

Witches and New Christians in the Viceroyalty of Peru

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Colonial anxiety in the Viceroyalty of Peru, based in tensions about the moral underpinning of colonization itself, manifested in ways that were specifically Iberian. European fears of witchcraft performed by Andean and African women and New Christians¹, filtered as they were through Iberian ideologies of gender and religion, were transferred to the New World in ways that were not grounded in the reality of Spanish held Peru, but nonetheless had significant implications for the lives of New Christians and Andean women in the New World. Iberian understandings of religion and conversion affected the way that the Spanish negotiated Judaism and Andean religion in Peru. In this paper I will argue that the Spanish anxiety about Jews and indigenous witches in early colonial Peru was based in the imagined threats that these groups posed to the colonial order: in being non-Christian, both Jews and Andean women were antithetical to the logic of colonization and were imagined to threaten Christianity and colonial state formation. Despite the fact that New Christians in the New World were principally trying to assimilate into Christian, colonial society and hide their Jewishness, and that Andeans did not have a concept of the devil or witchcraft and as a result did not understand themselves to be practicing witchcraft, the Spanish colonial imaginary perceived New Christians and indigenous women as serious dangers to the foundation of the colonial state. Andean women, African women, and conversos, moreover, became entangled in the Spanish imaginary in ways that were unprecedented in the Iberian Peninsula.

Christianity, like all monotheistic religions founded in revelation, has historically had a complex and violent relationship to other religions, and even to interpretations of Christianity perceived to be heterodox.² The conception of heresy, though, was not necessarily a natural part of Christianity, and had no precedent in Greco-Roman religion or Judaism at the time of the creation of Christianity.³ Christians, more than their Abrahamic counterparts, have perpetrated massive amounts of violence in their crusades, inquisitions, and colonizations.⁴ This violence

¹ People of Jewish, European descent whose family had recently converted to Christianity, also called conversos.

² Robert Erlewine, *Monotheism and Tolerance: Recovering a Religion of Reason* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2010), 10.

³ Perez Zagorin, *How the Idea of Religious Toleration Came to the West* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2003), 18.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 2.

stems from the conflict inherent in the basic structure of monotheistic traditions: that revelation happens to a particular group of people and the revealed texts are simultaneously understood to be universal.⁵ In response to the immense amount of violence perpetuated in the many European projects of colonization, enlightenment scholars took up the question of how God could reveal divine legislation to a particular people that was in fact intended for everyone. Mendelsohn, an 18th century German Jewish philosopher writing in a dominantly Christian space, argued that whatever is revealed to a particular people is only meant for those people, and that it is possible for every person to reason eternal truths. Divine legislation, he argued, is simply one manifestation of larger eternal truths, and is not necessary to understand eternal truths.⁶ Mendelsohn further argued that the Jewish revelation, because it is primarily about particular ways to live, is far more amenable to other religions than is Christianity, because the Christian revelation is about belief.⁷ Before this enlightenment ideology came about, though, the dominant understanding of Christianity was that divine legislation, revealed to Christians alone, was equivalent to eternal truths. The only way to achieve salvation, then, was not through either the divine legislation set out in Christianity or eternal truths which every person was capable of discovering through reasoning, but strictly through Christian divine legislation. The basic structure of Christianity, then, in many ways is based in the idea that Christianity is the only true religion, that it is the only true way of understanding the divine.

Claims on a true religion formed the foundation for the Spanish colonization of the Andes. Such a claim, though it was present in the Bible and was fundamental to the very structure of Christianity, ran contrary to Jesus Christ's teachings of "love, forgiveness, and a form of universal oneness."⁸ Certainly the Bible's teaching to "love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you" and to "love one another; for the one who loves another has fulfilled the law" seems to go against a colonial project.^{9, 10} Leela Fernandes, in her writing about a spiritualized feminism, argues that the project of colonization was not in line with the Christian Bible's emphasis on the

⁵ Robert Erlewine, *Monotheism and Tolerance: Recovering a Religion of Reason* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2010), 5.

⁶ Moses Mendelsohn, *Jerusalem or On Religious Power and Judaism* (Waltham, Massachusetts: Brandeis University Press, 1983), 94.

⁷ Emily Filler, personal communication, February 9, 2017.

⁸ Leela Fernandes, *Transforming Feminist Practice: Non-Violence, Social Justice and the Possibilities of a Spiritualized Feminism* (San Francisco: Aunt Lute Books, 2003), 103.

⁹ Matthew 5:43-44

¹⁰ Romans 13:8

fundamental universality of religion but was instead a “secular colonization of the divine”, a “[harnessing of] divinity in order to gain political authority.”¹¹ While the project of colonization certainly runs contrary to Jesus’ teachings of love and nonviolence, it is very much in line with the monotheistic structure of Christianity that claims a monopoly on truth.¹²

Moreover, whether conversion to Christianity, which was the moral underpinning of colonization, was based on an understanding of religion as universal, or on the idea that only one true religion exists had never been fixed or decided in the Christian tradition.¹³ From the beginning of the Christian era there have been two distinct understandings of conversion. The first understanding was based in the idea that pagan religions in Europe were basically the same as Christianity. Moreover, under this understanding every person has some intrinsic conception of God, so the Christian God “was in some ways already known to them.”¹⁴ Conversion under this understanding thus allowed for the simultaneous practice of the religion an individual was brought up with and Christianity; the two were not mutually exclusive.¹⁵ The second understanding of conversion, though, rejected the oneness of religion, claiming that “a mere reminder of what a person already knows” was insufficient for conversion. Instead, it required a total disavowal of a person’s previous religion.¹⁶ Colonization was not seen as an evil but instead as “necessary and salutary for the preservation of religious truth and orthodoxy and all that was believed to depend on them.”¹⁷ Because what was believed to depend on the conservation of religious truth was the salvation of souls, the violence of colonization can be understood as “persecution with good conscience.”¹⁸ For this reason, even though colonization seems to run directly contrary to Jesus’ teachings of love and the oneness of all people, the colonial project was based in the idea that

¹¹ Leela Fernandes, *Transforming Feminist Practice: Non-Violence, Social Justice and the Possibilities of a Spiritualized Feminism* (San Francisco: Aunt Lute Books, 2003), 103, 105.

¹² Perez Zagorin, *How the Idea of Religious Toleration Came to the West* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2003), 1.

¹³ Sabine MacCormack, “‘The Heart Has its Reasons’: Predicaments of Missionary Christianity in Early Colonial Peru” *The Hispanic American Historical Review* 65, no. 3 (1985), 443-444.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 443.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 444.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷ Perez Zagorin, *How the Idea of Religious Toleration Came to the West* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2003), 16.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

the stakes of salvation far outweighed any violence caused by colonization in this world.¹⁹ Certainly this second understanding is the only one that would seem to be associated with conversion. In fact the first understanding of conversion seems to be a contradiction in terms: if all religious traditions are fundamentally united, then what is the purpose of conversion from one to another? How could salvation only be a possibility for Christians?

In addition to the immense tension about conversion present in the Bible, then, there was also a historical split in understanding about the function of conversion.²⁰ Though the idea of conversion that manifested in colonization had been present since the beginning of Christianity, it was not the only accepted idea. Neither Christian teachings nor the institutionalization of Christianity in the succeeding 1,500 years made colonization inevitable. The “[harnessing of] divinity in order to gain political authority,” the perversion of the Christian Bible and even of the tradition of the institution of Christianity, was, as a result, in many ways forced and artificial.²¹

The historical split in the tradition of Christianization between a belief in the inherent unity of religions and the uniqueness of Christianity was nonetheless carried over to the New World. The ideology of evangelization in Peru was, like that in Spain, split between colonial officials who perceived some Andean deities as being in many ways equivalent to the Christian deity, and those who thought Andean deities were fundamentally different.²² Though in some ways this historical split informed the way in which colonization was conducted in the Viceroyalty of Peru, the second understanding of religions as fundamentally distinct, which was a necessary foundation for colonization and prevailed in the Iberian Peninsula’s deliberations about colonization, also prevailed in the colony itself and affected the way in which Peruvian colonization was implemented. Importantly, though, this understanding of religion was not the only one present in the Spanish discourse in Peru. Las Casas, a Spanish friar and social reformer in the New World, for instance, believed that Pachacamac and Viracocha, the creator gods of the Andean and Incan people, respectively, were essentially the Christian God.^{23, 24} This, of course, was a radical

¹⁹ Emily Filler, personal communication, February 7, 2017.

²⁰ Leela Fernandes, *Transforming Feminist Practice: Non-Violence, Social Justice and the Possibilities of a Spiritualized Feminism* (San Francisco: Aunt Lute Books, 2003), 105.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 105.

²² Sabine MacCormack, “Gods, Demons, and Idols in the Andes,” *Journal of the History of Ideas* 67, no. 4 (2006), 627, 629, 631, 637.

²³ *Ibid.*, 637.

²⁴ Sabine MacCormack, “Demons, Imagination, and the Incas,” *Representations* no. 33 (1991), 21.

interpretation of religion and one that undermined the entire colonial project. If Andean people already had an understanding of God, then Christianization, and consequently colonization, was superfluous. The great majority of Spanish colonizers, though, saw Christianity and Andean religion as fundamentally different. Even Las Casas moderated his assertion of the inherent unity of religions by claiming that although the Andean people had an understanding of the Christian deity, the deities who they worshiped were not God but the devil. As a result, Las Casas argued that conversion was necessary because the Andean people were stuck in a hall of mirrors in which it was impossible to distinguish devil worship from worship of the true, Christian God, and which was impossible to escape without outside assistance.²⁵

There was a further split in the Spanish understanding of Andean religion. Whereas apologists of Andean people argued that devil worship, though it was inherently wrong, was common to all humans who lacked true religion, others saw devil worship as a flaw inherent and specific to Andean people.^{26, 27} Las Casas and others drew on the history of the ancient Mediterranean and Rome in particular, which was thought to have had manifestations of the devil that were nearly identical to those seen in Peru. In both the ancient Mediterranean and sixteenth century Peru, the devil was thought to be present in illusions of the dead walking around with the living on earth and in idols. Apologists of Andean people thus asserted that devil worship was not unique to the Andes or to the New World but was instead a universal problem.^{28, 29} Because their argument was grounded in a historical context in which idolatry had led to what they considered true religion, they argued that idolatry was natural and came from the same, virtuous place as worship of the Christian God and was ultimately good.³⁰ Some, including Domingo de Santo Tomás, even argued that Andean idolatry would lead to true religion.³¹ Santo Tomás' argument is even more radical than Las Casas' because it asserts that whether or not Andean people

²⁵ Sabine MacCormack, "Gods, Demons, and Idols in the Andes," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 67, no. 4 (2006), 634.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 631-4, 639.

²⁷ Sabine MacCormack, "Demons, Imagination, and the Incas," *Representations* no. 33 (1991), 13, 20, 21.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 20.

²⁹ Sabine MacCormack, "Gods, Demons, and Idols in the Andes," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 67, no. 4 (2006), 631.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 632-3.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 639.

knew God in the present, they, like ancient Mediterranean peoples, would eventually come to know God, and as a result no colonial intervention was needed. The great majority of Spanish colonizers, though, ignored their pre-Christian history and instead avowed that the devil worship present in the Andes was a result of “the personal and cultural deficiencies of Andeans.”³²

In the early period of colonization there were two competing ideologies about Andean religion. The first understood the Andean and Incan creator deities to be in some ways the same as the Christian God, and that the devil worship present in the Andes was simply a co-option of the true deity by the devil, which was natural and would eventually yield to the true God, and which together pointed to the fact that colonization was not necessary or at least that the destruction of Andean religion was not necessary. The second ideology understood devil worship to be unique to peoples of the New World and colonization to be wholly necessary. These opposing understandings amplified colonial anxieties about conversion because even within the Spanish imaginary there existed a deeply and historically rooted conflict about the meaning of Christianization. Although these debates about the theological justification for colonization were present among early colonial clerics and administrators, the idea that devil worship was unique to the Andes and destruction of Andean religion was imperative, ultimately won out in Peru.³³

Both Spanish understandings of Andean religion, though distinct in their degree of empathy for Andean people, at their heart considered Andean religion as a form of devil worship.³⁴ These understandings were thus united in their lack of cultural relativism. The Spanish uniformly understood Andean religion entirely in terms of their own Christian religion. Andean religion, thus lacking any internal coherence as a result of the Spanish separation of Andean religious tradition from its beliefs and history, was construed as superstition.^{35,36} In the Andean devotion to huacas and their ancestors, the Spanish saw devil worship, and not the religious beliefs that made such a worship make sense.^{37,38} Consequently, both the Spanish who understood Andean religion as in some way united to Christianity and ancient

³² Sabine MacCormack, “Demons, Imagination, and the Incas,” *Representations* no. 33 (1991), 21.

³³ Irene Silverblatt, *Moon, Sun, and Witches: Gender Ideologies and Class in Inca and Colonial Peru* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1987), 170.

³⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁵ Sabine MacCormack, “Demons, Imagination, and the Incas,” *Representations* no. 33 (1991), 17.

³⁶ Irene Silverblatt, *Moon, Sun, and Witches: Gender Ideologies and Class in Inca and Colonial Peru* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1987), 171.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 170.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 171.

Mediterranean religion and the Spanish who saw Andean religion as totally unlike Christianity tried to understand Andean worship in terms of demonic illusion.³⁹ Ultimately, the second idea that Andean religion was not a true religion because its followers worshiped the devil instead of God had to win out because this laid the foundation for Spanish colonization. It would not have been possible to create a colonial state without employing an understanding of Andean religion as fallacious. This underlying understanding of Andean religion as devil worship coupled with the colonial anxiety about anyone who seemed to be subverting Christianity ultimately led to the witch hunts and Autos de Fe in early colonial Peru.

The Spanish understanding of Andean religion as devil worship was important to the way colonists ended up understanding resistance and perceived resistance to the colonial project of evangelization.^{40,41} If Andean worship was indeed devil worship, then indigenous witches were simply manifestations of Andean women's denunciation of Christianity and their practice of their traditional religion.⁴² ⁴³ Although Judaism was understood better than Andean religion by the Spanish and as a result was not uniformly reduced to devil worship, the same understanding of Christianity as the only true religion worked in the Spanish imaginary to delegitimize Judaism.⁴⁴ For both New Christians and Andean women, the practice of their ancestor's religion was at issue for Spanish colonizers who saw Judaism and Andean religion as resistance against Christianity and therefore against colonization. Although the extent of understanding of these two religions varied dramatically as a result of Spain's different history of contact with each, both were ultimately condemned for the purpose of state formation in Europe and in Peru.^{45, 46, 47}

³⁹ Sabine MacCormack, "Demons, Imagination, and the Incas," *Representations* no. 33 (1991), 17.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Sabine MacCormack, "Gods, Demons, and Idols in the Andes," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 67, no. 4 (2006), 646.

⁴² Ibid, 624.

⁴³ Irene Silverblatt, *Moon, Sun, and Witches: Gender Ideologies and Class in Inca and Colonial Peru* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1987), 171.

⁴⁴ Marvin Lunenfeld, "Pedagogy of Fear: Making the Secret-Jew Visible at the Public "Autos de Fe" of the Spanish Royal Inquisition," *Sbofar* 18, no. 3 (2000), 87.

⁴⁵ Ibid, 78.

⁴⁶ María Elena Martínez, "The Black Blood of New Spain: Limpieza de Sangre, Racial Violence, and Gendered Power in Early Colonial Mexico," *The William and Mary Quarterly* 61, no. 3 (2004), 480.

⁴⁷ Ann Twinam, "Purchasing Whiteness: Conversations on the Essence of Pardo-ness and Mulatto-ness at the End of Empire," in *Imperial Subjects: Race and Identity in Colonial Latin America*, eds. Andrew B. Fisher and Matthew D. O'Hara (Durham: Duke University Press, 2009), 145.

Both the witch hunts and the Autos de Fe in Peru had obvious roots in the witch hunts and Autos de Fe in the Iberian Peninsula, but these practices of public, mass religious persecution were not simply carried across the ocean in a “compact and stable block” but were altered by the new colonial context of Peru.^{48,49} Autos de Fe, like witch hunts, were public rituals of penance for Jews condemned of being infidels, and were followed by capital punishment, most often burning at the stake.⁵⁰ The underlying purpose of the witch hunts and Autos de Fe in Peru and in Spain was to cement the authenticity of Old Christians during a time of increasing significance of Christianity to Spanishness and to support state formation. Of course the meaning of Old Christians differed in Spain and Peru. In Spain, Old Christians meant Christians of Spanish descent and excluded people of Jewish and Muslim descent. In Peru, the term signified Christians of Spanish or indigenous descent and excluded people of Jewish, Muslim, and African descent.^{51,52} Autos de Fe and witch hunts at their roots reflected Spanish anxieties about the tenuousness of Church and Spanish authority and the perceived empowerment of marginalized groups in Peru and in Spain. This anxiety was particularly robust in Peru because social mobility was far more fluid in Spain’s colonies than in mainland Spain. As a result New Christians and to some extent Andeans were able to attain positions of aristocracy which would have been impossible in the Iberian Peninsula.⁵³ Moreover, both Autos de Fe and witch hunts functioned as public demonstrations with the explicit purpose of inciting fear in the marginalized groups they targeted to induce their compliance with Christianity and with the unity of the Christian colonial state.⁵⁴

The European witch hunts of the fifteenth through the eighteenth centuries,

⁴⁸ Gustavo Verdesio, “Colonialism Now and Then: Colonial Latin American Studies in the Light of the Predicament of Latin Americanism,” in *Colonialism Past and Present: Reading and Writing about Colonial Latin America*, eds. Alvaro and Félix Bolaños and Gustavo Verdesio (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2002), 1.

⁴⁹ Sabine MacCormack, “Gods, Demons, and Idols in the Andes,” *Journal of the History of Ideas* 67, no. 4 (2006), 624.

⁵⁰ Robin Vose, “Introduction to inquisition auto de fe records,” *Hesburgh Libraries of Notre Dame, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections*. (South Bend, IN: University of Notre Dame, 2010), http://www.library.nd.edu/rarebooks/digital_projects/inquisition/collections/RBSC-INQ:COLLECTION/essays/RBSC-INQ:ESSAY_Autosdefe.

⁵¹ María Elena Martínez, “The Black Blood of New Spain: Limpieza de Sangre, Racial Violence, and Gendered Power in Early Colonial Mexico,” *The William and Mary Quarterly* 61, no. 3 (2004), 480, 485, 489-491, 515.

⁵² Marvin Lunenfeld, “Pedagogy of Fear: Making the Secret-Jew Visible at the Public “Autos de Fe” of the Spanish Royal Inquisition,” *Sbofar* 18, no. 3 (2000), 78.

⁵³ Irene Silverblatt, “New Christians and New World Fears in Seventeenth-Century Peru,” *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 42, no. 3 (2000), 538.

⁵⁴ Marvin Lunenfeld, “Pedagogy of Fear: Making the Secret-Jew Visible at the Public “Autos de Fe” of the Spanish Royal Inquisition,” *Sbofar* 18, no. 3 (2000), 80, 86.

which were characterized by mass trials between 1570 and 1630 (as opposed to the individual and less frequent trials of the larger four-hundred year period) were very much informed by Europe's history.⁵⁵ During the sixty-year witch craze in Europe, a disproportionately female demographic was accused of witchcraft, and these women were overwhelmingly convicted and sentenced to death.⁵⁶ European witch-hunts, which accused primarily women of being agents of the devil, are generally considered a backlash both to women's increasing independence from men and motherhood and to the Church's fading authority.⁵⁷ Following the profound demographic changes caused by the Black Death between 1347 and 1397, which killed between 30% and 50% of Europe's population, the European population remained fairly stagnant.⁵⁸ This stagnation was not the result of poor conditions for population growth but was instead a consequence of women's increasing independence.⁵⁹ Because such a significant portion of the European population was killed in just 50 years, women inherited large amounts of money and land that would have normally gone to their brothers. These inheritances allowed European women freedom to not marry or to marry later in life, and to have fewer children.⁶⁰ The use of contraception, abortion, and infanticide, thus, increased dramatically, and was at the root of the population stagnation.⁶¹ Consequently, witch hunts explicitly targeted women and midwives in an attempt to incite fear in women who were using birth control and going against the gender order and to eliminate knowledge of birth control.⁶² The period of the most intense witch-hunts, moreover, was concurrent with the Church's waning power in the post-Reformation era, and it took advantage of Europe's most marginalized population (poor, old women) to reclaim its authority.⁶³ Finally, this period marked the first time that the Church possessed the technology and the capacity to Christianize the European masses, which were thought to have been

⁵⁵ Dale Hoak, "The Great European Witch-Hunts: A Historical Perspective," *American Journal of Sociology* 88, no. 6 (1983), 1271.

⁵⁶ Philip Smith, "A Quantitative Evaluation of Demographic, Gender and Social Transformation Theories of the Rise of European Witch Hunting 1300-1500," *Historical Social Research* 17, no. 4 (1992), 111.

⁵⁷ *Ibid*, 101-102.

⁵⁸ *Ibid*, 101.

⁵⁹ *Ibid*.

⁶⁰ *Ibid*.

⁶¹ *Ibid*.

⁶² *Ibid*,102.

⁶³ Dale Hoak, "The Great European Witch-Hunts: A Historical Perspective," *American Journal of Sociology* 88, no. 6 (1983),1273.

practicing pre-Christian sorcery.⁶⁴ The European witch craze of the mid-sixteenth through the mid-seventeenth centuries was a fear-based reaction both to the new independence of women and to old, pre-Christian manifestations of spirituality in Europe. The fear that the idea of witches brought about for Christian Europe, thus, was simultaneously based in an understanding of Christianity as the only true religion, one that was so distinct from the pagan religions of Europe's peasantry that mass forced conversion was required, and in new fears that were being engendered by a loss of Church control and by women's empowerment.⁶⁵ Though the witch craze in Europe arose from specifically European circumstances and fears, the European understanding of the devil working in religious and cultural traditions not well understood by the Church was at the heart of the witch hunts and Autos de Fe in Peru at the same time.

It is not a coincidence that the consolidation of Castile and Aragon in the late fifteenth century was soon followed by the Spanish Inquisitions in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries.⁶⁶ The "increasing obsession with safeguarding the boundaries of the Christian community" following close to 900 years of convivencia was very much tied to state formation.⁶⁷ Though during the period of convivencia on the Iberian Peninsula Christianity was not central to Spanishness, when the crowns of Castile and Aragon sought to unite their domains Christianity became essential to Spanishness.⁶⁸ This equation of the state with religious identity was only possible through the rejection of the historical Christian tradition that understood the inherent unity of religions. Consequently, Castile and Aragon placed increasing importance on the understanding of Christianity as exceptional, as the only true religion. Without such a rejection of the idea of all religions as, at their base, united, state formation would not have been possible either in the Iberian Peninsula or in Spain's colonies in the New World. As a result of the holding up of the second understanding of conversion and the rejection of the first understanding, Jews and Muslims could be, and were, constructed as societal dangers because they threatened the foundation of Catholicism in Spain through their turning of New Christians away

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Leela Fernandes, *Transforming Feminist Practice: Non-Violence, Social Justice and the Possibilities of a Spiritualized Feminism* (San Francisco: Aunt Lute Books, 2003), 105.

⁶⁶ Marvin Lunenfeld, "Pedagogy of Fear: Making the Secret-Jew Visible at the Public "Autos de Fe" of the Spanish Royal Inquisition," *Sbofar* 18, no. 3 (2000), 78.

⁶⁷ María Elena Martínez, "The Black Blood of New Spain: Limpieza de Sangre, Racial Violence, and Gendered Power in Early Colonial Mexico," *The William and Mary Quarterly* 61, no. 3 (2004), 480.

⁶⁸ Ibid, 506.

from Christianity.⁶⁹ Mistrust was not reserved for Jews but was also placed on the hundreds of New Christians who remained in the peninsula after they were forcibly converted to Christianity. Both conversos and Jews were thought to not believe in Christianity and to actively mock it.⁷⁰ Jews, for instance, were thought to believe that holy Christian icons were forms of Christian idolatry, to covet Christian blood, to practice ritual murder of Christians, and to use their place in finance to eliminate Christian wealth, among many other beliefs.⁷¹ Disloyal to the Church and the state and avaricious, Jews were made into an other and literally expelled from the peninsula in order to cement the unity of Castile and Aragon.^{72, 73}

Spain's witch hunts and Inquisition sought to bolster the authority of the Church and the state through the public condemnation of marginalized groups (namely women and Jews) who were, or were perceived to be, accruing their own empowerment and threatening the power of the state. Both Jews (and their converso counterparts) and witches were thought to be practicing a false form of religion: Jews and conversos in their Judaism and witches in their Andean and Incan religions.⁷⁴ The early Viceroyalty of Peru saw similar manifestations of the Iberian Peninsula's fear of witches in its witch hunts and its fear of New Christians in its Autos de Fe, which worked in much the same way that the Spanish Inquisitions worked in the peninsula to rid, either by migration, conversion, or mass burnings at the stake, non-Christians, and specifically Jews, from the state.⁷⁵

In Peru, though, witch hunts and Autos de Fe became entangled in a way they never had in the Old World. In Spain and throughout Europe, there was no connection between the European women accused of witchcraft and Jews and conversos. In Peru, though, indigenous and African women were the primary targets of witchcraft accusations. In the anxiety-laden imaginary of the Peruvian colonial

⁶⁹ Irene Silverblatt, "New Christians and New World Fears in Seventeenth-Century Peru," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 42, no. 3 (2000), 525.

⁷⁰ Ibid, 527.

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² Marvin Lunenfeld, "Pedagogy of Fear: Making the Secret-Jew Visible at the Public "Autos de Fe" of the Spanish Royal Inquisition," *Sbofar* 18, no. 3 (2000), 78-79.

⁷³ María Elena Martínez, "The Black Blood of New Spain: Limpieza de Sangre, Racial Violence, and Gendered Power in Early Colonial Mexico," *The William and Mary Quarterly* 61, no. 3 (2004), 480.

⁷⁴ Dale Hoak, "The Great European Witch-Hunts: A Historical Perspective," *American Journal of Sociology* 88, no. 6 (1983), 1273.

⁷⁵ Irene Silverblatt, "New Christians and New World Fears in Seventeenth-Century Peru," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 42, no. 3 (2000), 524.

government, which had a far larger population of potential and real religious deviants and in which state formation was far more tenuous, witches and New Christians became an organized force.⁷⁶ In the early 1600s, there was a popular theory that Jews and Andeans shared a common ancestry, which was bolstered by the common idea that Jews and indigenous people were ““similar in every respect... in physique and temperament and in other characteristics, such as their customs, rites, ceremonies, superstitions, and idolatries.””^{77,78} One of these similarities was the shared Jewish and indigenous ability to magically control wealth, which was drawn from stereotypes of Jews in Europe as controlling much of the financial world and from the Spanish perception that Andean people were intentionally hiding and disappearing the Incan Empire’s great mineral wealth from the Spanish.⁷⁹ In the Spanish colonial imaginary, mercantile centers became a site where, because of New Christian’s alleged magical ability to communicate in a shared, secret language with African and Andean peoples, Jewish heresy would turn indigenous and African people, and particularly women, away from Christianity and potentially away from their allegiance to the colonial state.⁸⁰ The connection the Spanish invented between indigenous people, Africans, and New Christians is particularly remarkable because of the essentialness that these groups represented for the colonial state: the Viceroyalty of Peru depended on the slave labor of Africans, the mita and tributary of Andean people, and the global trade that was in many ways facilitated by Jews.⁸¹ Perhaps, then, the connection the Spanish created between New Christians, Andean people, and Africans was not wholly random but instead came out of the interconnectedness that these three groups represented for the functioning of the colonial system.

In Peru the Spanish further connected New Christians and indigenous and African people by employing the same language of religious heterodoxy and pacts with the devil to describe indigenous and African witches that had historically been used against Jews in the Iberian Peninsula.⁸² Jewish religious rituals were even

⁷⁶ Ibid, 533.

⁷⁷ María Elena Martínez, “The Black Blood of New Spain: Limpieza de Sangre, Racial Violence, and Gendered Power in Early Colonial Mexico,” *The William and Mary Quarterly* 61, no. 3 (2004), 484.

⁷⁸ Irene Silverblatt, “New Christians and New World Fears in Seventeenth-Century Peru,” *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 42, no. 3 (2000), 532-533.

⁷⁹ Ibid, 533.

⁸⁰ Ibid, 532.

⁸¹ Ibid, 537.

⁸² María Elena Martínez, “The Black Blood of New Spain: Limpieza de Sangre, Racial Violence, and Gendered Power in Early Colonial Mexico,” *The William and Mary Quarterly* 61, no. 3 (2004), 512.

implicated in religious customs of Andeans and Africans.⁸³ In some ways, then, Judaism and Andean and African religions became equated with each other (through the belief that Andeans literally descended from Jews) and with devil worship. The false equivalence that the Spanish made of any non-Christian religion as devil worship, whether it was a religion the Spanish had long, historical contact with like Judaism, or a religion the Spanish were encountering for the first time, points to the ways the Spanish tried to make sense of Andean and African religions in terms of any religion they were familiar with. Moreover, the Spanish conflation of Judaism and Andean religion reveals how similar the Autos de Fe and witch hunts in the Andes were in the Spanish imaginary.

Unlike New Christians in Peru, who for the most part tried to hide their Jewishness in order to blend in with Spanish society and gain social mobility, there is significant evidence that indigenous women, though they did not believe in witchcraft and did not have any conception of the devil, utilized the “ideology of rebellion” that the Spanish provided them.^{84, 85} The Spanish understanding of gender divested Andean women of their traditional roles as presiders over their own religious and political institutions that were complementary to those of men.⁸⁶ Moreover, though the Spanish, like the Inca, used a system of tribute and mita to extract labor and wealth from the Andean people, the Spanish and Incan systems were profoundly different. The purpose of the Incan system was to sustain the empire by providing for those who could not at a given time provide for themselves, whereas the purpose of the Spanish system was to produce wealth that would be exported outside of Peru to the European market in order to accrue wealth for Spain.⁸⁷ As a result, Andean women were not only stripped of their roles in organizing their own political and religious institutions, but were economically exploited in ways that were unprecedented under the Spanish system of tribute. Moreover, the equality they had enjoyed with their male counterparts was expunged as the Spanish colonial state and ideology enforced a subordination of indigenous

⁸³ Irene Silverblatt, “New Christians and New World Fears in Seventeenth-Century Peru,” *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 42, no. 3 (2000), 535.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 538.

⁸⁵ Irene Silverblatt, *Moon, Sun, and Witches: Gender Ideologies and Class in Inca and Colonial Peru* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1987), xxxi.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 36.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 125-126.

people to the Spanish and a subordination of women to men.⁸⁸ Consequently, and because of the power that the Spanish vested in Andean women as a result of their own European fears of powerful women, Andean witches used the Spanish ideology of witchcraft to reclaim their culture, religion, and their female autonomy.⁸⁹

By the very definition of witchcraft that the Spanish created in the Andes, the practice by Andean women of their religion and the maintenance of their culture was construed as witchcraft. As a result these forms of resistance to Spanish colonialism took on towering meanings.⁹⁰ Both the Andean women who stayed in the *reducciones* and those that fled to the *puna* to create radical communities that rejected Christianity, colonization, and patriarchy in absolute terms were construed by the Spanish colonial state as witches simply because of their maintenance of their culture and religion.⁹¹ In fact, a Spanish priest who publicly whipped three Andean witches claimed that he punished these women not “so much because of the fact that they believed in superstitions and other abominations, but rather because they encouraged the whole village to mutiny and riots through their reputation as witches.”⁹² Andean witches, thus, were able to take advantage of Spanish fears, which were not rooted in Andean reality and instead stemmed from a deep misunderstanding of Andean culture-- the idea of the devil and even the concept of good and evil were specifically European, Christian ideologies-- to resist Spanish colonization.

In the Andes, Spanish fears about indigenous witches and Jews, which were clearly rooted in European ideologies, were united by what at their base was a fear of non-Christian religion. Although the Spanish colonial government feared that New Christians would magically consort with newly Christian indigenous and African peoples to turn these groups away from Christianity, in reality New Christians in Peru were striving to blend into the Christian world to gain mobility that was unavailable to them in the Iberian Peninsula and were largely uninterested in consorting with indigenous or African peoples. Women in the Andes equally did not themselves believe in the ideology of witchcraft, and certainly did not think that they were practicing witchcraft, but they were, in practicing their own religion and preserving their own culture, doing exactly what the Spanish feared by subverting Christianity and by extension the colonial state. In some ways, then, while New

⁸⁸ *Ibid*, 129.

⁸⁹ *Ibid*, 187.

⁹⁰ *Ibid*, 195.

⁹¹ *Ibid*, 197.

⁹² *Ibid*, 196.

Christians in early colonial Peru were tightly clinging onto Christianity, many Andean women were holding onto their own culture and religion.⁹³ In opposite ways, each were responding to colonization in ways that would most benefit them. For New Christians this meant blending fully into Spanish, Christian culture. For Andean women, because they were being oppressed as women and as Andean people, the only way to maintain any of their own power under such a system was to reject it, which meant upholding their own traditions and religion.

Although the Spanish colonial state saw New Christians and Andean women as consorting together against Christianity and the state, in fact they had set up the very conditions for the opposite to happen. Not only was the Spanish fear of New Christians for the most part unnecessary because of the power New Christians could attain by blending into Christianity, but their fear of indigenous witches actually had the effect of conferring power to Andean women that they would not otherwise have had. Moreover, though Spanish fears about any religion other than Christianity clearly manifested in the New World in ways that were in many ways identical to those manifested on the Iberian Peninsula, and which as a result distorted the ways in which the Spanish understood its marginalized constituencies, the colonial circumstances of the Andes undoubtedly permutated the ways in which these fears played out. In the Iberian Peninsula witches (who were exclusively European and almost always women) and Jews were both understood as religious deviants because of their practice of heretical forms of Christianity (i.e. worshipping the devil in lieu of the Christian god) and of their practice of Judaism. Punishments for heretics (witches) and infidels (Jews), though they were labeled differently, were ultimately the same.⁹⁴ Public, mass executions of witches and Jews, through witch hunts and Autos de Fe, also had the same purpose: to root witch craft and Judaism out of the Iberian Peninsula through state force. The importance that the Spanish colonial government placed on rooting out Andean religion, and the fact that it deemed observance of non-Christian religions as meriting capital punishment and mass expulsion from the state, clearly points to the degree of anxiety inherent in the colonial state.^{95,96}

The ways in which the Spanish state fused their deepest Iberian anxieties

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ Irene Silverblatt, "New Christians and New World Fears in Seventeenth-Century Peru," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 42, no. 3 (2000), 532.

⁹⁵ Ibid, 525.

⁹⁶ Irene Silverblatt, *Moon, Sun, and Witches: Gender Ideologies and Class in Inca and Colonial Peru* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1987), 171.

with their colonial Peruvian anxieties, moreover, is tremendously telling of the meaning of these anxieties. In the Iberian Peninsula the Spanish clearly saw some similarity between the heretical practice of witchcraft and the infidelic practice of Judaism, evidenced by their nearly identical punishments.⁹⁷ Witchcraft and Judaism were equally understood to be antithetical to Christianity and to the Spanish state. In the Viceroyalty of Peru, though, the likeness of witchcraft, understood to be practiced by Andean and African women, and Judaism, became deeply entangled in ways they never had in Spain. Andean people were widely believed to be descended from European Jews, and consequently Jews and Andean witches were thought to share religious customs and a magical language that was unintelligible to the Spanish.⁹⁸ Unlike in the Iberian Peninsula, in Peru witches and Jews did not just worship the devil, but they also shared a common culture. In the Spanish imaginary, because of the increased tenuousness of state formation in Peru and the shrunken proportion of Old Christians compared to that in the Iberian Peninsula, witches and Jews became a united force.

The immense amount of tension in the Viceroyalty of Peru was not only a consequence of the precariousness of state formation in Peru, but was also a result of tension in the very foundation of colonization. Colonial state formation in the Andes was predicated on the idea of the inherent disunity of religions, that Christianity was the only true religion.⁹⁹ This idea, though, was not clearly laid out either in the Bible or in the succeeding 1,500 years of Christian history. In the internal structure of Christianity, in the Bible, and in the 1,500 year long institutionalization of Christianity, there were competing ideas about the function of divine legislation, like that written down in the Bible, and eternal truths. This tension about whether to interpret the specifically Christian divine legislation as applying to everyone even though it was only revealed to Christians, versus understanding all religions, whether Christianity, Paganism, Judaism, African, or Andean religions, as fundamentally united, clearly underlied the tensions about conversion and state formation in Peru.¹⁰⁰ The tensions in the Spanish colonial government in Peru, though, because it was so deeply out of touch with the reality of the Andes, worked simultaneously to oppress non-Christians and newly converted Christians and to

⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ Irene Silverblatt, "New Christians and New World Fears in Seventeenth-Century Peru," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 42, no. 3 (2000), 532

⁹⁹ Robert Erlewine, *Monotbeism and Tolerance: Recovering a Religion of Reason* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2010), 10.

¹⁰⁰ Moses Mendelssohn, *Jerusalem or On Religious Power and Judaism* (Waltham, Massachusetts: Brandeis University Press, 1983), 94.

create a space for resistance.

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