la sabiduría cristiana.* Alventosa, Juan de, trans. Hijo de F. Vives Mora, 1930.

principally through his admiration of Francesco Petrarch and the influence of his works which is evident in the Petrarchan style of his *cántico* "La anunciación"; and through Ricci's father that immigrated to Spain from Italy as a painter by profession, and Vicente Carducho (Vincenzio Carduccio) (1576–1638) to whom Ricci was an apprentice.

Kelley Helmstutler Di Dio and Tommaso Mozzati, in their work *Artistic Circulation between Early Modern Spain and Italy* (2019), relate in the Introduction "Spanish Italy/ Italian Spain" that the relationship between the countries during the early modern period "resulted in a confluence of cultural ideals" in which Italian art did not replace the artistic style found in Spain. Helmstutler Di Dio and Mozzati observe that "the forms and styles of Italian cities, when merged with those of Spain, produced a *koiné* [lingua franca] that well suited the Spanish court's political ambitions and piety" (Helmstutler Di Dio and Mozzati 1). In this manner, the Italian vision was reported by Spanish artists, and the city of Naples was remodeled by the Spanish crown "into a leading center in Quattrocento visual culture" (2). By the turn of the sixteenth century the Spanish painters and sculptors were travelling to Italy and enriching the way of life they found in the cities there.

Thereupon, the unique heritage of Spanish culture and religion together with the medieval influences found within these during the Renaissance gave rise to the later era, which, as Javier Lucea García indicates in his *La poesía y el teatro en el siglo XVII* (1984), comprised a specific generation of neoclassists that began within an encyclopedic atmosphere that grew in strength at the beginning of the nineteenth century and gave birth to unique authors such as Leandro Fernández de Moratín (1760–1828). This group did not enjoy such a heterogenius nature and was comprised of unique poets both in their artistic works as in their ideologies: "oscilación entre el neoclasicismo más puro y el compromiso, entre la anacreóntica[41] y la

[41]adj. Dicho de una composición poética: Que, a imitación de las de Anacreonte, canta la alegría y el hedonismo. *Real Academia Española Diccionario de la lengua española.* *https://dle.rae.es/anacreóntico?m=form*.

poesía sentimental; pasarán de la égloga a la elegía; tomarán partido por el conservadurismo o el liberalismo, conviviendo todas las combinaciones de esas variables" (Lucea García 36). Thus, a diverse group would choose how they presented Enlightenment positions, but ultimately "…se alinearon en una de las dos Españas que se habían estado gestando en la segunda mitad del XVIII y que se enfrentarían en el XIX: son los poetas del reinado de Carlos IV y sus consecuencias" (Lucea García 36–37). These poets, "la generación de Moratín," as Javier Lucea García refers to them in *La poesía y el Teatro en el siglo XVII* (1984), did not have an adverse reaction to Enlightenment ideologies, but instead were selective and grew from the temper of the eighteenth century. This point goes a step further when Edward H. Friedman et al., in *Aproximaciones al estudio de la literatura hispánica* (2022), state that the poetry of the Enlightenment and Neoclassical era declined due to the rationalist and analytic postures, relying on French literary works of the time (Friedman et al. 174). Also, Feliciano Blázquez in *Santa María, La Virgen: Antología de poesía mariana en lengua castellana* (2006) notes that during the Enlightenment "En aquella época de racionalismo imperante, no había sitio para la poesía, en general, y menos para la poesía religiosa" (Blázquez 182). Nonetheless, Lucea García classifies this generation as Neoclassical due to their "ideal formal de la Ilustración, el Neoclasicismo," a tendency which expressed balance, which was especially seen in the works of Moratín, and possessed a purity and linguistic refinement of French influence. They understood classicism as returning to the classic Spanish works and continued to write within the poetic genres of the latter half of the eighteenth century. Furthermore, Lucea García notes the tendency during the Enlightenment to put into verse often that which previously classified in prose, and this may be the reason for the large number of formal aspects which can be seen as the result of the lesser influence of rhyme and the tendency to utilize assonant rhyme or blank verse. Poets of the age also tended towards flexible verses such as romance and hendecasyllabic silvas. Yet within this

classicism there was a “clasicismo mormóreo” from Moratín that was fully realised as “el poeta neoclásico por excelencia o el creador del teatro moderno” as a “literato puro” (Lucea García 37).

In this manner, as the formal analysis in Chapter 4 will begin with the poetic aspect of this study, here it may be appropriate to consider this lyrical poet and playwright, author of “La anunciación” (1813), through brief background of his unique life and experiences, and in this manner, enrich the discussion of his understanding of the biblical event selected for this study. Leandro Fernández de Moratín was born in Madrid to a noble family line from Asturias in 1760. He began his poetic life when the Real Academia applauded his “patriotic enthusiasm” (Moratín 21) and awarded Leandro a prize for “La toma de Granada por los Reyes Católicos” in 1779 at just nineteen years of age. Nevertheless, despite his aptitude for studies, his father, Nicolás Fernández de Moratín, also a famous playwright and poet, discouraged his son from obtaining a university degree due to his own ideological views regarding Spanish higher education (Moratín 19). This proved to be a difficulty in the life of Leandro later in life because he found himself lacking a university diploma with which to earn a living. After the premature death of his father who had steered him into the profession of jewelry making, he was obligated to depend on support from his uncle and as such found less time to dedicate to his literary pursuits. In his introducción to Moratín’s *Poesías*, Jesús Pérez-Magallón describes this period in Leandro’s life after the death of his father: “No es difícil imaginar las contradicciones y el desasosiego del joven poeta, la mente hirviendo de proyectos e ideas, entregando sus horas al obrador de joyería, sintiendo cómo desperdicia su valioso tiempo en manualidades tal vez vividas como embrutecedores” (Moratín 26). It seemed that his outlet of creativity came with the *tertulias* with groups of friends, but he continually suffered the rejection of his works (Moratín 31). Then, with the support of the count of Floridablanca, he saw the premiere of his play *El viejo y la niña* in 1791.

Moratín wrote in the genre of dramatic criticism in the classical French manner, travelled extensively in Europe, and at the end of his life was exiled in France. Moratín died in Paris in 1828, and as Luis Felipe Vivanco wrote, leaving behind a career as "español ilustre en el ejercicio de las letras" (Moratín 52). As a poet, playwright, and translator, Moratín's work finds a place within the group of educated, fun, and sarcastic neoclassical writers and friends of his era (Moratín 53). Leandro's particular writings were characterized by dramatic criticism as in his *La comedia nueva* (1792) and the classical manner was not a superficial term for his works, but the only style (*estética*) in which the poet and playwright could express his ideological concerns (Moratín 91). Nonetheless, the Catholic Encyclopedia published between 1907 and 1912 states that "He was unquestionably the best dramatic writer Spain had produced since the famous ones of the Siglo de Oro" ("Leandro Fernandez de Moratin"). According to a writing regarding the literary commitment of the Moratíns, father and son: "There were not, however, wanting in Spain persons of better judgement, who observed those errors with a view to correct them, and among whom the prominent place is due to the two Moratins, father and son" (Project Guttenberg). Admittedly, this theme of morality present in Moratín's dramatical works extends as well to his carefully composed and acclaimed lyrical works.

Within this context, Pérez-Magallón comments on Moratín's poetry: "De entrada, digamos que en ese territorio la poética moratiniana no tiene ninguna pretensión de originalidad, pero sí abarca el entramado de nociones clave que marcan el neo-clasicismo –imitación universal, naturaleza, furor, ingenio, juicio, buen gusto, arte, lima—" (Moratín 93). The author continues to characterize the poetic style of Moratín: "nuestra opinión aquí es que esa poesía presenta el entusiasmo, la sensibilidad, la energía y la inspiración propias del ingenio y del demagogia, y su estilo se acerca a todos los precipicios imaginables de su tiempo" (Moratín 94). In this fashion, Moratín was considered a "verdadero ideal neoclásico" (Arce 455) and

"el más puro poeta del neoclásico español" (Arce 475). However, Pérez-Magallón comments on "… cierto escepticismo religioso, que en Moratín tendrá explicaciones más coyunturales y características muy diferentes" (Moratín 102). Nevertheless, the work *Poesías* considered *poesías sueltas* composed of 77 poems, from which the *cántico* "La anunciación" originates, was an attempt by Moratín to organize a selection of his works that would display his versatility in the genre and to establish a firm foundation by which "un criterio neoclásico" could be measured (Moratín 120). "La anunciación" is one of three religious *cánticos* that were influenced by Pietro Metastasio (1698–1782), the Italian poet and celebrated opera librettist during the eighteenth century.

Pérez-Magallón cites Maurizio Fabbri's comments that Leandro's interest in Marian themes suggests a confusion with his own sentiments about his mother or a patriotic fervor as "la amada patria tan dura e inconstante con algunos de sus hijos" (Moratín 134). This is an interesting notion, as Marian devotion is often described as bringing clarity and purpose through a closer relationship with Christ. To this effect, in Louis de Montfort's *The Secret of Mary* (1700–1716) recalls the image from Augustine that Mary is "the living 'mold of God'" and continues that "Whoever is cast in it, and allows himself to be molded, receives all the features of Jesus Christ, true God" (Montfort 266–67). Additionally, Pérez-Magallón notes Mary's words are not greatly elaborated, but rather amplified in the exchange with the angel, and then presented as una "virgen de enormes poderes –vence al demonio, madre preocupada por sus hijos, protección frente al mal y los males, dominadora con su voz de los elementos naturales, capaz de triunfar sobre la muerte" (Moratín 134). Nevertheless, with fewer descriptions in the style of the New Testament, this study proposes that Moratín's lyrical rendition does relate this important moment in Mary's life and later foretells her triumph as the woman of the Apocalypse, which is well-known and accepted as Catholic belief. However, Moratín was "a caballo entre los dos siglos" which presents an interesting idea for

his religious poetry, particularly during the reason-centered Age of Enlightenment. Moreover, within the body of de Moratín's work, religious poetry is not necessarily prevalent. Lucea García comments on "la pluralidad rayana en la escisión" within the Church as multiple factors that seemed to vary between different archbishops in different cities, amongst others, in determining its role, but the writers of the eighteenth century were "frecuentemente considerados miembros "relajados", en el seno de la Iglesia o de sus comunidades." Thus, this century did not have a major contribution in religious poetry, and the author mentions only Cándido María Trigueros (1736–1798) and Moratín as contributors to this genre, while this group is generally from the middle class and does not evidence strong clerical foundations within their poetry (Lucea García 123). Additionally, Joaquín Arce in *La poesía del siglo ilustrado* (1981) makes mention of how the best Enlightenment poets, of which Moratín is included in the short list, endeavor to assimilate into the new scientific disposition which comprised a renewal of approach and processes originating in other more advanced European countries. However, these poets "…lamentan la pérdida de lo que consideran auténticos valores hispánicos. Reniegan, por su "mal gusto" artístico y su decadencia política, del pasado inmediato, pero exaltan e idealizan el tipo humano y heroico de la época de los Reyes Católicos y Carlos V" (Arce 21).

One of Moratín's biographers relates the life of Moratín, his exile, morality, and disposition:

> There, in a foreign land, lies a celebrated Spaniard, to whom his country did not offer sufficient security to allow him to die tranquilly in her bosom. A man averse to all party feeling, obedient to existing authority, whether of fact or of right, absorbed in his studies, teacher from his retirement of the purest morality, incapable of injuring any one, or of exciting disorder even indirectly, he had to wander forth many years,

> not proscribed, but driven away by apprehensions too justly entertained. (Project Gutenberg)

To such a degree, this mention of Moratín's character brings an important facet to this work. Moratín's qualities as "obedient" and "of the purest morality" would indeed have the disposition to understand Mary. At the very least, his words give the impression of expressing a personal significance of these qualities, and to a much greater degree than someone commissioned to write about Mary without a comprehension of the importance of her role in the salvation of Man. Fabbri writes:

> Pero una figura, por encima de cualquier otra, debe ser según Moratín digna de atención para todo poeta; esta figura, y vuelva a citar, es "tan poderosa, tan bella, tan pura, tan merecedora de reverencia y el amor de los hombres": se trata de la Virgen que D. Leandro define como: "una mujer, la más perfecta de las criaturas, la más inmediata al trono de Dios, medianera entre él y la naturaleza humana; madre amorosa, amparo y esperanza nuestra". (Fabbri 133)

Fabbri remarks upon the sincerity in Moratín's Marian poetry and his fascination for the tradition Catholic rites as "religiosa pompa de sus misterioso y sacrificios" as well as its artistic heritage.

Another influence was found in aesthetical pleasures of elegance and refinement, as well as crowded processions "el momento de devoción más solemne y de intensidad emotiva más profunda" (Fabbri 133). Fabbri also mentions his work *Viaje a Italia* which recalls Moratín time spent becoming acquainted with the literary and cultural expression Italian culture. Moratín's admiration for Petrarch was evidently a motivation for his travels to Avignon, and thereby one could then wonder how Moratín was influenced by the elegance of Petrarch's *canzone* 366 dedicated to Mary.

Subsequently, the consideration of genre, style, and some formal poetic aspects may aid in the appreciation of "La anunciación" and thereby place it within its historical period. Firstly, it is important to note how the Baroque epic engendered certain noteworthy characteristics in the poetry of the Enlightenment and can be said to appear in two tendencies of the era: one that poets write for posterity, of a higher style, and the other, light, spontaneous and somewhat resistant to Baroque conventions. Our *cántico,* then, can correspond to the first group, and is one in which *imitatio,* also typical for this type of poetry retaining Baroque edifices and yet seems more grounded through, as Lucea García proposes, a decreasing use of references to Latin, a more direct syntax (less "trabajada y dislocada") and tends toward the contrasting of elements, which hopefully will become apparent within the exchange between Mary and the angel Gabriel in "La anunciación." And while the second half of the century reveals poetry that is more expressive in order to create an impression, additionally it is often referencial. Here "la función poética del lenguaje se supedita a lo sustancial. la comunicación" that could suggest style over content or message, without refocusing the attention on the poetic forms themselves, which does not seem to be the case with "La anunciación." Hence, this study will argue that this work does not resemble the latter poetic description of tendencies, but rather the imitation style of religious poetry in verse that contains formal style elements and intends a more narrative purpose (Lucea García 81–82).

According to Arce, Moratín proposed that he had incorporated his father's practiced poetic construction, and this together with the imitative style of Spanish poets, had "emulado "el método, la exactidtud y doctrina" de los franceses, junto a "la fantasía y el sonido armónico" de los italianos." Arce suggests that the Spanish poets of the Enlightenment tended more toward Italian poetic style, but "Estos se defenderán abiertamente contra tan servil imitación" (Arce 38). Nevertheless, the literary figure Pietro Napoli-Signorelli, who having arrived in Spain in 1765 "… figura entre los cultivadores de las letras asentados en España" and acted

as an intermediary between the two cultures. This is evidence in A. Mariutti de Sánchez Rivero's article "Un ejemplo de intercambio hispano-italiano en el siglo XVII: Leandro Fernández de Moratín y Pietro Napoli-Signorelli" in *Revista de la Universidad de Madrid* (1960).[42] This is not to say that the Italians living in Spain were interested in influencing the literature produced at that time, but, according to Arce "Los dos pueblos están certeramente retratados: la fusión constante del sentido práctico italiano con su fino instincto artístico; y la miopía de cierto tipo de cultura española atenta sólo a lo que exalta a su patria" (Arce 78). Although this age did not produce much in the way of innovations as far as meter, but the *octavilla italiana* proceeding from Italy in the eighteenth century and the loose hendecasyllable as "la forma más adecuada a la poesía rigurosamente ilustrada" (Arce 107) tended to be the poets' preference.

Arce remarks that although Dante was mentioned by the poets of the age, Petrarch was the only Italian poet from the 1300s and 1400s that figured in the eighteenth century in Spain. Furthermore, Petrarch's love lyric was esteemed and studied, and his style was imitated. According to Arce, what was attractive in the Italian works for this generation of poets that saw him as an undeniable model for love sonnets and in this manner Italian poetry possessed a lyrical quality that greatly appealed to the Spanish sensibilities. The verses of Petrarch were an inspiration to Moratín, like as to his father. Leandro referred to Petrarch as the "gran poeta," and in 1787 visited certain places in Avignon that had a significance in the life of the iconic Italian poet. During this period he wrote to a friend that it saddened him the "tiempo que han perdido muchos imitadores de Petrarca, así italianos como españoles" (Arce 80).

Now this study returns a the painting that can cohesively enrich the discussion of the *cántico*. In this manner, we first turn to an overview of the visual art of the Baroque that

[42] Mariutti de Sánchez Rivero, A. "Un ejemplo de intercambio cultural hispano-italiano en el siglo XVIII: Leandro Fernández de Moratín y Pietro Napoli-Signorelli", *Revista de la Universidad de Madrid*, IX, 1960, pp. 763-808.

emerges in Rome. Alois Riegl, in his work *The Origins of Baroque Art in Rome* (2010), relates the psychological implications of the art of antiquity and how unity was created through sentiment during the Renaissance. Riegl explains that representations in the art of antiquity were "isolated" and that "human actions were presented as acts of will rather than expressions of sentiment because the will is typically psychologically isolating, as it is always egoistic: it strives to maintain the individuality of any form. Sentiment and feeling are unifying demands, aiming at union with the universe and elimination of the individual" (Riegl 130). Hence, the new art produced then solidified as a tendency in the Renaissance, striving for the connection of things "for the sake of connection", instead of a "refined isolation". Riegl states that the Renaissance achieved a perfection in the reunion of the two through the artists of the High Renaissance Michelangelo (Michelangelo di Lodovico Buonarroti Simoni) (1475–1564) and Correggio (Antonio Allegri da Correggio) (1489– 1534) that "always seemed perfect in itself" (130). Additionally, the expression of sensuality in Correggio's works is not of a lascivious nature, but rather "has a more purifying effect than an exciting one" (131) and thereby can present a manner in which works of visual art are received by the observer as occurring through the senses.

Alfonso E. Pérez Sánchez, in *Pintura barroca en España 1600–1750* (1986), interprets Spanish art of the Baroque era: "El arte español y en especial la pintura, alcanza en el breve espacio de ese siglo [Siglo de Oro] y medio privilegiado su punto de máxima significación y calidad, ofreciendo en el rico y variado conjunto de la Europa de su tiempo una personalidad singular…" and "…la pintura de España como un canto a la realidad, aceptada en su inmediata verdad, sin embellecimiento alguno, pero con una cierta dignidad serena y casi altiva, matizada de sentimiento religioso" (Pérez Sánchez, *Pintura* 10). And in terms of religious art specifically, "La publicación del *Parnaso* (1724) de Antonio Palomino consagra definitivamente la idea de que en España hubo una historia pictórica con rasgos propios y en

las que descuellan creadores de gran calidad" (Portús Pérez 7). This observation regarding the richness of the Spanish works and pertaining to the visual focus of this study, Spanish Baroque religious painting, well-situates itself within the devotional traditions of the culture and thereby could offer a unified vision at its highest point of both biblical scenes and the lives of saints. As related above, Spanish uniqueness in conserving its traditional religious views in conjunction with the reformist tendencies from outside created an artistic convention that produced some of the most beautiful works of the Baroque. Pérez Sánchez continues to detail an understanding of the tendencies of the painting of this era:

> No es posible definir con unívoca rotundidad las características generales de la pintura española del barroco. Son muy diversas las estéticas, las técnicas y los recursos de todo tipo que pueden señalarse a lo largo del siglo. No es posible tampoco intentar las definiciones de la "escuelas locales" tal como lo procuraba la historiografía del pasado siglo. Entre Zurbarán y Espinosa, siento este valenciano, o que entre Valdés y el madrileño Francisco Ricci, cuyas obras se han confundido entre sí tantas veces. (Pérez Sánchez, *Pintura* 10)

Pérez Sánchez points to a certain *realism* in Spanish art of the age that answered the Catholic Reformational Church's petition for authentic, clearly represented works with universal appeal. These differed from their Italian counterparts that exhibited more idealized qualities, the Flemish "opulent sensualism," or the French "serene intellectualization" while "El realismo español, curiosamente, sólo se hallaba en las obras religiosas donde cristos, santos y vírgenes procedían de modellos de la vida cotidiana, seres de la calle incorporados a la iconografía tradicional, con toda su inmediatez humanísima, apenas trasfigurada" (Pérez Sánchez, *Pintura* 10–11).

Due to the presence of the Spanish Court, the most active artistic center was Madrid, a city of artistic vitality that was a magnet for artist from all parts of the peninsula, as the

"Madrilenian school" was composed of artists from other regions of Spain (Pérez Sánchez *Pintura* 13). Here as well Pérez Sánchez specifies the distinct expression of Spanish religious art of the Baroque:

> La realidad exterior, para el artista del barroco español, ha sido casi siempre un lenguaje que ha servido para acceder con más facilidad y hacer legible a todos el ámbito de lo religioso, de lo "transcendente", que se imponía al español de entonces como la *única* realidad. La realidad visible y circundante adquiere así un valor transitivo, como simple vehículo de aproximación a la mejor inteligibilidad del relato evangélico o hagiográfico. (Pérez Sánchez, *Pintura* 11)

In view of this, it is interesting to note that even inasmuch as what the author considers limited vis-à-vis the representation of biblical scenes or the lives of saints, religious Baroque art achieved "…su punto de máxima significación y calidad, ofreciendo en el rico y variado conjunto de la Europa de su tiempo una personalidad singular…" (Pérez Sánchez, *Pintura* 9). Additionally, "[o]cupa el primer puesto, sin lugar a dudas, el género *religioso,* considerado unánimemente como lo más noble, digno y significativo del arte de pintar" (Pérez Sánchez, *Pintura* 43). Pérez Sánchez cites Francisco Pacheco (1564–1644) as relating the objective of religious art "persuader a los hombres a la Piedad y llevarlos a Dios" (Pérez Sánchez, *Pintura* 43). The author continues to propose that religious topics including the Gospels, the Old Testament, Marian themes, and the lives of saints occupied the majority of the Spanish national œuvre. Noteworthily, this predominance of Spanish religious visual works of the Baroque were much greater in comparative extent than the degree to which the Italians, French or Dutch dedicated their paintings to religious themes. Therefore, with an understanding of the abundant religious genre of the age, a brief introduction of the life of Francisco Ricci (Rizi) (1614–1685) may be of interest to situate him within the epoch.

"Francisco Ricci, pintor de Su Majestad" was how he was announced in the Court in 1659 (Agulló Cobo 135), denoting his particular influence on Spanish Baroque painting of the age. Francisco Ricci, or "Rizi" as adapted orthographically to the Spanish language, was the youngest son of Antonio Ricci, a native of Ancona, Italy, who immigrated to Spain as an assistant of Federico Zuccaro, a highly influential prolific painter in the Mannerist style who travelled widely in Europe. Subsequently, the apprentice remained in Spain after the departure of his maestro and married Francisco's mother who was Spanish with the surname Guevara and possessed the title *doña,* indicating royalty. Antonio Ricci was a painter but abandoned the arts for a career as an engineer responsible for public works and subsequently this allowed Francisco to be instructed in the art of painting under the tutelage of Carducho, an Italian painter to the king that had taken up residence in Spain. Ricci was an apprentice of Carducho, who was a man of letters, versed in theoretical knowledge and conditioned by living in Italy. In this manner, he began to develop Baroque qualities in his art (Pérez Sánchez, *Pintura* 85, 93) such as a pleasing proportion and an accurate and dynamic depiction of detail, which he most assuredly learned from his maestro.

Ricci then became one of Carducho's most outstanding and hard-working students, and in this manner, it was probable that Ricci gained access to the Court of Spain through the master painter. In 1656 Ricci earned the title of Painter to the King, thus serving him for over thirty-five years. From the influence of Carducho, Ricci developed a compositional exactitude, an enthusiasm toward drawing as well as a multiplicity of modes of artistry (Grove Art Online). Alfonso E. Pérez Sánchez in his work *Carreño, Rizi, Herrera y la pintura madrileña de su tiempo [1650–1700]* (1986) speaks of Ricci's own style of artistic expresión: "Pero en el conjunto de la pintura española, Ricci, por la riqueza de su imaginación y la belleza de su colorido, ha de ocupar un puesto de primerísimo orden" (Pérez Sánchez 286). Thus, Ricci also earned the attention and praise of his peers. By studying the works of Tiziano amongst

the great Venetian masters, one can trace an influence on the quality of Ricci's artwork, as becomes apparent in the type of composition employed by Rubens (Pérez Sánchez, *Pintura* 70).

Historically, both Ricci and his peers were influenced by the schism that occurred at the time of the Protestant Reformation. As an example of the effects of this division in art, one influence on Ricci and his generation of painters was Raphael (Raffaello Sanzio da Urbino) (1483–1520). Prodi explains that Raphael's work of Saint Cecilia (1514–1515) (figure 3) inspired artists such as Ricci and was painted shortly before the division in Europe's religious landscape. Saint Cecilia stands among the other saints, in a moment of spiritual togetherness whilst she gazes above at the angels in song. She displays a hand-held organ whilst other musical instruments lie broken and discarded on the ground before her. Prodi puts forth that this work represents what is to come: the Reformation, the Council of Trent and the splitting of the Church which are more apparent in art and music than philosophy and theology (Paleotti 5). Yet Prodi sees "… Catholic Reform as a movement parallel to, and virtually independent of, the Protestant Reformation, seeking to extirpate the degenerations and abuses of the medieval Church while keeping its dogmatic and disciplinary structures intact during the epochal shift" (Paleotti 5). The era was growing into modernity and the symptoms felt were "either more revolutionary or more reformist" according to Prodi who expresses the growing pains in "today's terms" (Paleotti 5). This translated to personal religious practice: "In the sphere of private life, there arises a new relation between the sacred and the individual conscience. Robbed of his or her traditional insertion into the cosmos, the modern individual gives primacy to the problem of individual salvation" and the question arises whether this is through good works, a predestination or divine mercy (Paleotti 5).

Likewise, the representation of the subjects themselves differs in the artistic works throughout the distinctive periods. As such, in Early Modern art, sometimes the artists'

creations represented a highly personal perspective, without necessarily remaining faithful to how their subjects actually appeared. Thus, the observer can see the works from the artist's perspective and not "how ancient art isolated objects from the beholder and from each other…" (Agulló Cobo 131). This perspective from modern art can draw the viewer closer to the subject, and in the case of *La Anunciación* of God's will to Mary, to view her not as objectively as possible, but from within the artist's perception to bring "a purification to the senses." Hence, these Early Modern elements can serve as precursors to the Baroque style of painting in the early 17th century which Riegl defines Baroque art is: "peculiar, unfamiliar, extraordinary."

Between the Protestant Reformation and Catholic Counter-Reformation, there was a shared suspicion of images as used as idolatry (Paleotti 7). Then, only after the middle of the century does religious art acquire a role in the implementation of the edicts of the Council of Trent (1545–1563). Here art becomes a means for the Church to invite "a new synthesis between inner conversion and disciplinary measure and puts the theme of pastorality and *salus animarum* (the salvation of souls) at its center with the Council of Trent …" (Paleotti 8). This becomes an effort to fuse the theological nature of the Christian church with popular devotion, creating a new religious art (Paleotti 8). During the last session on 3 December 1563, the Council of Trent decreed on the use of images. It affirmed Christ as "our sole redeemer and savior," but believers can call upon the saints as intercessors as they provide a link to Christ and his intentions and referenced the Second Council of Nicaea of 787. Hence, the importance of images of saints lies not in some sacred essence, but rather that how they assist in focusing on devotion toward redemption and thereby adding a new function to the Medieval consideration as instructional (Paleotti 10). However, as Prodi points out, the implementation of this Tridentine decree varied within dioceses: "… patronage initiatives, in other words decisions to commission works of sacred art, might come from a variety of

sources, including religious orders and confraternities" (Paleotti 13). "The bishops themselves were individuals" and consequently the use of images also depended upon how art was discussed and executed on the local level (Paleotti 13). Nevertheless, from the last years of the sixteenth century, art did not possess the link to theological concerns that it once had, but rather images became means of devotion and religious steadfastness, as well as possessed dominant roles concerning political power (Paleotti 33).

Paleotti proposes the role of images as to deliver the three categories of the good—"the delightful, the useful, and the honest" (Paleotti 109). Within the delightful is what pleases the eye, while the useful can conceal imperfections and adorn the simplest abode. Paleotti writes about the honest,

> …we say that when it comes to honesty and virtue, it is impossible fully to express how fruitful images are, for they instruct the intellect, move the will, and refresh the memory of divine things, and altogether they produce in our minds effects greater and more potent than those felt from anything else in the world. They represent before our eyes, while simultaneously stamping onto our hearts, heroic and magnanimous acts, whether ones of patience, or justice, or chastity, gentleness, distain for the world, and commiseration, and others of the same kind. Indeed, in an instant, a Christian image causes in us desire for virtue and horror of vice, which are the principal, broad roads leading us to true honor and perpetuity of glory…. (Paleotti 110)

Notwithstanding, regarding the image of Mary herself, Rubin points out in her work *Mother of God: A History of the Virgin Mary* (2009) the unique situation of Spain during the Reformation period: "While all this change in attitudes and practices around Mary [caused by the Reformation] was taking place in Northern Europe, in the southern kingdoms of Iberia Mary was triumphant" (Rubin *Mother* 379). Rubin identifies Mary as "the personal mentor to the young Isabella [of Castile]" (1451 – 1504) as she married Ferdinand of Aragon (1452 –

1504) in a joint sovereignty of both kingdoms and they became the 'Catholic Monarchs.' Rubin affirms that the rulers' establishment of the Spanish Inquisition to root out converted Jews and Muslims who were not sincerely practicing their new faith was related to the queen's "vision of purity" (Rubin *Mother* 380) in the Immaculate Conception. The purity of Mary became "a national theme of unity in faith" and "where the queen led, others followed" in forming a Christian intention and dedication based on an orthodoxical practice of the Catholic faith (Ruben, *Mother* 380). This led to the commissioning of works to fill the new churches of the newly converted and the visual expression of the Immaculist movement, which will be referenced in relation to the Annunciation in the next chapter.

Nevertheless, this study does not intend to take a certain position in regard to Queen Isabel and her policies or the political ambitions of the Catholic Monarchs. The purpose is to relate the use of the religious image during this period and as the focus of this study is Mary in the arts, devotion to Mary seems to have been an important consideration for Queen Isabel. The limited historical look into the reception and use of the religious image during this time period to follow is not purposed to justify the Catholic Monarchs' decisions and policies but rather highlight the complications in the use of religious art within a multi-cultural Spain of different religions. This is intended to present a brief, but broader view of the era.

The goal of the centralized integration of Spanish Muslims into Christian Spain after 1492 involved the local culture (Fuchs 3). This is a very complex issue comprising three religions (Christianity, Judaism, and Islam) and the use of religious images. Although the Eastern Church had a long tradition of the use of iconography, the Roman Church "no fue especialmente pródiga en elaborar una teoría, mucho menos una teología de la imagen" (Pereda 29) which marked a difficulty when Spain saw the need to introduce Christian devotion through the means of imagery to its newly converted population. Moreover, Felipe Pereda in *Las imágenes de la discordia:Política y poética de la imagen sagrada en la España*

del cuatrocientos (2007) writes of both Seville in 1478 and Granada in 1500 where similar yet distinct issues surrounded the new Christian converts and devotion images. In Seville, the Catholic Monarchs implemented ways to counter the lukewarm religiosity of the new converts from Judaism and their opposition to the religious image. Here, Fray Hernando de Talavera (1430-1507), confessor to Queen Isabel, published an ordinance in Seville that "cada fiel cristiano tenga en la casa de su morada alguna imagen pintada de la cruz, en que nuestro Señor Jesucristo padeció, y algunas imágenes pintadas de nuestra Señora o de algunos santos o santas, que provoquen y despierten a los que allí moran a haber devoción" (Pereda 30). Talavera insisted on refuting the accusation that devotional images were the practice of idolatry and differentiating between what the new convert thought of as "*adoration*" and replacing it with "*honra*" (Pereda 64-65). His two-pronged approach of refuting accusations against religious images and legislating their use in Seville due to "su valor pedagógico y devocional" (Pereda 19).

According to Julio Caro Baroja in *Los moriscos del reino de Granada* (2003), to the east in Granada resided the largest concentration of Moorish people in Western Europe; there cohabitation was shattered when the Catholic Monarchs captured the Kingdom of Granada in 1491 (Baroja 45-46). Under the jurisdiction of Talavera, now Archbishop of Granada, the Queen's campaign of the mass-production of religious statues to fill the churches of the newly converted Muslim population fostered conflict within the morisco[43] community. Talavera surmounted linguistic barriers toward peaceable conversions (Pereda 18) through "*una suave y lenta tarea de adoctrinamiento y persuasion que iba poco a poco consiguiendo conversiones*" (García Arenal 29). While in Seville Talavera had recognized the sacred image as a signifier to "… corregir la espiritualidad errata de los judeo-conversos sevillanos," the

[43] The converts became known as "*cristianos nuevos de moros"* or "*moriscos*" (Núñez Muley *A Memorandum* 3).

situation in Granada posed distinct challenges to the adoption of a new faith that imposed a new devotional practice. *Las capitulaciones de 1491* enabled the Muslim population to conserve "…lo fundamental de sus tradiciones, su cultura, y sus costumbres, además de un grado importante de autonomía política, sobre todo en el terreno de la justicia" (Pereda 255). When the Catholic Monarchs arrived in Granada in 1499, they found the results of Talavera's eight years of efforts to be meager, and brought in the Archbishop of Toledo, Francisco Jiménez de Cisneros (1436-1517), who had "una idea completamente diferente del modo en que había que afrontar la conversion de los mudéjares" (Pereda 290). Pereda notes that it is not known the type of proceedings that came to pass in which Talavera was implicated as Archbishop, but the result was an uprising in which the Christian authorities lost control of part of the city for three days. Although the Catholic Monarchs did not approve of Cisnero's hasty decisions, the actions could not be undone (Pereda 190-191). When Isabel and Fernando did return to Granada in 1500, the agreements made in *Las Capitulaciones de 1491* were not honored and no longer in effect (Pereda 292). Mercedes García-Arenal in *Los moriscos* (1996) notes that in 1501 the Catholic Monarchs decreed the conversion of the Moors of Granada[44], and all of which "… *contribuyó a avivar la aversion de los moriscos por la religion de sus conquistadores*" (García Arenal 29).[45] Although a continued analysis of this fascinating period in Spain's history would provide further background on the complexities of the regard and usage of the religious image of the age, this study contends that the information presented briefly examines its intricacies and acknowledges that there are many additional historical figures, geographic places and cultural identities that have not

[45] For further reading on the Morisco cultural practices and the 1567 mandates of assimulation, *La Pragmática Sanción de 1567,* please refer to Francisco Nùñez Muley's *Memorial en defensa de las costumbres moriscas.* Linkgua Historia 285, 2024. And in English, *A Memorandum for the President of the Royal Audiencia and Chancery Court of the City and Kingdom of Granada.* Edited and translated by Vincent Barletta. U of Chicago P, 2007.

been mentioned, but yet had important roles to play in shaping the historical landscape of modern Spain and its sacred image.

Therefore, the chapter has identified the unique role of religion in Spanish culture and its interrelationship with Italian culture and how this influence, amongst others prevalent during the respective eras affected the lives of Moratín and Ricci, as well as Spanish Enlightenment poetry and Baroque painting. Then, it has concluded with a limited overview of Mary's role within the rule of the Catholic Monarchs and their vision of her purity, as well as some additional facets to the cultural situation during a complicated interreligious period in Spanish history. Chapter 4, to follow, will begin the discussion of the Annunciation, the two artistic works, and their formal literary analysis and through a theological lens.

Figure 3. *L'estasi di santa Cecilia* (1515-1516) by Raphael, Pinacoteca Nazionale di Bologna, Bologna

CHAPTER 4

MARY'S BEAUTY IN THE ANNUNCIATION WORKS OF MORATÍN AND RICCI

And in the sixth month, the angel Gabriel was sent from God into a city of Galilee, called Nazareth, to a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin's name was Mary.

- Luke 1: 26–27

You have heard, O' Virgin, the announcement of the great mystery; the means designed for its fulfillment have been unfolded to you, each wondrous, each replete with joy.

- Saint Bernard of Clairvaux *Sermons of St. Bernard on Advent and Christmas*

As described by the Apostle Luke in the New Testament, the momentous occasion in Mary's life when the Archangel Gabriel appeared to her to announce that she was to be the mother of Christ, is known as the Annunciation. This extraordinary historical occurrence set in motion eventualities that would forever change history as the salvation of humanity could then be fulfilled through Mary's responding "yes" to her angelic messenger. This was accomplished in "the fullness of time,"[46] and according to the Catechism of the Catholic Church was "…the time of the fulfillment of God's promises and preparations. Mary was invited to conceive him in whom the "whole fullness of deity" would dwell 'bodily'"

[46] Bernard references Galatians 4:4: "But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent his Son, made of a woman, made under the law:" (Bernard, *Sermons* 25-26). Saint John Paul II states "This "fullness" marks the moment when, with the entrance of the eternal into time, time itself is redeemed, and being filled with the mystery of Christ becomes definitively 'salvation time'" (John Paul II *Redemptoris* 6).

(Catechism 122). Not only did this encounter change the course of history, but it provided a moment of a supernatural nature that has resonated with billions of people over millennia. Moreover, John Paul II writes in his encyclical letter of 1987: "The Annunciation, therefore is the revelation of the mystery of the Incarnation at the very beginning of its fulfilment on earth … Mary is "full of grace" because it is precisely in her that the Incarnation of the Word, the hypostatic union of the Son of God with human nature, is accomplished and fulfilled" (John Paul II, *Redemptoris* 15). Such is the resonating effect of Mary's affirmative response that enables the fulfillment of the Incarnate Word, and yet Mary must have been able to receive this honor even before it was bestowed on her, for she had no time to prepare herself before being overshadowed by Spirit.

What is more, Bernard finds richness in the Gospel of Luke within the very words themselves: "Full is every word of divinest mystery, redolent of sweetest heavenly perfume; to him, that is, who searches it diligently and knows how to draw "honey from the rock and oil from the flinty stone"[47] (Bernard, Sermons 22). This passage from *Sermons of St. Bernard On Advent and Christmas* (1909) provides a definitive example of how to approach a biblical mystery: through its contemplation of the words themselves that offer the "sweetest heavenly perfume" upon their meditation. It is through the approaches such as this that this study hopes that the selected theological writings chosen will open a discussion of the artistic works and can "draw 'honey from the rock …'" toward their richer and more profound understanding.

Thus, this part of the discussion will commence with a description of the Annunciation in Scripture in order to present a more integral awareness that can pertain to Christ's words "Behold your Mother"[48] in such a way that Mary's beauty manifests through her profound humility. Her humility becomes the basis for her other virtues, and this chapter will explore

[47] Deuteronomy 32:13.
[48] John 19:27.

how it translates into beauty, as revealed in the Annunciation through an analysis of the art from the artists Moratín and Ricci and theological writings that can add depth to its examination. Then, the importance of the concept of Immaculate Conception as it prefigures the Annunciation will be explored, especially its religious movement within Spain during the Baroque (1600–1750) and how as the Immaculata Mary was prepared to become the Mother of Christ. Next, a brief introduction of the exchange between the angel Gabriel and Mary will bring the poetic work into a theologically based discussion of Mary's role in the Annunciation. Subsequently, an exposition of Moratín's *cántico* "La anunciación" and a formal poetic analysis will follow, which will include an investigation of its Petrarchan influences and explore common points with Petrarch's *canzone* 366. After this, a theological analysis of Moratín's La anunciación will include patriarchal voices, early modern saints, art history-based comparison of Annunciation works, Mannerist vs. Baroque style, and technique. Ricci's *La Anunciación* (1613) will be introduced to bring a visual element to strengthen the description in Moratín's *cántico* and the theological commentary. To this extent, the writings of Saint Bernard, Saint Ambrose, Saint Hildegard of Bingen, Saint Louis-Marie de Montfort, Saint Alfonso de Liguori, Saint François de Sales, Gabriele Paleotti, Ignace de la Potterie, Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger, Hans Urs von Balthasar, Saint John Paul II, and André Feuillet will be accompanied by the literary voices of Dante and Petrarch amongst others, revealing specific aspects of the Annunciation in the Gospel of Luke that directly pertain to the artwork featured in this study. The objective is to bring together the art and theological fields in an analysis that enriches the consideration of both artistic works on the Annunciation to propose a reassessment of the concept of beauty through Mary's humility, obedience, and faith. Possession of these qualities assist in reaching spiritual heights that would not be possible with the "Beauty is skin deep" approach mentioned in Chapter 1.

To begin with, the Annunciation is the first reference to Mary in the New Testament and marks the beginning of her motherhood to Christ. The Annunciation is significant, as it brings Mary into view as an example of a pious woman that possesses such admirable qualities as to enable her to become the mother of Jesus and, as previously mentioned, a guide to show the path toward God. However, it may be worthy first to understand the Immaculate Conception which became one of the four Marian dogmas of the Roman Catholic Church in 1854 after centuries of development of its doctrine. The Immaculate Conception manifests "the mystical union between God and the experiential world" (Stratton 1) as her immaculate state has great bearing on her ability to give birth to the Christ and considered as perfection as the Son of God. Therefore, Pope Pius IX's proclamation in the apostolic constitution *Ineffabilis Deus* that year can be found in paragraph 491 of the second edition of the Catechism of the Catholic Church:

> The most Blessed Virgin Mary was, from the first moment of her conception, by a singular grace and privilege of almighty God and by virtue of the merits of Jesus Christ, Savior of the human race, preserved immune from all stain of original sin. (*Catechism* 124)

Additionally, the Catechism of the Catholic Church the same paragraph clarifies that:

> Throughout the centuries the Church has become ever more aware that Mary, "full of grace"[49] through God, was redeemed from the moment of her conception. That is what the dogma of the Immaculate Conception confesses, as Pope Pius IX proclaimed in 1854: "The most Blessed Virgin Mary was, from the first moment of her conception, by a singular grace and privilege of almighty God and by virtue of the merits of Jesus Christ, Savior of the human race, preserved immune from all stain of original sin. (*Ineffabilis Deus,* 1854) (123–24)

[49] Luke 1:28

In this manner, through the merits of her son, Mary was preserved from all sin and therefore her state of purity was of the highest in order to be able to give birth to the Redeemer. Evdokimov has shed light on the place of beauty within a biblical objective, and therein Mary is found at beauty's utmost expression as she had emptied herself of her own will and completely turned herself over to God (Evdokimov 12), which is communicated by her *fiat* or agreement with the divine plan of God spoken to the angel Gabriel. This is evidenced in the angel Gabriel's greeting "Hail, full of [God's] grace" as Mary was a vessel for God's favor in order to bear the God-Man, and that the promise of the Immaculate Conception preserves this state since her conception. Twomey explains that in Scripture

> [t]he Song of Songs has provided theologians and poets with many terms of praise for a person beloved but its protagonist, the Shulamite, a young lover, became associated with Mary and this meant that that a short text originally intended as a love-song became a way of contrasting Mary with the rest of sinful humanity. 'Et macula non est in te'[50] (*The Song* 4:7) is at the root of the word 'immaculate' and is, therefore, central to any study of biblical sources of the Conception doctrine. (Twomey, *The Serpent* 105)

In *Immaculate Conceptions: The Power of the Religious Imagination in Early Modern Spain* (2019) Rosilie Hernández writes of the influential Immaculatist movement in Spain: "In the spirit of post-Trent pastoral reforms, his parishioners' unqualified faith and zeal–surely moved and sustained by God's will and grace–offer the ultimate and incontestable substantiation of Mary's eternal holistic purity and the correctness of Seville and Spain's resolute devotion to and defense of the *tota pulchra*…" (Hernández 3). Therefore, Spain became this future Marian dogma's strongest defender, as "the radical inscrutability of God's design…one woman—who was *never* touched by the stain of original sin. Indeed, the quality

[50] *The Song* 4:7.

of this exceptionality, of purity itself—how it could be defined, identified, appropriated, internalized, particularized, transmitted, materially embodied, popularized, nationalized, and politicized–is at the crux of the Immaculist religious imaginary…" (Hernández 4). In this manner, Spain as the Immaculate Conception's champion suggests an interwovenness of the then doctrine into the fabric of Spanish culture and within this will come the importance of its advancement through its visual portrayal.

Historically, it is interesting to note that, according to Twomey, the concept of the Immaculate Conception entered the collective consciousness through an idea that arose in the third and fifth centuries within apocryphal texts (Twomey, *The Serpent* 11). As previously noted, the stories within these gospels circulated likely due to the lack of knowledge of the beloved mother of Christ due to the few references to her in the New Testament. After that, the second stage of emergence of the Immaculate Conception as a belief was a feast day in honor of Mary's birth that then figured prominently amongst the saints. This feast of her Conception in turn developed in stages and in various parts of Europe during the Middle Ages and was given special attention in Spain beginning in 1309 (Twomey, *The Serpent* 11–13). Ratzinger observes in *Mary: The Church at the Source* (1980) the type of maturation of an enigma which emerges in time: "There can be fruitfulness in the Church only when she has this character [of Marian mystery], when she becomes holy soil for the Word. We must retrieve the symbol of the fruitful soil; we much once more become waiting, inwardly recollected people who in the depth of prayer, longing, and faith give the Word room to grow" (Ratzinger, *Mary The Church* 17). In this fashion, as the development of dogma finds fertile soil and takes time to grow, so must its understanding be revealed at an appropriate moment to be received and then expanded upon in "the fullness of time."

In Sermon II of *Missus Est* Bernard speaks to the importance of Mary's immaculate status: "Therefore, it was needful that the Creator of man, in order to unite Himself to the human

race, should choose—nay, create –a Mother whom He knew to be worthy of, and acceptable to, Himself. He willed her to be an immaculate virgin, that she might merit to have for her Son the Spotless One, Who was about to take away the sins of the world" (*Sermons* 32). In this manner, Ratzinger speaks of Mary's body as prepared by God to receive the Logos: "A body is prepared for the Son through Mary, in that she gives herself over wholly to the Father's will and thus places her body [*Leib*] at his disposal as the tabernacle of the Holy Spirit" (*Mary: The Church* 84). Not only is this point pertinent for the understanding of the Immaculate Conception as a dogma and how it is a preparation for the Annunciation but also provides a profound manner in which to view the artistic works on the subject. Alain Blancy et al. write:

> Mary, as a virgin and as a mother, is not simply in the line of certain women highlighted by the Old Testament. She is separated from them by the virginal conception, which transforms the meaning both of her virginity and of her motherhood…Once she had been touched by the shadow of the Most High she became the temple, as it were, of him who through her was coming into the world. (Blancy et al. 61–62)

Therefore, it is fitting to return to the Catechism to place this Marian mystery within the context of Scripture, the primary source for all interpretation on Mary, her life, and relevance in the Church and human history. Firstly, the angel Gabriel's greeting in the Annunciation (Luke 1: 26- 33) gives reference to the significance of the sanctity of Mary as a holy vessel for Jesus the Christ:

> To become the mother of the Savior, Mary "was enriched by God with gifts appropriate to such a role." The angel Gabriel at the moment of the annunciation salutes her as "full of grace." In fact, in order for Mary to be able to give the free

> assent of her faith to the announcement of her vocation, it was necessary that she be wholly borne by God's grace. (*Catechism* 123)

And from *Catechism*, paragraph 492:

> The "splendor of an entirely unique holiness" by which Mary is "enriched from the first instant of her conception" comes wholly from Christ: she is "redeemed, in a more exalted fashion, by reason of the merits of her Son." The Father blessed Mary more than any other created person "in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places" and chose her "in Christ before the foundation of the world, to be holy and blameless before him in love." (124)

In this manner, the *Catechism*'s explanation adds even more dimension to the Marian dogma, revealing Mary's specialness "with every spiritual blessing" as the French rendering gives Solomon's praises a special connotation: "Mon amie toute belle sans défaut en toi" (*Le Cantique des Cantiques* 4:7 89). In this manner, Chapman draws attention to a prayer that begins an early writing of Augustine *De Soliloquiis*[51] that states: "God Who is goodness, beauty, truth, wisdom, life, joy, and sovereign concord; through of, and in Whom are good and beautiful everything which possesses goodness and beauty" (Chapman 53). Therefore, God as the source of all virtues–all beauty, goodness, truth–in His adored creation allowed no stain (*défaut*) at her birth in preparation for the birth of the Son.

According to Alain Blancy et al. in *Mary in the Plan of God and in the Saints: Toward a Common Christian Understanding* (2002), the movement supporting the Immaculate Conception began in the fourteenth century and continued in debate, in part due to those that strictly followed the views of Augustine on the subject, which dominated the field. Augustine acknowledged "fullness of personal holiness" given to Mary as the mother of Christ, but he could not support the notion that she was conceived without sin like every other human

[51] Augustine of Hippo. *De Soliloquiis* 387.

throughout history (Blancy et al. 99). The Council of Trent (1545–1563) during Session V (17 June 1546) issued this Decree Concerning Original Sin that those of the Catholic faith must hold that Adam, the first man, transgressed and that offense of the sin of disobedience "By one man sin entered into the world and by sin death; and so death passed upon all men, in whom all have sinned." However, the very last section of the decree refers to Mary: "This holy council declares, however, this it is not its intention to include in this decree, which deals with original sin, the blessed and immaculate Virgin Mary, the mother of God…" ("General Council of Trent: Fifth Session"). Thus, the growing pains of the dogma of the Immaculate Conception reached the nineteenth century which saw a renewal of Marian devotion. These factors helped to garner the support needed of the document that defined this theological concept that had developed, and it was made clear that this was indeed the moment to put forth a vote. Consequently, when Pius IX asked the episcopate at large for their opinions, the results came in at 546 in favor, 57 against (Blancy et al. 100). In hopes that that the dogma of the Immaculate Conception regarding Mary's original purity has now been established as the fundamental understanding of what was required of Mary to become the Mother of Christ, a more thorough comprehension of the Annunciation is possible.

Initially, the interchange between angel and human, messenger and espoused maiden, has infinite mysteries to offer in its narration, as well as in its portrayal of Mary. However, it is within the description of both the angel and Mary and their placement in juxtaposition, as well as the presence of Gabriel that delineates and defines the person of Mary. In order to see this more clearly, Bernard brings the reader his sermons *Missus Est* in praise of Mary, an interpretation of the contrasts described by Saint Luke in his Gospel. The nature of Gabriel in his luminous presence standing before Mary sheds light on her personage as "[i]n her dwelt the fullness of the Godhead corporally" (Bernard, *Sermons* 47). As a result of Bernard's

analysis, this favorite biblical event takes on an even greater dimension when we consider the grandiosity of the angel that "resplandece la estancia de María;" (Moratín 361).

The dichotomy of the scene becomes apparent in Moratín's "La anunciación" (1813) and can be reinforced by Ricci's visual work *La Anunciación* (c. 1663) (figure 4), which both serve to further illustrate the interplay of meanings within the divine encounter. From there, this angelic framework allows the observer to truly "behold" Mary as Bernard describes "A holy virgin, a prudent virgin, a devout virgin" (Bernard, *Sermons* 28). His interpretation of the Annunciation and in particular her virtue of humility as depicted by Bernard, Moratín and Ricci then create a space for commentaries on humility as beauty by the forementioned theologians. Thereupon, the richness of this Marian mystery comes to life to further develop the interpretation and to explore to the depths of Mary's beauty through the works of Moratín and Ricci.

This study proposes that both artistic renditions of the angel Gabriel as a major element of their works on the Annunciation lend themselves to the interpretation of Bernard. They will also work in combination, as the observer can hear in their mind when gazing upon the visual work the lyrics of the *cántico*, which bring to life the angel's message and set the stage for the protagonist to come into view. Therefore, in this chapter, we shall, in the words of Christ, "Behold thy Mother" (John 19:27) within this mystical encounter that glorifies the beauty of Mary.

Regarding any historical connections of the artists, although both Ricci and Fernández Moratín both lived and worked at least part of their lives in Madrid, the investigation for this study found no evidence to support the idea that Moratín had seen Ricci's work on display in Madrid, nor that any contact with Ricci's work served as inspiration for his *cántico*. However, hopefully this study will demonstrate how well both works can be adapted to an interpretation of a common theme consisting of two artistic genres, in this case both originating in the same

city of origin, Madrid, and thus exposing a Spanish sensibility of the two artistic renderings within the cultural framework of the Baroque and the Enlightenment. Nonetheless, the focus of this investigation is, as Bernard so fittingly points out, a framework with which to delve deeper into Mary's divine beauty.

Although this study will concern itself in part with the exchange between the angel Gabriel and Mary, the statement above indicates the power of Mary's qualities and how they triumph over darkness. This is extremely compelling given that those qualities are not battle prowess, intellectual savvy nor methodical research, but rather humility, obedience, faith, and trust. This dissertation contends that Mary's virtues present a distinctive and appealing contrast to our modern society's value system, that finds its origins in the Modern Era. Henceforth, the following example denotes these attitudes toward religious poetry and assists in highlighting how Mary's qualities as presented in Moratín's work present a counterpoint to our current considerations of beauty. Inasmuch as the strength of Mary is a focus of the latter part of Moratín's poem and exposes its Italian influence, Jesús Pérez-Magallón in his introduction to Moratíns Poesías (2023) draws attention what he claims that Pier Paolo Pasolini (1922–1975) "…llamara la religosidad popular que florece en todos los rincones de Italia…aunque desde la mirada de un españolito poeta y viajero" (Moratín 134). Although while these words seem to continue a regard more toward the attitudes of the Enlightenment, this study proposes Moratín's *cántico* has quite a lot to offer in terms both of its structure and message, and upon closer analysis, actually interweaves elements into this Marian mystery. Moreover, Ratzinger, in the following statement from *Mary: The Church,* speaks to the mystery of the words of Jesus during the "finding in the temple" (Luke 2:41–52), but may well assist in answering Pier Paolo Pasolini's statement above and speak to biblical mysteries in general:

> Even for the believing man who is entirely open to God, the words of God are not comprehensible and evident right away. Those who demand that the Christian

> message be as immediately understandable as any banal statement hinder God. Where there is no humility to accept the mystery, no patience to receive interiorly what one has not yet understood, to carry it to term, and to let it open at its own pace, the seed of the word has fallen on rocky ground; it has found no soil. (Ratzinger *Mary the Church* 71)

As such, this study will put forth that Moratín's *cántico*, whether the author intended it to be examined outside of the neoclassical assemblage or not, provides an apt text to complement Ricci's *La Anunicación* and an excellent platform to delve into the depths of theological considerations on Mary's virtues as a representation of her beauty.

Marizio Fabbri in his article "La oda 'A la Virgen Nuestra Señora' y su significación en la lírica Moratín" for the Coloquio Internacional sobre Leandro Fernández Moratín (1978) describes the poetry of Moratín: "debemos interpretarlo en su propia realidad histórica, en su necesidad de reaccionar ante la tradición barroca en armonía con las profundas exigencias de orden, simplicidad y didactismo que lo guiaban" (Fabbri 132). Fabbri continues to draw attention to the fact that Moratín did not write any of his Marian poetry in isolation but rather as a dominant theme in "Oda a Virgen Nuestra Señora," "A la Capilla del Pilar de Zaragoza," and the *cántico "*La anunciación*"* "donde María viene nuevamente señalada con apelativos denso de dulce humanidad, como madre, esposa, virgen, que acentúan la intensa antropomorfización" (Fabbri 132). This insight into Marian and other religious poetry within the works of Moratín becomes all the more noteworthy as it inspired interest among "la casi inexistente producción lírica religiosa del tiempo, que a menudo como señaló el mismo D. Leandro, aparecía 'chabacana y ridícula'" (Fabbri 132). Before the comments of the critics of the age that did not give great consideration to religious poetry, Moratín responded by invoking the freedom of expression and pointed to specific elements of Christianity that were "históricos" rather than "meramente dogmáticos." Nevertheless, Moratín seemed to need to

defend his choice to honor Mary in song, which reveals the narrower scope of the age concerning religious devotion.

Regarding Moratín's selection of poetic form, the dictionary of the Real Academia Española (RAE) defines a "*cántico*" as: "Cada una de las composiciones poéticas de los libros sagrados y los litúrgicos en que sublime o arrebatadamente se dan gracias o tributan alabanzas a Dios; p.ej. los *Cántico*s de Moisés, el tedeum, el magníficat, etc."[52] Thus, Moratín's "La anunciación", by recreating the scene poetically, gives tribute to God who created it for humanity. It is a recognition of the careful planning and care that was taken to bring Christ into existence at that moment in history and its exaltation as the glorious event that it was. The mystery of the Annunciation, like other Biblical "mysteries," is an unfolding of the events that only can occur through careful contemplation of them. Moratín provides a lyrical rendition of the revelation of God's will in "La anunciación" through which the reader is brought into the majesty of the encounter of heavenly and earthly, further accentuating their differences, and through which the reader is afforded glimpses into Mary's beauty in her humility. An approach to the Infancy Narratives of Jesus Christ, and for this study in particular the Annunciation that André Feuillet proposes in his work *Jesus and His Mother …* (1984) is that without a type of quiet reflection ("*méditation silencieuse*") and prayer on the scene, the reader will not be able to reach a level of deeper understanding of its mysteries as Feuillet writes "…nous ne pourrons jamais accéder à l'intelligence de cette merveille" and quotes Pascal: "Les yeux du cœur qui voient la sagesse" (Feuillet 111). In this manner the reader can also consider the words of Horace (65 BC– 8 BC) concerning the arduous confection of poetry: "My aim shall be poetry, so moulded from the familiar that anybody may hope for the same success, may sweat much and yet toil in vain when attempting the

[52] Diccionario de la lengua española: https://dle.rae.es/cántico?m=form

same : such is the power of order and connection, such the beauty that may crown the commonplace" (Horace 471). Hence, it may be in a moment of quiet that Moratín's "La anunciación" "may crown" a contemplation of its lyrics with Mary's beauty. Selection number 72 of the *Poesias sueltas* by Leandro Fernández Moratín:

72
Cántico
La anunciación
—1813

Voz 1.a

¿Qué nuncio divino
desciende veloz,
moviendo las plumas
de vano color?

Voz 2.a

El bello semblante
en risa bañó,
que inspira alegría,
disipa temor.

Voz 1.a

El rubio cabello
al hombro esparió;
diadema le ciñe
de extremo valor.

Voz 2.a

Ropajes sutiles
adorno le son,
y en ellos duplica
sus luces del sol.

Voz 1.a

¡Feliz habitante
de la alta región!

Voz 2.a

¡Alado ministro
del sumo hacedor!
Voz 1.a
¡En hora bendita
la tierra te vio!
Voz 2.a
Su dicha pendiente
está de tu voz.
Voz 1.a y 2.a
Que tú solo anuncias
favores de Dios.
Voz 3.a
Lleva a la santa Nazaret su vuelo
el ángel del Señor, y resplandece
la estancia de María;
de fragrantes aromas se enriquece
el aire en torno, y suena melodía
igual a la del cielo.
La honesta virgen, ruborosa y muda,
se postra absorta al paraninfo hermoso:
ve tanto bien, y merecerle duda.
Él, con acento grave y amoroso:
«No temas, no, la dice
de las hijas de Adán la más felice.
Llena de gracia estás; está contigo
el Dios que adoras inefable, eterno,
y el fruto santo que de ti se espera
se ha de llamar Jesús». Dijo, y la esfera
que en luces arde y arreboles de oro
vuelve a romper con ímpetu sonoro,
y se estremece el enemigo infierno.
Voz 4.a
¡Oh, instante dichoso
de amor y consuelo

que la tierra al cielo
para siempre unió!
¡Y al Dios poderoso
que truena indignado,
piadoso, humanado,
sumiso le vio!
Coro
Virgen, madre, casta esposa,
sola tú, la venurosa,
la escogida sola fuiste,
que en tu seno recibiste
el tesoro celestial.
Sola tú, con tierna planta,
oprimiste la garganta
de la sierpe aborrecida,
que en la humana, frágil vida
esparció dolor mortal (Fernández Moratín 360–362).

Thus, as in this *cántico* and other religious writings, through the desire to know more and reach an understanding of any of the elements, biblical mysteries can lead to an intellectual comprehension, but most importantly, to an opening or a revelation of the different aspects of the mystery in order to find deeper meanings. In this manner, it is appropriate to first consider the formal aspects of Moratín's *cántico* before proceeding with the theological analysis.

Formalistically, the *cántico* is divided in its meter and versification according to the different speakers: an antiphonal form of exchange between four "*voces*" that end in the "*coro*" that is realistically the four in unison to put forth a strong conclusion and move beyond the scene of the Annunciation to Mary's triumphal efforts for humanity. The *cántico* begins with *Voz 1.a* and *Voz 2.a* in an exchange of evenly distributed two quatrains each of hexasyllabic verse in AABA, CABA, AACA, CABA rhyme scheme. Next these voices begin the antiphonic distichs in hexasyllable again in CA, AA, BA, CA, CA in two each, then

joining together in a final hexasyllabic distich. The beauty of this structure lies in the interchange of voices as a prelude to the biblical description of the Annunciation in an expansion to the story in considering the angel Gabriel's arrival to the scene, which will be examined below. An additional noteworthy point regarding both the quatrains and the distichs is that they are written in alternating plain verse and sharp verse (*verso llano* and *verso agudo*) which enable the alternating voices to express excitement in the anticipation of the heavenly "nuncio divino" as well as his movement toward his destination "desciende veloz, / moviendo las plumas." These first twenty-six lines, as in the entire *cántico* express both aonrant and consonant rhyme at different intervals.

Regarding syntax, Lucea García also notes that the in instances of lesser art, the phrase or sentence must be necessarily divided, but rarely does one find an intentional use of enjambment. The author identifies this as the tendency to match the rhythm to the sirrema which both has the feeling of literary dexterity and a bit heavier in rhythm (Lucea García 84). However, Lucea García cites Joaquín Arce in "La lírica Moratín y el ideal neoclásico"[53] who considers the poetry of Moratín the most refined of the neoclassical poetry of the XVIII century as demonstrating sirrematic enjambment between noun and adjective ("…moviendo las plumas/de vano color?" (3–4).

Subsequently, *Voz 3.a* begins on line 27 for nineteen rhyming lines and begins the biblical scene of the Annunciation and introducing Mary as the "la santa Nazaret," describing Gabriel's magnificent presence in Mary's room, Mary's posture and countenance, Gabriel's words and his splendor, and how the event had a ripple effect in the dark realm of the enemy, a possible reference to the prophesy of the Apocalypse about "the woman clothed by the sun."[54] The first six lines of the nineteen form a silva consisting of two sets of three verses in

[53] Arce, Joaquín. "La lírica Moratín y el ideal neoclásico", *Coloquio internacional sobre Leandro Fernández Moratín,* Albano Terme, Piovan Editore, 1981, oo, 25-36.
[54] Apocalypse 12:1.

which the first two lines of the three are hendecasyllable and the last heptasyllable in consonant rhyme in ACB, CBA. Next, there are two lines of dodecasyllable, four of hendecasyllable, then six of dodecasyllable. These are written in plain verse, aonrant rhyme with the rhyme scheme of BA, BA, CC, AA, BB, AAA. *Voz 4a*. then commences with an octave divided into quatrains of three heptasyllabic lines followed by one pentasyllabic in both aonrant and consonant rhyme in which the rhyme scheme is ABBC, ADDC. The *octavilla italiana* in consonant rhyme that alternate between the first three lines of each in plain and the last of the four in sharp verse, expands on the lyrical nature of the verses and transmitting a dramatic quality to Moratín's *cántico*. This *ocavilla italiana* for a moment reverts the reader's attention from the *enemigo* in the last line of *The Song of Songs* of the *Voz 3.a* to place it firmly upon the momentous significance of the Annunciation that forever unites heaven and earth, and then on God in powerful His powerful presence witnesses the moment of the Annunciation. Its effects reverberate into the heavens where God becomes at once humanized and submissive as Christ became flesh in the womb of Mary and was obedient to the will of God (John 5:30): "I cannot of myself do anything. As I hear, so I judge: and my judgment is just; because I seek not my own will, but the will of him that sent me." This passage can be read as joining both heaven and earth on earth through Mary, and heaven to earth as God and Christ as one. Finally, the *Coro*, which presumably would comprise the four voices in unison, relates two quintains, the first of which alternates between heneasyllabic and heptasyllabic lines with the rhyme scheme as AABBC. The second quintain is octosyllabic and continues the rhyme pattern in DDEEC, and both quintains are in plain verse, in a softening of tone as it begins with Mary ("Virgen, madre, casta esposa,") and ends with her defeating the enemy and the effects this had for humanity ("oprimiste la garganta / de la sierpe aborrecida, / que en la humana, frágil vida / esparció dolor mortal.")

Additionally, some Petrarchan influence can be seen word choice. In line 33–35 of *canzone* 366: “et fra tutti terrreni altri soggiorni / sola tu fosti electra, Vergine benedetta,” (Petrarch 412) echoes in Moratín’s *cántico* lines 54–56 “Virgen, madre, casta esposa, / sola tú, la venturosa, / la escogida sola fuiste,” (Moratín 362). Regarding the use of language, some tendencies purity of form of the age—including archaisms often employed in pastoral poetry (“agora,” “fierro,” “felice,” “aquesto,” “tristura,” for example) and French borrowed words or French use of phrases in Spanish words, such as “embarazada” to mean “avergonzada,” omitting grammatical rules regarding prepositions as in the suppression of the personal ‘a’— are present. This purist use of language, according to Lucea García, intended to elevate the style of poetry and could arguably be a purposeful technique to make a connection to past poets, or in the case of “La anunciación,” to biblical stories, sermons, or popular theological writings. In Moratín’s *cántico*, this *puritas* is apparent with words such as “ropajes” (13), “felice” (38), and perhaps “sierpe” (61) that would indicate a use of archaisms.

Subsequently, Moratín’s *cántico* reveals the enemy of Christians, and this is not uncommon given the representations of the Immaculate Conception that were commissioned during the Catholic Reformation, including the image Mary with the serpent underfoot in reference to the Book of Genesis. The woman of the Apocalypse[55] described in Petrarch’s *canzone* 366 “Vergine bella, che di sol vestita, / coronata di stelle, al sommo Sole” (1–2) and Genesis[56] finds a place in Moratín: “Sola tú, con tierna planta, / oprimiste la garganta/ de la sierpe aborrecida,” (59–61). These two images are combined in Pedro Pablo Rubens’ *La Inmaculada Concepción* (1628–1629) (figure 5) and *La Inmaculada Concepción* (1767–1769) by Giambattista Tiepolo (figure 6) and are both holdings of the Museo del Prado.

[55] Apocalypse 12:1
[56] Genesis 3:15

Rubens' *Inmaculada* was given to Felipe IV in 1636, then became part of the Royal Collection and later was exhibited in the Monastery of El Escorial, where it remained until 1837. *La Inmaculada* by Tiepolo was a royal commission for the Church of San Pascual de Aranjuez in Madrid. Admittedly, given the strength of the support of the dogma of the Immaculate Conception in Spain, Inmaculada images would have been visible and formed part of the Spanish culture and collective consciousness after the Catholic Reformation. Due to the great fervor in Spain that led to the formal definition of the dogma in 1854, Immaculist art would have been prevalent and visible to Moratín, who through his reading of Petrarch and familiarity with this image, could have likely described what in Spain might have seemed as the "other half" of the image named by Petrarch. While this study has not yet found evidence to support this, Moratín's presumed familiarity with the Spanish image might have led him to find similarities in Petrarch's *canzone*.

Furthermore, Petrarch's *canzone* 366 also makes mention of the enemy. Petrarch's reference begins with a prayer in lines 74–78: "Vergine; ma ti prego / che l'tuo nemico del mio mal non rida: / ricorditi che fece il peccar nostro / prender Dio, per scamparne / humana carne al tuo virginal chiostro" (Petrarch 414). These lines present a supplication to have pity on the author and not to allow the enemy to ridicule his unfortunate situation by reminding Mary that she was the "virginal cloister" for the Redeemer sent by God. Contrastingly, Moratín's allusion to the enemy relates more to such an image as that of Rubens' *Immaculata* mentioned above by drawing attention to the Book of Genesis and the longer-term effects of her triumph over evil contained in lines 59–63: "Sola tú, con tierna planta, / oprimiste la garganta / de la sierpe aborrecida, / que en la humana, frágil vida / esparció dolor mortal" (Moratín 362). Here the enjambement creates an even greater lyrical quality and strength of the rhythm, not unlike a battlefield or heroic song, whilst the use of an archaism, "sierpe," seems to bring forth a historical consideration or the recounting of a feat of victory. Although

this inference to the Immaculate Conception was more of a message perhaps intended for humanity in general and less of a personal plea during the final year of his life as in the case of Petrarch, the lines (57–58) before this passage relate to those of Petrarch: "Que en tu seno recibiste / el Tesoro celestial" (Moratín 362). Both passages, albeit in distinct words, relate to the virginal state of Mary as a temple of purity "tuo virginal chiostro" to receive the Christ "el Tesoro celestial." Thus, both poets refer to Mary's sinlessness through her ability to carry and give birth to Christ, in praise of her perfect purity and exceptional motherhood. This point is found in both works as Petrarch refers to the sweet and dear names that are befitting of Mary "madre, figliuola et sposa" and Moratín's description of her virtues in line 33 "La honesta virgen, ruborosa y muda." Granted that the former outlines Mary's roles, whereas the latter her qualities as seen at the time of the Annunciation, there remains the issue of the rhythm of each line's description as a type of a list that aids in identifying Moratín's description as Petrarchan in its form. Also, it is important to draw attention to this line from Moratín as another usage of Petrarchal style in that "La honesta virgen" reflects the usage of affectionate descriptions in *canzone* 366 that bear the title "virgin" but with different uses of adjectives. Such examples are found in line 27 "Vergine pura, d'ogni parte intera," line 14 "Vergine saggia, et del bel numero una," the first line "Vergine bella, che di sol vestita," line 61 "Vergine dolce e pia" and line 66 "Vergine chiara et stabile in eterno" (Petrarch 410–414). In this manner, by virtue of the examples of commonality between the lyrical works and Moratín's intense admiration for the Italian poet, these distinguishable similarities present in two particular types of poetry can add to the discussion of the Italian influence on Spanish art throughout the centuries.

Although this particular *cántico* was written shortly after the turn of the century, the tendencies of the eighteenth century, as outlined by Javier Lucea García in *La poesía y el teatro del siglo XVII* (1984), seem to fit some of the general ideas and structure of the poem.

For example, the author mentions that during this time, poets preferred rhyming the nouns and verbs instead of adjectives due to their fullness of meaning and "mantienen la tensión intelectual hasta el final del verso," as can be seen in the tension or strength in the different voices throughout "La anunciación," in comparison with the third section, which seems to slow the rhythm in order to present the conversation between Mary and the angel. Also, the author notes an increase in hendecasyllable verses that were melodic, and in which musicality was studied within the use of certain letters to denote descriptive connotations. For example, the letter 'r' functioned well for rough and hard objects, while the 'l' related well to sweet and soft things and the 's' simulated the sound of water or of the wind (Lucea García 80). This is especially true when *Voz 3.a* speaks in a more narrative style, and as stated above, seems to slow the pace of the lyrics to include the 'l' sound and even the word 'melodia,' in about the first half of this section. Then the 'l' sound becomes less apparent as Gabriel in faithfulness to his duty, delivers his message in which this part of the section (36) begins "Él, con acento grave y amoroso."

Furthermore, alongside this poem's analysis to aid the understanding of how the structure and the poetic and thematic influence of Petrarch contribute to the author's message, the reader may want to bear in mind the words of Horace concerning poetry as images before the development of the theological perspectives: "A poem is like a picture: one strikes your fancy more, the nearer you stand ; another, the farther away" (Horace 481), which reminds of the angel coming from afar to deliver his message, and then next we 'see' him in the scene in Ricci's visual angelic encounter. Further, Javier Portús Pérez in *Portrait of Spain: Masterpieces from the Prado* (2012) denotes the closeness of Gabriel to Mary which "implies a moment of intimacy and mystery" (Portús Pérez, *Portrait* 152). In order to attempt to interpret the dynamic of this fundamental scene in biblical history, let us turn now to the writing of Italian saint and member of the Society of Jesus Saint Aloysius Gonzaga (1568–

1591) for his thoughts on angels. In his work *Meditations on the Holy Angels* (1737) gives some insight into the relationship between the angel Gabriel and Mary:

> Now God created no other being more pure and more noble in all the heavens and in all the earth than the Virgin Mary. If you consider for a moment how princes in this world always entrust the treasures which are dearest to them to their most faithful and trusted servants, then you will be able to imagine how highly Gabriel is esteemed by God, since He chose to entrust to him His most dear and precious treasure—namely, His beloved spouse and mother, the blessed Virgin Mary. (Gonzaga 54)

Here Saint Aloysius Gonzaga's words about Mary seem to echo the expression of the perfection of God's creation in *The Song of Songs*: "One alone is my dove, / my perfect, my only one," (Song 6:9). Blancy et al. call attention to "The angel greets Mary as one to whom grace has been given: the Lord is with her. The passive expression, "filled with grace," which emphasizes the point that the grace in Mary is the result of a gift freely given and accepted. This grace is not a material thing, but rather a quality of her relationship with God, before whom she has "found favor" (Luke 1:30) (Blancy et al. 62). In this way, according to the Gospel of Luke, Mary was in the state of grace when Gabriel arrived and greeted her as such, meaning that she was highly favored by God before He bestowed upon her the honor of becoming mother to the Redeemer. By the fact of the Immaculate Conception, she was born spotless and subsequently maintained her purity throughout her life; thus, Mary had been set apart and prepared for the role of Mother to Christ. Consequently, God's appreciation for His beloved creation described by Moratín: "Llena de gracia estás; está contigo el Dios que adoras inefable, eterno," begins to shed light on the absolute uniqueness and the depth of God's adoration of Mary. These lines reveal not only Mary's own preparedness to receive such a grace, but her deep love for the Creator. Moratín echoes the word of the angel and contributes a greater dimension to the scene, such that Mary's profound feelings for God

were reciprocated because “He was with her.” Her beloved Creator was “beyond description,” too, loved her, and this eternal love was confirmed by her state of grace and the gift to her and the world of His son.

Moreover, Moratín’s line 54 “Virgen, madre, casta esposa” relates well to Petrarch’s line 47 of *canzone 336:* “madre, figliuola et sposa.” Moratín’s archaic use of the adjective “felice”: “de las hijas de Adán la más felice” (38) has a place in Petrarch’s line 50; “et fatto ‘l mondo libero et felice,” Additionally, the address of Mary in Petrarch, for example “Vergine chiara et stabile in Eterno” (66), “Vergine sacra et alma” (87), “Vergine santa d’ogni gratia piena” (40), has a similar approach in Moratín’s “La honesta virgin, ruborosa y muda” (33). This line by Moratín has more of the tenderness found in Petrarch’s *canzone 366*, but indeed other parts of the *cántico*, and particularly through the alternating use of plain and sharp verse give it a more strong, celebratory lyric in a description of the scene of the Annunciation and ending in the description of the importance of the event Whereas Petrarch’s use of the first person “I” in a more reflective tribute to Mary reveals a sensitivity and acknowledgement of the fineness of her qualities.

Additionally, it is conceivable that an artist’s character influences the interpretation of their work. To this end, Joaquín Arce in *La poesía del siglo ilustrado* (1981) shares the fruit of his investigations on Moratín:

> Escritor de obra reducida, bien pensada, sin extremismos ni excesos, ocupa en la historia de la lírica castellana el primer lugar como cultivador de una ya auténtica poesía neoclásica. Su aspiración constante, más o menos consciente, es volver al espíritu en que se inspiró la literatura antigua, o al que se imaginaba como tal, mediante la elevación paralela de la dignidad de los asuntos y de la forma. (Arce 483)

Arce’s comments relate well to the idea of Moratín’s lyrical works and specifically *La anunciación* as possessing the spirit of poetry from an earlier era, which recalls his

admiration of Petrarch's verse. Also, Arce mentions "la elevación" of "la dignidad de los asuntos y de la forma," which harmonizes with the sacredness of the Annunciation and that Moratín would treat this subject carefully and respectfully.

Then, Arce continues to inform about the writers of the Age of Enlightenment as wishing to "superar la concreta circunstancia histórica …" with their poetry "… para crear la impresión de una historia fuera de tiempo" (Arce 483). This effect is clear in Ricci's visual art of *La Anunciación* where he recreates the historical scene to involve the viewer. Romare Bearden and Carl Holty in *The Painter's Mind: A Study of the Relations of Structure and Space in Painting* (1969) remark that:

> It is ridiculous to imagine that a painter can approach a canvas with a slide rule and measure the correct proportions of beauty and truth …With the painter, the supreme interpretation of pictorial structure lies in a change in his character and vision to a oneness with all the means of his medium and with art itself. This change may not be a natural one: it calls a person to a more highly organized state of being. (Bearden and Holty 84)

Although this observation originates in the twentieth century, it bears scrutiny in the sense of an integration on the part of the painter with the created art and its depiction. In this manner, the artist would naturally need a predisposition toward the subject in order for the portrait to transmit their particular vision. As an example, and continuing with the visual arts for a moment, this can be observed in the varied renditions of the Annunciation scene. Although it is beyond the scope of this study to detail the differences and similarities found within works dedicated to this significant biblical scene, one such example from Ricci's mentor can aid in understanding an earlier artistic portrayal. This brief comparison seeks to depict a moment in time that reveals the dynamism of Ricci's work and enables the observer to view in comparison to Carducho's more static scene, but one not devoid of beauty. A comparison of

Ricci's work and Carducho's *La Anunciación* (late 1500s –early 1600s) (figure 7) reveals two different approaches. Carducho was also from the Madrid school of the Baroque of the XVII, but in his work, we find "Typical of the technically perfect but spiritually uncharged quality of many of Carducho's full-scale works is *The Annunciation,* made for the Convent of the Descalzas Reales in Madrid" (Veliz 21). Although figure 7 is a copy listed by the Prado, this study aims to demonstrate this idea of religious works that are masterfully technical but void of spirit. This technical skill is quite evident in Mannerism, in which the painters' objective was often to display their own talents. Elizabeth Lev states: "enamored of their own prowess, some artists had lost sight of the holy stories in favor of provocation, often of a lascivious nature, or else a vain virtuosity, arraying a dizzying number of figures but masking the sacred message" (Lev 3). This "art for art's sake" as a symptom of Mannerism may or not be the case with this particular work by Carducho, but the "spiritually uncharged" quality is something notable. 'Spiritually charged' could mean a painter's feelings for the subject on canvas, his perception that moves beyond technical considerations for their own sake and transmits, in the example of the chosen work by Ricci, a sense of apparent joy in the news and the beauty of Mary both physically in the moment and her fiat. Perhaps Carducho's rendition could then be considered an example of 'Beauty for beauty's sake,' but without the spiritual significance of the event.

Moreover, Ricci's rendition includes the Baroque preference for movement and transmits the impression that the angel has just arrived to deliver his message. Portús Pérez notes the Baroque style's sense of action as Ricci "—an artist who took Baroque painting in Madrid to the highest degree of dynamism and lavishness of color—took advantage of the expressive possibilities of the Annunciation to compose one of the most interesting and accomplished paintings in his œuvre" (Portús Pérez, *Portrait* 152). However, Bearden and Holty quote Michelangelo as reproving of early Renaissance Flemish painting: "In short this art is without

power and without distinction; it aims at rendering minutely many things at the same time, of which a single one would have sufficed to call forth a man's whole application" (Bearden and Holty 129). Although Flemish painting of the early Renaissance is not a main interest for this study, Michelangelo's words may be applicable to the essential qualities of a painting in that the power of the depiction should be perceived by the viewer. Indeed, Moratín's *cántico* informs the reader of the angel's countenance as he descends onto the earth and then fills Mary's chamber with the light of his presence "…y resplandece la estancia de María" (28–29). The scene gives a feeling of happening in the moment the viewer perceives it, and thus they become a privileged witness to the exchange with the accompaniment of Ricci's lively representation "¡Oh, instante dichoso / de amor y consuelo / que la tierra al cielo / para siempre unió" (46–49). Furthermore, the movement in the midst of the conversation between Mary and the angel Gabriel surrounded by the angelic presence of the cherub that observes and pulls back the curtain above Mary's head are reminiscent of the painting style of Alonso Cano (1601–1667) seen in his *La Inmaculada Concepción* (c. 1650) (figure 8) (Portús Pérez 152) and Titian (Tiziano Vecellio) (1485 - 1576), and in particular *Ratto d'Europa* (*The Rape of Europa*) (1559–1562) (figure 9) with its flowing angels in seemingly floating positions having a downward gaze. Thereby, Cano's influence could have occurred when he lived and worked in Madrid, while Titian's influence could have come by way of his strong international presence as a portraitist and wide regard for his mythical themes, as this work was commissioned for King Phillip II of Spain and later inspired Spanish artists such as Rubens and Diego Velázquez (1599–1660) (Titian). Another painter that transmits elegance, graceful lines, and a wonderful use of color and lighting is Federico Barocci (1533–1612). These qualities are also found in Ricci's *La anunciación*, quite possibly because Barocci was inspired by Titian and coincidentally was commissioned by Phillip of Spain. Thus, the possible interconnections of the painters and their works can serve to illustrate both the

cultural exchange between Italy and Spain, but also the legacy of Spanish Baroque art. Within Spain's artistic inheritance, Ricci's portrayal of the Annunciation uniquely depicts the encounter between Mary and the angel Gabriel, which also expresses a visual tension depicted in the seeming opposites of the scene.

Technically, "The tension in a work of art is produced by opposition, the scale of different areas, as well as by directional movements and counter movements. The more powerful the opposition (this includes color) the firmer will be the equilibrium of the work. Unlike balance, equilibrium is the product of the proper use of opposition and contrast" (Bearden and Holty 44). Portús Pérez determines the tension of the dynamism of Gabriel in contrast to Mary's serene demeanor, as well as her robes in reds and blues as a "counter-weight" to the golden, green, ivory and deep red of Gabriel's garments (Portús Pérez, *Portrait* 152). This opposition is created by the angel Gabriel extending his hand and fingers and pointing his knee towards Mary, and her counter-movements downwards with her gaze and her hands crossed about her chest in a posture of receiving. This tension provides an equilibrium to present a combining of these elements and a proper use of the space of the tableau creating, according to Portús Pérez, an "extraordinarily self-contained" impression that "creates a moving, though restrained, narrative effect" (Portús Pérez, *Portrait* 152). There is also a triangular form between the painted head of Mary, the angel Gabriel, and one of the cherubs at his feet. This marks a repetition of forms to draw the attention of the viewer as the main cherub below watches the scene intently. The visitors from two points forming one side of the triangle expose to view the showcase of God's masterpiece. At this point, having examined Moratín and Ricci's works from a technical perspective, Bernard will begin the theological discussion to open the conversation to these voices.

Hence, this message for Mary and that of the pregnancy of Mary's cousin Elizabeth[57] who would give birth to the precursor of Jesus, John the Baptist, was entrusted to the angel Gabriel who was "sent by God" (Luke 1:26). According to Bernard of Clairvaux: "Among the blessed spirits themselves Gabriel alone was excepted, for he alone was found worthy of his name and embassy" (Bernard, *Sermons* 23). Moratín echoes the grand stature of the angel in lines 25–26 "Que tú solo anunicas / favores de Dios" (Moratín 361), which refers to the extraordinary trust God placed in his messenger and the exclusive nature of both his errands. Consequently, Bernard in Homily 1 of *Missus Est* makes note of the importance of the name of the angel that was sent to deliver the divine message. 'Gabriel' translates to "Strength of God" who initially concerned Mary as to the nature of the greeting, but as a member of God's tour-de-force on a mission of the highest priority, he was able to gently allay her concerns. Gabriel represents and thereby presents to Mary the "Power of God," yet as one that does not overwhelm nor overpower her but instead puts her at ease in a moment of uncertainty as to the intention of both the messenger and the message (23–24). Gabriel says to her: "Fear not, Mary, for thou hast found grace with God"[58] and as well in Moratín: "'No temas, no, la dice, / de las hijas de Adán la más felice. Llena de Gracia estás; está contigo / el Dios que adoras inefable, eterno, …" (lines 37–40). Here Moratín relates how Gabriel could help calm her mind and heart in preparation for the extraordinary news that he brings. This scriptural scene suggests strength discovering softness, might showing delicacy, firmness revealing restraint on the part of the angel that in reality was a heavenly intrude into a moment of the young Mary in her private chamber. In this manner, Gabriel as God's messenger functions as a type of divine framing to show off His masterpiece to the world as He sent His "strength" to Mary. Bernard's notion is important in Ricci's rendition as a deliverer of the Divine Word, Gabriel

[57] Luke 1:11-20.
[58] Luke 1:30.

represents God's elite, as not just any messenger would be given this assignment despite the fact that the task as it did not require supernatural puissance. Interestingly, the mystic Anne Catherine Emmerich (1774–1824) that was given the vision to see both the life of Christ and of Mary speaks of the Annunciation: "But now at her [Mary's] right hand there poured down such a mass of light in a slanting line from the ceiling of the room…I saw in this light a shining white youth, with flowing yellow hair, floating down before her. It was the Angel Gabriel. He gently moved his arms away from his body as he spoke to her" (Emmerich 143). Allowing that the opening Voices of Moratín's *cántico* relate the angel Gabriel moving swiftly ("desciende veloz, / moviendo las plumas" lines 2–3) before his encounter with Mary, both the power and strength of the only messenger that "announces the favors of God" and his tenderness once he arrives and in lines 28–32 "…resplandece / la estancia de María; / de fragantes aromas se enriquece / el aire en torno, y suena melodía igual a la del cielo" indicates more of a celestial ambiance; after travelling speedily to accomplish his divine mission, Gabriel must now relate it to a young virgin who "se postra absorta al paraninfo hermoso / ve tanto bien, y merecerle duda" (lines 34–35) alone in her private room. Wherefore, the power and strength of the messenger of God would then need to appeal to the concerns of the "honesta" "ruborosa" and "muda" virgin so as not to startle or concern her to such a degree that she would be less receptive to his delivery of the message from God.

God's force is displayed in the space that Gabriel occupies in the first lines of the *cántico* and how both his attire and the brightness shining from him illuminate Mary's entire room. Here, the probable smallness of the room is lit up from something of the brightness of a searchlight ("el ángel del Señor, y resplandece / la estancia de María;") from a being that is not a messenger angel, but the messenger angel ("Que tú solo anuncias / favores de Dios.") arrives with the power and might of God to bring His most precious daughter the news of miraculous event to come. And yet, Gabriel is gentle with Mary by addressing her as "full of

grace" as had found favor with God but reassuring her and informing her about her cousin's pregnancy and how her own blessed pregnancy was to take place. It is important to note that grace, or the Holy Spirit was already in Mary ("Hail full of grace the Lord is with thee") and he will now come upon her to conceive the Christ child by "…the more abundant grace which He will pour out upon her" (Bernard, *Sermons* 63). From Moratín we can get a sense of the angel's large presence and the contrast to the "honesta," "ruborosa y muda" young virgin Mary. The last verse of Moratín's *cántico* bring forth the image of the woman of Revelation[59] clothed with the sun and the moon under her feet defeating the dragon in a battle of good and evil, but still within the framework he created by simply using the adjective "tierna" ("Sola tú, con tierna planta, / oprimiste la garganta / de la sierpe aborrecida,") concerning her tender foot crushing the head of the serpent (Revelation 12:1). However, as a foreshadowing to the Book of Revelation, Bernard remarks on how Gabriel "Strength of God" imparts his strength to her "in order that he might strengthen and support the Virgin, by nature timid and bashful, whom the novelty of the miracle might terrify and overpower" (Bernard, *Sermons* 24). This would not necessarily be apparent in the account of the Annunciation, but serves to demonstrate the innate nature of Mary throughout her life: being instilled with the power of Gabriel's angelic strength and the God's Son by the Holy Spirit at this moment, she will become the powerful *Theotokos*, or "God-Bearer" and defeat the forces of evil in her feminine delicacy. Hence, this study will further open the discussion to Ricci's work that is intended to demonstrate its visual significance towards a deeper understanding of the scriptural scene in what has been described thus far by Moratín, *The Song of Songs*, Petrarch, Bernard and Saint Gonzaga. Subsequently, additional theological and literary voices will further assist with this study's interdisciplinary interpretation.

[59] Revelation 12:1.

Firstly, Hans Belting in *Likeness and Presence: A History of the Image before the Era of Art* (1994) comments on the interrelation between image and Scripture, and cites Gregory the Great (?–604) as a medieval source to explain the concept of *memoria*:

> According to Gregory the Great, painting, "like writing," induces remembrance. "To call back to memory" is, first of all, the task of the Scriptures, with the image able to play only a supporting role. Image and Scripture together recall what happened in the story of salvation, which is more than a historical fact … Images contain moments from a narrative, although they themselves are not narratives …The differences between them are the outcome of historical factors and consequently make possible remembrance *within* or *through* the image. (Belting 9–10)

In this way, Gregory the Great clarifies the relationship between Scripture and the image in order to view painting from a theological perspective, not the beauty importance or purpose rooted in the painter or the painting itself. Then, by considering this perspective, the role of Ricci's work within the theological treatment of the artwork will become more apparent.

Paleotti in his *Discorso* observes that Christian images convey to the viewer a delight (*diletto*) that presumes anterior knowledge of the subject presented and entails three types of human cognition. The anterior knowledge would be the familiarity with Scripture and the stories from the lives of the saints and would be able to recognize these scenes in a visual representation and in this case, an understanding of the Annunciation. Then, with this prior knowledge, they could be received by the viewer in three forms: that which moves through the senses, that which is rational, and that which is supernatural and exceeds the capacity of the senses and rational intelligence. Paleotti claims that the latter is "spiritual cognition" given by God to the purest of souls (Paleotti 111–12). To each of these connect with the emotions [*affetti*], in which is found delight, which can act as a sensual delight, a rational delight, and a spiritual delight, all of which can signify diverse experiences of the same image

(Paleotti 112). In this way, Paleotti seems to indicate different levels of experience of a visual work that might be an emotional response, an intellectual understanding or curiosity, and a supernatural, one could say, participation with the work which presumably might involve revelation, deeper understanding and/or profound insights as to the nature, purpose or message of the work. Tina Beattie, in her seminar "The Annunciation in Theology and Art: shedding new light on an old doctrine" for the Centre for Marian Studies on 26 March 2025, comments that no part of an artist's work is accidental, but rather completely intentional, and although Baroque paintings were not exclusively purposed for literacy as in Medieval times, the viewer, garnering the prior knowledge stipulated by Paleotti, engages with the artists through their rendition, and "in a sacramental[60] sense, enter into the scene" (Beattie, *The Annunciation*). The supernatural nature of Paleotti's third category of human cognition relates to Beattie's observation that visual art can be "an encounter with the mystery of God" and thereby the *diletto* would then concern a divine gift to the viewer.

Therefore, according to the aforementioned kinds of human cognition outlined by Paleotti, we can first see, and, in some instances, feel the beauty of the scene in Ricci's *La Anunciación* that it seeks to portray. As typical for Baroque style, the scene expresses a moment in mid conversation between Gabriel and Mary, as the hand and fingers of the former are raised in an attempt to reinforce the words of his message, diligently performing his mission to pass on his message and elicit an affirmative response. This position of the hands and fingers does not "feel" frozen during the entirety of the exchange, but rather that the

[60] The 1983 Code of Canon Law (CIC) defines sacramentals as "sacred signs by which effects, especially spiritual effects, are signified in some imitation of the sacraments and are obtained through the intercession of the Church" (1166). The Second Vatican Council's Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, Sacrosanctum Concilium (SC), further describes sacramentals by their ability to "signify effects, particularly of a spiritual nature, which are obtained through the intercession of the Church. By them men are disposed to receive the chief effect of the sacraments, and various occasions in life are rendered holy" (60). From *Catholic Answers: https://shop.catholic.com/blog/what-is-a-sacramental/#:~:text=Sacramentals%20come%20in%20diverse%20shapes,the%20sign%20of%20the%20cross*.

viewer is privy to witness and enjoy a private encounter, and in terms of Paleotti's "spiritual cognition" that exceeds rational understanding, the scene seems outside of chronological time but well within *kairos* time to gaze upon Mary. There is both a beauty in the visual elements of movement flowing around the angel, especially in the lightness of his clothing and softly curled hair. This effect transmits the transitory nature of the scene that is amplified by the viewer's prior knowledge that the angel will soon depart. The observer then can follow the hand of Gabriel to set their sight on the innocent and unsuspecting Mary, as one would contemplate a conversation a few feet away, provoking an emotional response such as surprise, contentment, expectation, or fulfillment. Then, the rational process might wonder about the size of the room or balcony, the time of day, and due to the afore mentioned dynamism in Baroque technique, there might be questions as to at what point of the conversation the observer happened upon, such as if the angel had just arrived a moment before. Next, the spiritual cognition that might consider the perfection of Mary in her physical representation and her agreement with the Will of God, and in this way, Ricci's work can be seen as "a ladder leading up to eternal things and cause men to desire the goods of heaven. Then the soul feels an enjoyment deep inside, exceeding the other two [cognitive processes] mentioned above to the degree that it arises from a much more lofty and perfect cause" (Paleotti 111–12). This third process is considered a heavenly gift and, in this way, not within one's own capabilities to acquire, but an enjoyment that reaches beyond an emotional joy or rational understanding of biblical mysteries. For example, the viewer could experience revelations regarding Mary's own feelings, thoughts, participation, or a more profound apperception of the event. Consequently, the different types of cognitive processes as presented by the theologian Paleotti can bring about an understanding of the processes occurring during the observation of Ricci's work and then assist in the understanding of the

levels which Marian art can touch a person and raise cognition to a spiritual level of delight that "surpass[es] by far all the others deriving from material things" (Paleotti 114).

With this in mind, it may benefit the discussion to note the particularities of Ricci's *La Anunciación*. Within Spanish Baroque painting there exists much variety, but the works of Francisco Ricci can be characterized as courtly high Baroque style. Ricci's painting reveals an expertise in the use of color and materials together with a sense of action or movement, and although generally on a grander scale, *La Anunciación* is one of his smaller pieces measuring 122 x 96 cm, and is, according to Javier Portús Pérez in Guía Pintura barroca española (2001) is "…un testigo de las magníficas dotes de su autor" (Portús Pérez 232). As maintained by Portús Pérez, due to the original lowered arch finishing, this work was most likely the upper part of an altarpiece. However, despite the size requirements of the altarpiece, Ricci "…ha logrado plasma una composición que desborda dignidad, delicadeza y monumentalidad, y demuestra hasta qué grado de exquisitez llegó la pintura barroca madrileña" (Portús Pérez 232). Portús Pérez also describes Ricci as having inherited the long tradition of depiction of the Annunciation but ignores the typical renditions of Mary situated in a room. In this manner, he frees the space by means of light and color to illustrate a place less earthly-bound where the painter

> […] se preocupa más por subrayar el delicioso diálogo entre María y el ángel mediante una atmósfera maravillosa, que en describir pormenorizadamente un espacio real. Ese juego entre historia, ilusión, realidad, aparición y milagro aparece subrayado por el ángel que, en la parte superior izquierda, descorre una cortina y nos hace testigos de la escena. (Portús Pérez 232)

The combination of expression, color, and composition and the aesthetic effect they communicate denotes "a joy impossible to describe," as von Balthazar proposes above, and

as such, we can feel a sense of privilege or exclusive access to view the momentous exchange as it is happening in the Baroque style.

At first sight, one might notice the moment of action of the Baroque style with the angel's hand in a position to signal his intent to speak and to garner Mary's attention due to the importance of the words he will impart. Mary was initially troubled by the greeting of Gabriel "and thought within herself what manner of salutation this might be" as he pronounced her "blessed among women" and that she was to bear the Redeemer but that would conflict with her promise of virginity to God. However, Mary's question to the angel "How shall this be done, because I know not man?" denotes a query not "if" it would happen, but on the contrary "how" it would. Bernard explains in "On the Dignity of Mary and on the Mystical Stars that Constitute Her Crown" (1170–1190):

> Deservedly therefore, did she obtain the one blessing without forfeiting the other, so that her virginity derived a great increase of glory from her fruitfulness and her fruitfulness in like manner was enhanced by her virginity: as two stars that seem to borrow additional brightness from each other's rays. For it is doubtless a grand thing to be a virgin; but to be a virgin and a mother at once-that is something far greater and grander in every way. (St. Bernard, "On the Dignity" 269–70)

Mary, by virtue of her "yes," was able to become mother to Christ and yet maintain her virginity that she so desired to dedicate to God. Thus, Mary's brightness is depicted by Ricci in the contrast of the light coming past the curtain to shine on her and also reveal her halo.

Furthermore, Ricci's *La Anunciación* reveals Mary as glowing both from within and through a diffused light or saturated light rather than the single beam frequently depicted in Annunciation art in which the Holy Spirit, often represented as a dove, is the source. Ricci's rendition shows both Mary and the angel Gabriel as light sources, as well as diffused light coming down from the top at an angle and reaching her halo. Beattie's remarks that the use of

light in Annunciation works reveals "God as splendor" that becomes apparent in Ricci's work in the luminous presence of the figures that radiate divine light that involves the third aspect of Paleotti's theory of how the observer receives a work of visual art. The magnificence of the scene–God's masterpiece encountering His strength in angelic form–that the viewer might "enter" the biblical moment to witness it as the "light of the world has entered [enters] into creation" (Beattie *The Annunciation*) as a likely reference to "That was the true light, which enlighteneth every man that cometh into this world" (John 1:9).

On the other hand, Gabriel's robustness, given his name "The Strength of God," is apparent in his stature: muscular arms and strong build that suggest his special position in the army of God. Yet it is the combination of his expression combined with his visual physique that creates a feeling of power yet safety in his presence. This may well be accomplished through Ricci's use of a Baroque palette of blues, reds, and soft green tones throughout the painting that suggest a sensitivity in the encounter and thereby can bring a visual harmony the reading of the *cántico* without overwhelming the words of the Gospel. Chapman observes the preferences for soft and bright tones, and the harmonious balance of the different parts in relation to our perception of beauty. And light, "the queen of colors—bathing all that is beheld, adds its color" (Chapman 50) brightly illuminates and thereby highlights Mary's beautiful face and delicate nature.

Furthermore, Moratín's description of Gabriel as "El bello semblante / en risa bañó, / que inspira alegría, / disipa temor" seems to have found its visual interpretation as Ricci's Gabriel balances his personal power given by God and the joy he finds in his mission. Ricci's Gabriel seems to emit a soft tone of voice and a gentle look that inspires joy. Thus, Ricci's use of light in his work correlates well to Moratín's description of the garments of messenger of God "y en ellos duplica / sus luces el sol" (lines 15–16) that "resplandece la estancia de María" (28–29) and the angel "… Dijo, y la esfera / que en luces arde …" (lines 42–43). He

wears the brightness of God and "Ropajes sutiles / adorno le son, y en ellos duplica / sus luces el sol" although it may not be clear to the observer if the diadem that Ricci's Gabriel wears is of great value, but he is wearing a fabric and jewel that alludes to Moratín's depiction in lines 11–12: "diadema le ciñe / de estremo valor" The following two lines concern themselves with Gabriel's hair which is a prominent aspect of his appearance both in the *cántico* in lines 9–10 "El rubio cabello / al hombre esparició;" and in the painting in which Gabriel's abundance of shoulder length hair is "spread" or envisioned as thick and full.

In this manner, Moratín and Ricci portray the beauty and majestic presence of the angel who, in a gesture of tenderness, presents Mary with a stem of lilies symbolizing her virginity and purity. This notion speaks of "I am the flower of the field, and the lily of the valleys" (*Song* 2:1), one of the flower images of the beloved, and is "a metaphorical portrayal of love and marital bliss" when the Holy Spirit overshadows Mary, his Sacred Spouse, to conceive Christ. It is the words of Christ in Luke 12:24 that emphasize the importance of the reliance on God ("Consider the lilies, how they grow: they labour not, neither do they spin") that Mary consented to in her fiat, and later, the lily emerged as an emblem of chastity and virtue attributed to Mary (Digital Bible). Traditionally, the lilies used to represent virginity and the conception without stain of sin that "sobresale entre un mundo martirizado por el pecado" (Rey Ballesteros 117). Additionally, "Both the rose and the lily, from the Song of Songs, were readily taken as scriptural prefigurations of the Virgin, expressing her perfect beauty, singularity, and exceptional purity" (Twomey, *The Serpent* 173). Verdon, in his work *Mary in Western Art* (2005), mentions the visions of Saint Bridget of Sweden (1303–1373) that related before the beginning of time, "God decided to create Mary" and "Mary's soul, prepared by the Creator, was "a lantern emanation light" and "an ardent flame of love," while her body was "a most pure crystal vase" (Verdon, *Mary* 89) which also symbolizes purity and *claritas* of the body and a flame of love for the Creator in her soul that would have been

apparent according to the afore presented theological considerations in Chapter 1. Rubin mentions the writings of Hildegard of Bingen (1098–1179)[61] in which the saint declares Mary "You appeared as a shining white lily, as God looked upon you before all of Creation" [62] (Rubin 31–32) and Further, Hildegard of Bingen in her *Symphonia* Part II Mother and Son in "O quam magnum miraculum" ("Antiphon for the Virgin") number 16 lines 11–15: "Do you see? She makes goodness / sweeter than perfume, / brings more grace to heaven / than ever disgrace to earth" (Hildegard of Bingen, *Symphonia* 120–21). Thus, the Annunciation as a revelation in art intertwines with the event to reveal deeper meaning through images in alignment with Scripture and its melodic counterpart in poetry to expand upon the descriptions in the Gospels in this instance to present "La honesta virgen, ruborosa y muda" that "makes goodness sweeter than perfume."

Ricci illustrates natural beauty and qualities in a rendition that is not necessarily typical of Annunciation art: the strength of Gabriel and his tenderness, the delicacy of Mary and her humility–in a manner that does not illude to these or paint them symbolically, but rather in a dynamic fashion by showing the viewer how the exchange could have very well seemed if represented on canvas. Therefore, if we consider the questions: What does sweetness and humility look like at the moment before becoming the Mother of God? How does the angel attempt not to frighten the young Mary with is powerful presence whilst delivering his weighty message? After reading Moratín's *cántico*, a space opens for contemplation on the part of the reader to imagine the encounter in a new way, brought to light by Bernard and to sight by Ricci. However, this is no easy task to achieve as Ambrose of Milan (374–397) comments in *Commentary of Saint Ambrose on the Gospel according to Saint Luke* (c.380):

---

[61] Hildegard of Bingen was in epistolary communication with Bernard of Clairvaux in which Bernard ("the outstanding saint of her age") encouraged Hildegard to continue written on her prophetic visions and he also interceded with Pope Eugenius III (1088–1153) and after reading the *Scivias* (c. 1151) "sent the abbess {Hildegard] a letter of apostolic blessing and protection" (Hildegard of Bingen *Symphonia* 4).
[62] Hildegard of Bingen. *Symphonia: A Critical Edition of the Symphonia armonie celestium revelationum* [Symphony of the harmony of celestial revelations], translated by Barbara Newman. Cornell UP, 1988, 126-127.

"Undoubtedly Divine Scripture is not bound by the laws of worldly wisdom, nor by rules of writing that are more concerned with elegance of language than with truth and reality. Nevertheless, if you search the Scriptures, you will find there, in these diving writings, much that you will admire" (Ambrose, *Commentary* 1).

Ambrose continues to reflect on Mary as God's masterpiece in her humility and prudence in spite of the unexpected greeting, but that "For Mary alone this salutation was reserved […] that she alone should be called full of grace; for she, and she alone had obtained such a grace." At this greeting Ambrose remarks that: "Mary blushed" and subsequently begins his explanation of how Mary in her modesty differs from a woman demonstrating a "kind of modesty; in the Virgin, a blush renders her modesty more charming" (Ambrose, *Comentary* 29). Bernard puts forth his interpretation on Gabriel's thoughts during his meeting with Mary: "Then the angel, looking on the Virgin, and easily reading the confliction thoughts that were passing throught her mind, encouraged her in her timidity and in her doubt. Calling her by her name, he gently persuaded her not to fear" (Bernard, *Sermons* 54). Ricci's depiction of Mary in both her posture and facial expression relate the moment in which she contemplates Gabriel's words. Her prudence appears to be manifested in Moratín's lyric "La honesta virgen, ruborosa y muda" (33). Hence, through these insights into the biblical conversation, the writings of Saints Ambrose and Bernard aid in animating the scene and reveal a personal view of Mary, more human in her blushing and yet full of grace like no other woman, encountering the 'Power of God' in her private chamber.

At this private meeting, one can imagine that when the angel Gabriel first meets Mary, he is his mesmerized by her beauty. Here Dante speaks in *Paradiso*:

> "O santo padre, che per me comporte
> l'esser qua giù, lasciando il dolce loco
> nel qual tu siedi per etterna sorte,

qual è quell' angel che con tanto gioco

guarda ne li occhi la nostra regina,

innamorato sì che par di foco?" (Dante, *Paradiso* Text XXXII 364, lines 100–105)

According to Charles S. Singleton, Dante's speech in *Paradiso* (1321) memorializes the Annunication and the angel Gabriel's everlasting devotion to Mary as "He seems afire" as per Singleton's translation, and Moratín describes him as speaking "Él, con acento grave y amoroso" (Moratín 361 line 36), while Ricci's visual rendition demonstrates the tender adoration of the angel for Mary and as well his prudence as not to frighten Mary, as related above. This further insight into the heart of the angel has the effect of increasing the viewer's sympathy for the strong messenger of God, whose fondness is apparent in his expression attempts to conceal a burning love for her, restrained within the commitment entrusted to him by God. His joy at seeing her is represented with an intensity that verges on being over-bearing, yet his stance and expression reveal more than a simple interaction. Then continuing in *Paradiso,* Bernard then responds to Dante's question to reveal more about the angelic messenger:

Ed elli a me: "Baldezza e leggiadria

quant'esser puote in angelo e in alma,

tutta è in lui; e sì volem che sia,

perch'elli è quelli che portò la palma

guiso a Maria, quando 'l Figliuol di Dio

carcar si volse de la nostra salma (Dante, *Paradiso* Text XXXII 366, lines 109–14).

Singleton's translation renders it "Confidence and grace, as much as there can be in angel and in soul, are in him…" speaks well of Moratín's and Ricci's Gabriel, with all his other qualities mentioned about, to go deeper into the holy meeting and understand how Gabriel's loving devotion to Mary opens a path of understanding of Mary herself.

As some of Gabriel's fine qualities were mentioned about, this study now looks to Mary's own perfect virtues. Bernard proposes that "If Mary had not been humble the [Holy] Spirit would have not rested on her. If the Holy Spirit had not rested on her, she would never have become fruitful; for how without Him could she have conceived of Him" (Bernard, *Sermons* 27). Mary is "so reverently saluted by the angel? and so lowly as to be espoused to a carpenter?" in what Bernard determines a "Beautiful commingling of virginity with humility" that is so "pleasing to God, in Whom humility commends virginity, and virginity adorns humility" (Bernard, *Sermons* 26). He proposes further that "…without humility, I will venture to say that even the virginity of Mary would not have been pleasing to Him, the Divine Majesty" (Bernard, *Sermons* 27). In this manner, the virtue of humility is paramount to Mary's beauty that, according to Louis de Montfort, is infinite: "…and finally, that the depth of her humility, and of all her virtues and graces, is an abyss which never can be sounded" (Montfort 3). Equally, Mary's choice is motivated by a will to serve God, not herself, and therefore, despite her personal vow of chastity, offers herself to God's plan: "Mary forgets herself and her virginity, and glories only in her humility" (Bernard, *Sermons* 28). John Paul II expands Mary's humility in her response to the angel and placed herself in service to God: "The words "Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord" express the fact that from the outset she accepted and understood her own motherhood as a total *gift of self,* a gift of her person to the service of the saving plans of the Most High" (John Paul II, *Redemptoris* 55).

Additionally, Ricci's rendition reveals a noteworthy aspect of Mary's posture. According to Portús Pérez, the position of Mary's hands in Ricci's rendition relates Mary's physical response to Gabriel's presence denote a type of protection within her own thoughts and impressions of the angel, all the while remaining enclosed within herself. This idea calls to mind the image of an enclosed garden or a sealed fountain from *The Song of Songs*: "My sister, *my* spouse, is a garden enclosed, a garden enclosed, a fountain sealed up" (Song 4:12).

Louis de Montfort determines that "Mary is the "sealed fountain" (Montfort 3) and Bernard speaks of a historical interpretation of the symbol of the garden as "Creation is symbolized in the sowing or planting of the garden" (*Bernard of Clairvaux on the Song of Songs*, vol. 2, 28). Hildegard of Bingen in her "O splendidissma gemma" in "Antiphon for the Virgin" part II Mother and Son number 10 lines 1–5: "O respendent jewel / and unclouded beauty of the sun / which was poured into you, / a fountain springing / from the Father's heart," (Hildegard of Bingen, *Symphonia* 114–115), in her "Hodie aperuit" Mother and Son number 11 lines 1- 2: "Today a closed gate / has opened to us" (Hildegard of Bingen, *Symphonia* 116–117).

Gregory Cleveland, in *Beholding Beauty: Mary in the Song of Songs* (2020), further relates the idea of something precious and secure, safe from the outside world:

> Mary is truly the "garden locked" of the Song of Songs, enclosed by the Spirit for his own cultivation and enjoyment … Her garden is enclosed by the Lord's protective love, which admits no destructive foxes, lions, or leopards, symbols of evil. Mary as the bride is enclosed in the garden of her heart for mystical union with her Beloved. The Spirit makes her supremely fruitful. She becomes an orchard of trees, fruits, and spices. As the Spirit blows [*ruah* in Hebrew meaning breath or wind, and refers to the Holy Spirit or breath of God] upon her garden, the scent is wafted abroad to faraway places. (Cleveland 167)

Cleveland's commentaries serve to enrich the discussion of Mary's inner thoughts of protection as her "garden" was fertile and sweet fragrances. In this quotation Mary "is a garden enclosed, a fountain sealed up" (Song 4:12) with the intermingling of the cedar and the cypress, spikenard and spices that indicate a place of delight fit for the King. Likewise, Beattie, in her seminar on the Annunciation in Art, refers to the enclosed garden that prepares "to welcome Christ in" (Beattie, *The Annunciation*) as God hides what He loves: "For he hath

hidden me in his tabernacle; in the day of evils, he hath protected me in the secret place of his tabernacle" (Psalms 26:5).

Additionally, John Paul II notes the beauty of the metaphors: "A garden enclosed you are, my sister, bride, a garden closed, a fountain sealed" (Song 4:12). He draws attention to "not only the beauty of language, but a beauty of the truth expressed by this language" (John Paul II, *Man* 570). This truth, in addition to the visual aspect of Ricci's *La Anunciación*, can be found in Moratín's description of the scene. Not only does the reader find the power of God in the form of Gabriel and the details of his celestial visit and lovely countenance, but also in the fact that all of his majesty is representative of the majesty of God, who sent him, and that all of the glitter or brightness and the fragrance noting the angel's presence, along with "la esfera que en luces arde y arreboles de oro vuelve a romper con ímpetu sonoro…" (42–44) is all for Mary. The divine display that is sent by God to receive Mary's consent is in her honor, and although the message could have been given with less grandiosity, nothing could be more fitting for the "masterpiece of God," the "garden enclosed," and the "fountain sealed" whose humility is revealed as "La honesta virgen, ruborosa y muda" (line 33).

For what does "honest" imply when it refers to a virgin? Perhaps again from *The Song of Songs*: "Thou art all fair, O my love. and there is not a spot in thee" (Song 4:7) for Mary's purity would be an important element in her ability to carry to term the unblemished God-Man. The description of Mary implies as well that she was true to her vow of chastity and devoted to God: "What manner of one is thy beloved of the beloved, O thou most beautiful among women?" (Song 5:9) for her beauty can be seen in her desire to please God in her character and in her actions as "Virgen, madre, casta esposa, sola tú, la venturosa, la escogida sola fuiste, que en tu seno recibiste el tesoro celestial" (lines 54–58). This relates well to John Paul II's writing on both the "visible" and "invisible" beauty of femininity (and masculinity) (John Paul II, *Man* 567), that Ricci's rendition of Mary's expression of having more within

that meets the eye upon first examination. Moratín's lyrics remind the reader that Mary was the only one chosen by God as the chaste bride that was a "garden enclosed," "a fountain sealed" that "que la tierra al Cielo para siempre unió" (lines 48–49).

Henceforth, the beauty of Mary's self-sacrifice as the "handmaid of the Lord" as "Mary is the excellent masterpiece of the Most High, the knowledge and possession of which He has reserved to Himself" (Montfort, *True* 2). Louis de Montfort explains:

> She is the grand and divine world of God, where there are beauties and treasures unspeakable. She is the magnificence of the Most High, where He hid, as in her bosom, His only Son, and in Him all that is most excellent and precious. Oh, what grand and hidden things that mighty God has wrought in this admirable creature, as she herself had to acknowledge, in spite of her profound humility: "He that is mighty hath done great things for me (Luke 1:49). (Montfort, *True* 2)

The innocent beauty of the Virgin "embodied the idea of feminine beauty, purity and love and was considered as a complement to the work of the Lord in the salvation of mankind" (Hibbard 24) and Ricci's Mary conveys the radiance of being what von Balthazar describes, which comes with her expression in the form of the beauty of her femininity that "hath found favor with God" (Luke 1:30).

In *Paradiso* (1321), Dante, with the aid of "il suo fedel Bernardo," is able to see and receive graces from "… la regina dela Cielo, ond' ïo ardo / tutto d'amor, ne farà ogne grazia" (Dante, *Paradiso* 352). Dante describes:

> Vidi a lor giochi quivi e a lor canti
> ridere una bellezza, che letizia
> era ne li occhi a tutti li altri santi;
> e s'io avessi in dir tanta divizia
> quanta ad imaginar, no ardirei

lo minimo tentar di sua delizia (Dante, *Paradiso* XXXI, lines 131–38 354)

Mary's beauty, in the words of Dante, reveals itself in an image of Mary smiling, which recalls Mary's restrained smile in Ricci's work. Here she seems to be wondering as to the angel's greeting, but within such mental deliberations, are seen her great beauty and gentleness. Bernard in *Paradiso* explains the depth of Mary's beauty to Dante: "Riguarda omai ne la faccia che a Cristo / più si somiglia, ché la sua chiarezza / sola ti può disporre a veder Cristo" (Dante, *Paradiso* XXXII 364, lines 85–87). Thus, these passages from *Paradiso* relate to Jaroslav Pelikan's idea in *Mary Through the Centuries: Her Place in the History of Culture* (1996) in which the author describes how through "[t]he privilege of beholding Mary" (139) or "Regina celi" (Queen of Heaven)[63] the reader can wonder about the transformation that occurred in Dante and her countenance that "She was at the same time the personal embodiment of the supreme virtues of which humanity was made capable through the gift of grace: in her, as Bernard said, 'is every goodness found in any creature'" (Pelikan 142).

Pelikan relates that Mary possesses the virtues of "faith, hope, and charity,"[64] describing "la donna del cielo" (Dante, *Paradiso* XXII, 360 line 29). In Paradiso, Bernard reveals Mary as "chè l'uno e l'altro aspetto de la fede / igualmente empierà questo giardino" (Dante *Paradiso*, 360, lines 38–39), which evokes the garden imagery of *The Song of Songs*. Further, Hildegard of Bingen in her *Symphonia* Part II Mother and Son in "O viridissima virga" ("Song to the Virgin") number 19 lines 9–12 expresses in her lyrics the garden metaphor of the womb and the beauty of Christ growing within: "For in you blossomed the beautiful flower / that gave fragrance / to all the spices / which had been dry" (Hildegard of Bingen, *Symphonia* 126–127) and in "O quam preciosa" ("Responsory for the Virgin") number 22

[63] Dante *Paradiso* XXIII line 128, p. 264
[64] 1 Cor 13:13

lines 1–7: “O how precious is the virginity / of this virgin / who has a closed gate, / and whose womb / hold divinity suffused / with his warmth, / so that a flower grew in her” (Hildegard of Bingen, *Symphonia* 134–135). There emerge the images of Mary as so precious to God in her desire to do His will that makes her obedience the place for the beautiful flower of Christ to bloom within an enclosed garden.

Here, again, as Mary was alone in her private quarters, it is fitting that Gabriel addresses her apprehension: “And the angel said to her: Fear not, Mary, for thou hast found grace with God” (Luke 1:30*)*, and requires faith on the part of Mary after the angel reveals the events to unfold. Mary replies: “How shall this be done, because I know not man?”[65] Bernard asserts that Mary’s question to the angel occurred after “a prudent silence, for she was in doubt what this salutation might be, and she preferred in humility to give no answer rather than risk speaking of what she did not understand” (Bernard, *Sermons* 62). Scripture says: “Humble thy heart, and endure: incline thy ear, and receive the words of understanding: and make not haste in the time of clouds” (Eccl 2:2). Mary’s question that both Ambrose and Bernard reference denotes a willingness to participate in God’s divine plan and a wondering about how this mighty feat would be accomplished as she had made a vow of chastity and consecrated her body to God. Her concern was not asking Gabriel to allay her doubts as did Elizabeth’s husband Zacharias, but rather a willingness to become the holy vessel to receive the Redeemer: “Mary shows readiness to do what she is asked and does not doubt that the mystery will be accomplished as she had read the Scripture “Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign. Behold a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and his name shall be called Emmanuel [God is with us]” (Isaias 7:14). In this context, it is understood that Mary would be familiar with the words of the prophet Isaias, but she still would have to entrust to God her future with her earthly spouse, amongst her people, and the care she could provide to the

[65] Luke 1:34.

Redeemer when the angel replied: "The Holy Ghost will come upon thee, and the power of the most High shall overshadow thee" (Luke 1:35). Evdokimov offers the theory of early Church spiritual writer Evagrius Ponticus of an alternate interpretation of the Lord's Prayer from one of Saint Luke's manuscripts stating "Your Holy Spirit come" instead of "Your Kingdom come" because " … the Kingdom of God is the Holy Spirit; we pray the Father to send him down on us"[66] (Hausherr 83). Thus, as Evdokimov explains, Evagrius equated the Kingdom of God with the Holy Spirit, and then if "… the contemplated Kingdom is Beauty, the Third Person of the Trinity reveals himself as the *Spirit of Beauty*" which "communicates the splendor of holiness" (Evdokimov 2–3). Thus, this interpretation that the Holy Spirit that overshadowed Mary then endowed her with increased beauty and also enabled her to become pregnant while maintaining the "enclosed garden" exclusively for Christ. It was the loveliness of God's Kingdom on earth that shined on Mary as can be viewed in Ricci's depiction as the quantity of soft, diffused light. Evdokimov continues: "Life and light are the well-known characteristics of the Holy Spirit. Light is above all the power of revelation which is why *Deus revelatus* is called God of Light. This divine Light "enlightens all men" (John 1:9). Thereby the descent of the Holy Spirit introduces to Mary the joy of motherhood, and bestows on her a magnification of her beauty, and by means of her son, brings heaven to earth.

The supernatural nature of Gabriel's message would, certainly, still raise questions about the reverberations that would occur within her life, but her trust and faith without asking about her safety, health, or other concerns for herself, were revealed her fiat: "Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it done to me according to thy word" (Luke 1:38). André Feuillet, in *Jésus et sa Mère* (1974), observes that Mary's "yes" when she "abandons herself to God"

[66] "Que ton Règne arrive : Le Règne de Dieu, c'est l'Esprit-Saint ; nous prions qu'Il le fasse descendre sur nous … Il reste du moins là une trace de cette exégèse qui voit le Saint-Esprit dans le "règne" selon la variante de saint Luc 11,2 'Que vienne ton Esprit-Saint sur nous, et qu'Il nous purifie !'" (Hausherr 83-84).

("…s'abandonne à Dieu"[67]) allows the Holy Spirit to work fully in her. Feuillet proposes that for Mary, the Annunciation was a test firstly of her humility and also of her faith and with her question "How shall this be done?": "…elle se soumet totalement au plan divin mystérieux : "Voici la servant du Seigneur ; qu'il me soit fait selon ta Parole" (Feuillet 24). Von Balthasar writes:

> The Word of God who wills to take flesh in Mary needs a receptive "Yes" that is spoken with the whole person, spirit and body, with absolutely no (even unconscious) restrictions, that offers the entirety of human nature as a locus for the Incarnation. Receiving and allowing need not be passive; but rather in relation to God, they are when done in faith, always supreme activity. If Mary's "Yes" had contained even the shadow of a demurral, of a "so far and no farther", a stain would have clung to her faith and the child could not have taken possession of the whole of human nature (von Balthasar, *Mary the Church* 104–5).

In this manner, in an address in Mexico City on 26 January 1979, John Paul II outlined three elements or "dimensions" of one of Mary's titles Virgo fidelis: the first being search, or the question "Quomodo fiet?" ["How shall this be?"] that is the basis of "this ardent, patient, and generous search", the second is reception, where Mary responds at this important moment with "fiat" ["Let it be done" or "I am ready"] and thereby gives herself completely to God's will, and finally the third dimension consistency which was accomplished her entire life: "Mary's "fiat" in the Annunciation finds its fullness in the silent "fiat" that she repeats at the foot of the cross" (John Paul II, "Homily Los Angeles").

[67] This is a beautiful expression in the French, which calls to mind the 1956 translation of the Psalms (*Les Psaumes*) by André Chouraqui. Chouraqui renders Psalm XCI: 2: « Je parle au Seigneur, mon refuge, ma citadelle, il est mon Dieu, je m'abandonne en lui » (Chouraqui 185). This also seems well aligned to Mary's possible mental and spiritual attitude, as she was said to have studied the Psalms and abandons herself to God's will in her fiat.

Ambrose as well notes the essence of the very qualities that make her fit "to give birth to the Meek and Humble" as described in the Gospel according to Saint Matthew (Matthew 11:29): "In calling herself a handmaid she is claiming no privilege in consequence of the great grace she has received" and as the author highlights, in this manner she establishes her humility and devotion, "her obedience … her earnest desire … her readiness to serve …" (Ambrose, *Commentary* 32–33). Luigi Gambero, in *Mary and the Fathers of the Church: The Blessed Virgin Mary in Patristic Thought* (1999), explains that "For Ambrose the Annunciation constitutes the central mystery of Mary's life and mission. In this direct encounter with the saving God, her existence assumed a fundamental direction. Thenceforth, her life would be characterized by profound faith and by total and absolute obedience to God" (Gambero 196). Ambrose also brings to light "[h]ow prompt Mary is to believe" when presented with a supernatural event, in contrast to Zacharias, who would not believe because he thought it impossible as his wife was beyond what was considered usual childbearing years. And Elizabeth voiced the result of Mary's total faith and obedience later during the Visitation: "Blessed art thou that hast believed, because those things shall be accomplished that were spoken to thee by the Lord" (Luke 1:45). It is incredible to consider that "[s]he far surpassed the priest [Zacharias]. The priest wouldn't believe. The Virgin corrected his error" (Ambrose, *Commentary 33).* Subsequently, as a consequence of her faith and devotion, Mary reveals the beauty of her genuine humility when given the lofty honor of motherhood, for which she must be by nature a pure and humble abode for the Son of God to enter into and dwell. Her virtues were revealed during this extraordinary exchange between the powerful messenger of God and a humble young virgin through the writings of Ambrose and Bernard bringing depth to the discussion to reveal Mary's beauty in God's Will.

Likewise, both these Spanish works of the Annunciation represent an artistic expression that function by creating an atmosphere through which the reader and viewer could approach

the scene and, in a way, bring themselves into that moment of time to witness it. Moratín conveys by means of his *cántico* a sense of awe surrounding the angel Gabriel ("El rubio cabello / al hombro esparió; / diadema le ciñe / de extremo valor") in contrast to the simplicity of the young maiden ("La honesta virgen, ruborosa y muda / se postra absorta al paraninfo hermoso:") to create a type of framing effect: Gabriel's powerful presence and his authorization to transmit his divine communication in all its grandiosity is essentially showcasing Mary, the masterpiece of God's creation. Bernard so aptly explains: "In order, therefore, that she who was to conceive and bring forth the Holy of Holies might be holy in body, she received the gift of virginity, and that she might be holy in mind, she receives the gift of humility. With these gems of virtue the royal Virgin was adorned, and, radiant with the double splendour of holiness in body and mind…" (Bernard, *Sermons* 33).

Furthermore, Ignace de la Potterie in *Mary in the Mystery of the Covenant* (1992) proposes a dual aspect of the virginity of Mary: one external and the other internal. The former is the biological expression and "… unfortunately, the only one often considered when speaking of the virginal conception of Mary." Whereas "the interior, existential, and spiritual" of the latter echoes the distinction made by Augustine between *virginitas cordis,* or virginity of the heart, and that of the flesh (*virginitas carnis)* and here that of the heart denotes Mary's "intent" of virginity (Potterie 143). This interior side to Mary's dedication of her body to God possesses profound theological and spiritual connotations, especially in connection with the beginning of the angel Gabriel's salutation to Mary.

According to Potterie, and previously mentioned by Dodd, the exchange recorded in the Gospel of Luke in the Greek language—for example, *chaïre kecharitômenê*—presents challenges in its translation. However, the verb *charitoûn* is expressed in the perfect tense, meaning Mary was already filled with God's grace and as Potterie renders it: "Rejoice you who have been transformed by grace" (Potterie 144). Thus, Mary is already in the state of

purity and sanctity and thereby is “completely holy” and able to receive the Redeemer, as Potterie refers to Bernard’s concept of “the grace of virginity” found in *Missus Est* Homily III, 3 that “Truly, then, is she full of grace who clung to the grace of virginity, and also obtained the glory of fecundity” (Bernard, *Missus* 49). The “secret orientation of her existence” in Mary’s virginity was a deep desire and “was precisely the effect of her transformation by grace [*kecharitômenê*].” “If God, by his *grace*, the grace of virginity, had sustained in Mary this *desire of virginity*, it was precisely to prepare her for that to which he had destined her” to become the mother of the Messiah in a *virginal manner*” (Potterie 145). Potterie makes one further point in his work which refers to Mary’s fiat: Saint Luke uses the work *genoito*, used only here in the New Testament, which offers a sense of “joyous consent to enter completely into the design of God” rather than “a passive and resigned acceptance” (Potterie 145). This is an expression of her own desire or the verb to desire (*optare*) that reveals a joy in being chosen that may not be transmitted through translations of the Bible.

Thereupon, the “Strength of God” in the angel—his beauty, tenderness, and radiant splendor—can be considered as announcing the beauty of God in a virgin that was preserved from sin, that is obedient to God and wants nothing more than to please Him. Mary is offered the lofty status as the mother of the Redeemer and then places herself in His service with her words from Luke 1:38: “And Mary said: Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it done to me according to thy word.” Mary is a vessel of God’s will, and yet, as human, possesses free will, and choses to exercise it to give her gift back to God. Mary offers herself as the servant of God, that His will be done in her submission to His divine plan.

In this way, both artistic forms reveal the young girl confronted by a powerful and loving angel, and because of her comportment and words in exchange, the reader and viewer can “behold” the mother of Christ in her description and likeness at the moment of the Annunciation. Her consent to the angel as written in Luke 1: 38, holds an important key to

understanding her nature and why she would be the subject of so many visual artistic representations, so much so this intimate moment between the two is easily identifiable amongst world art. Here Ratzinger can offer some guidance from the twentieth century that speaks to the character of Mary may well assist in understanding how a person completely filled with God might be presented:

> …[Mary] does not construct a self-enclosed individuality whose principal concern is the originality of its own ego. She does not wish to be just this one human being who defends and protects her own ego. She does not regard life as a stock of goods of which everyone wants to get as much as possible for himself. Her life is such that she is transparent to God, "habitable" for him. Her life is such that she is a place for God…This "typological identification" is a spiritual reality; it is life lived out of the spirit of Sacred Scripture…. (Ratzinger, *Mary the Church* 66–67)

Thus, the virginal maiden, described by Moratín as "honesta…ruborosa y muda" and revealed by Ricci in a posture of humility, diverts her gaze from the angel and who thinks not of herself and how she is to gain from such a lofty award, as in that case she would not have been "habitable" for God due to thoughts of self and ego. "In calling herself the servant of the Lord, Mary, who was not a servant due to her social status, expresses her readiness to be at the Lord's disposal, but in a free and responsible way. As "the eyes of a maid" are turned to the hand of her mistress (Ps 123[122]:2), so she places herself at the service of him who will take on himself the condition of a servant (Phil 2:7)" (Blancy et al. 62–63). John Paul II notes the honor given to Mary was not because of her high rank in society: "Furthermore, Mary spontaneously declared herself "the handmaid of the Lord," although aware of the lofty dignity conferred upon her at the angel's announcement" (John Paul II, *Theotókos* 134). The "lofty dignity" referred to by John Paul II considers the greatness of the gift of motherhood to the Redeemer, but by contrast, presents the depth of Mary's humility. "In the Virgin's case,

God's action certainly seems surprising [in the Annunciation]. Mary has no human claim to receiving the announcement of the Messiah's coming. She is not the high priest, official representative of the Hebrew religion, nor even a man, but a young woman without any influence in the society of her time" (John Paul II, *Theotókos* 88).

In such a fashion, according to Beattie, in the Annunciation we find an encounter with the mystery of God, and in art this can be a rediscovering of Mary's beauty. Beattie states that according to Saint Anselm of Canterbury (1033–1109) a reaction from the viewer as an artistic reawakening can take on a mystical quality as creator because the created "are intertwined" as "Mary is the mouthpiece of all creation" (Beattie, "The Annunciation"). Through Annunciation imagery, Mary can be identified as "aglow with the presence of God" which the viewer "enters into" through sight. Ratzinger continues her to further an understanding of "full of grace":

> In reality, grace is a relational term; it does not predicate something about an I, but something about a connection between I and Thou, between God and man. "Full of grace" could therefore also be translated as "You are full of the Holy Spirit; your life is intimately connected with God … "Full of grace" therefore means, once again, that Mary is a wholly open human being, one who has opened herself entirely, one who has placed herself in God's hands boldly, limitlessly, and without fear for her own fate. It means that she lives wholly by and in relation to God (Ratzinger, *Mary the Church* 67–68)

Furthermore, herein lies the beauty of Mary, the "wholly open human being" so that God could do His work in her for others. Mary's fiat is beauty itself that in humble trust she places herself completely in alignment with divine will.

In this manner, Mary's relationship to God, her abandonment to Him and "placed herself in God's hands wholly" as "God's dwelling in the world" as stated by Ratzinger, was,

according to Twomey, the physical evidence of her beauty that shines forth her closeness to God (Twomey, *The Serpent* p. 161). This view was popular with Medieval theologians, such as Bernard, who his writings on Mary and *The Song of Songs* allowed others to make a connection between these two in support of the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception (Twomey *The Serpent* 161). The way of beauty, as proposed by Roten, makes apparent her "*spiritual profile*" which remains the same both at the beginning of her life with Christ and at the Coronation. "The transformation from Jewish girl to eschatological icon is not the result of a personal journey in search of fulfillment, but a monument to God's own art. It is the expansion and realization of personhood in mission, freed and fashioned by the hand of the Spirit" (Roten 123–24).

Bernard assists in deepening the contemplation of Moratín's and Ricci's lyrical and visual images:

> …whilst Mary, in proportion as she surpassed all, humbled herself in all things, yea and regarded herself as the least of all. Rightly, therefore, was she from last made first who, whereas she was the greatest of all, had made herself the least of all (Matt. xx. I6). Rightly was she made mistress of all who conducted herself as the handmaid of all. And rightly was she exalted above the angels, who in her unutterable modesty and meek- ness had placed herself below widows and penitents … (Bernard, "On the Dignity" 275)

In this manner, Mary reveals what is in her heart as reverence while not feeling herself worthy or deserving of the gift bestowed upon her.

Bernard now extends Mary's beauty as her willingness to serve as an absolution of the pridefulness of Man: "May thy integrity and purity excuse before Him the stain of our corruption; may thy humility, so pleasing to God, obtain from Him the pardon of our vanity" (Bernard, *Sermons* 18) because, as Saint François de Sales (1567–1622) in *Introduction to the*

Devout Life (1609) speaks of the guises of importance in the world: “Honor, rank, and dignity are like the saffron, which flourishes and increases most when it is trodden underfoot. All the value of beauty is gone when its possessor is self-conscious; to be pleasing it should be forgotten; and science becomes contemptible when it is puffed up and degenerates into pedantry” (De Sales 129). For the Apostle asks: “For who distinguisheth thee? Or what hast thou that thou hast not received? And if thou hast received, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received *it*?” (1Cor 4:7) expresses within a God-centered mindset, all that one possesses has been given as the possessor has received the benefits they enjoy from the necessities such as food and shelter. Beauty, then, can lie in the total emptying of self-importance towards a mindset of humble gratitude that is “so pleasing to God” that Mary “made herself the least” and she did so with courage and dignity. However, François de Sales warns against a show of false humility:

> We pretend that we should be amongst the humble, and take the lower place, but it is in order the better to go up higher. True humility does not affect to be humble, and makes few lowly speeches, for she not only desires to hide other virtues, but above all, to hide herself; and if it were lawful for her to lie, or deceive or offend others, she would appear outwardly proud and haughty, so as to conceal her real self, and live unknown and in concealment. (Sales 132)

Therefore, as François de Sales puts forth, true humility lies in a genuine movement of the heart to see as God sees, not an outward show or exercise, but a calling from the soul within and need not be demonstrated to others. Louis de Montfort explains that “Because she hid herself in this world and put herself lower that the dust by her profound humility ...” (Montfort 21) and only revealed herself to God:

> Her humility was so profound that she had not inclination on earth more powerful or more constant than that of hiding herself, from herself as well as from every other

> creature, so as to be known to God only…He took pleasure in hiding her from all human creatures, in her conception, in her birth, in her life, in her mysteries, and in her resurrection and Assumption…or if He did reveal anything, it was nothing compared to what He kept undisclosed. (Montfort 1)

Mary's beauty forms a Marian mystery such as the like the world has never seen and hence inspires artists with von Baltasar's something "more" that enlivens them to sing her praises and painters to create the most beautiful woman imaginable. Mary is set apart for a reason, the beauty expressed in her humility "goes before" the People of God" as John Paul II wrote.

Furthermore, Saint Alfonso Maria De Liguori (1696–1787) in *Il mese di maggio* (1935) *con le Glorie di Maria* (1835) cites Bernard as proposing that "L'umiltà è fondamento e custode delle virtù" (de Liguori, *Le glorie* 284) and continues to explain that it is the essential virtue and one that Mary possessed, as a humble heart distinguishes the special gifts from God in order to humble herself even more. Here, also, Alfonso de Liguori makes a point that "alle luce più grande che aveva per conoscere l'infinita grandezza e bontà del suo Dio, conosceva meglio la sua piccolezza" (de Liguori, *Le glorie* 284–85). This is an interesting consideration that relates to the Annunciation and the scene created by Moratín and Ricci: the majesty revealed by God through His angel of great splendor created an atmosphere of light and grandeur but also came to offer Mary the gift of becoming the mother of Christ if she chose to accept, as Moratín describes in his *cántico* "la escogida sola fuiste, / que en tu seno recibiste / el tesoro celestial" (Moratín 362 lines 55–58). Here, Moratín indirectly emphasizes the choice that Mary had, not only to become the mother of God, but as the one chosen ("sola tú, la venurosa,"). In this manner, Mary did not become swept away with the brilliance of the angel nor ask what her recompense would be, but offered herself, not knowing what her life would be like. This true humility serves to exalt Mary : "La royauté de Marie … ne fait en rien de Marie une princesse lointaine. Son achèvement supra-terrestre ne détruit pas en elle

l'humilité, la pauvreté, qui sont l'étoffe même de sa gloire" (Laurentin 154–55). Therefore, Mary's royality can be misunderstood as an earthly title, power or possessions, but in reality, we can all be poor in spirit and humble in our attitudes towards others, but why Mary outshines even the loveliest queen is her total acceptance of God's will in her life and her obedience to Him.

To aid in a better understanding of the manner of docility that Mary possessed in her fiat or her "yes" to God in her response to Gabriel: "Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it done to me according to thy word" (Luke 1:38) contains a special type of obedience. Samuel Keyes, in his article "Why We Do Lent" (2025), states that although most considerations of obedience arrive from an external nature, such as obedience to one's parents, our company of employment or the government of a state, province or country; a deeper, more internal obedience becomes a part of us, "inextricable from our identity as human beings" (Keyes 31). Notwithstanding, the author referred to the Passion of Christ in his article, but inarguably this inner obedience could refer to Mary's "yes" at the scene of the Annunciation because her acceptance of God's will was so immediate as she found her identity in God. Mary did not deliberate or, as this encounter was a sudden and unexpected occurrence for her, ask for more time to think to talk it over with her betrothed, her parents, or the elders of the temple. Mary knew that this was indeed the messenger of God and that he was speaking the truth, and her alignment with the Creator was such that she obeyed without reservation.

Further, Pelikan explains obedience in regard to Mary as a model for humanity: "In every century she served as a model of patience, indeed of quietistic passivity and unquestioning obedience. When the prophet Isaiah asked, "Shall the clay say to him that fashioned it, What makest thou?" and again affirmed, 'We are the clay, and thou our potter'…" (Pelikan 83) and Mary as "the handmaid [*Ancilla* in the Vulgate] of the Lord," "the vessel that received" as the model for passivity and complete submission to God. Pelikan notes that "an obedience that is

open to the future should be defined as supreme activity, not passivity" (Pelikan 83–84). This raises an interesting point and one worthy of mention: it is not an easy thing to be passive and trust completely in God when there are unknown factors that could cause pain and misfortune to oneself in the process. As such, Mary's submission was her faith in God's providence, never wavering in her obedience which was created through her humility after having emptied herself of her own will, then allowing God to work in and through her.

John Paul II furthers the discussion on Mary's obedience: "Is not Mary *the first of "those who hear the word of God and do it"?*[68] …Without any doubt, Mary is worthy of blessing by the very fact that she became the mother of Jesus according to the flesh…but also and especially because already at the Annunciation she accepted the word of God, because she believed it, *because she was obedient to God,* and because she "kept" the word and "pondered it in her heart"[69] and by means of her whole life accomplished it" (John Paul II, *Redemptoris* 28). Importantly, John Paul II speaks of "*the human will is originally innocent,"* and "original innocence as "purity of heart" which "At least indirectly, it includes the revelation and discovery of human moral consciousness …In a certain sense, one should understand it as original righteousness (John Paul II, *Man* 193–95). In this manner, Mary's own virtues remind the observer of her "original innocence" revealed in Ricci's work as the grand depiction of Gabriel contrast with the "original righteousness" of Mary's chastity and humility. Moratín's description reinforces her "honesty" as truly and authentically pure of heart as to be the only one chosen as *Theotokos*, the God-Bearer. Additionally, in these works, both painter and poet remind the viewer and listener of the connection of physical beauty with "honesty" and thereby the ability to "… en tu seno recibiste / el tesoro celestial" (Moratín 362 lines 57–58).

[68] Refers to Luke 11:28.
[69] John Paul II references Luke 1:38, 45; 2:19,51.

John Paul II (1920–2005), in his *Man and Woman* refers to inner innocence as "purity of heart," and within the human heart there is an echo of original innocence (John Paul II, *Man* 202). Furthermore, the role of the body is seen as a manifestation of the divine: "The body, in fact, and only the body, is capable of making visible what is invisible: the spiritual and the divine. It has been created to transfer into the visible reality of the world the mystery hidden from eternity in God, and thus to be a sign of it" (John Paul II, *Man* 203). Thus, through the painting, Mary prefigures more than an innocent, pure, and devout young woman in raising her eyes to heaven, as the visibility of her body on the canvas makes visible both the spiritual and divine and connects the viewer with the mystery of God.

Moreover, John Paul II in *Redemptoris* speaks of the extraordinary grace bestowed on Mary: "Mary, Mother of the Incarnate Word, is placed *at the very center of that enmity* [foretold and confirmed by the Apocalypse], that struggle which accompanies the history of humanity on earth … In this central place, she who belongs to the "weak and poor of the Lord" bears in herself, like no other member of the human race, that "glory of grace" which the Father "has bestowed on us in his beloved Son," and this *grace determines the extraordinary greatness and beauty* of her whole being" (John Paul II, *Redemptoris* 16). Here John Paul II quotes from *Lumen Gentium,* the dogmatic constitution of 1964: "…Mary is 'the Mother of the Son of God. As a result, she is also the favorite daughter of the Father and the temple of the Holy Spirit. Because of this gift of sublime grace, she far surpasses all other creatures, both in heaven and on earth'" (John Paul II, *Redemptoris* 15). All the more so, Mary's "glory of grace" derives from her place in the "weak and poor of the Lord," "lower than the dust by her profound humility," where her soul was "a lantern emanation light," "an ardent flame of love," and while her body was "a most pure crystal vase." Thus, Moratín's description "La honesta virgen, ruborosa y muda" (line 33) and Ricci's rendition as humble, demure, quiet and contemplative reveal how Mary, and as John Paul II identifies her as God's

favorite daughter and the temple of the Holy Spirit, converge as "she far surpasses all other creatures, both in heaven and on earth" and thereby became "la escogida sola fuiste, / que en tu seno recibiste / el tesoro celestial" (Moratín 362 lines 55–58).

Subsequently, the graces bestowed on Mary were contingent on her chastity. Bernard remarks:

> Virgins who deserve the name are ever timid; they never think themselves secure; and while avoiding what ought to be feared, they fear where there is no danger. They know that they bear a precious treasure in fragile vessels; that it is difficult to live among men an angelic life, to converse on earth after the manner of the celestial spirits, to lead on earth a holy life in mortal flesh. In every unforeseen occurrence they suspect some snare for their virtue, and therefore Mary was troubled at the words of the angel. She was troubled, but not disturbed … Mary was troubled, and spoke not; she thought what manner of salutation this might be that she was troubled proves her virginal modesty; that she was not disturbed, her fortitude; her thoughtful silence shows her prudence. (Bernard, *Sermons* 53)

This passage recalls Moratín's description of Mary as "honesta" because the intention "that she was troubled proves her virginal modesty" as virgins "… know that they bear a precious treasure in fragile vessels." This speaks to the notion of a woman regarding herself as precious "while avoiding what ought to be feared" to circumvent situations that would cause dishonor through a lack of self-respect or personal dignity. This was even much more the case for Mary as she had consecrated her body to God. Also, "her thoughtful silence shows her prudence" as in Moratín's characterization as "muda" for "Mary was troubled, and spoke not," which is evident in Ricci's blushing Mary with her arms crossed about her chest, downward gaze and calm expression.

Thus, the “enclosed garden” that God hides from others hides herself as well. This speaks to the few instances where Mary is referenced in Scripture as revealing little, which “was nothing compared to what He kept undisclosed.” However, Mary might also be hidden in plain sight for millennia. Feuillet cites A. Harnack as proposing an interesting theory. Certain Infancy stories, in particular the Annunciation and the Visitation “par les faits même qu’ils rapportent et aussi par leur exquise délicatesse … trahissent leur origine féminine et font songer notamment à des communications de Marie. Aussi bien n’est-ce que pas elle seule qui a pu attester le prodige de la conception virginale ? Comme le dit Lagrange, "elle seule a connu toute cette histoire dans son fond le plus secret" (Feuillet 84–85). This proposal makes an extremely interesting point, being that who would have known better than Mary herself the events of Luke 1–2, and could express them in a feminine style that differs from the rest of this Gospel? Perhaps, as through her art, this writing has remained hidden and, in that way, forms a part of biblical Marian mysteries.

Finally, Mary’s beauty also lies in her steadfast faith in God. Despite not knowing what would befall her, she chose to consent to divine will. Alfonso de Liguori references the words of Augustine: “Maria fu più beata nell'accogliere la fede di Cristo, che nel concepire la carne di Cristo” (de Liguori, *Le glorie* 300) which is a considerable statement as we often consider that the pinnacle of Mary’s life was giving birth to Jesus. However, as Augustine proposes, Mary as being “more blessed in receiving the faith of Christ than conceiving the flesh of Christ” truly considers the importance of faith in her life. This faith was first seen at the moment of the Annunciation, developed throughout Mary’s life, which Alfonso De Liguori reveals is a gift and a virtue at the same time (de Liguori *Le glorie* 302):

> …she is the only one to whom it has ever been said, "The Holy Which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God" (Luke 1:35). …should any of us be found wanting in the meekness of modesty, or in humility of heart, or in greatness and

> constancy of faith, or in compassion of soul: think you we shall be able to justify our negligence by pleading that these gifts like the others are singular in Mary?" (St Bernard, "On the Dignity" 271)

Augustine of Hippo puts forth that Mary asks "how" this is to happen (Lk 1:34) but never doubts the power of God, in contrast with Zacharias, Elizabeth's husband, who loses his voice because he questions and expresses his doubts to the angel Gabriel. Mary, on the contrary, possessed the virtues of faith, charity in collaboration with the early Church, and humility or holy modesty of her person. "All these virtues are expressed, above all, in the devotion and faithfulness with which the Virgin hears the word of God and puts it into practice[70] (Gambero 227). Luigi Gambero in *Mary and the Fathers of the Church* writes that while "Ambrose has no doubts that Mary's faith was illuminated and goes so far as to demonstrate that it would be impossible to perceive any unbelief in the words of Mary at the Annunciation; that would be like admitting that the Holy Spirit came down upon Mary to reward her unbelief" (Gambero 197). Therefore, the virtue of sincerity in devotion, faithfulness, obedience, faith, and humility would also determine the degree of pulchritude through "consistency" and originating "from the heart."

In conclusion, through the artistic works of Moratín and Ricci and their literary commentary, a world of beauty has appeared within the Marian mystery of the Annunciation. As Bearden and Holty propose, "Sometimes the poet can divine truths in the varied promptings and motivations of the artist with more cogency than the historian or critic" (Bearden and Holty 13). This study proposes that the sources of theological writings as well as the theologians themselves gifted parts of their innermost contemplations of Mary in the wonder of her unparallelled beauty. This study proposes that each of the voices cited has contributed much toward a more profound and comprehensive perspective on pulchritude that

[70] Augustine of Hippo from *De sancta virginitate 5.*

involves the whole person based on the merits of coming closer to the source of all goodness, truth, beauty, and wisdom. And the last word belongs to the principle saintly inspiration of this study, Bernard of Clairvaux:

> For by an unutterable artifice if the expression may be allowed of the Holy Spirit Who came down upon her, such magnanimity of faith was united in the secret chamber of the Virgin's heart to such profound humility that—as I have said of the union of integrity with motherhood—these two stars also received additional brightness from each other's rays. That is to say: her abysmal humility did not diminish the magnanimity of her faith, nor did the latter prejudice the former; but whilst remaining the humblest of all in her conceit of herself, she showed herself most magnanimous by her faith in the divine promise: she, who considered herself nothing better than a poor little handmaid, believed, nevertheless, with the most undoubting faith,… (Bernard, "On the Dignity" 276–77)

Bernard words reveal Mary in her truest sense, "profound humility" as "most magnanimous by her faith" in "united in the secret chamber of the Virgin's heart," creating a vision of exquisite beauty beyond compare that the world has never seen since.

Figure 4. *La Anunciación* (c. 1663) by Francisco Ricci, Museo del Prado, Madrid

Figure 5. *La Inmaculada Concepción* (1628-1629) by Peter Paul Rubens, Museo del Prado, Madrid

Figure 6. *La Inmaculada Concepción* (1767 – 1769) by Giambattista Tiepolo, Museo del Prado, Madrid

Figure 7. *La Anunciación* (?) Anonymous, copy of Vicente Carducho's *La Anunciación*, Monasterio de la Encarnación, Madrid

Figure 8. *La Inmaculada Concepción* (c.1650) by Alonso Cano, Museo Diocesano de Arte Sacro de Álava, Vitoria, Basque Country, Spain

Figure 9. *Ratto d'Europa* (1559 – 1562) by Titian, Isabella Stewart Museum, Boston

CONCLUSIONS

This dissertation moved deeply into Annunciation art to present a counter-narrative of beauty that challenges the modern society's appearance-based assumptions. The Baroque and Enlightenment works of Leandro Fernández de Moratín and Francisco Ricci presented a lyrical and visual focus where the beauty of Mary lies in the center of the biblical mystery. Selected theological writings then magnified the understanding of Mary's exquisite qualities creating an enriching and profound experience by inviting contemplation on the sacred.

Chapter 1 began by bringing an awareness to how beauty standards propagated by current media and social platforms were reported as having adverse effects on women's health. Consequently, the idea of modern perceptions of beauty as limiting opened a space for this study's theological response. Additionally, this dissertation argued that some of the misinterpretations of Mary as a feminine icon found in both secular and religious circles were found lacking and superficially construed. For this reason, a God-centered approach was presented as in the Book of Wisdom: "With whose beauty, if they, being delighted, took them to be gods: let them know how much the Lord of them is more beautiful than they: for the first author of beauty made all those things" (Wisdom 13:3). As the source and center of all beauty, the concept of God as "Perfect Beauty" found in the writings of Saints Thomas Aquinas and Augustine of Hippo, as well as Hans Urs von Balthasar and Saint John Paul II, provided a theological understanding to consider beauty in terms of components that form an integrated whole.

For Aquinas, beauty begins in the senses, and its notable plenitude lies in the realization of its divine blueprint, such as a sketch can become a colorful painting in the hands of the painter in the fulfillment of its creative intention. Aquinas' notion of *claritas*, or brightness,

denotes a "splendor of form" (Roten 122-123), while Augustine explains his concept of illumination that relates to the totality of the physical form in its number, form, order, and unity, which increases in beauty with the radiance of the life force within. Hence, Aquinas' *claritas* as the soul's radiance seems to cultivate Augustine's notion of beauty, as the latter even proposes that the soul is superior to the beauty of the physical body.

Indeed, this is quite different from the modern views of beauty that originate in personal judgment and something measurable in the physical appearance. On the contrary, von Balthasar describes the "overspreading" of the beautiful (von Balthasar, *Theologic* 223–24) in our lives in ways that can often move far beyond the rational mind and the limitations of the visual experience. Therefore, Christ's command to "Behold thy mother" (John 19:26-27) can concern itself with more than the eyes can perceive, in a contemplative regard of Mary's inner radiance as beauty, and which, according to Augustine, turns toward God (Fontanier 100-101).

Chapter 2 continued with Mary's spiritual radiance through the tradition of her lyrical and visual portrayal. This study contended that the *The Song of Songs*, while not exclusively Marian in its interpretations, provides an incomparable wealth of symbols including the locked garden and the enclosed fountain. Mary's unblemished state is exposed in the *The Song of Songs*: "Thou art all fair, / O my love, / and there is not a spot in thee" (The Song 4: 7) where Mary becomes the spotless beauty "full of grace" (Luke 1:28) that completely abandons herself to God's Will. Because Mary is filled with His radiance, viewer can perceive themselves as privy to that which is hidden in the locked garden of Mary's innermost being. These Marian metaphors run in currents throughout the works of Dante Alighieri and Spanish Medieval poetry at a time where "…every topic intersected with considerations of the Virgin Mary" (Rubin "God-Bearer" 31), and when spiritual beauty received a greater consideration.

Visually, "she is the masterpiece of the hands of God" (Montfort 21) and often presented a challenge to artists to render her visual representation as "…despues del hijo, fue la criatura más bella que Dios crió" (Pacheco 210). Belting puts forth that Scripture is ultimately tasked with recalling, and therefore image and Scripture together tell the story of salvation that is more than a historical narrative: "…The differences between them are the outcome of historical factors and consequently make possible remembrance *within* and *through* the image" (Belting 9-10). The image then becomes more than a recollection of a historical moment in time, but a manner of moving "within" to allow for a deeper resonance within the viewer. Additionally, this study proposed then that Paleotti's premises on Christian images as different levels of experience within the sensual, rational and spiritual delight, which the latter can lead to possible revelation, offer deeper meanings and insight on the nature, purpose and message of the artistic work. It was also extremely important that depictions of Mary were not only noted for her physical beauty, but through the understanding of the concepts of Leonardo Da Vinci: "…the divine conception of the painting (*Iddea*) appeared as if alive, being the divine person (*Iddio*) in the ideal beauty (*idea*), thus uniting religion and art in one" (Belting 481). Therefore, the beholder is drawn to an image which should possess "the true knowledge of the thing to be imitated" (Paleotti 310). In this manner, Mary does "win the mind of every viewer" (Paleotti 310) through the portrayal of the mysteries within her life that invite contemplation on the "highest woman and the noblest gem in Christianity after Christ" (Lev 119).

Chapter 3 provided a historical basis to present the lives and works of Moratín and Ricci. It became an introduction to the formal aspects of the study as well as addressed the unique situation of Spain within Europe and its religious and cultural heritage. Spain's adaptation of Humanism found a place where "Lo antiguo y lo moderno se unen en una simbiosis nueva" (Garrote Pérez 14) that did not completely discard traditional values in favor of a new focus

centered on man himself. This study cited the influence of Saint Thomas of Aquinas' *Summa Theologica* (1274) and how scholastic theories were reformed to apply Thomistic theories during the period of the Catholic Reformation (Garrote Pérez 15-16). This assured a preserving of Medieval thought, a more traditional social orientation, and a strong Christian faith. Additionally, this study proposed that the Spanish mystical tradition as well as an Italian presence which "resulted in a confluence of cultural ideas" (Helmstutler Di Dio and Mozzati 1) both represented a strong cultural influence that left an impression on the works of Moratín and Ricci. In this regard, both Moratín and Ricci's artistic works of the Baroque and Enlightenment rose from Spain's unique cultural framework. The Baroque dynamism of Ricci's painting and the Enlightenment's classicism evident in Moratín's *cántico* engage the sacred at a space where Marian devotion articulates theological insights to contribute complementary artistic vantage points to the Annunciation.

With the preparation of the proceeding chapters, Chapter 4 could then delve into the individual works of Moratín and Ricci, synthesizing them into corresponding lyrical and visual elements of the Annunciation scene rendered more meaningful through theological insights. Chapter 4's analysis of Moratin's lyrical description of Mary as "La honesta virgen, ruborosa y muda" was interpreted as complementing the visual description of Ricci's prudent Mary exhibiting a visible downward gaze. Furthermore, the poetic depiction provided by Moratín in Petrarchan form, style, and moments of tenderness reminiscent of *canzone 366*, can relate verse to the visual experience of the color palette, expressiveness, and soft flowing forms apparent in Ricci's painting. In his *cántico,* Moratín relates Mary as "muda" (silent), which lyrically responds to her arms crossed gently in front of her chest in a chaste manner in Ricci's painting. In Ricci's visual rendition and through Moratín's lyrics, Mary is viewed as "muda" so she can listen to the message of God, "honesta" (modest/chaste) in her true desire

to serve God's plan, and "ruborosa" (blushing) in her humility, each quality expressing a wealth of inspiration for spiritual meditation.

The artistic experience then alludes to the existence of more beauty found within that is kept private and protected. Within von Balthasar's conceptions of divine ideas in art there exists a "mysterious 'more'" that is the filling with God's love, something hidden to the outside world and therefore more prized and precious. In this fashion, we can behold Mary while recognizing that there is much more to discover. Moratín's *cántico* and Ricci's visual work together to invite contemplation on the Annunciation with guidance from theological perspectives to dive deeper into spiritual intimacy with the sacred, calling forth concealed levels of the mystery of Marian beauty and her role in salvation.

It was one of Mary's exquisite qualities, her humility, that prepared her to fulfill her perfect potential to serve God with her whole being. Her obedience to and faith in God then enabled the creation of an *integritas* of beauty that "lacked nothing" (Maurer 11) in her radiance originating from divine grace. Moreover, with her fiat Mary became resplendent with the gift of motherhood from the Holy Spirit as Ricci depicts in the supernatural illumination streaming down from above. In the examples of the works of Moratín and Ricci, an attention on the angel Gabriel as a flowing, dazzling being of light wonderfully frames the portrayal of Mary, who having said 'yes' because God asked it of her, demonstrates a superb luminescent beauty.

This dissertation presented Mary's beauty in her humility as submissive before God, aligning herself with His will and plan for the salvation of humanity. That is a beauty that puts the spiritual welfare of all the following generations of people above her own because God wills it so. Thus, Mary's beauty finds itself in a theological anthropology rather than a social construction, as neither idealized nor objectified, but arising from the integration of her body, soul, intellect and will in service to God. In this way, Mary replies with her fiat "be it

done to me according to thy word" (*Luke* 1:38) which John Paul II describes as "a total *gift of self*" (John Paul II *Redemptoris* 55). Gambero quotes Augustine when he describes Mary: "… in the devotion and faithfulness with which the Virgin hears the Word of God and puts it into practice" (Gambero 227). In this way, Mary humbly agrees to be the mother of Christ without inquiring as to the benefits of such a lofty position nor glories in it herself. Mary obeys God to bring forth His plan of salvation and has faith in Him and then becomes a model for women's spiritual agency and embodiment within sacred art and literature.

Henceforth, Mary's choice and willingness to become the mother of Christ "When the fulness of the time was come, God sent his Son, made of a woman" (*Galatians* 4:4) is portrayed as a fleeting moment in the Baroque style commemorated in Ricci's work. The beauty of the scene denotes something tangible for the modern viewer in the way of "a ladder leading up to eternal things and cause men to desire the goods of heaven. Then the soul feels an enjoyment deep inside…" (Paleotti 111-112). Moratín and Ricci allow us to 'see' and appreciate the events of the biblical account more clearly with theological interpretations and so prepare us to "Behold" Mary, beginning in the senses and moving to "a depth which is logically inexpressible" (Evdokimov 20).

This study proposed that the ability to see a visual work of art with "ease, facility, brevity, stability" (Paleotti 114) as described by Paleotti in the sixteenth century can speak to the modern consideration of the importance of the image. Von Balthasar's words "in a world which is perhaps not wholly without beauty, but which can no longer see it or reckon with it…" (von Balthasar *The Glory* 19) can find a remedy in Mary's portrayal in these two Annunciation works. Her total submission, not to another person or created being, but to God Himself, possesses a beauty in trust and faith that denotes the human perfection of spirit. This is a beauty that encompasses the unity of mind, will, body, intellect, including the senses, and creates more wholeness in the relationship of man with God (Chapman 54 – 55). This study

maintains that it is this pulchritude that can be recognized in Moratín and Ricci's works, which Aquinas affirms begins in the senses, and can move deeper into the spiritual meaning of the Annunciation itself. Thus, within this integrative focus lies Mary's supreme beauty of self-denial, trust and love.

Ratzinger further explains the importance of the spiritual in contemplating biblical mysteries: "Those who demand that the Christian message be as immediately understandable as any banal statement hinder God. Where there is no humility to accept the mystery, no patience to receive interiorly what one has not yet understood …the seed of the word has fallen on rocky ground…" (Ratzinger, *Mary the Church* 71). Then, with patience and the inspiration of Mary's example, an image can assist in the understanding of the message found within the Annunciation. Moreover, Mary's example of humility becomes an important part of entry into the biblical scene in which the image visually guides toward more profound insights. During the lyrical and visual experience of the sacred, the viewer can remove themselves as the point of reference, cease to rely on personal judgement and the rational mind that may entertain the Annunciation as a mental exercise, so that the radiance of the moment in time and the brilliance of Mary's beauty can begin to shine forth.

This study has put forth that the seed of Marian mysteries had not "fallen on rocky ground" neither with Ricci's Baroque visual work *La Anunciación* nor during the Enlightenment with Moratín's *cántico* "La anunciación." Moreover, both the *cántico* and the painting as lyrical and visual interrelated components of this biblical scene can provide a much richer experience in bringing the observer into the majesty of the encounter of heaven and earth commencing in the senses. However, Feuillet writes about biblical mysteries that "…nous ne pourrons jamais accéder à l'intelligence de cette merveille" without quiet reflection and prayer (Feuillet 111). Herein, a work of poetry, according to Horace becomes "…the beauty that may crown the commonplace" (Horace 471) and a space for personal spiritual awareness.

Furthermore, Mary returns humanity to "Original Love" as proposed by John Paul II (John Paul II, *Man* 242), as she "goes before" (John Paul II *Redemptoris* 9) to help heal the fracture in "*man's original spiritual and somatic unity*" (John Paul II *Man* 243-244). Here John Paul II identifies a break in the spiritual connection with the body, which denotes a lack of understanding of how the spiritual component is actually the source of the unfathomable radiance. By exploring the theological tendency to address the spiritual in the contemporary writings of John Paul II, von Balthasar, and Benedict XVI, and Evdokimov to address this "*original spiritual and somatic unity,*" this study showed how Marian aesthetics comprises a much wider interdisciplinary field than one uniquely reserved for devotional practice.

Lastly, this study's interdisciplinary method provided an approach to the beauty of Mary that seeks to bring inspiration to our world. Through these theological voices, Mary's beauty is revealed as a hiddenness, a surrender and an interior radiance that contrasts the modern appreciation for visibility, performance, and popular interest. It may be of worthy to consider that such perfection in a human will and the highest qualities that set Mary apart can be an extremely encouraging model for men and women in this age and can serve as an inspirational concept within a modern secular society. This study's method contributes to religious meaning by integrating literary analysis, art historical description and illustration, and theological contemplation. This methodology can in turn inspire future studies of theological aesthetics through the unity of the senses, intellect, and spirit in experiencing sacred art. It can lend itself to other representations of the Annunciation in diverse eras and cultures, different biblical scenes and Marian mysteries, and other artistic mediums such as iconography and sculpture. In this way, Marian aesthetics can be an important tool for the examination of the ideals of beauty and femininity as seen within cultures and historical timelines.

In a wider sense, this dissertation has proposed interpretations suitable for liturgical practice, Catholic education and personal spiritual development. It has reclaimed Mary as the splendor of beauty and proposes a reexamination of current values. Mary represents a beautiful soul and a brilliance of presence that contradicts modern performance-based standards. She invites contemplation as a mystery that received God's grace, that offers a counter position to the spectacle or self-asserted value. Then we can admire Mary's beauty and grace with a sense of awe in its grandiosity and in the manner of the words of Christ "become as little children" (Matthew 18:3) and thereby allowing a space for its mysteries to reveal themselves. Within such majesty found in the Annunciation's encounter with magnificent beauty, Mary is revealed for us to contemplate, emulate, admire, and then inspire us to new spiritual heights as she "*goes before*" to lead the way to the all-encompassing divine love that illuminates her.

In conclusion, the Annunciation as seen through the artistic vision of Ricci and the lyrics of Moratín is more than an artistic event—it opens the observer to a theological epiphany. There, in the midst of the artistic experience provided by Moratín and Ricci, lies a space to view beauty and a reception of feminine grace through an integration of the human faculties. Mary's "yes" to God birthed a new human person of radiant grace not preoccupied with external modern considerations of physical ideals. Here, there are no superficial limitations or self-serving mental exercises, but instead, a spiritual, embodied beauty in its purest sense. And then, in beholding Mary, we come closer to the source of all beauty, the divine artist Himself.

CODA

De Maria numquam satis

- Saint Bernard of Clairvaux

John Paul II once wrote that "It can thus be said that women, by looking to Mary, find in her the secret of living their femininity with dignity and of achieving their own true advancement." And in this way, Mary continues to "*go before*" to reveal to us in "the face of women the reflection of a beauty that mirrors the loftiest sentiments of which the human heart is capable" (JOHN PAUL II, *Redemptoris* 66). In this manner, hopefully, this study has been able to suggest alternative thoughts on beauty that the saints have attested to and present them as exemplified in their purest form in Mary. Then, in the arts, Ricci's rendition could aid in the visualization of Moratín's *cántico* to arrive at a richness of the theological accounts of the Annunciation, of beauty, and of Mary herself. In this manner, we can appreciate her incomparable qualities, which can delight and inspire a life lived devoted to a higher purpose and assist in balancing our modern sense of beauty, inspiring spiritual growth.

In his Gospel to the Philippians, Saint Paul reminds "For the rest, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever modest, whatsoever just, whatsoever holy, whatsoever lovely, whatsoever of good fame, if there be any virtue, if any praise of discipline, think on these things" (Philippians 4:8). Thus, one could say that herein lies Mary in all her beauty to reflect upon as a model and a guide through the purposeful gift of herself to others: her humility, obedience, and faith. For as our dependence on the visual has most likely been a factor in our "darkened" or "dimmed" vision, and instead might find more fulfillment in a model similar

to this Scripture: “And the Lord said to Samuel: Look not on his countenance, nor on the height of his stature: because I have rejected him, nor do I judge according to the look of man: for man seeth those things that appear, but the Lord beholdeth the heart” (1 Kings 4:7). And perhaps, as Jesus has asked us to “Behold thy mother” there are more reasons to do so than we realize.

Undoubtedly, Mary will continue to be a wonderful, beautiful mystery for us to enjoy delving into for eternity. She extends hope and guidance through the Scriptures and theological writings that can offer tools for contemplation of ourselves, our lives and the world at large. However, if the reader is not familiar with Catholic writings, any of the theologians mentioned in this study would be a good place to begin - often it is a simple as the one that appeals to you the most at the moment. Nevertheless, due to the scope and theme of this study, undoubtedly many well-regarded Mariologists were not included. The reader could very well explore the writings of Irenaeus of Lyons, Cyril of Alexandria, Catherine of Siena, Anthony of Padua and Jean Eudes just to mention a few where merit can be found in their expression of true love of and devotion to Mary. Nonetheless, a disclaimer must be stated that Mary will open your mind and heart to beauties once hidden, as has indeed occurred in composing this study. In this manner, Louis de Montfort, a particularly devoted Mariologist wrote “…Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor man’s heart comprehended” (1 Corinthians 2:9) the beauties, the grandeurs, the excellences of Mary—the miracle of the miracles of grace, of nature and of glory” (Montfort 4).

Therefore, the inspiration Mary transmits to humanity is ever present: through theological writings, beautiful paintings, poetry, and prayers; as well as the humility in other’s attitudes and the sincerity in their efforts. Mary is in ourselves, our neighbors and friends, families and churches, once we can enlighten our vision by “beholding” her and allow her example of true beauty to enrich our lives. Therefore, the model presented in this study can be applied to

many different works of art in different mediums and on the different biblical mysteries. Roten informs how the arts reveal the path to Mary:

> Better than other religious motifs, the figure of Mary offers an aesthetic bridge to link religion and art … To make the image of Mary truly incarnational, the artist has to sample the many facets of human experience. There is no other way to give a complete vision of the culture of life and the need to be incarnational and eschatological; and there is no adequate representation of Mary without the Spirit leading the hand of the artist. (Roten 127)

Therefore, there can be a sense of newness and rebirth through Mary when we begin to see the world around us as a place for her beauty, which inspires lovely hearts that incline themselves to emulate her virtues in their lives. Ave Maria.

WORKS CITED

Agulló Cobo, Mercedes. *Noticias sobre pintores madrileños de los siglos XVI y XVII*, U of Granada, 1978.

Alighieri, Dante. *La Vita Nuova*. Edited and translated by Stanley Appelbaum. Dover Publications, Inc., 2006.

--. *The Divine Comedy: Paradiso 1: Text*. Translated by Charles S. Singleton, Princeton U P, 1975.

-- . *The Divine Comedy: Paradiso 2: Commentary*. Translated by Charles S. Singleton, Princeton U P, 1975.

Ambrose of Milan. *Commentary of Saint Ambrose on the Gospel according to Saint Luke*. Translated by Íde M. Ní Rianin, Halcyon P, 2001.

--. *De virginibus* 2, 6. https://www.newadvent.org/fathers/34072.htm. Accessed 6 Feb 2025.

Arce, Joaquín. *La poesía del siglo ilustrado*. Editorial Alhambra, 1981.

Arteaga, Esteban de. *La belleza ideal*. Espasa-Calpe, 1943.

Augustine of Hippo. *The Confessions of Saint Augustine*. Paraclete P, 2015, 220.

--. *Enchiridion on Faith, Hope and Love*. Regnery Publishing, 1996.

Barrett, Melanie Susan. *Love's Beauty at the Heart of the Christian Moral Life: The Ethics of Catholic Theologian Hans Urs von Balthasar*. Edwin Mellen Press, 2009.

Bearden, Romare and Carl Holty. *The Painter's Mind: A Study of the Relations of Structure and Space in Painting*. Crown Publishers, 1969.

Beattie, Tina. "The Annunciation in Theology and Art: shedding new light on an old doctrine." *The Centre for Marian Studies,* 26 March 2025, Zoom.

--. “Mary in Patristic Thought”. *Mary: The Complete Resource*. Edited by Sarah Jane Boss, Oxford UP, 2007, 81–105.

Belting, Hans. *Likeness and Presence: A History of the Image before the Era of Art*. Translated by Edmund Jephcott. U of Chicago P, 1994.

Bernard of Clairvaux. *Bernard of Clairvaux on the Song of Songs* Volumes 1–4. Translated by Kilian Walsh. Cistercian Publications, 1971.

--. *Honey and Salt: Selected Spiritual Writings of Saint Bernard of Clairvaux*. Edited by John F. Thorton and Susan B. Varenne, Vintage Spiritual Classics, 2007.

--. “On the Dignity of Mary and on the Mystical Stars that Constitute Her Crown.” Sermon for the Sunday within the Octave of the Assumption, *Worldpress,* 21 August 2016. https://coelifluus.wordpress.com/2016/08/21/sermon-saint-bernard-sunday-after-assumption-blessed-virgin/. Accessed 4 February 2025.

--. *Sermons of St. Bernard of Clairvaux on Advent and Christmas*. Anthem Publishing, 2020.

Blázquez, Feliciano. *Santa María, La Virgen: Antología de poesía mariana en lengua castellana*. Biblioteca de Autores Cristianos, 2006.

Blancy, Alain and Maurice Jourjon and the Dombes Group. *Mary in the Plan of God and in the Saints: Toward a Common Christian Understanding.* Paulist P, 2002.

Berry, George Ricker. *The Interlinear Literal Translation of the Greek New Testament ....* Hinds & Noble, 1897.

Bettella, Patrizia. *The Ugly Woman: Transgressive Aesthetic Models in Italian Poetry from the Middle Ages to the Baroque*. U of Toronto P, 2005.

Le Cantique des Cantiques. Translated by André Chouraqui. Desclée de Brouwer, 1953.

Caro Baroja, Julio. *Los moriscos del reino de Granada*. Alianza Editorial, 2010.

Catechism of the Catholic Church. Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1994.

Chapman, Emmanuel. *Saint Augustine’s Philosophy of Beauty*. Sheed & Ward, 1939.

Cleveland, Gregory. *Beholding Beauty: Mary and the Song of Songs*. Pauline Books and Media, 2020.

Conley, Kieran. *The Theology of Wisdom: A Study in St. Thomas*. The Priory P, 1963.

De Liguori, Alfonso Maria. *Il mese di maggio con le Glorie di Maria*. Shalom Editrice, 2010.

--. *Le Glorie di Maria*. Limovia.net, 2013.

Dodd, Gloria. "The Marriage of Mary and Joseph." *The Virgin Mary and Theology of the Body*, edited by Donald H. Calloway, Ascension P, 2007, pp. 79–98.

Dronke, Peter. *Medieval Latin and the Rise of European Love-Lyric* Volumes I and II, 2nd ed. Oxford UP, 1968.

Eco, Umberto. *Art and Beauty in the Middle Ages*. Translated by Hugh Bredin, Yale UP, 1986.

--. "Sviluppo dell'estetica medievale." *Momenti e problemi di storia dell'estetica,* vol. 1, Marzorati Editore, 1959.

Emmerich, Anne Catherine. *The Life of the Blessed Virgin Mary*. Tan Books, 1970.

Evdokimov, Paul. *The Art of the Icon: a theology of beauty*. Translated by Steven Bigham, Oakwood Publications, 1996.

Fabbri, Maurizio. "La oda "A la Virgen Nuestra Señora" y su significación en la lírica de Moratín." *Coloquio Internacional sobre Leandro Fernández de Moratín*, Bolonia, 27–29 de octubre de 1978, Piovan Editore, 1980, 123–36.

Feuillet, André. *Jésus et sa Mère d'après les récits lucaniens de l'enfance et d'après Saint Jean : le rôle de La Vierge Marie dans l'histoire du salut et la place de la femme dans l'église*. J. Gabalda et Cie. Éditeurs, 1974.

Fontanier, Jean-Michel. *La Beauté selon Saint Augustin*. Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 1998.

French, Mandy. “What is the connection between beauty standards and mental health?” *Medical News Today*, 1 May 2024, https://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/beauty-standards-and-mental-health. Accessed 20 February 2025.

Friedman, Edward H. et al. *Aproximaciones al estudio de la literatura hispánica*, 8th ed. Vista Higher Learning, Inc., 2022.

Gambero, Luigi. *Mary and the Fathers of the Church: The Blessed Virgin Mary in Patristic Thought*. Translated by Thomas Buffer. Ignatius P, 1999.

Gámez Salas, José Miguel. “La simbología inmaculista y su culmen iconográfico a través de Murillo (IV Centenario nacimiento de Murillo 1617–1682)”, *Revista Historias del Orbis Terrarum*, Anejos de Estudios Clásicos, Medievales y Renacentistas, ISSN 0718–7246, vol. 16, Santiago, 2018, pp. 91–128. García Arenal, Mercedes. *Los moriscos*. U of Granada, 1996. https://dialnet.unirioja.es/servlet/articulo?codigo=6841646. Accessed 31 March 2024.

Garrote Pérez, Francisco. *Pensamiento y naturaleza en España durante los siglos XVI y XVII*. Ediciones Universidad de Salamanca, 1981.

“General Council of Trent: Fifth Session: Decree Concerning Original Sin” *Papal Encyclicals* Online. https://www.papalencyclicals.net/councils/trent/fifth-session.htm. Accessed 12 December 2024.

Germanus. *In Praesentationem Ssmae Deiparae*, I: PG XCVIII, 303 A.

Gilby, Thomas. *Poetic Experience: An Introduction to Thomist Æsthetic*. Russell and Russel, 1967.

Gonzaga, Aloysius. *Meditations on the Holy Angels*. Translated by Robert Nixon. TAN Books, 2022.

Gress, Carrie. *The Marian Option: God's Solution to a Civilization in Crisis*. TAN Books, 2017.

Grove Art Online, *Oxford Art Online*, 8 May 2024, https://www.oxfordartonline.com/groveart/display/10.1093/gao/9781884446054.001.0001/oao-9781884446054-e-7000072330#oao-9781884446054-e-7000072330. Accessed 12 March 2025.

Guardini, Romano. *Das Christusbild der paulinischen und johanneischen Schriften*, 3rd ed. Matthias-Grünewald, 1987.

Hausherr, Irénée. *Les leçons d'un contemplatif : Le traité de l'oraison d'Évagre le Pontique* [par] I. Beauchesne, 1960.

Heller, Agnes. *The Concept of the Beautiful*. Edited by Marcia Morgan, Lexington Books, 2012.

Helmstutler Di Dio, Kelley and Tommaso Mozzati, editors. *Artistic Circulation between Early Modern Spain and Italy*. Routledge, 2019.

Hernández, Rosilie. *Immaculate Conceptions: The Power of the Religious Imagination in Early Modern Spain*. U of Toronto P, 2019.

Hibbard, Howard. Guido Reni s Painting of the Immaculate Conception." *The Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin*, vol. 28, no. 1, 1969, pp. 19–32. JSTOR, https://doi.org/10.2307/3258470. Accessed 29 November 2024.

Hildegard of Bingen. *Creation and Christ: The Wisdom of Hildegard of Bingen*. Translated by Columbia Hart and Jane Bishop. Paulist P, 1996.

Hildegard of Bingen. *Symphonia: A Critical Edition of the Symphonia armonie celestium revelationum* [Symphony of the harmony of celestial revelations]. Translated by Barbara Newman, Cornell UP, 1988.

The Holy Bible: Douay-Rheims Version. Saint Benedict P, MMIX.

Horace. *Satires, Epistles and Ars poetica*. Translated by Rushton H. Fairclough, Harvard UP, 1991.

"Increasing" *The Bible Hub.* https://biblehub.com/topical/i/increasing.htm. Accessed 16 April 2025.

John Paul II. *Crossing the Threshold of Hope*. Edited by Vittorio Messori, Vittorio, Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1994.

--. *The Encyclical Letter of John Paul II: Mother of the Redeemer Redemptoris Mater*. Daughters of St. Paul, 1987.

--. "The Holy See Homily" Los Angeles Coliseum 15 Sept. 1987. *The Holy See.* https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/homilies/1987/documents/hf_John Paul-ii_hom_19870915_coliseum-los-angeles.html. Accessed 26 Jan 2025.

--. *Man and Woman He Created Them: A Theology of the Body*. Translated by Michael Waldstein. Pauline Books and Media, 2006.

--. *Theotókos: Woman, Mother, Disciple*, vol. 5. Pauline Books and Media, 2000.

--. "Veritatis Splendor" *The Holy See,* 6 August 1993, https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_John Paul-ii_enc_06081993_veritatis-splendor.html. Accessed 16 January 2025.

Katz, Melissa R. "Mary, the Mirror: Sacred Imagery and Secular Experience", *Picturing Mary: Woman, Mother, Idea*. Scala Arts Publishers, Inc., 2014, 51–61.

Keyes, Samuel. "Why We Do Lent." *Catholic Answers,* Spring 2025, pp. 28–32.

Konstan, David. *Beauty: The Fortunes of an Ancient Greek Idea.* Oxford UP, 2015.

Knight, Ben. "Small exposure to body positive content can improve body image." UNSW Sydney Newsroom. 6 Jan. 2023, https://www.unsw.edu.au/newsroom/news/2023/01/small-exposure-to-body-positive-content-can-improve-body-image. Accessed 21 February 2025.

--. “TikTok and body image: idealistic content may be detrimental to mental health.” UNSW Sydney Newsroom, 21 Aug. 2023, https://www.unsw.edu.au/newsroom/news/2023/08/tiktok-and-body-image--idealistic-content-may-be-detrimental-to-. Accessed 21 February 2025.

Laham, Martha. *Made Up: How the Beauty Industry Manipulates Consumers, Preys on Women's Insecurities, and Promotes Unattainable Beauty Standards*, Rowman & Littlefield Publishers,2020. http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/ugalib/detail.action?docID=6361882. Accessed 21 February 2025.

“L’arte barroca”. Storiadellarte.com. https://www.storiadellarte.com/periodi/barocco/barocco.htm. Accessed on 7 July 2025.

Laurentin, René. *Court Traité sur la Vièrge Marie : Édition post-conciliaire,* 5th ed. Lethielleux, 1968.

“Leandro Fernandez de Moratin”. Catholic Encyclopedia on Catholic Answers. https://www.catholic.com/encyclopedia/leandro-fernandez-de-moratin. Accessed 16 December 2024.

Lecky, William. *History of Rationalism*. Longmans, Green, and Co., 1866.

Lee, Dorothy Ann. “How the cult of Virgin Mary turned a symbol of female authority into a tool of patriarchy.” *The Conversation,* 22 Dec 2019, https://theconversation.com/how-the-cult-of-virgin-mary-turned-a-symbol-of-female-authority-into-a-tool-of-patriarchy-127806. Accessed 28 December 2024.

Lev, Elizabeth. *How Catholic Art Saved the Faith: The Triumph of Beauty and Truth in Counter-Reformation Art*. Sophia Institute P, 2018.

Lucea García, Javier. *La poesía y el teatro en el siglo XVII*. Editorial Playor, 1984.

Lumen Gentium. The Holy See Vatican Archives. https://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19641121_lumen-gentium_en.html. Accessed 19 December 2024.

Madrid, Alonso de. *Arte de servir a Dios*. Martin Nucio, 1551. https://books.google.es/books?id=BCg7AAAAcAAJ&printsec=frontcover&hl=es#v=onepage&q&f=false. Accessed 25 April 2025.

Mariutti de Sánchez Rivero, A. "Un ejemplo de intercambio cultural hispano-italiano en el siglo XVIII: Leandro Fernández de Moratín y Pietro Napoli-Signorelli", *Revista de la Universidad de Madrid*, IX, 1960, pp. 763–808.

Maurer, Armand A. *About Beauty: A Thomistic Interpretation*. Center for Thomistic Studies, 1983.

Meléndez y Pelayo, Marcelino. *Edición nacional de la obras completas de Meléndez Pelayo: Historia de las ideas estéticas en España,* Vol. 1–3. Edited by D. Enrique Sánchez Reyes. Aldus, S.A., 1946.

Mieggi, Giovanni. *The Virgin Mary: The Roman Catholic Marian Doctrine*. Translated by Waldo Smith, The Westminster P, 1950.

Montfort, Louis. *The Saint Louis de Montfort Collection*. Catholic Way Publishing, 2013.

--. *True Devotion to Mary with Preparation for Total Consecration*. Tan Books, 2010.

Moratín, Leandro Fernández. *Poesías*, Edición de Jesús Pérez-Magallón. Cátedra, 2023.

Newman, John Henry Cardinal. *Discourses Addressed to Mixed Congregations.* Longmans, Green, and Co., 1907. https://www.newmanreader.org/works/discourses/index.html. Accessed 30 December 2024.

Núñez Muley, Francisco. *A Memorandum for the President of the Royal Audience and Chancery Court of the City and Kingdom of Granada*. Edited and translated by Vincent Barletta, U of Chicago P, 2007.

--. *Memorial en defensa de las costumbres moriscas*. Linkgua Historia 285, 2024.

Pacheco, Francisco. *El arte de la pintura*, Tomo II. Imprenta y Editorial Maestre, 1956.

Paleotti, Gabriele. *Discourse on Sacred and Profane Images*. Translated by William McCuaig, The Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles, 2012.

Pelikan, Jaroslav. *Mary Through the Centuries: Her Place in the History of Culture*. Yale U P, 1996.

Pereda, Felipe. *Las imágenes de la discordia: Política y poética de la imagen sagrada en la España del cuatrocientos*. Marcial Pons Historia, 2007.

Pérez Sánchez, Alfonso E. *Carreño, Rizi, Herrera y la pintura madrileña de su tiempo [1650–1700]*. Ministerio de Cultura: Banco Herrero, 1986.

--. *Pintura barroca en España 1600–1750*. Ediciones Cátedra, 1992.

Petrarch. *Petrarch's Songbook: Rerum Vulgarium Fragmenta*. Translated by James Wyatt Cook, Medieval & renaissance Text & Studies, 1996.

Pisani, Renato. *Maria nell'Arte: Iconografia e iconologia mariana in venti secoli di cristianesimo*. Gangemi Editore, 27 October 2000.

Pius XII. *Ad Caeli Reginam*. https://www.vatican.va/content/pius-xii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-xii_enc_11101954_ad-caeli-reginam.html. Accessed 24 December 2024.

Plotinus. *Enneads*. Translated by Stephan MacKenna. Penguin, 1991.

Pope Benedict XVI. *Marian Thoughts*. Catholic Book Publishing Corp., 2007.

Portús Pérez, Javier. *Guía Pintura barroca española*. Museo del Prado, 2001.

--. *Portrait of Spain: Masterpieces of the Prado*. Museo Nacional del Prado, 2012.

Potterie, Ignace. *Mary in the Mystery of the Covenant*. Translated by Bertrand Buby, Alba House, 1992.

The Project Gutenberg eBook of Modern Poets and Poetry of Spain. https://www.gutenberg.org/cache/epub/53671/pg53671-images.html#IV. Accessed 10 March 2025.

Les Psaumes. Translated by André Chouraqui. Presses Universitaires de France, 1956.

Ratzinger, Joseph Cardinal. *Daughter Zion: Meditations on the Church's Marian Belief*. Ingnatius P, 1983.

--. *Introduction to Christianity*. Ignatius P, 2004.

--, Hans Urs von Balthasar. *Mary: The Church at the Source*. Ignatius Press, 2005.

Rey Ballesteros, José Fernando. *Figuras de la Virgen en el Antiguo Testamento*. Ediciones Palabra, 2007.

Riegl, Alois. *The Origins of Baroque Art in Rome*. Translated by Andrew Hopkin and Arnold Witte, The Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles, 2010.

Rossi, Aldo. "Guiding Dogma for our age: the Assumption." *Society of Saint Pius X, District of the USA*, August 12, 2014 (original publication May 2001), https://sspx.org/en/news/guiding-dogma-our-age-assumption-5252. Accessed 27 December 2024.

Roten, Johann G. "Mary and the Way of Beauty." *Marian Studies*, Vol. 49 The Virgin Mary in Art, Article 10, 1998. https://ecommons.udayton.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1513&context=marian_studies. Accessed 2 February 2025.

Rubin, Miri. "God-Bearer and Woman: Christian Traditions of Picturing Mary Throughout History." *Picturing Mary: Woman, Mother, Idea*. Scala Arts Publishers, Inc. January 22, 2015, 27–37.

--. *Mother of God: A History of the Virgin Mary.* Yale UP, 2009.

Sales, Francis. *Philothea or Introduction to the Devote Life*. TAN Books, 2010.

"S. Giovanni Battista." Arcidiocesi di Foggia-Bovino. https://diocesifoggiabovino.it/?pag=diocesi&sub_pag=parrocchie&id=5. Accessed 31 December 2024.

Schütze, Sebastian. "The Politics of Counter-Reformation Iconography and a Quest for the Spanishness of Neapolitan Art." *Spain in Italy: Politics, Society, and Religion 1500–1700*, edited by Thomas James Dandelet and John A. Marino, Koninklijke Brill NV, 2007, 555–68.

"St. Germanus I of Constantinople". *4 marks of the church*, https://4marksofthechurch.com/germanus-i-of-constantinople/. Accessed 7 Feb. 2025.

Stratton, Suzanne L. *The Immaculate Conception in Spanish Art*. Cambridge U P, 1994.

Teresa de Jesús. *Camino de perfección.* Espasa-Calpe, S.A., 1969.

"Titian: Women, Myth and Power." *Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum.* https://www.gardnermuseum.org/experience/titian-women-myth-and-power-gallery-guide. Accessed 3 May 2025.

Twomey, Leslie K. *The Serpent and the Rose: The Immaculate Conception and Hispanic Poetry of the Late Medieval Period*. Brill, 2008.

Veliz, Zahira, editor and translator. *Artists' Techniques in Golden Age Spain: Six Treatises in Translation*. Cambridge UP, 1986.

Verdon, Timothy. *Mary in Western Art.* Hudson Hill P, 2005.

-- et al. *Picturing Mary: Woman, Mother, Idea*. Scala Arts Publishers, Inc. January 22, 2015.

von Balthasar, Hans Urs y Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger. *Mary: The Church at the Source*. Ignatius P, 1997.

--. *The Glory of the Lord: Seeing the form*. Ignatius P, 1983.

--. *Theologic I: The Truth of the World*. Translated by Adrian J. Walker, Ignatius Press, 2000.

Witte, Arnold. “Reconstructing Riegl’s Entstehung der Barockkunst in Rom.” *The Origins of Baroque Art in Rome*, edited and translated by Andrew Hopkins and Arnold Witt, the Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles, 2010, 34–59.