

There are many mysterious facts and circumstances surrounding the life and work of the nun Juana Inés de la Cruz. This thesis tries to provide answers for many of these particulars. Specifically those facts associated with the emergence of *Reply to Sister Filotea of the Cross*. It is, however, not possible to find a definite answer or interpretation. Juana lived in difficult times for a woman with high skills. She was not allowed to decide freely in many situations due to her being female. Her life and her creations were much closer to real social life than to closed religious inner life. Nevertheless, Juana was inspired by religious themes and was influenced by medieval mysticism. This is reflected mainly in the artistic side of her artwork. Although at the end of her life she had what might be called a spiritual conversion, it had no any effect on her literary work. Even though it had not been her primary interest, Juana became active in theological disputation. Upon request of another person she submitted Vieyra's sermon to her criticism. The letter *Carta athenagorica* was a crucial milestone in Juana's life, just like her decision to become a nun. Due to the letters' publication, we can now read what this writer felt, who is nowadays considered as such an important part of the nascent Latin American literature. Another reason for writing *Reply to Sister Filotea* was the defense of women's rights: to study, to teach and to express their opinions publicly. Juana also defended herself against her tough critics. *Reply to sister Filotea of the Cross* became Juana's personal confession. A confession of her fears, her suffering from verbal attacks and the feeling of harm and persecution. The *Reply* is also a defense of knowledge, intellect and free manifestation of attitudes regardless of the circumstances of a human being. Finally, it encourages its readers to tolerance.