

◆ CHAPTER ELEVEN

Docile Bodies and the Walls of Female
Confinement Past and Present:
A Biopolitical Look at *Orange is the
New Black* and Chicaba

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This essay examines several disparate characters—fictional as well as non-fictional—in parallel and that originate in equally heterogeneous sociocultural environments. It examines the institutionalized control over women and their bodies within the physical spaces of the prison and convent and the social spaces of freedom or confinement procured within these walls to explore identity and religiosity in a limiting context. At stake is the exploration of an institutionalized control over the space that the female body inhabits behind prison walls in Netflix’s streaming series, *Orange is the New Black*. Likewise, it delves into the curious hagiographical story of the first African-born Spanish slave turned nun, Chicaba, and the limitations of gendered race in seventeenth-century Spain, behind convent walls. The overarching objective of this study is to provide a reading of early modern Spanish women’s racialized space within conventual enclosures in comparative terms with a twenty-first-century prison narrative and for a twenty-first-century audience. Michel Foucault’s notion of “cellular power” and its effects on the “disciplined body” will facilitate a lens of analysis to scrutinize the ever-changing structures of institutionalized power, or biopolitics, and the positioning of women across chronological space and differing power hierarchies. Concomitant with the effects of cellular power on the female body is Julia Kristeva’s notion of the abject suffering that the female body is subjected to that creates those liminal spaces that women and, more specifically, women of color experience to achieve a normalized space within the social hierarchy. This biopolitical overview of various types of social, metaphorical and racial enclosures of women of the early modern period as compared to those of the twenty-first-century

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female body, effectively examines the docile bodies of women of past and present institutionalizations or normalizations thereby unveiling the effects of hierarchical power on gendered and racialized bodies.

Docile Bodies: *Orange is the New Black*

Piper: “It’s a sign of weakness. That’s what all the books said.”

Mr. Healy: “Women fight with gossip and rumors. And there are lesbians. You do not have to have lesbian sex. And remember, nothing goes on here that I don’t know about.”

Piper: “And then I ran away and became the nice blonde lady I was supposed to be.”

Anita: “Look, you do what you want. But you will be the only one in this entire prison that does. You want that?” (“I Wasn’t Ready”)

The preceding, decontextualized, excerpts of Netflix’s streaming video series, *Orange is the New Black*, provide background to convict Piper Chapman’s learning curve toward a normalization of prison life and a trained or disciplined and docile body.¹ *Orange is the New Black* explores the protagonist’s—Piper’s—initiatives to uphold her individuality within a system of imprisonment that seeks to absorb prisoners into a normalized mass of orange, the color of prison clothing. Among other methods, the impersonal bureaucracy of the prison system employs randomly enforced strip-searches, body counts, and censorship to break the individual’s identity and sexuality. The plotline follows that of a similar first-time prisoner’s story: initial shock, the learning and procuring of new social codes, and the eventual immersion into prison society. Piper Chapman, a woman living in New York City, is sentenced to fifteen months in a women’s federal prison in Upstate New York. She has been convicted of transporting drug money to her former inamorata, Alex Vause, an international drug-trafficker. Her sudden and unexpected arrest disrupts her relationships with her current male fiancé and her family. Behind prison walls, Piper is reunited with Alex and they re-examine their amorous relationship, while outside the penal institution, she professes to be “the nice blond lady I was supposed to be” (“I Wasn’t Ready”). This means, of course, that Piper feigns adherence to contemporary patriarchal social norms while *extra muros*, by abiding by the traditional familial expectations of procuring a heterosexual marriage and living a morally virtuous and lawful life.² Notwithstanding, an examination of her intramural life provides the spectatorship a new vantage

point of Piper's capabilities as a criminal, a manipulator, and a lesbian.

This dual character development on the inside and outside of specified physical and societal boundaries delivers a unique opportunity to scrutinize questions of identity that are typically procured in relation to institutionalized power structures. Michel Foucault's seminal study, *Discipline & Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (1975), outlines a genealogy of disciplines directed at the normalization of the body. Foucault examines the development of systems of punishment from the medieval period to the twentieth century, pinpointing the shift from violent punishment to self-surveilled discipline with the prison reforms of the Western world in the eighteenth century.³ Although Foucault did not directly address the concept of biopolitics until his lectures at the Collège de France, *Society Must Be Defended* (1975–1976), he does speak to a mechanics of biopower that aims to control corporeal movements in *Discipline & Punish*. He centers his discussion on institutionalized disciplinary measures that seek to simultaneously harness and regulate movements of the individual's body and of the social body. He defines these measures as "disciplines" that are aimed at increasing the efficacy of the body, which he analyzes within the corporeal movements of the modern institutions of the school, the army, the hospital, the manufactory, and the prison.

What was then being formed was a policy of coercions that act upon the body, a calculated manipulation of its elements, its gestures its behaviour . . . Thus discipline produces subjected and practised bodies, "docile" bodies. Discipline increases the forces of the body (in economic terms of utility) and diminishes these same forces (in political terms of obedience). (*Discipline* 138)

The application of coercions or disciplines upon the body represents a nomenclature that enables Foucault to analyze a "micro-physics of power" that produces docile bodies, which are essentially trained bodies: bodies that react to specific social, chronological, physical, emotional, and environmental cues in a predetermined manner (28). In Piper's prison, the time, movements and space of her body are unyieldingly governed by her predetermined area and bunk within a cell; bells signaling when to eat, work, and sleep; designated bathrooms divided according to race; and jobs doled out at the whim of the institution's councilor, Mr. Healy. This scheduled and disciplined life resembles Foucault's description of the timetable for *Écoles mutuelles* (mutual improvement schools) of nineteenth-century France: "8.45 entrance of the monitor, 8.52 the monitor's summons, 8.56 entrance of the children and prayer, 9.00

the children go to their benches, 9.04 first slate, 9.08 end of dictation, 9.12 second slate, etc.” (150). This daily itinerary of school life bears a not-so-coincidental resemblance of Piper’s penitentiary schedule, as Foucault’s rhetorical question intimates: “Is it surprising that prisons resemble factories, schools, barracks, hospitals, which all resemble prisons?” (228). Foucault’s overarching premise links disciplines, which govern the time, space, and movements of the individual body, as power that normalizes or standardizes the body politic. These disciplines echo one another throughout different institutions of the social body in order to achieve the desired effect of homogenization, thereby evading entropy within the community. Accordingly, while orienting Piper within her shared prison cell, her cellmate, Anita, advises her on how to appropriately sleep on top of her bunk without positioning her body within the sheets: “Anita: ‘Look, you do what you want. But you will be the only one in this entire prison that does. You want that?’” (“I Wasn’t Ready”). Piper’s desire to slumber within the sheets of her bed is one example that deviates from the disciplined normalization that prisoners comply with in an effort to attain utility and obedience of the body. The sheets are rarely cleaned and most likely promote the spreading of insect infestation and disease; thus, Piper will be alone in not adhering to the unique and normalized position—above the sheets—she must sleep in while within penitentiary walls. Anita immediately proceeds to instruct Piper on where to situate her body during the daily prison count: “Anita: ‘That light comes on, you need to be where you’re supposed to be, and you don’t move, until it goes off. Dinner’s after.’” (“I Wasn’t Ready”). Once all prisoners are accounted for, their bodies instantaneously file into the cafeteria, from there to work, again to the cafeteria, to educational activities designed to indoctrinate societal compliance, and so on.

Sandra Lee Bartky has observed that “Foucault treats the body throughout as if it were one, as if the bodily experiences of men and women did not differ” (27). Indeed, Foucault appears to be more concerned with concentrating on the effects of biopower on the body politic as a whole rather than with its specific members and the disciplines incurred upon them. Nevertheless, Bartky’s argument for a more direct analysis of the effects of biopower on specific members of the body politic is not in vain since scholars such as Judith Butler have likewise commented on gender being tantamount to a social construct rather than biological: “[Gender is] a mode of enacting and reenacting received gender norms which surface as so many styles of flesh” (48). Bartky’s pointed question hits the mark: “Where is the account of the disciplinary practices that engender the ‘docile bodies’ of women, bodies more docile than the bodies of men?” (27). To this end, we will endeavor to uncover Foucault’s apparently overlooked female disciplines and normalized bodies inasmuch as they were not the focus of his analysis to begin with. Likewise, an investigation will

be carried out into another area that Foucault chose to avoid concerning the institutionalization of power structures. Namely, pre-eighteenth-century society is largely examined in Foucault's thinking as a backdrop for comparative purposes since medieval and early modern cultures maintain a traditional power hierarchy wherein the sovereign bears supreme power over the subject.⁴ On the contrary, eighteenth- to twentieth-century Western societies repatriate the power hierarchy across so many different institutions, essentially enabling it to invade all areas of life. Examining these contrasting power structures across temporal and genealogical space elucidates biopower's effects on similar bodies in similar spaces at dissimilar periods of time. With the objective of examining a comparative chronological and genealogical system of power structures that enclose or liberate the female body, perhaps a representation of the official discourse of early modern hegemonic power presented in treatises apropos women's roles in society will prove relevant to the discussion.

Treatises of Counter-Reformation-era attempts to control female space and body are ubiquitous in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Spain.⁵ From Juan Luis Vives's *The Education of a Christian Woman* (1523) to Fray Juan de la Cerda's *Vida política de todos los estados de mujeres* (1599) (*The Political Life of all States of Women*), treatises concerning what women do and where they do it abound. Fray Luis de León's *La Perfecta casada* (*The Perfect Married Woman*) illustrates a characteristic attempt to classify, categorize, and scrutinize female voice, space, and action. Indeed, the title of the manual directs readership toward a specific type of female body, a married woman, signifying that perhaps the comportment of unmarried women requires similar guides to equally "perfect" their actions in accordance with civil status. In one particularly revealing excerpt of León's book, he sheds light on the overall perception of a married woman's place according to hegemonic social standards. In rhetorical fashion, León inquires "si la casada no trabaja, ni se ocupa en lo que pertenece a su casa, ¿qué otros estudios o negocios tiene en que se ocupa?" (70) (if the married woman does not work, nor occupy herself with housework, what other studies or business does she have to occupy herself with?). His response exposes a shocking, albeit common, result to comparable treatises:

emplee su vida en los oficios ajenos; . . . en ser venturera, visitadora, callejera, amiga de fiestas, enemiga de su rincón, de su casa olvidada y de las casas ajenas curiosa, pesquisidora de cuanto pasa (y aun de lo que no pasa inventora, parlera y chismosa) . . . dada del todo a la risa y a la conversación . . . el trabajo da a la mujer, o el sér, o el ser buena; porque, sin él, o no es mujer, sino asco, o es tal mujer, que sería menos mal que no fuese.

(73)

(she employs her life in the business of others . . . in being venturous, in visiting, in going out, friendly to the party scene, enemy of her proper place, forgetful of her own household while curious of others', fishing about for news (and inventing it where there is none, talkative and gossipy) . . . immersed in laughter and conversation . . . work gives to woman either her being or being a good person; because without it she is not a woman but rather disgusting, or she is such a woman that it would be better if she were not.)

León indicates that a woman who strays from domestic duties develops certain characteristics commonly associated with prostitutes: *callejera*, *amiga de fiestas*, *de las casas ajenas* curiosa (in going out, friendly to the party scene, enemy of her proper place). She blossoms into a gossip, prone to conversation and foolhardy laughter, which is a perception indistinguishable from that of Prison Councilor Healy's on the behavior of twenty-first-century women: "Women fight with gossip and rumors" ("I Wasn't Ready"). Where she is not able to fish for information, she invents it. What's more, León proclaims that women of this ilk are not women at all, but rather disgusting beings that should not exist. In a word, he proposes that such a woman poses a threat, signaling that her ability to interact freely and with whom she desires may spread unwelcome ideas to other female members of the body politic. The cure? Annihilation of any possibility to stray from a docile normalization, either by maintaining the woman occupied with the disciplines of housework or by separating her from society, possibly by means of death.

These Inquisitorial era treatises governing the space of women align with the self-help books that Piper Chapman absorbs prior to entering prison: "Piper: 'It's a sign of weakness. That's what all the books said.'" ("I Wasn't Ready"). Piper's "books" appear to orient her toward the disciplines of prison culture, resembling Luis de León's treatise on the governance of married space aimed at the perfect married woman ("I Wasn't Ready"). And while early modern treatises and modern-day handbooks explore specific subject matter in a formal and systematic method, they are not unique in purveying disciplines that train docile bodies. Official discourse directed toward the comportment of a perfection or normalization of docile female bodies permeates all forms of communication throughout Inquisitorial Spain and our contemporary world. Yet this affirmation only serves to display a long line of sociocultural inheritance of a patriarchal world order. Helena Sánchez Ortega observes "Since ancient times, woman has been the object of accusations

that have essentially transformed her into the source of all suffering” (196). Classical and Judeo-Christian history “associate her with the appearance of sudden illness, death, accidents, and even metaphysical malaise. Eve, Lilith, Delilah, Pandora, and Helen are names that immediately bring to mind the misfortunes befalling men who trusted women” (196). To be sure, even biblical references denote patriarchal norms that coerce women into a subordinate space to men, lest they break their traditional role thereby associating themselves with history’s negative exemplifications of the female body: “For man was not made from woman but woman from man. Neither was man created for woman, but woman for man” (Corinthians 11:8–9).

The hegemonic language governing women’s social space found throughout Occidental literature in the forms of theological and social treatises as well as official royal discourse and the self-help books of the twenty-first century are indicative of a certain type of power that emanates from the cellular structure, which governs the physical limitations of its captives. Foucault traces the distribution of disciplinary techniques to the idea of a physical enclosure not unlike the convent: “Discipline sometimes requires *enclosure*, the specification of a place heterogeneous to all others and closed in upon itself. It is the protected place of disciplinary monotony” (*Discipline* 141). For the twenty-first-century Piper Chapman, enclosure typically signifies a disciplining technique aimed at self-reflection, which Foucault understands as a punishment of the soul. This type of “Discipline organizes an analytical space. And there . . . it encountered an old architectural and religious method: the monastic cell” (143). Notwithstanding our contemporary perception of the cell as a site of monotonous punishment aimed at self-reflection for those committing crime, its monastic origins reveal cellular space as perhaps one of choice or, at minimum, a location that grants its occupant reprieve from social pressures. Indeed, Piper Chapman sheds her traditional responsibilities of procuring a heterosexual marriage and leading a law-abiding life for her homosexual relationship and activities that amount to smuggling contraband inside her cellular accommodations. Thus, the twenty-first-century prisoner’s individualized confines, commonly understood as a method of punishment, signify a form of freedom from societal boundaries with regards to certain liberties that may be otherwise restricted outside of confinement. The inmate, in a word, relinquishes certain freedoms wielded outside of enclosure, but encounters others within the grasp of cellular power.

Chicaba’s Black Docile Body

Notwithstanding the social roles of female characters in *Orange is the New*

Black or the positioning of women of history as subordinate to men, even within the confines of the monastically organized cell, socioracial hierarchy creates disciplined bodies that are veritably more subordinate than the gendered hierarchy of the traditional patriarchy. In Piper Chapman's Upstate New York prison, inmates are separated by race and social status: Latina women are typically portrayed as cooks or kitchen workers; the mentally unstable women and drug addicts clean the bathrooms; bathrooms are assigned for use by black, white, or Latina groups of women; the lone Russian inmate is portrayed as a variety of Mafia capo; and so on. These communal segregations are indicative of a greater hegemonic worldview that groups like-minded, like-skinned, and culturally alike peoples together. Sor Teresa Juliana de Santo Domingo (Chicaba or Chikaba) is emblematic of a racial differentiation of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries similar to Piper's prison. She is the first noble-born African slave in Spain, who likewise becomes the first female author in the Spanish language of African descent, the first black nun admitted into a cloistered convent in Spain, and the first black/Spanish nun who is currently in the process of beatification (Melián 566).⁶ Known as *La Negrita de la Penitencia* (The little black lady of the convent)—a not so casual sobriquet—Chicaba was the late seventeenth-century daughter of a tribal chieftain. At nine years of age, she was captured from the Gold Coast region of Africa and enslaved to the Marquis and Marquise of Mancera. The complexion of her skin, her foreign origins, and her life as a slave contribute to her social and physical marginalization and the segregation from her peers, while her former high-born standing as a tribal princess is what situates her as a liminal figure in her position as the servant of a house of Spanish nobility.⁷

The bulk of our knowledge on Chicaba's existence originates from Juan Carlos Paniagua's hagiography, *Compendio de la vida ejemplar de la venerable madre Sor Teresa Juliana de Sto. Domingo*—Chicaba's Christian name—and from a small exhibition honoring her life in the Convent of las Dueñas of Salamanca, Spain.⁸ Approximately four years after her death (1752), Paniagua composed Chicaba's hagiography with the objective of beatification and possible canonization. Bearing this in mind, it is quite possible that Paniagua's portrayal of Chicaba's life consists of a certain level of embellishment to achieve a positive representation of her persona, which is an unsurprising characteristic of hagiographical writing (Ferrús 188). Despite that, he presents several key pieces of information to her story that elucidate her position as subordinate to other women of her period and women in similar conventual situations. The first half of the hagiography recounts Chicaba's noble parentage, her subsequent capture, and life as a slave situated in a privileged household, while Paniagua intermittently peppers the narrative with her apparent innate desire to devote herself to Christ and the mistreatment she experienced at the hands of other servants in the

service of the Marquis. After the Marquise of Mancera passed away, Chicaba was granted permission to seek out a convent that would take her in. Due to the complexion of her skin, she was denied access to all but one, the convent of Santa María Magdalena of Salamanca, as a professed tertiary.⁹

While her black-African origins determine her subsequent status as a victim of the slave trade, Paniagua's textual account of Chicaba's conventual life illuminates her liminal position amid acceptance and exclusion. He identifies a number of convents that reject Chicaba's admission as a religious devotee owing to her status as foreign and black. Beatriz Ferrús Antón traces Inquisitorial reasoning on Chicaba's rejection into conventual life as attributable to her race and foreignness since indigenous and black women were typically assigned the duties of servants or slaves inside convent walls and were rarely admitted as religious figures (183). That Chicaba was eventually permitted access to the convent of Santa María Magdalena as a professed tertiary nun situates her alongside her white counterparts. Nonetheless, Paniagua describes her conventual duties as akin to those that a servant or slave would carry out. Likewise, her designated places of prayer are separate from those of her white counterparts, which further underscores her liminal position as simultaneously accepted within conventual walls and excluded, albeit in assigned duties and place of prayer alone. These differentiating characteristics of Chicaba's life aside, two incidents in Paniagua's retelling of her story merit commentary as they relate to Foucault's notion of the monastic cell as a technique of disciplining the body: the first details Chicaba's momentary alteration in skin tone upon death; the second describes how and who Chicaba cares for in the convent, likening her to Julia Kristeva's concept of the abject.

In Foucault's description of the principle of enclosure as a disciplinary technique "Solitude was necessary to both body and soul, according to a certain asceticism: . . . 'Sleep is the image of death, the dormitory is the image of the sepulchre'" (*Discipline* 143). Following this line of thought, the monastic cell or convent must achieve a certain level of solitude in order for the body and soul to meditate on its sins and cleanse itself of all transgressions. In life as in death, Chicaba imitates the solitude and meditation that approximates her soul to divine power by situating her body both within conventual walls and those of her casket (which currently rests within the walls of the Dominican convent of *las Dueñas* of Salamanca). It is no coincidence that Foucault cites Nicolas Delamare's 1705 *Traité de police* regarding the semblance of the dormitory to the sepulcher and sleep to death. In the afterlife, one is considered to have greater contact with the divine. As a consequence, the living's imitation of the departed and his/her surroundings is thought to approximate one's soul to that divine hierarchical structure. For Foucault, this technique of organization in the imitation of divine structures according to rank is "the

base for a micro-physics of what might be called a ‘cellular’ power” (*Discipline* 149). Within Chicaba’s conventual walls, cellular power ranks her black and foreign body toward the bottom of the social hierarchy. This is not unlike how cellular power operates on the imprisoned bodies of Piper Chapman’s Upstate New York prison by dint of a racialized segregation that maintains like-skinned bodies adjacent to one another within the confines of cells. This likeness in skin tone grouped together within cellular space normalizes the notion that like-bodies must live, act, and react in alike ways.

In the immediate aftermath of her death, Paniagua had to demonstrate that cellular power had transformed Chicaba into a disciplined body that is worthy of beatification: “el color del rostro, por su naturaleza negro, antes de expirar se le puso blanco, y aún después de muerta perseveró así no poco tiempo. . . . No pocas religiosas afirmaban sentir una fragancia celestial y que excedía a cuantas composiciones aromáticas por acá se practican” (195–97) (the color of her face, which was naturally black, turned white before she expired, and even after death remained this way for some time. . . . More than a few religious devotees confirmed a celestial fragrance that exceeded all other aromatic compositions known to them). The celestial fragrance that surrounds Chicaba’s expired figure indicates that her soul has achieved a righteousness worthy of the beatification that Paniagua desires for her. Likewise, the change in pigmentation of her skin indicates a further whitewashing of her soul and ancestral sin. According to Valérie Benoist, the black nun was passing on to a life as white, represented by the alteration in color of her face, linking her afterlife with her terrestrial life (152). In the Jesuit Alonso de Sandoval’s treatise on slavery in the Americas, *De instauranda aethiopum salute*, Ham, the son of Noah, was cursed for having mocked his father while he slept unclothed (Brewer-García 121). This anathema extended to the descendants of Ham, tainting them with the same black skin pigmentation, which grew to signify slavery to further condemn Ham’s bloodline (121). Nonetheless, Sandoval offers a spiritual salvation to this curse through evangelization in the afterlife: “lo que es imposible a la naturaleza, es muy fácil a la gracia . . . pues antes quedan con la gracia de los santos sacramentos, blancos como el sol, y de oscuras noches días claros” (24) (what is impossible in nature, is simple for the grace of God . . . they become, with the divine sacraments, white as the sun, and from dark nights come clear days). Sandoval’s image of black skin turning to white signifies a difference between terrestrial life and celestial salvation, wherein those pious and disciplined black earthly bodies will achieve a righteousness worthy of lifting Ham’s curse. Chicaba’s status as black slave could be construed as a consequence of the biblical curse placed on Ham if her skin tone and slavery are regarded as a result of her ancestry. For Benoist, the whitewashing of Chicaba’s face and soul demonstrates the regard that she

was held in among her peers, but it also serves to substantiate white and male dominance (155). The hagiographical author, Juan Carlos Paniagua, a white and male priest who embodies the traditional center of power within the social hierarchy of the Church, is entrusted with the interpretation of Chicaba's life. Juxtaposed with Paniagua's white and male figure, which wields that power of interpretation, is the object of the hagiography, Chicaba. Chicaba, a black female and slave figure, is subjected to the positioning of her story in death to the whims of those entrusted to exhibit her tale, who likewise exercised power over her social positioning in life. Displaying Chicaba's black-face-turned-white justifies and propagates white dominance over black by presenting white as the color adjoining the righteous with the divine. The interpretation of her female and black-face-turned-white at the hands of a white male priest justifies and propagates male dominance over female.

During conventual life, Paniagua places a spotlight on Chicaba's duties of caring for the elderly and ailing to effectively establish a basis for the effects of cellular power on a disciplining of her body. In graphic detail, Paniagua chronicles Chicaba's relationship with a particularly ill religious laywoman that evokes a gruesome image: "[The laywoman] con unas llagas tan asquerosas, que ocasionaban a quien las miraba indecible fastidio . . . las asistentas no podían sufrir el hedor" (172) ([The laywoman] covered with disgusting ulcers, caused great revulsion for those who looked upon them . . . the cleaning ladies could not suffer the stench). Chicaba's altruistic devotion to this ailing laywoman guides her to a cure that epitomizes the abject: "la lamía las llagas, siendo sus labios la esponja con que chupando, recogía lo asqueroso de las materias" (172) (she licked the open wounds, her lips the sponge with which she sucked the revolting material). The sensations produced in the cleaning ladies and those that observed Chicaba's care of the laywoman border the detestation that Kristeva avails herself of in her essay on the abject: "The repugnance, the retching that thrusts me to the side and turns me away from defilement, sewage, and muck" (2). For Kristeva, the abject is what does not respect limits and transforms "fluid demarcations of yet unstable territories" (11). Chicaba's cure for the religious laywoman, and others in similar situations, breaks down the barriers between herself and the other. For Ferrús Antón, upon licking the open sores, the communication of abject fluid between the two bodies not only erases barriers, but also transforms abjection into difference, which becomes a sign of grace and miracle (191). Paniagua repeats similar events, emphasizing Chicaba's altruism as a sign of miracle, and it is through repetition of her divine and abject deeds that she gains a cellular disciplining of the body while carrying out a sacrificial life from within convent walls.

Nonetheless, positioning Chicaba's body in a space of abjection is not

unique to Paniagua's portrayal of the nun. There exist various accounts of pious women's bodies displayed as a sign of abjection, which when placed in the hands of a disciplining cellular power while immured, signifies a divine and miraculous transformation that grants divine grace. Moreover, cellular enclosure coupled with abjection appears in hagiographical accounts of other saintly women, such as Saint Radegundis of Villamayor de Treviño in Burgos (Cavero 99). According to Bernardo de León's *Chronica general del Orden Blanco*, Radegundis undergoes a similar hagiographical transition to that of Chicaba: she is the daughter of noble parentage, she is moved by a divine power to endure a pilgrimage or relocate, she lived a humble life as a low-ranking Premonstratensian nun, and she elects to immure herself to gain a greater level of devotion. While Chicaba's own skin serves as the barrier that creates social boundaries, Radegundis differentiates herself by dint of immurement with brick and mortar walls. Both women, nonetheless, achieve abjection within cellular power's isolating grasp, which may concomitantly signify religious and social freedoms from traditional hierarchies and restriction. Upon Radegundis's death, after ten years of solitude as an *emparedada*, Bernardo de León's description of her decaying body evinces another form of abjection: "allí tenía sus affectos tan apegados y tan juntos a las llagas que no las apartaba dellas, allí sentía estar la fuerza de sus cabellos" (f. 46 r) (her clothing was so completely stuck to her wounds that it would not come loose from her, her hair had grown long and thick). Contrary to Chicaba's alteration of skin tone, Radegundis does not undergo any physical displays of mutation that would signify divine grace or miracle. Nonetheless, her chronicler informs us that she experienced a premonition of her death at the significant age of thirty-three, not unlike Christ, which is perhaps indicative of divine miracle since she did indeed pass away at this presaged age.

The commonality among these differing medieval and early modern women rests within the walls of a cellular or enclosed life that, after immurement, enables them to achieve recognition of their sufficiently disciplined bodies and thereby acceptance into other, more divine, circles of power.¹⁰ That they must do this by suffering terrestrial abjection creates the detestable conditions that will differentiate their lives from those of their male and white counterparts. Suffering permits them the salvation of divine grace that their, perceived, imperfect female and black bodies were not previously worthy of. Conversely, the twenty-first-century Piper Chapman's confinement does not seek to purify her for the purpose of divine acceptance into traditional male structures of power, but rather to normalize her comportment by means of rehabilitation. For Foucault, "The [modern] prison must be the microcosm of a perfect society in which individuals are isolated in their moral existence, . . . but come together in a strict hierarchical framework" (*Discipline* 238).

This divergence in the structure of power from a pre-eighteenth-century hierarchy, wherein power was centered around the monarchy and thus the divine, to an institutionalization of power spread across a plurality of officially recognized institutions—such as the prison—also differentiates the methods by which confinement coerces adherence to structure. For Foucault, and for the pre-Enlightenment era European, the Monarch's power emanated from a central focal point intended to emulate divine grace. Subjects were expected to self-fashion themselves by pressing into service the model of divine power encountered in the body and institution of the Monarch. Docility, and thus normalization, was achieved by dint of both positive and negative exemplary models such as the Monarch, the walled-in religious figure, or public execution. Contrary to this, Foucault posits that race and gender—individual differences—among subjects replace the exemplary model of power structure in post-Enlightenment society:

the discourse of a battle . . . by a race that is portrayed as the one true race, the race that holds power and is entitled to define the norm, and against those who pose a threat to the biological heritage. At this point . . . institutions within the social body which make the discourse of race struggle function as a principle of exclusion and segregation and, ultimately, as a way of normalizing society. (*Society* 61)

In a word, difference creates hierarchy that is subsequently utilized to organize society. Although Foucault himself does not mention it, this same conclusion that racial difference normalizes society may also be applied to gender difference. Within Chicaba's convent, she appears as the only black body, a body subjected to greater coercions than her white counterparts in order to whitewash her soul of transgressions. Within the walls of Piper Chapman's Upstate New York prison, darker bodies are subject to jobs and conditions that lighter bodies are rarely portrayed carrying out, unless they are deemed mentally or physically infirm. Whether race, gender, or both play a role in exercising disciplines upon bodies to create a normalization of power, medieval, early modern, and twenty-first-century societies condition difference into compliance with normality.

Perhaps paradoxically, Piper and Chicaba find certain freedoms within confinement and while separated from patriarchal normalization that they do not encounter *extra-muros*. For Piper Chapman, her sexual expression and innate desire to lead is liberated within the prison system. Chicaba's only apparent salvation and readily available position in life appears to be out of the reach of a society dominated by white men seeking to enslave her, albeit

the convent is still a system of patriarchal hierarchy. That women may feel compelled to regard physical enclosure as a circumvention of the abusive confines of societal boundaries is precisely what Frederick A. de Armas's seminal study, *The Invisible Mistress*, underscores while examining man's position as relative to that of woman's as it concerns our analysis of enclosing bodies as a technique of discipline: "Man is free, but woman must always obey the husband (or father) and is for all intents and purposes incarcerated" (46). For De Armas, in the early modern Spanish literature of María de Zayas, man is portrayed as "the cruel jailor, while woman emerges as a creature imprisoned by her society, a society ruled by men" (46). In this regard, cellular power works simultaneously to both liberate its female captives from "the cruel jailor" of social pressure while compelling them to reflect upon their transgressions and subordinate position to men and to color (46). Foucault's understanding of biopolitics "to ensure, sustain and multiply life, to put this life in order" is carried out with greater disciplinary techniques on women's bodies and on darker bodies than on male and lighter-skinned bodies in the twenty-first century (*History* 138). This observation is one that television series, such as *Orange is the New Black*, and the media draw attention to continually. Meanwhile, the paradigms of power structure have shifted from a medieval and early modern centralized monarchical power to a current institutionalization of power radiating throughout society. Nonetheless, the same bodies that were subjected to similar methods of overzealous disciplining of the Inquisitorial past remain so, thereby demonstrating the force that disciplinary cellular power exercises to achieve normalization within the Occidental cultural patriarchal continuum. While the distribution of biopower has ultimately transformed over the passing of time, stories of confinement demonstrate that cellular space, intended to separate and discipline to achieve normalization, creates liminal spaces wherein the patriarchal and racialized order is both present and also simultaneously creates alternate freedoms for its female captives.

NOTES

1. The cited text from Episode 1 of Season 1 of *Orange is the New Black*, titled "I Wasn't Ready," is removed from conversational context to achieve an economy of words and space in this essay. The quoted text may be referenced in chronological order at minutes 8:00, 27:00, 29:00, and 33:00, respectively. The Netflix series is based on the autobiographical novel, *Orange is the New Black: My Year in a Women's Prison*, by Piper Kerman.
2. This essay makes no attempt at analyzing moral judgments. Nonetheless, the change

in comportment of the protagonist while located inside or outside of prison walls must be attributed to societal expectations; the tightening or loosening of certain rules or social mores, whether they are written or implied. Thus, Judeo-Christian morality must be considered while examining behavior, although it is undoubtedly not the only influence on one's character or comportment.

3. While Foucault specifically focuses on France throughout most of his oeuvre, he does utilize comparisons of other Western regions or countries, such as the United States and Great Britain. With this in mind, many of his assertions may not directly translate to the discussions in this essay from one sociocultural setting to another, neither chronologically nor in any form of definitive functionality. Nonetheless, this essay will center on the generalities of his thinking rather than its specifics to any one society or locus.
4. According to the historian José Antonio Maravall, Monarchical Spain's power structures are organized by divisions of honor in a pyramidal figure. Divine grace manifests itself vis-à-vis degree of honor. Those closer to the Sun or King receive honor, while those furthest from the apex of the pyramid experience less honor. The monarch is considered the divine's earthly representation—"Rey es sol"—thereby obtaining a majority of celestial grace (Lope 3.2909). "La acentuación [of divisions of honor] . . . de la movilidad vertical en esa época, . . . proporciona, sin embargo, al cuerpo social su peculiar dinamismo ascendente, y concomitantemente reduce, cada vez más también, el área de cada estrato a medida que se sube hacia el nivel final de la organización: esto es, hasta ese rey o soberano de las modernas monarquías absolutas." (Maravall, *Poder* 167) (The accentuation [of divisions of honor] . . . of vertical mobility in that epoch, . . . provides to the social body, however, its peculiar ascending dynamism, and likewise continuously and simultaneously reduces the area of each social stratum as one rises toward the final level of the organization: In a word, toward that king or sovereign of the modern absolute monarchies)
5. Juan Luis Vives's *De institutione feminae Christianae* (The Education of a Christian Woman) (1523) exemplifies this type of self-fashioning treatise for women. The manual advocates for the education of all women from childhood through adolescence to marriage, widowhood, and second marriages. In some respects, the treatise breaks from traditional and classical ideology concerning female intellectual inferiority to men, while in others, it reinforces ideas that bind women's sexuality to the realm of male control.
6. Baltasar Fra Molinero's article, "La primera escritora afrohispanica," presents an interesting quandary concerning what or who constitutes or qualifies as being an author. Based on a single poem found in Paniagua's *Compendio de la vida* that Chicaba had composed while a conventual nun, Molinero makes a compelling argument for her status as an Afro-Spanish author.
7. For an overview of slavery and the African slave trade throughout the seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Iberian Peninsula, see Elvira A. Melián's "Chikaba, la primera monja negra en el sistema esclavista finisecular español del siglo XVII."

8. Sister María Eugenia Maeso's 1999 transcription of the *Compendio* as well as an updated and annotated 2004 version by the same author, titled *Sor Teresa de Chicaba: Princesa, esclava y monja*, are the principal documents that have been used in the process of beatification for Chicaba. I would like to express my deepest gratitude to María Eugenia for taking the time to meet with me and for granting me several interviews with her on this subject. She has been an invaluable source of information and it has been a pleasure becoming acquainted with her.
9. As Valérie Benoist points out, tertiaries were not obligated to live cloistered lives, and many resided outside convent walls (147). According to Paniagua, however, Chicaba did indeed dwell within convent walls in a near-cloistered state.
10. For more on immurement or *emparedadas*, see Gregoria Cavero Domínguez's discussion of the *Prayer of the Walled-Up Woman* in this volume of *Hispanic Issues* as well as Ana Rodríguez-Rodríguez's contribution, which underscores cruel narratives of immurement.

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