Fear nobody but His Majesty,
My spirit you'll be free.
For You I wait silently,
It seems that You believe in me.

Jerusalem, if I forget you,
Fire not gonna come from my tongue.
Jerusalem, if I forget you,
May my right hand forget what to do.

Ain't no one gonna break my stride,
Ain't no one gonna hold me down.
Oh no, I got to keep on moving,
Stay alive.

-Matisyahu

To ask me to renounce what formed me, what I've loved so much, what has been my law, is to ask me to die. In this fidelity there is a sort of instinct for self-preservation. To renounce, for example, some difficult formulation, some complication, paradox, or supplementary contradiction, because it is not going to be understood, or rather because some journalist who does not know how to read it, or read even the title of a book, thinks he or she understands that the reader of audience will not understand any better, and that his or her ratings and job will suffer as a result, is for me an unacceptable obscenity. It is as if I were being asked to capitulate or subjugate myself—or else to die of stupidity.

-JD

University of Alberta

The Archeology of Conquest: Calisthenics, Ideology

by

Filip Ani 

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Masters of Arts

in

History

Department of History and Classics

Edmonton, Alberta
Spring 2008

Library and Archives Canada

Published Heritage Branch

395 Wellington Street
Ottawa ON K1A 0N4
Canada

Bibliothèque et Archives Canada

Direction du Patrimoine de l'édition

395, rue Wellington
Ottawa ON K1A 0N4
Canada

Your file Votre référence
ISBN: 978-0-494-45720-7
Our file Notre référence
ISBN: 978-0-494-45720-7

NOTICE:
The author has granted a non-exclusive license allowing Library and Archives Canada to reproduce, publish, archive, preserve, conserve, communicate to the public by telecommunication or on the Internet, loan, distribute and sell theses worldwide, for commercial or non-commercial purposes, in microform, paper, electronic and/or any other formats.

The author retains copyright ownership and moral rights in this thesis. Neither the thesis nor substantial extracts from it may be printed or otherwise reproduced without the author's permission.

AVIS:
L'auteur a accordé une licence non exclusive permettant à la Bibliothèque et Archives Canada de reproduire, publier, archiver, sauvegarder, conserver, transmettre au public par télécommunication ou par l'Internet, prêter, distribuer et vendre des thèses partout dans le monde, à des fins commerciales ou autres, sur support microforme, papier, électronique et/ou autres formats.

L'auteur conserve la propriété du droit d'auteur et des droits moraux qui protège cette thèse. Ni la thèse ni des extraits substantiels de celle-ci ne doivent être imprimés ou autrement reproduits sans son autorisation.

In compliance with the Canadian Privacy Act some supporting forms may have been removed from this thesis.

While these forms may be included in the document page count, their removal does not represent any loss of content from the thesis.

Conformément à la loi canadienne sur la protection de la vie privée, quelques formulaires secondaires ont été enlevés de cette thèse.

Bien que ces formulaires aient inclus dans la pagination, il n'y aura aucun contenu manquant.

Canada

For Katie Pollock,
Get well soon

Preface

The essay that follows is the product of a project originally conceived in my first year as a graduate student. I felt that the state of historical scholarship on the topic of Conquest was significantly streamlined, abridged and defective. Everybody knows the rule of thumb: If you talk to 20 different historians then you'll get 20 different histories. But how are those stories told? To me it seemed that much of the historical scholarship, the 'telling of stories' about Conquest, and theoretical framework was wrong. And it was wrong in ways that mattered. It followed, then, that I wanted to show why it was wrong. To my complete surprise, the rough ideas I had at that time have now been consolidated into this more concrete form. I would like to thank the faculty of the University of Alberta, Professors David Johnson, John-Paul Himka and Fred Judson for their contributions to my education.

I wish to thank Professor Beverly Lemire for her tremendous scholarly curiosity, advice and support.

I wish to thank Professor Christopher Bracken for his articulations, encouragement and challenges.

I wish to thank Professor Ann de Leon for her great attitude (a rarity in academia), willingness to help and thoroughness.

I wish to thank my family, immediate and extended, and friends, immediate and extended.

I wish to thank Emanuela Bocancea, Graeme Andrews and Erwin Selimos for their thoughts, assistance and intellectual friendship.

Finally, I am deeply grateful to Professor Andrew Gow for his participation and help in preparing this work, and, above all, I thank him for his ethics.

Abstract

This work is an intellectual history that uses a historical event, the Spanish Conquest of Mexico, to illustrate some of the fundamental problems when assessing the past. Its thesis hinges on the relationship between idea and event, that is, the Castilian 'making sense' of the encounter with the Americas and uses the heavily theorized term 'ideology' to propose a solution. Its critique focuses on the defective historical theory and practice of this field, which is radically undermined when exposed by recent trends of thought from other disciplines, that is, the 'hows' and 'whys' of what is wrong with this period's historiography. Its historical analysis draws from contemporaneous thinkers and paradigms of this period, that is, the ideas which were used to 'understand' events and which formulated a historical consciousness. Finally, its solution is a call for a looser conception of history which does not speak in terms of historical totality and also demonstrates the profound reality of ideology in history. In essence, this work is an archeology of the bundle of elements which made 'Conquest' possible. Also, this is an exercise, or a calisthenics, in acknowledging the historical Other, its difference, its alterity, and hedges away from traditionally simple and moralistic claims on the past. Instead it calls for an ethics which is characterized by self-depreciation, an admission of latent bias in 'making' discourse, and a thorough questioning of the notion of 'facts'.

Table of Contents

Introduction
I am Ideological (and So Can You)!

"Men make their own history, but they do not make it just as they please; they do not make it under circumstances chosen by themselves, but under circumstances directly found, given and transmitted from the past. The tradition of all the dead generations weighs like a nightmare on the brain of the living."
—Karl Marx, *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Napoleon*

"There is nothing outside of the text."
—Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology*

"Ideology has no history."
—Louis Althusser, *Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses*

"...it is a node within a network."
—Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*

Since Marx, and the philosophical insights of Derrida, Althusser and Foucault, historical scholarship has been taught a methodological lesson that must be taken seriously: history has a structure, but not necessarily a 'center'. To change the analogy to space, where there is no gravity, there is no up and down, and this 'de-centered' pronouncement about history sends us into a gravity free intellectual universe, without upside down or right-side up. This means, in effect, that 'fixed' or 'centered' intellectual reference points are permanently removed from historical articulation. This situation, of being without a point of reference, destabilizes concepts which previously defined the 'center' of historical discourses and hence also that which defined 'marginal' concepts too. In this 'centerless' historical universe, the elucidation of the past hinges on a 'dissolved' articulation of the human subject in relation to his/her historical circumstances. Succinctly, history is not specifically generated (or to be understood) by any singular economic, political, cultural or philosophical human *logos* (e.g., the human subject with his or her rational ego) and, for that matter, any one particular mode of causality. It becomes a scattered affair. If this wasn't so, how is it possible that individuals can evaluate and come to conclusion about such different understandings of events?

From this I make the following assumption: *histories are separate from History*.

Much like there is no writing or, much less a word, before the letter (the letter H makes little sense on its own, but sequenced with other letters, e.g. I-S-T-O-R-Y, we recognize an intelligible signifier) the events of the past cannot be fully understood in singular analysis.[1] The grand conclusion is that to grasp a 'meaning' of an event inevitably refers (or defers) us to a whole system of

[1] To make a vulgar example, the rise of Napoleon cannot be attributed to solely his genius, but through the sociopolitical conditions of 18th-19th century France; and the sociopolitical conditions of 18th-19th century cannot solely be attributed with Napoleon's rise, but also his genius.

meanings. One such notion that can be applied here is 'overdeterminism', a word borrowed from Freud, which designates an effect which arises from a variety of causes, that is, from several causes acting together, rather than from a single (e.g. economic, political, geographic, religious etc...) factor. This represents the interplay of intertwined and intercontingent factors, which could be the internal dynamics or the external relations of a historical culture(s). It seems, then, that to write History is impossible, only history can be written. Therefore, historical thinking as synecdoche, that is, identifying and piecing together perceived stable structures in the past (e.g. models of economic growth, gender, quantitative analysis, demographic changes, social constants, technological advance, etc.) and using them to refer to a greater whole forms a 'genus' which automatically evacuates the alterity of history. The genus applied to history establishes a rigidity or stability where none exists. Furthermore, those words and meanings we use as historical referents (e.g. models of economic growth, gender, quantitative analysis, demographic changes, social constants, technological advance, etc.) often have a life of their own, and constantly override and obscure the supposed simplicities and clarity of an external transcendental reality. They too fall under the spell of referral, deferral and systemized 'meaning'. This view therefore holds that history is a far messier, less austere, considerably more human enterprise than many scholars would dare suppose. Academia does not have the luxury of an all-seeing, all-understanding and omnipresent God's eye view of the past and present, or, for that matter, an Eye of Sauron, that famous part of J.R.R. Tolkien's fantasy legendarium, which could 'pierce all shadows of cloud, and earth, and flesh', 'pinning' an event or individual under its 'gaze', 'naked' and 'immovable', and, therefore, render the past fully comprehendible and understandable. I have developed this concept of linked and interacting causes with an intention to undercut simplistic notions of the historical process, those Occam razors, which do not account, and take for granted, the human and subjective elements in 'writing' and 'making' history.

Here the genus is where the violence of the letter and the inscription of (or a) history bear relation. The equation *discourse is violence* is, thus, a function of the formula *histories are separate from History.* In fact, this refines the first assumption as it characterizes how writing history creates knowledge as a form of domination or control over the past.

From this I make a second assumption: *histories are violent.*

Any historical assessment inherently engenders force as it does violence to the past, submitting and inscribing events into a narrative through indirect sources. The historical is an Other that has no say in this process. It has no choice but to say, "I accept." Histories, therefore, are intrinsically violent because they encapsulate and etch 'meaning' into an inaccessible past. This is closely related to what Arthur C. Danto calls 'narrative sentences', which he characterizes as sentences which give descriptions of events under which the events could not have been witnessed, since they make essential reference to events later in time than the events they are about, and hence cognitively

inaccessible to observers.[2] Histories may make earlier periods available, but on their own terms and with their own emphasis. They are detours to Truth or short cuts that create knowledge(s). Through the text of histories the reader is taken aside and addressed as a friend. Authenticity is vouched for. However, at the same time, there is an incompatibility as something is necessarily suppressed, made clandestine, or left unsaid. Although these statements do nothing to ameliorate the philosophical problematic inbuilt into historical endeavors, they should not be read as a declaration of contempt for scholarship. Rather, they are meant to highlight the limited nature of the historical discipline and to foster critical thinking and humility when applying research tools to the past. It appears, then, that the expanded expression (*histories are separate from History + discourse is violence + histories are violent*) has particular ramifications for the historical discipline. As a case study to illustrate this problematic I draw attention to the history written about colonial Latin America and the establishment of European hegemony over the 'New World'. In this historical phylum, the European-American encounter was hugely complex and traumatic for natives and early moderns. For historians in this genre, scholarship is stigmatized by a *leyenda negra*, reliant on the genus, most particularly on outmoded modes of production, or colored by the praise of the individual exploits of men or cultures. The present work compels a deep resistance to the essentialisms and determinisms, those historical 'centers', which have plagued the historical discourse of the early modern colonial period of Latin America— explicitly in the analysis of early modern Iberian perspectives of the Americas. Furthermore, it poses anew the very terms of Conquest as an attempt to intervene in an area of history that is under-theorized, tendentious and defective. The thesis is transformative in that it acknowledges and engages typologies, ideas, beliefs, axioms, even fantasies and their subsequent supportive practices at the core of history. As a rule, this project shapes itself around the years of Castile's immediate contact with what was perceived as the 'Indies'. It follows therefore that a thrust of this thesis is the study of the relation between idea and event. As scholarship shows, a remarkable amount of what is called theory in academia tries to deal with exactly that problem.

How do I account for this relationship? The theoretical clue that I rely on throughout this project is the term 'ideology'. Ideology has never been so much in evidence as a fact and so little understood as a concept as it is today. The meaning of the term ranges from a broad sense of social determination of thought to the deployment of false ideas for personal interest or gain. It is seen as pejorative or as a neutral medium. As it were, ideology is already overladen with conditions and consequences and its operation is little understood in history and current affairs. Historians who employ ideology as a research tool, or present it as evidence, must necessarily be familiar with the history of ideology (that is, the many theoretical understandings of the concept) when writing their examinations of ideology in history. Although this essay does not

---

[2] See Arthur C. Danto, *Narration and Knowledge.* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985).

offer a history of ideology, it does explicate some its features and provides a definition of how I use the term in the context of the early modern and American encounter. It is important to note that nobody has yet come up with a single adequate definition of ideology and this project is no exception.[3] For my initial probe I make use of a fairly loose, but familiar, understanding of ideology in an effort to construct a discursive framework that straddles both history and critical theory. This limited context and discussion of ideology can be assembled in the form of the following six features or assumptions:

1. Ideology is a theory of ideas that constructs a reality. Ideology is a worldview but also exists in apparatuses. Therefore it has both a 'negative' and a 'positive' definition. E.g. ideology can be 'in' a person who goes to Church, kneels and prays because he/she believes in God, but can also exist in the Church and the act of prayer in which the person participates and then believes in God.
2. Ideology (or ideas) may spring from underlying desires, but can also be partly constitutive of them. E.g. I could really want a Bentley or I could really want a Bentley because they are considered 'cool'.
3. Ideology is axiomatic, a premise which presents itself as 'always already there' as if it were a 'second nature'. In this view it offers itself as an 'of course!' or 'that goes without saying!' It 'eternalizes' what it purports.
4. Therefore, it is very difficult for an ideology to critically think about itself. It renders beliefs natural and self-evident, identifying itself as 'common sense' so that nobody can imagine how things could ever be different.
5. Ideology can also ensure cohesion of a social group and order. This is meant to provide insight into the binary scenarios of Us versus Them, Good versus Bad, Civil versus Savage, and Europe versus the Americas. In this case it is a process of universalization and unification. Groups can find themselves unified by ideas they view as natural phenomena.
6. We are all ideological. You, me, us, them. Everybody. There is no such thing as the 'pre'-ideological individual.

[3] Here are some useful definitions of ideology as outlined by Terry Eagleton that portray the multifaceted nature of the word. They include: a) the process of production of meanings, sign and values in social life, b) a body of ideas characteristic of a particular social group or class, c) ideas which help to legitimate a dominant political power, d) false ideas which help to legitimate a dominant political power, e) systematic distorted communication, f) that which offers a position for a subject, g) forms of thought motivated by social interests, h) identity thinking, i) socially necessary illusion, j) the conjuncture of discourse and power, k) the medium in which conscious social actors make sense of the world, l) action-orientated beliefs, m) the confusion of linguistic and phenomenal reality, n) semiotic closure, o) the indispensable medium in which individuals live out their relationship to a social structure, p) the process whereby social life is converted to a natural reality. See Terry Eagleton, *Ideology, An Introduction.* (London: Verso, 2007), 1-2.

I feel that this line of inquiry (particularly point 4) is closely related to Derrida's observation that "There is nothing outside of the text."[4] This phrase broaches the argument that we are always and already embedded in various networks (social, historical, linguistic, political, familial, professional, economic, sexual, electronic, or worldwide webs...to name only a few), and that we cannot view that world without the frame that these networks have constructed around our consciousness. Hence, the inquiring self cannot step out of the text surrounding his/her *episteme* and experience Truth or the Real World. Ideology is thus, to use the Derridian expression, our experience of the world through the text. Hence, the subject emerges as a result of the applied forces of these texts, or frames, in the process of self-constitution. This means that a) histories (mine included) form unstable versions of the past as they always and already view history through ideological or textual frames which must be continually critiqued, deconstructed and rebuilt; b) the past also possessed its own ideologies that framed the historical subject's view of reality. Here ideology, a network of ideas modulating in each age, serves as a leveling device between the past and the present, as it is always *there*. "Ideology has no history," writes Althusser, "which emphatically does not mean that there is no history in it (on the contrary, for it is merely the pale, empty and inverted reflection of real history) but that it has no history *of its own.*"[5] In other words, Ideology is *a*historical while ideologies mutate without anchor. This translates into a general theory of ideology that distinguishes ideologies and ideas from Ideology in general. In an Althusserian sense, and from a theoretical perspective, Ideology has no history, as it is omni-historical, but ideologies or ideas do. It is 'ideology' which I historicize.

My aim is to undercover the principles and consequences of a historical culture's set of ideologies and ideas. From the perspective of historical examination and formulation, I am concerned with Foucault's 'nodes' that were parts of 'a network' of ideas during this period. Here I am referring to how an epistemological 'network' allows *thought* to organize *itself*. I imply an investigation of that which renders necessary a form of thought, or, to put it somewhat differently, the excavation of unconsciously organized sediments of thought. In this sense, I am more concerned with the impersonal structures of knowledge than individuals and their histories, much like Foucault discusses in his work.[6] Hence this analysis does not engage a centered historical early modern consciousness, but the de-centered ideas that engaged the early modern historical consciousness. Naturally the ideas that I evaluate are the hegemonic ones, meaning the prevalent and dominant ideologies of a period. Therefore, the current historical exercise explores the buttressing of a formal social order, a formal ideological order, or a formal Lacanian Symbolic order, of early

---

[4] Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammotology*. Translated by Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak. (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1997), 158.

[5] Louis Althusser, "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses," in *Lenin and Philosophy*. (New York: Monthly Review Press, 2001), 108.

[6] For Foucault's perspective of historical examination and formulation see Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things*. (Bristol: Tavistock Publications,1970); and Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*. (Bristol: Tavistock Publications, 1972).

modern discourses. Methodologically, I am the first to admit that I engage a cultural totality. I am not so much concerned with the history of knowledge and how it is constructed and mutates under the concepts of discontinuity, rupture, threshold, and transformation (which are potentially significant and rigorous methods for historical analysis) as I am with ideas that were considered knowledge in history. Rather than analyzing the history and the historicity of the breaks in knowledge that produced the current Spanish America out of the early modern world (which would prove a fascinating study), I look at historical knowledge itself. At the same time, I try to be productive, not reproductive, to reread and revise older works, to unfold what has been folded, to question what has been accepted, and to show ideological possibilities of early modern relationships to the Americas. Therefore, one of my aims is to conduct a critical review of approaches in this field, pinpoint an area of theoretical oversight, and propose a(nother) solution.

What interests me is discerning an early modern reality through their texts (historical and ideological) and the results and details of how this reality ran up against other realities. However, the very articulation and mission (if you choose to accept it) of this project is to show that institutions, traditions, societies, texts and beliefs do not have definable meanings, and that in a given historical event (here, early modern European/Castilian interaction with the Americas) there is always more than an analysis can impose, my own analysis included. It should be said at once that even with the number of books and authors I examine, there is a much larger number that have been left out. This is a disclaimer and a warning that underlines the dangerous function by which history can latently encompass an entire historical cultural structure with the reading of a handful of texts. I wasn't there and I don't know anybody who was. Plus, I'm ideological (and so are you) and see the past through my own cognitive experience. Consequently, I want to make it difficult to make generalizations. It must be said, therefore, that my research hinges on formal utterances; that which has been said and written down in an official capacity. But certainly what has not been said, what couldn't be said, or what has been lost with time, is equally important. And, in writing history, what hasn't been said, or what cannot be said, *still* has to be said in some way. I admit that my exercise involves the gathering and construction of a Castilian early modern straw man, made from the available historical texts. My straw man represents an approximate consciousness and is given life by certain ideas and texts of a period. The reader should be quick to note that this exercise is by no means representative of a group consciousness, but of a potentiality of consciousness within a group that is based on a historical perception. I'm playing Frankenstein as the 'de-centered' ideas animate an artificial, but historical, character. This straw man, or zombie, should be burnt (maybe by *auto de fe*) once the exercise is complete, because he is not a mold for understanding the past, but a model, a possibility. He is to be delimited and recreated again and again with different form and with different characteristics. This thesis, then, translates into a potentiality (a possible early modern consciousness) that is

awaiting actualization as my research has a conversation with the ideas of a period that appear to performatively generate actions.

The Castilian imperial venture was a unique historical entity. Indeed, unlike other Empires, it was a Catholic entity. This Catholic entity was neither monolithic nor homogeneous— its brand name was Castilian and individuals responded to the value of this social formation differently. So, in understanding and articulating early modern contact with the Americas, we have to go back constantly to the Iberian origin, not in order to cultivate the origin, to trace an etymology of philosophical and historical purity (a simplistic excavation and explanation of history), but in order to appreciate where those early moderns came from. Here Marx's quote opening this introduction gains its relevance. The early modern language used to understand the Americas was, to make use of Marx's idiom, 'borrowed'.[7] Just when early moderns seemed to be engaging in revolutionizing their world and global history, in creating something entirely new (as many historians would have us believe), spirits of the past were conjured up creating a Europe beyond Europe, or a Spain beyond Spain. The naming of the 'new' lands, 'Hispaniola', 'Fernandina', 'Santiago', 'New Spain', 'New Galicia', or 'New Granada', illicitly generated characteristics of pre-comprehension and pre-understanding.[8] A version of Spain, or what some thought of as Spain, was already there when the explorers arrived.

The press of the past, and what was perceived as the past, constructed how the early moderns would understand the Indies. This thesis is therefore an intellectual history. It evaluates and records not necessarily an episode in the history of ideas or thought, but ideas and thoughts in history. In a genuine sense, I am entering a labyrinth of ideas and smile at my lack of a map. Each of the three ensuing chapters details how ideology occurs and, in some cases, reoccurs in history: chapter 1 provides a review of literature on this topic and deepens the conceptualization of ideology as a critical tool in historiography. It will point out of the problems (methodological and ideological) in recent and respected works of Latin American history and then move to outline a radical framework meant to unify historical scholarship and theory. Chapter 2 discusses ideology on a broad level in the works of some of the prominent 16th century writers and their textual relationship to the Americas. It will highlight the importance of religion to the structural integrity of the early modern reality. Finally, chapter 3 approximates a historical consciousness of early moderns who interacted with the Indies on a concrete level. It evokes a historical cosmology of Iberians through institutions and apparatuses. These chapters are meant to interlock and coalesce. They are to create a historical possibility, not a historical explanation. All three are meant to indicate a Copernican understanding of history, and the compelling force and recourse of ideology in

---

[7] For Marx's full articulation of 'borrowed language' see Karl Mark, *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte.* (New York: Mondial, 2005).

[8] Fernandina had been previously christened "Juana', after the Queen of Spain. This name became unfashionable as the Queen descended into madness and then forced into semi-captivity. Fernandina would eventually become know as Cuba. Santiago was the original name for Jamaica.

the structure of history and cosmology. Not only do I prompt us to break free of habitual modes of perception or categorization, but I prefer to think of the historian and the historical subject as 'dissolved' or as 'constructed', whereby what we may think of the historian (ourselves) and the historical subject (who or what we study) as products of social and linguistic forces, rather than as independent entities. In this respect, we are more like the sweaty, smelly, and fortune-seeking *conquistadores* than we think.

***

It would be foolish to continue without discussing the arbitrary use of the words 'Spain' and 'Spaniard', especially in relation to this period in history. Here I am touching on an idea most famously related to the works of Américo Castro who vehemently attacked those who felt that Spanish people are 'as ancient as the first inhabitants of the Peninsula'.[9] Spain itself, currently and in the past, is nothing but a misnomer. Certainly, not everyone who inhabits what is known as Spain feels that they are Spaniards (just take a look at the tensions which are caused during the selection of Spain's national soccer team, or a FC Barcelona-Real Madrid match). One need only point to the long historical nationalist movements of Basques, Catalans and Galicians (to name a few) to elicit the idea of Spanishness and portray it as something possessing a certain 'constructedness'. Consequently, when those *conquistadores* arrived in the Americas they identified themselves according to their region of birth.[10] They saw themselves as Castilians, Asturians, Leonese, Navarrese, Estremadurans or Andalucians. Only when fighting a religious enemy did these *conquistadores* see themselves as *españoles*. Therefore I detach myself from the term 'Spaniard' throughout this study because it is inappropriate and a somewhat ambiguous term for this period of history. Furthermore, I shy away from the use of the word 'Iberian' because that would imply the Peninsula in its entirety—one mustn't overlook the fact that Portugal is located in the same geographic region as Castile etc...Therefore, the terms I choose to employ are 'Castilian-speaking Iberian' and 'Castilian-speaking Iberia', because these terms exclude Portugal, portray the fact that the Indies were under the government of the Kingdom of Castile and that the *conquistadores* were all Castilian-speakers even though they were not Castilian. At times I also use the term 'Castile' or 'Castilian' in relation to the Americas because the Kingdom of Castile, by tradition, automatically governed newly-conquered territories. I also use the term *Cristiano* because it encompasses the sense that the Castilian-speaking Iberians of the medieval and early modern period identified themselves by religion in relation to the non-Christian Other. Finally, I also use

---

[9] See Américo Castro, *The Spaniards: An Introduction to their History*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1971).

[10] See Himmerich y Valencia, *The Encomenderos of New Spain, 1521-1555*. (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1991); and Bernard Grunberg, "The Origins of the Conquistadores of the Mexico City," in *The Hispanic American Historical Review*, Vol. 74, No. 2, (May, 1994): 259-283.

the term 'early modern' as a referent to the Europeans during this period. 'Spain' and 'Spaniard' only serve to confuse matters in history and should be discarded, or otherwise used with a disclaimer when approaching any medieval or early modern study.

I also refuse to use the term 'New World' because it causes a degree of confusion in scholarship. The signifier 'New World' contains imagery of the periphery, that is, there is an assumption that the 'Old World' possesses, and is a point of transcendental origin from which culture ventured outwards to discover the unknown. I am aware that the term 'New World' was a device coined by Amerigo Vespucci (1451-1512) who assigned the name to the Americas because skies there were populated by stars unknown to antiquity, however due to a slippage in the construction of language the 'New World' has come to represent a binary between the lesser and the greater. Regrettably, the signifier 'New World' has become so commonplace in our understanding of the Americas that it is difficult to talk, speak or think about its history without it. Unfortunately, my solution in this case is not very innovative. I have decided to refer to the 'New World' as 'the Indies', the 'Americas' or the 'newly discovered territories'. Even then these terms should be used *sous rature*, as they are European terms and not transcendental by any means. The advantage to using the terms 'Indies' is that it portrays what the European early moderns thought of as the 'the Americas' and the 'newly discovered territories'.

Chapter 1
Enjoy your Ideology…

This chapter aims to conduct a critical review of the approaches in the field of early modern Iberian encounters with the Americas. It frames the historiographical and narrative problems of some canonical historians who have addressed the Castilian-Amerindian Catholic Monarchy. In this sense, this chapter is an analytical philosophy of history because it applies itself to conceptual problems that arise out of the practice of history. Also, this chapter performs a narratology, which is not just the reading and interpretation of individual texts but the attempt to study the nature of the text itself, as a concept of practice. To define my analytical philosophy of history, my use of narratology and my intention more closely: I endeavor to study how several influential historical narratives produce historicity; that is, I point out the basic mechanisms and procedures these authors use to historicize this period. Then I will demonstrate why these works are problematic because of their theoretical oversight; that is, I point out the implications of their conclusions entailed in their versions of historicity. Finally, I would like to propose a solution. The foundational scholarship I consider is that of James Lockhart, Ross Hassig and Charles Gibson, who each make claims to 'social history'. Today, the implicative reverberations of these scholars writings surround the project of Latin American history like the cosmic residue from the Big Bang— those implications are imperceptible, maybe, but ubiquitous. That is problematic.[11] I will argue that the history generated by these scholars relies on argumentative self-evidence (meaning that these historians narrate from the viewpoint of a present self-evident truth and that they can now look back and retrace the progress of its own 'triumphal' evolution). The point can be put in a different way. The cardinal texts of these authors offer generalized and simplistic summary historical accounts which are couched in a perverse double logic involving historical structural materialism and self-authenticating truth. I will be explicit and state that there is no excuse for a sloppy misreading of this work, as it is not challenging this consensus of scholarship on the grounds of its factual accuracy (E.g. Cortés made landfall in 1519, Montezuma lived in Tenochtitlan); rather what I am trying to pinpoint is that questionable, and shuttle-bug, nexus of ideas that leads from a contingent fact (materialist discourse) to a wholesale and absolute explanation of historical event, purpose and importance (that self-revealing truth). I will show that lending too much credence to the influential works of Lockhart, Hassig, and Gibson not only creates history with an implausible ring to it, but also mystifies our perceptions of this period. I will also demonstrate that there is some insightful scholarship

[11] The aim of this chapter is a gesture which underlines, but does not efface, the works and conclusions of these three historians. Thus, with these authors it is not a question of being 'right' or 'wrong', but, on the contrary, de-naturalizing that which is considered natural. Essentially this means that we cannot assume that which is conditioned by a historical theoretical framework is natural or an anchor of Truth.

conducted by Iberianists, such as J.H. Elliot, Anthony Pagden, Helen Nader, Jorge Cañizares-Esguerra, Richard Kagan and Ricardo Padrón to name a few, who focus on the medieval and early modern periods. This group bends the stick in the other direction from Lockhart, Hassig and Gibson in evaluating the Castilian-Amerindian Catholic Monarchy. Even so, I will suggest that there are grounds on which to question this other group's work.

The basic problem with this historical phylum genus is that its narrative presents itself as a settled body of work with known general qualities and properties. The historian-narrator writes through a zero focalized narrative: he is not identified as a distinct character with a name, or a personal history, but remains just a voice or tone, which we may register simply as an intelligent, recording consciousness, a mere telling medium which strives from neutrality and transparency. Indeed, we shall see later that for the foundational authors of this period's history, colonial discourse is synonymous with the attempt to provide rational, technical, 'scientific' rationales for social domination, rather than mythic religious or metaphysical ones. Generally, these authors project teleological Western economic values (structural-materialist discourse) and simple empiricism onto the European-American encounter and blatantly neglect the relationship between idea and event. This is important to point out because this view highlights the influence that post-Enlightenment ideology continues to have on historical surveys at best, and at worst provides a reductionist and determinist vision of the European-American encounter.

I begin with James Lockhart, an eminent scholar in Latin American and Nahua history and language. Generally, Lockhart's scholarship tends to designate historical effects as arising from a single historical factor (the economic graphed on top of the social) rather than from a variety of historical causes (that is, several causes acting together), and utilizes concepts which are comparatively recent in historical formulation. Says Lockhart, "What the Spanish colonial period added to pre-Columbian America can be described briefly as the contents of two complementary master institutions, the Spanish city and the great estate."[12] This statement reflects a reductionist immediacy, implying that a historical condition is reducible to its elements which enables a historian to consider any element separately and to compare it with another similar element with a different temporal condition. What is problematic here is that it is impossible to extract or uncouple one element from its historical condition without altering its contingent meaning. His methodology is based on the possibility that historical reference is direct, that consequently we have access to others' (or even our own) histories and that specific meaning is present in historical artifacts which are waiting to be recovered through the empirical act of analysis.[13] If Lockhart's logic of 'two master institutions' is

[12] James Lockhart, "Ecomienda and Hacienda: the Evolution of the Great Estate in the Spanish Indies (1969)," in *Of Things of the Indies, Essays Old and New in Early Latin American History*. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999), 1.

[13] The term 'historical reference' is closely related to the 'metaphysics of presence' discussed throughout the works of Jacques Derrida. Historical reference and the metaphysics of presence imply that that full meaning of a word is held to be present during oral or written communication. In terms of historical reference there is an assumption that certain historical

followed to its conclusion, what results is a historical totality in which there is a misleading understanding of the historical complexities of a period. Indeed, linearly speaking we know that the pre-Conquest period *was followed* by the post-Conquest period, that New Spain *did* become Mexico and that the colonial period cities *turned into* the present-day cities, but we should not want to live faster than this actually occurred, or project the *telos* of modern economics onto this past such that it groans towards an inevitable and programmable present. In short, we should identify and be resistant to this type of typological and imaginative thinking, which binds historical elements and events together into a sequenced historical narrative that pedagogically produces an explanation of 'how things evolved and came to be'. Lockhart's text betrays an assumption that history is based in the 'future anterior' or an analytico-teleological method which is haunted by Hegelian principles, as if Lockhart were gazing into a mirror seeing an image of himself in the past. The Hegelian implication of course is that Lockhart's scholarship presents history as inevitable, 'working' itself out, always already in motion, a future present, foreseeable, anticipatable, programmable, pre-set along an archaeo-teleological horizon, keeping its head and its heading by way of some sort of ontological automatic pilot.[14] My general point is that a narrative structure penetrates Lockhart's version of the past to the point where he cannot make reference to the past without coupling it to a teleological present.

However, in the 16th century, the effects of the process of colonization were not apparent. Yet Lockhart argues in another essay that "Spanish American cities in the 16th century had the same structure and function as

---

documents could represent a transcendental signified, which serves as an anchor of truth. Derrida named this assumption 'logocentrism'. Unfortunately, such transparent presence of meaning can never be achieved because historical reference is actually amorphous, its meaning shifting with time. 'Economics' of the past is not the 'economics' of the present. See Jacques Derrida, "Difference", in *Margins of Philosophy*. Translated by Alan Bass. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984), Jacques Derrida, "Signature, Event, Context," in *Margins of Philosophy*. Translated by Alan Bass. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984); and Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology*. Translated by Gayatari Chakravorty Spivak. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997).

[14] The paradigmatic gesture of Western modernity and its history appears to predominately represent a genealogy of modernity of how the West achieved its current privileged state of global dominance, as historical events are bent into a narrative that provide a linear representation of the historical events that correspond to periods of Western supremacy in a logical order. This type of cultural hegemony, not to mention cultural identity, is a powerful ideology, which is most strikingly exemplified by Georg W.F. Hegel. His major historical work, the *Philosophy of History* represented a totalitarian system of history that saw a pattern to human affairs. The wagons of human progress and 'absolute knowledge' hurtled West. For Hegel, history was a journey of progress in which human consciousness proceeded historically, and Westerly, to higher stages, which he referred through a process called *Aufhebung* (commonly thought of as the Hegelian dialectic, in English, sublation), until its highest form of self-realization, Absolute Spirit. This interjected the idea that there was logic to history, as it specified the contraction latent in all thinking, meaning that one idea inevitably provoked its opposite. *Aufhebung* was how this logic resolved itself, or how human consciousness beat itself into shape. History, thus, is an anticipatable, programmable, even masterable future, moving toward its telos or a future-present. See Georg W.F Hegel, *Philosophy of History*. (Prometheus Books: Amherst, 1991).

today."[15] The underlying assumption is that the composition, purpose and 'meaning' of the 'city' have remained unchanged throughout history. This freezes the sign 'city', and history itself into a universal, unalterable and natural feature. Like universalization, naturalization is part of the de-historicizing thrust that is implicated in Lockhart's work which appears to deny that ideas and beliefs are specific to a particular time, place and social group. The implication appears to be that somehow the 'city' or 'social life' is magically absolved from its social determinants and uncoupled from the historical process. What arises is a sort of history, or historical categorization before the concept. To use a parallel example, one might consider the term 'economy', which is a frequently used term in historical consideration. 'Economy' was the management of a household and then management of a community before it became the description of a perceived system of production, distribution and exchange. Simply put, the city and the understanding of the city today are not the same as the city and the understanding of the city of yesteryear. It seems that Lockhart projects his own values in his assessment of the past. Says Lockhart,

> It may seem strange to speak of 16th century Spanish American behavior in the language of 19th century and 20th century railroads. But despite the anachronism, the terms have the right flavor of economically rational action working itself out in a context of markets, populations, raw and manufactured materials, and geographical realities.[16]

In a move to produce a historical truth, Lockhart constructs a text that searches for (and at the same time writes) a genealogy of modernity. This teleological presupposition institutes a tribunal of history which judges historical actions. Essentially, it projects historical 'patterns' and permits the dissolution of a historical condition into specific elements (for Lockhart, 'rational economics'), instituting (and making official) these elements in order to proceed to their measurement and to naturalize their truth. Ultimately, a critical question is whether the pattern exists in history, or the history exists because of the pattern, that is, what is observed as the 'facts' are bent into a methodology that generates history (and presto-abracadabra-BAM!— we have knowledge, 'meaning' and Truth).

It follows that the tacitly active feature in this methodology is reductionism, which suggests that the world can be broken down from bigger pieces into smaller pieces and, thus, a thinker can glean 'sense' from our world

---

[15] James Lockhart, "The Social History of Early Latin America: Evolution and Potential (1972, revised and expanded in 1989)," in *Of Things of the Indies, Essays Old and New in Early Latin American History*. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999), 29. [Henceforth referred to as, 'Early Latin America.']

[16] James Lockhart, "Trunk Lines and Feeder Lines: The Spanish Reaction to American Resources" (1991), in *Of Things of the Indies, Essays Old and New in Early Latin American History*. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999), 120. [Henceforth referred to as, 'Truck Lines'.]

(historical or present). In addition, Lockhart couples this reductionism with economic determinism. For instance, economics make society and, therefore, society is nothing more than the manifestation of economic properties, or internal economic properties are 'causes', and the properties of the social external are the effects of those 'causes'.[17] In this schema economics exist as a self-enclosed system of meaning and reference, pointing towards some 'transcendental signified' or source of authentic and unitary truth. It is here that Lockhart, acting as if he were a good card-carrying mechanical Marxist, takes for granted the drastic opposition between the real world of empirical self-evidence and secondary meaning that is placed upon that evidence by thought and language. His entire discourse preserves those loaded distinctions as that which sets a firm, categorical limit between world and text. It is no surprise that Lockhart sees himself as a social scientist, basing his lexicon, as a scientist does, on validation; thus, he uses history as a testing ground for patterned rational economics.[18]

For Lockhart, the rational economy is the engine behind historical process: "I do hope that [scholars will find] patterned, in its own context rational, economic activity on the part of the Spaniards and the Indians in the 16th century Indies."[19] I am opposed to that statement. If in historical scholarship, (or it would seem, in this case, under the injunction of historical scholarship) one is permitted to 'hope'—or, better yet, 'wish'—so do I 'wish' from my heart that just the converse metaphor should apply, and state that this mode of analysis is a movement which sacrifices what is true for what is desirable, any truth in fact, even the religious, scriptural, superstitious, economic and material truths—for there are truths of that description. Indeed, the Lockhartian *esprit de corp* presents an important problem, a problem that matters, indeed an *intimate* problem, which is distinguishable by its attempt to expel (or 'wishes' to expel) any 'spirits' from history. We find the Lockhartian methodology, its presupposition and paradox: the calculation of practical economic expedience is the backbone on which every combination of worldly wisdom and action is based—and not for one occasion, not just for one exceptional instance, but chronically and *always*. An assemblage forming the basis for a system of values takes shape, an absolute whose strong nature possess superfluidity and a molding plastic force that shapes 'habit' and 'utility', even 'error'. Says Lockhart,

> In a way we must account it a shame that Latin American history got its start with the extravagant language and often chimerical notions of the Italian Columbus. Actually, a strong realism, an active search for

---

[17] See Lockhart, 'Early Latin America,' 29. Here Lockhart also writes, "My intuition was that a close study of society would reveal that core and make sense of the whole."

[18] Lockhart, 'Early Latin America,' 77.

[19] Lockhart, 'Trunk Lines,' 157. Note that this rational process is an example of Hegelian logic. See Hegel, *Philosophy of History*, 9. "The only Thought which Philosophy brings with it to the contemplation of History, is the simple conception of Reason; that Reason is the Sovereign of the World; that the history of the world, therefore, presents us with a rational process." In light of Hegel's text, Lockhart appears as his subaltern.

> and exploitation of every economic possibility were the norm for the Spaniards...[20]

Belief is illicit. Lockhart pushes forward into an inner world of Truth, looking for an efficient, governing, and decisive principle in that precise quarter where the intellectual self-respect of economic history should be the most reluctant to find it—what is the *real* motive power which always impels human activity? Upon evaluation, it seems Lockhart's statements are religious and moral in nature. His uses the word 'hope' and 'shame', which are normally thought of as belonging to the discourse of religion or morality rather than scientific or rational inquiry. As Lockhart 'hopes' does this not mean that he 'desires' rather than 'investigates'? Or, 'projects' rather than 'finds'? Does not his use of the word 'shame' delineate what is 'good' and what is 'bad'? Or, what is *real* history and what is not? Most importantly, it appears that for Lockhart religion is a dispellable historical myth and his 'rational' economic model is a historical truth—but this model only explains historical colonial America by the frequent recourse to the suppression or omission of 'rogue' elements that do not fit into its system. 'Mistakes' are either discarded as irrelevant or recoded into independent and 'real' elements.

If I am to be frank: Lockhart wants history that is more real than Columbus' reality, or a glimpse of a man that justifies the existence of a 'rational' man. For this scholar, the irrepressible desire for the factual, the 'material' (True social life) guided Spaniards in the Americas, which effectively means that Columbus' showy Genoese beliefs and values were *fantasy*, which produced a confused image of the *real* (the Truth of Latin American history). The historical material produced by Columbus is illegitimate in this type of structural materialist discourse because his writings are heavily religious in content and because he understands the Indies in terms of a medieval and early modern theological world picture.[21] By reading Lockhart one gets the sense that he desires to exorcise Columbus' mysticism from historical consciousness and draw a(n) (im)possible yet firm line between a reasonable explanation of the American encounter (*logos*) and a fanciful and mythical representation (*mythos*). He rejects the man of the past in the name of the man of the future. The reader (and student) of Lockhart is given a choice between, on the one hand, an economic description that is certain but that teaches nothing in terms of the historicality of the period, and on the other hand, a hypothesis that is a foregone conclusion, always already decided by an economic pattern pointing to the present.

Ross Hassig, another widely-read scholar on the subject of Iberian colonialism, also expresses his history of Conquest in a modulation of the same fashion as Lockhart. Hassig employs the same reductionist deterministic

---

[20] Lockhart, 'Trunk Lines,' 120.

[21] Columbus's religious worldview was a serious and 'scientific' paradigm of this period. For the full content of Columbus's letters see Christopher Columbus, *Four Voyages to the New World: Letters and Selected Documents, Bilingual Edition.* Translated and edited by R. H. Major. (New York: Corinth Books, 1961).

principles and economic analysis as Lockhart in *Trade, Tribute and Transportation, The 16th Century Political Economy of the Valley of Mexico.* Hassig writes that 'Free Trade', 'Laissez-Faire entrepreneurs', 'supply and demand' and the 'free economy' were all features in the economy of the Valley of Mexico under the 'Aztec State'.[22] It is on this basis that Hassig graphs modernity and Western economic values onto the past, where capitalism is conditioned and assumed by history as natural. Here there is a strong implication. That which has been true always and everywhere (the modes of production) is innate to human nature, and so cannot be changed. One just has to accept that that the Amerindians have always secretly wanted to be stockbrokers, or 11th century Castilian peasants were really capitalists in heavy disguise. Much like Lockhart, Hassig offers a summary dismissal of the role of belief in history, stating, "Spanish expansion beyond Iberia was primarily economic in motivation."[23] Religion, Hassig suggests, operated solely as a feature for 'justification', and Conquest, being a political and military affair, was an imprint of the same 'justification' used during the war with the Moors.[24] He also writes that ideology itself has a simple function ('justification') and using it to consider behavior and society in history "produces an inadequate and seriously distorted assessment."[25] An assessment, one wonders, of what? One can only assume that Hassig is referring to historical truth, or the reality of the Real which defines itself as the truth of the Truth. Here one can draw a parallel between him and the sixteenth-century Castilian Catholic who defined the *logos* of Christianity as the history of those historical and, therefore, the life of the living.[26] In Hassig's case, he defines the history of the historical in terms of materiality, or the matter of that which matters. Indeed, Hassig takes his own ideological position. As he denounces sixteenth-century religious ideology as mere 'justification' for rationally motivated acts of selfishness one might suggest that his position is itself steeped in post-Enlightenment ideology. It appears that Hassig views the past, specifically the Middle Ages and the early modern period, in the same terms as Enlightenment historians and their offspring, whether Voltaire or Jacob Burckhardt, who concluded that those periods were rife with fanaticism, superstition and ignorance and buttressed by a religious ideology that was sure to give way in the face of the rationality. For Hassig, however, ideologists were other people. His historical discourse is unable to curve back and reflect critically upon itself as it is blinded by its own

---

[22] Ross Hassig, *Trade, Tribute and Transportation, The 16th Century Political Economy of the Valley of Mexico.* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1985), 126. Those are the terms he uses.

[23] Ross Hassig, *Mexico and the Spanish Conquest, 2nd Edition.* (University of Oklahoma Press, 2006), 9.

[24] Ibid, 9.

[25] Ross Hassig, *Time, History and Belief in Aztec and Colonial Mexico.* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2001), see the introduction.

[26] This is a theme we will clearly see in the next chapter. See Jose Rabasa, *Without History? Apostasy as a Historical Category.* (Draft). Rabasa, Chair of the Spanish and Portuguese Department at UC Berkeley presented a draft of this paper in February of 2007. He deals with this problematic. I had the opportunity to speak with him and remain in email contact to discuss the themes of his paper.

grounds and frontiers. Hassig's line of historical criticism of the Conquest derives principally the *leyenda negra*, or the widespread belief that the Conquest was evil precisely because it used religion as a method of 'justifying' war.

The point can be put a different way. In our post-Enlightenment ideological age, fighting for one's vision of this world is generally acceptable; while doing the same for one's religious belief is almost always reprehensible. Slavoj Žižek makes an excellent point when he recalls the letter from the 7-year-old American girl whose father was a pilot fighting in Afghanistan. Although she loved her father, she was ready to let him die, to sacrifice him for her country. When President George W. Bush quoted this letter, it was perceived as a 'normal' outburst of American patriotism. Žižek asks us to imagine an Afghan girl reciting the same words about her father fighting for the Taliban; we don't have to think long about what our reaction would be: morbid religious fundamentalism.[27] Now imagine the statements located in the various accounts of conquistadores and historians of Conquest which recite the glory of capturing the Indies for God and for Castile. *We don't have to think long about what our reaction would be:* morbid religious fundamentalism, even 'justification' of Conquest. For instance, take Hassig, who in blanket fashion, and in line with how the Conquest is generally interpreted, writes that *relaciones* were made "for political purposes—to justify actions, to gain political and religious legitimacy, and to seek favors—and all are patently self-serving."[28] Hassig is obviously directing this statement against the *relaciones* of Hernan Cortés, who is portrayed as 'justifying' Conquest and securing his position of material gain. Here, the author, Cortés, is truly dead, as the reader, Hassig, produces his own understanding of the *relación* text.[29] This is supplemented in the *Oxford History of Mexico*, where Hassig writes in "The Collision of Two Worlds" that *some* religious motivation *may* have underlain attempts to convert the Indies, but he is dismissive—it is a political affair.[30]

It is not entirely clear how this prejudice against belief located in modern historical surveys on *Christiano* and Indian contact became so deeply

---

[27] See Slavoj Žižek, *Welcome to the Desert of the Real.* (London: Verso, 2002), 43.

[28] Hassig, *Conquest*, 3.

[29] Here I am making a specific reference to Roland Barthes crucial essay, "The Death of the Author". In that essay Barthes asserts the independence of the literary text and its immunity to the possibility of being unified or limited by any notion of what the author may have intended into the work. The essay declares textual independence: the text is not determined by intention, or context. Rather the text is free by its nature of all such restraints. Hence the death of the author is the birth of the reader. Barthes highlights that the text is produced by the reader (rather than the author), or even by language itself, as the absence of the author makes the claim to decipher the text futile. Hassig does something intriguing in this context. He dismisses Cortés's text and the proceeds to read it in his own way. However, rather then admitting the futility of accessing the 'truth meaning' of this historical text he presents his reading as the absolute rather than his articulation of the text. See Roland Barthes, "The Death of the Author," in *Image-Music-Text.* (142-148). (New York: Noonday Press, 1999).

[30] See Ross Hassig, "The Collision of Two Worlds," in *The Oxford History of Mexico.* Edited by Michael C. Meyer and William H. Beezley. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000). My emphasis.

rooted in this period's history. However, one possibility is that its etymology stems from the data and analysis composed by Charles Gibson. Gibson's most well know work was published in 1964, entitled *The Aztecs Under Spanish Rule: A History of the Indians of the Valley of Mexico, 1519-1810.* It is considered essential literature in Castilian colonial history to this day. Gibson's book contains superb geographical, agricultural and economic information. Nonetheless, Gibson constructs a methodological and interpretive framework that is problematic at best and unfortunately *was* and *is* being used as a canonical historical reference.[31] The book's conclusions contain a latent bias: "The Black Legend," writes Gibson "provides a gross but essentially accurate interpretation of relations between Spaniards and Indians," as the "the Legend builds upon the record of deliberate sadism."[32] Gibson makes it clear that the Church pursued its own ends as "Spanish imperialism sought to justify its acts by its Christian mission," making religion a simple excuse for the "empirical fact" of "Spanish exploitation."[33] Indeed, the Conquest was brutal. However, statements like, "the *economienda* was an institution of terror" do nothing to provide insight into the thought-process of early moderns *who made and operated the institution itself.*[34] And, yet, materialists follow Gibson and continually forward the redundant 'empirical' claim that the *economienda* was not a healthy place to live (neither were, ghettos, Inquisitional prisons, nor is Darfur, by the way)—it was vicious, and generally cruel. Instead, historians must ask, what—beyond a simply economic model—explains phenomena like the *economienda.* In this case we may forward the suggestion that Gibson and Hassig overlook religious motivations in history because of their *a priori* ideological commitments to a rationally motivated universe. This failing, that non-critical-self-reflectiveness and the fact that we don't live in rational universe, licenses us to look for other explanations. An answer, which I will further develop in the following chapters, may be found in the motivations, provided by both religious and ideological beliefs, which don't 'justify' action but, rather, construct *what is experienced as reality itself.*[35] One pervasive

---

[31] A deeper etymological analysis of Gibson work shows the influence of William Prescott. Prescott was a Latin American historian living in the early 19th century and his thematic centered on Spain as being a state in historical decline. The supposed decadence of the Spanish state was later taken up by Gibson in the 20th century and proves to be a continuing theme in historical studies. See Richard Kagan, "Prescott's Paradigm: American Historical Scholarship and the Decline of Spain," in *The American Historical Review*, Vol. 101, No.2, (April 1996): 423-446.

[32] Charles Gibson, *The Aztecs under Spanish Rule: A History of the Indians of the Valley of Mexico, 1519-1810.* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1964), 403.

[33] Ibid, 98, 134-135, 403.

[34] Ibid, 59.

[35] The words 'justify' or 'justification' in this context are a misnomer in historical studies, they imply the possibility that an action has the chance of being wrong and needs validation. Here are three examples of different degrees to relay my point: a) according to the sixteenth-century *christano viejo*, the Spanish Inquisition did not need to justify its existence but was a necessary reaction to a perceived real threat: the undermining of the Catholic faith, b) in the twentieth-century, the *Kristallnacht* was an outburst of violent and furious rage, half organized and half spontaneous, that the staunch SA *Kommando* needed not explain because the answer was obvious: Jews were parasites, c) In the film Star Trek VI, with the possibility for peace between

argument is that religious belief, whatever the description, has been a motivating force in human history and in the course of history many have acted on beliefs which others did not have. A sixteenth-century Catholic Castilian, believing his religion revealed, would have to admit that Christ is the Son of God, that the Messiah has come. A sixteenth-century *Morisco*, believing that Mohammed is the prophet of Allah, would think it idolatrous to venerate an icon of Jesus. A sixteenth-century Iberian Jew, awaiting the Messiah, would believe that some of his ancestors' neighbors jumped the gun. If it were argued, as some scholars do, that belief was all myth, that religion was nothing but lies, one could logically conclude that historically people have lived under the dominion of *mythos*. In other words, I feel that the consideration of ideology and religion, those terms which are generally thought of as scattered *mythos* to a materially anchored *logos*, are fundamental terms in history. Therefore, I categorically reject simplistic structural materialist discourses of the type used in the historical studies I have mentioned. Even if the ideas contained within certain beliefs in the past may seem stupid, they were not stupid in their day and we must, therefore, (re)consider them with great respect.[36] That said, I do not want to overestimate the significance of belief in the process of history. I simply feel that materialist discourse in this period's history has bent the stick too far in one direction. As an intellectual historian, I trade in ideas, and, much like a material historian who researches the economic, we are both chronically likely to overrate our respective importance in society as a whole. When one emphasizes, one always overemphasizes.[37] However, one thing is certain: the contemporary popular view of Castilian-speaking Iberia's encounter with the Americas, as influenced by Lockhart, Hassig and Gibson, is simplistic. When writing of these eminent scholars, one cannot help but notice the lack of complexity built into their system, their emphasis on narrative, but also an apparent unwillingness to consider innovation in methodology, hostility towards theoretical approaches and the arrogant belief in the clarity of the past. In fact, Lockhart's essay *A Historian and the Disciplines* demonstrates his dislike of new trends in historiography and Hassig's *Time, History and Belief* contains a malicious critique of theory and its application to history.[38] When evaluating this 'simple history', one is reminded of the

---

the Federation and the Klingon Empire, Captain Kirk does not justify his aversion towards Klingons: Kirk tells Spock how he feels, "The Klingons have never been trustworthy. This [peace] is a terrifying idea. You know how I feel about this. There're animals." Spock responds, "There is an historic opportunity here." Kirk shoots back, "Don't believe them. Don't trust them." "They are dying," explains Spock in a last ditch effort to explain the need for peace. Kirk retorts, "Let them die." The point here is that Kirk already sees the Klingons as brute savages and therefore the Federation should not dignify them with peace overtures.

[36] For this paragraph's argument I was inspired and I am indebted to Umberto Eco and his work *Serendipities: Language and Lunacy*. Translated by William Weaver. (New York: Harcourt Brace & Company, 1998). See introduction.

[37] Q.E.D. (*Quod erat deconstruendum*).

[38] See James Lockhart, "A Historian and the Disciplines (1999)," in *Of Things of the Indies, Essays Old and New in Early Latin American History*. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999). Lockhart appears to be giving a *res gestae* in ineffectual nostalgic autobiographical form. It is clear that he lacks reading in historical methodology and philosophy. See Hassig,

anecdote about the madman who searches for a lost key beneath a streetlamp; asked why he is searching there, when he lost the key in the dark corner, he answers: "But it's much easier to search under a strong light!" However, history is complex and difficult to understand (if at all)—*it is found in those dark corners*, it is not straightforwardly referential, it was not fully perceived as it occurred and thus I suggest we resituate our historical understanding in terms of permitting history to arise where immediate understanding may not have, and to suspend any political or ethical judgments on the past.[39]

The implication of this type of history characterized by Lockhart, Hassig and Gibson is the reduction of explanation in terms of economics which are then related to the political. But it seems that if there is a possibility that history can be motivated by belief instead of economics, total adherence to materialism appears to offer implausible historical explanations. The truth, surely, is that the economics has some part to play in this period's history, but that this factor has been exaggerated by a long tradition of historical materialism. I do not deny that material elements play an important role in history; in the American context historians of economics need only point to the development of the silver mines of Zacatecas or Potosí to draw attention to the material implications of Iberian relations to the Americas. However, what must be established is an open method, or at least, communication between those abstract ideological factors and those material formal and informal economic activities which could potentially work toward a broader comparative basis for studying the encounter and Conquest of the Americas. However, Lockhart, Hassig and Gibson have 'transfixed' history, which is a unique and irreducible moment when something idiosyncratic happens, and have saturated in it universality, bathed it in the light of the general and turned it into a token type.

Only until recently has scholarship problematized these approaches in work done by Iberianists who focus on the medieval and early modern periods. I side with those medievalists and early modernists who, by the nature of their field, have the benefit of assessing how discovery and Conquest called into question entrenched certainties of classical and religious teaching. It seems that the Marxist-Leftist bent Latin Americanists I have critiqued tend to evaluate cultural, intellectual, social and spiritual accounts in terms of the role of the 'material' and the market, whereas Iberianists appraise the impact of new geographic discoveries on European modes of thought. This type of work has rallied around the distinguished J.H. Elliot, a historian of early modern Spain. Although there are significant and important criticisms of Elliot, specifically from post-colonial authors, I am interested in the cognitive implications of his work rather than his Eurocentric bent (which would prove a fascinating literary analysis). What is fundamental is that he has argued that what was 'new' about the Indies was assimilated into classical and biblical paradigms, dulling the

---

Time, History and Belief in Aztec and Colonial Mexico. Here Hassig demonstrates a weak grasp of critical theory in an unconvincing an attack in chapter 3. He is clearly out of his depth.

[39] I am in full agreement with Cathy Caruth's argument as outlined in "Unclaimed Experience: Trauma and the Possibility of History (Freud, Monotheism)," in *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative, and History.* (10-24). (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1996).

impact of discovery.[40] This thesis is generally widely accepted, and has been supplemented by the scholarship of many others.

These include Anthony Pagden, Helen Nader, Jorge Cañizares-Esguerra and Ricardo Padrón.[41] In brief, the principal focus of these authors is the development of settler colonies and their relationship with their mother country. However they are all well aware that there has been recent and exciting scholarship devoted to the recovery of the past of the indigenous peoples of the Indies. The fundamental question that arises from these new works is the notion of the premise, that is, a pre-established belief of what one is going to encounter based on the conditional forces of history, society and culture. For instance, J.H. Elliot argues that the *Reconquista* was at once a military and religious enterprise which "helped establish forms of behavior and create habits of mind, easily transportable to distant parts of the world in the dawning age of European overseas expansion."[42] Elliot continues by suggesting that from the vantage point of 1492 "it was natural to think in terms of the continuing acquisition of territory and of the extension of the *Reconquista* beyond the shore of Spain."[43] Anthony Pagden applies the premise in the context of medieval and early modern thought and explores how the beliefs and histories associated with those periods entailed a point of reference from which the early modern Europeans could make sense of the unfamiliar in the newly discovered territories.[44] Padgen's book *Lords of all the World: Ideologies of Empire in Spain, Britain and France, c.1500-c.1800*, employs that word 'ideology' in a vague sense but nonetheless demonstrates the currency of Roman thought in shaping early modern worldviews. Helen Nader analyzes the Conquest though a slightly modulated understanding of the premise. She argues that

> Conquerors grounded their aspiration in the historic past, not in chivalric novels or imaginative leaps into an unknown world. Their

---

[40] See J.H. Elliot, *Empire of the Atlantic World: Britain and Spain in America, 1492-1830.* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006). J.H. Elliot, *Spain and Its World, 1500-1700.* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989); and J.H. Elliot, *The Old World and the New, 1492-1650.* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970).

[41] See Anthony Pagden, *Lords of all the World: Ideologies of Empire in Spain, Britain and France, c.1500-c.1800.* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995). Anthony Pagden, *European Encounters with the New World: From Renaissance to Romanticism.* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993). Helen Nader, "The Spain that Encountered Mexico," in *The Oxford History of Mexico.* Meyer, Michael and William H. Beezley, (eds). (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000). [Henceforth referred to as 'The Spain that Encountered Mexico'.]. Helen Nader, *The Book of Privileges Issued to Christopher Columbus by King Fernando and Queen Isabel, 1492-1502.* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996). Jorge Cañizares-Esguerra, *Nature, Empire, and Nation: Explorations of the History of Science in the Iberian World.* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2006). Jorge Cañizares-Esguerra, *Puritan Conquistadors, Iberianizing the Atlantic, 1550-1770.* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2006); and Ricardo Padrón, *The Spacious Word: Cartography, Literature, and Empire in Early Modern Spain* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004).

[42] Elliot, *Empires of the Atlantic World,* 17.

[43] Ibid, 19.

[44] See Anthony Pagden, *The Fall of Natural Man.* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986).

> historical memory focused on the Middle Ages, when Europeans had carried on regular long distance commerce with Asia.[45]

In a fascinating turn, Nader suggests that the 'material' in the form of Indian cities was understood by the Castilian-speaking Iberians in terms of references to European city structure, not to mention all the secondary meanings associated with the function and symbolic spatial areas of the European municipality. Nader, however, has neither considered the possibility that ideology itself can be manifest in material apparatuses (the structure of the city) nor how the conditioning provided by a material apparatus can construct a perception (or premise) of the how the world is supposed to 'be'. This point requires elaboration and should be read in conjunction with the definition of 'ideology' as outlined in the introduction. In this case, ideology appears as a positive reality. As Louis Althusser and Slavoj Žižek observed, ideology structures our social practices and therefore lies in our practical activities. Therefore, ideology is not necessarily a matter of what one thinks about a situation, it is somehow inscribed in the situation itself. The central idea is that people live in ideology; it is a matter of lived relations. For instance, Althusser turns to the example of the Church and religious ritual. The subject in ideology adopts a practical attitude and participates in the regular practices of an ideology apparatus (the Church). Hence, the "subject's ideas exist in his or her actions."[46] Another example can be made: it is no good reminding myself that I am opposed to homophobia as I attend a heterosexual-only club. By dancing on the club's floor, I have supported and perpetuated a homophobic ideology. The ideology is the club itself, not in my head. In Nader's case of the city we can delineate the 'positive' feature of ideology. The ideology of the Castilian municipality, its structure and the individual's daily routine in this structure (e.g. going to church or to the market), counts as a historical subject's lived relationship with his material existence. This means that an early modern would have a pre-conception of how a city is supposed to be structured and the daily rhythm associated with those structures. This means that the early modern viewer of the Americas, for instance, Hernan Cortés and his conquistadores who gazed upon Teonochtitlan, saw Amerindian cities in Eurocentric terms; there was no other point of reference.

Jorge Cañizares-Esguerra has approached early pre-conceptions in terms of early modern science and religion and their applications to the Americas. Cañizares-Esguerra's *Nature, Empire, and Nation: Explorations of the History of Science in the Iberian World* implies that chivalric and gendered values colored the pursuit and structure of knowledge which organized understandings of the Indies and the interactions with them during the colonial period, while *Puritan Conquistadors, Iberianizing the Atlantic, 1550-1770*, argues that European settlers (Castilian-speaking and English-speaking) inscribed and understood the Americas in terms of a struggle with Satanic forces that had possessed mastery of the area until the arrival of the *Conquistadores*. Ricardo

---

[45] Nader, 'The Spain That Encountered Mexico,' 11.
[46] Althusser, "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses," 169.

Padrón has focused on the premises located in early modern cartography and spatial belief and its relationship to the Indies.[47] Padrón demonstrates how European ideas of the arrangement of the globe structured the perception of settlers arriving in the Americas, not to mention Iberians who remained on the peninsula. Furthermore, he has also demonstrated the considerable lag time it took for Iberians to 'paradigm shift' away from the theory that the Americas were connected to Asia. However, I do have a point of contention with Padrón in his commitment to the thesis of Mexican historian Edmundo O'Gorman, who suggested that America is something that was invented rather than discovered. Padrón's study is in the vein of the O'Gorman-influenced work of Richard Kagan and Barbara Mundy, where mapping America is evaluated as a creative affair with an emphasis on artistic construction.[48] The fundamental problem here is that for the contemporaneous Castilian, those artistic expressions *were* contemporaneous knowledge. This can be summarized by the thesis that America was not 'invented', but rather already pre-constituted in the mind of many early moderns before they arrived ashore. Or, 'America' was constructed from an array of explanatory possibilities drawn from older paradigms where, from the temporal distance associated with the modern historical standpoint, nothing 'new' was created, but what was encountered was interpreted as something 'new' within 'old' frameworks.[49] Quite simply, the ontological chasm separating Europe and America was not visible or, for that matter possibly observable, for the early modern.

I believe that the implications of Elliot's thesis and the branches of histories he touched are clear: an implicit pre-comprehension on the part of the early moderns in relation to the territories they would encounter is a fundamental factor in the study of the European and American encounter. How, then, are we to explicate that pre-comprehension? Here scholarship has stopped short. Whereas historians in this field, particularly Anthony Pagden, have identified the inherent cognitive value of the term ideology, they possess a very limited understanding of the concept. This has generated a partly-subliminal, yet partly-obvious void in historiography where it enters the domain of theory. It is here that the curious (sometimes childish, sometimes fierce, always rodeo clown-like) relationship between theoreticians and traditional historians manufactures a void and stunts growth in historiography. The vulgar representation of ideology as an ambiguous feature has diluted its use in

---

[47] See Padrón, *The Spacious Word: Cartography, Literature, and Empire in Early Modern Spain*, particularly the introduction.

[48] See Richard L. Kagan with Fernando Marias, *Urban Images of the Hispanic World, 1493-1793*. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000); and Barbara E. Mundy, *The Mapping of New Spain: Indigenous Cartography and the Maps of the Relaciones Geograficas*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000).

[49] Diana Taylor addresses 'America' not only as an 'invention', but also as a 'performance' and 'practice'. She uses these terms to suggest that lived behavior might illuminate different versions of past events. See Diana Taylor, "Remapping Genre through Performance: From 'American' to Hemispheric Studies," in *Publications of the Modern Language Association of America*. (October 2007): 1416-1430. Here I suggest that early moderns didn't *ad lib* or improv, they were performers reading from a long-established script.

historical study. In essence, ideology needs elaboration, and Elliot's branch of historiography opens an exciting opportunity to generate fresh history-writing.

As I suggested in my introduction, our conception of history is invariably accompanied by a certain suggestion of ideology which is implicit in it and conditions it, and must be elucidated. For this reason, I prefer to lay my cards on the table and give the reader the principal philosophers I draw from in my discussion of historical idea and historical event. Therefore, I admit that through my own specific readings of Karl Marx, Antonio Gramsci, Louis Althusser, Michel Foucault, Raymond Williams and Slavoj Žižek, I have engaged ideology as a function of critical thinking.[50] Indeed, I suggest an anti-descriptivist approach to evaluate what is beyond the descriptive features of a historical event that could constitute its scholarly articulation. I posit that it is the 'un-decidable' which forms the ground of history or any historical structure. Furthermore, as our historical imagination is compelled to accept the *presence* of ideology, scholarship must move to acknowledge and analyze its possibilities, its *realities*. Therefore my assumption is that ideology is a very real historical force. It is precisely here that the admission of ideology's effect on the *episteme* problematizes logocentric habits of thought by showing how strictly impossible it is to draw a firm line between reality and representation. Only through amplification of the term ideology can it be used as an effective device for critiquing history and historiography. This means that historiography must modify its understanding of ideology to ascertain the texture of historical social relations in terms of how it constructs the historical social reality of a period. Indeed, there is always already (although we hate to admit it) an illusionary element located in the construction of knowledge. If we want to *begin* to understand the dimension of fantasy situated in early modern Castilian-speaking Iberia's relationship to the Americas we must return to the Marxian formula, "they know not what they are doing but they are doing it," and modulate it slightly with a Quixotic twist: 'they know very well what they are doing and they are doing it.' Thus, ideology does not simply 'program' individuals like robots, but it succeeds because individuals find it desirable for ideology to be successful. The broader implications are that the notion of ideology now operates on at least two levels, in history and in historiography.

On another level, it appears that ideology also needs discussion in terms of its material nature, which may be good news for historical materialists.

---

[50] For the specific texts used in developing my usage of ideology see, Karl Marx, *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy, Volume I.* Translated by Ben Fowkes. (New York: Penguin Books, 1990), Karl Marx and Friedrich Engles, *The German Ideology*. (Amherst: Prometheus Books, 1998), Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*. Edited and Translated by Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith. (New York: International Publishers, 2005),Louis Althusser, *Lenin and Philosophy and other essays*. Translated by Ben Brewster. (New York: Monthly Review Press, 2001), Louis Althusser, *For Marx*. Translated by Ben Brewster. (New York: Verso, 2005), Louis Althusser, *Politics and History*. Translated by Ben Brewster. (New York: Verso, 2007), Raymond Williams, *Marxism and Literature*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), Slavoj Žižek, *Tarrying with the Negative, Kant, Hegel and the Critique of Ideology*. (Durham: Duke University Press, 1993), Slavoj Žižek. *Mapping Ideology*. (London: Verso, 1994); and Slavoj Žižek. *The Sublime Object of Ideology*. (New York: Verso, 1999).

Given recent debates in ideological theory, it appears that historians are ensnared in the possibility that ideology itself (that complex of ideas, theories, convictions, beliefs, argumentative procedures) can be external and material in social apparatuses, institutions and rituals. To use a simple example, in the context of medieval and early modern Castile, the Church, the institution itself, is a material manifestation of ideology and the ideology 'in' the Church can also 'work on' a consciousness, filling it with ideology. Therefore, anything with a material physical and concrete property, take for instance an object, whether it be the Eucharist, the barracks, a woodcut depicting the Indies or a piece of clothing, is itself ideological, instructing how things 'are' or 'ought to be' (E.g. Be a good Christian, keep things orderly, natives of the Indies look and act 'strange', this is the way to dress.). Thus, ideology can also unify by showing (or instructing) what people have in common. In the example of colonial Latin America, ideological factors binded together Castilians, Galicians, Leonese, Basques, Aragonese and Catalans (to name a few) in a single purpose of ensuring the ultimate triumph of the Holy Church.[51] It is not difficult to detect the implications of this thesis: that early modern ideology demanded, religiously and academically (if such a distinction can be made for this period), the subordination and displacement of other forms of belief. This is a much more precise and powerful way of articulating the relationship between the Conquest and religion, especially in light of other historical events of this period, such as, the Reconquest or the expulsion of the Jews. It is not as if Castilian-speakers interacting with the Indians of the Americas did not realize what they were doing in terms of Conquest, but rather they knew exactly what they were doing in terms of how ideology *represented the social reality to which they belonged and motivated Conquest.*

It is far more historically and academically insightful to consider the possibility that early moderns pre-comprehended what they encountered in the Americas by inscribing what they already knew about the outside world, bringing with them their own subjectivities that were inflected by an ideological quilt. I will show in the next two chapters that even at the most fundamental levels, pre-existing early modern expectations shaped how early moderns viewed the world. It is telling that Susan Martinez-Conde, director of the Laboratory of Visual Neuroscience at the Borrow Neurological Institute in Phoenix, writes "Even at the most fundamental levels, *our* expectations shape how *we* view the world."[52] In the following chapter I will discuss Iberian religious ideology in terms of its relationship with the Americas not in terms of its 'false' representation of the Indians, but, rather in terms of its seemingly 'true' and quite accurate description of the natives in relation to the early modern Catholic Castilian-speaking Iberian. This is necessarily an ideological question because it reveals how what was considered and perceived as natural (the understanding and treatment of the Indies) was conditioned by ideologies of religion, history and society.

---

[51] J.H. Elliot, *Imperial Spain, 1469-1716.* (London: Penguin, 2002), 99-110.

[52] Susana Martinex-Conde, 'Skewed Vision,' in *Scientific American Mind.* (Oct-Nov 2007): 55- 57, 56.

Chapter 2
The Axiomatic of Belief

Before advancing any farther, it may be well to underline that in academic theory it seems we must concede that without preconceptions of some kind we would not be able to identify an issue or pass judgment on a situation. Martin Heidegger calls this 'pre-understanding'. The assumption here is that there is no such thing as 'presuppositionless' thought. Heidegger also argues that the human subject experiences 'thrown-ness' (*Geworfenheit*). Here, the wider meaning of this term represents the idea that human beings are 'thrown', with neither prior knowledge nor individual option, into a world that was there before and will remain there after they are gone.[53] Such Heideggerian expressions are good places to start this chapter as it discusses the 'pre-understandings' of early modern *Cristiano* writers of the Americas. Again, because there is no such thing as 'presuppositionless' thought, all thinking might be said to be shaped by ideology and this chapter therefore locates part of the immense ideological web into which early moderns were 'thrown'. This means that I am providing an analysis of the possibilities within a certain historical situation: the hand those *Cristanos* were dealt by history. The term ideology serves as a signifier that represents the symbolic system from which a historical social order spoke to those historical individuals and, although no amount of rigorous analysis could reveal how ideology related to *each* individual, that doesn't prevent us from committing to a critical intimacy with part of the architecture of ideas of this period. In this chapter I assess the works of some prominent sixteenth-century writers and their textual relationship to the Americas. Although these writers bitterly disagreed on the nature of the Indians, I believe that on a fundamental level they were unified in viewing the Americas through an ideological construction based on religion and in terms of a *Conquista Espiritual* (Spiritual Conquest), and that the success of this Conquest was desirable. Although the *Conquista Espiritual Cristiana* itself was not a homogenous enterprise in terms of methodology and jurisdiction, I argue that on close inspection there is actually deep-seated agreement between *Cristianos* on an ideological level, causing serious and fascinating implications which challenge our own 'pre-understandings' of this period's history.[54] We will see the Indies acting as a reflection, or mirror, to the gaze of the early moderns, who always already saw themselves, their beliefs and values. However we also see the image being inflected as if the early moderns were transmitted back *an improved image* of themselves, their beliefs and values.

I begin with Gonzalo Fernández de Oviedo (1478-1557), one of the most well known of the 'apologist' historians of Conquest. Oviedo was an

---

[53] For an expanded discussion of 'pre-understanding', 'presuppositionless' and 'throwness', see Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, translated by John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson (New York: Harper and Row, 1962).

[54] I highlight that the particular cases I use are for demonstrate purposes, and not to make overarching claims about mendicant religious orders.

active participant in Spanish colonialism and deeply involved in early discourse of the Americas. He is often thought of as an arch-racist, providing weak theoretical 'justification' for Christian debauchery and plunder of the Americas. However this image is made considerably more complex in light of G.F. Dille's view, who writes that,

> Although [Oviedo] was as interested as any other in finding the fame and fortune that had eluded him the Old World, he was appalled by the savage conduct of his countrymen who came to Tierra Firme with the sole purpose of quickly appropriating indigenous gold by whatever means possible.[55]

The *Historia General y Natural de las Indias* shows that Oviedo is a Castilian imperialist who wanted a Castilian Amerindian Catholic Monarchy with well-greased gears so its machinery could provide inertia for a powerful Christian state. Oviedo was a proponent of what I term 'hot' or 'hawkish' conversion, which many Catholics felt was the only way to submit the Americas to Christianity. The legal tract *De Iudaeis*, written in 1555, sums up this perspective,

> ...these wars [the Conquest] are licit. They are waged on the grounds that the infidels of the New World practice vices which violate the law of nature, namely the crimes of human sacrifice and idol worship. Divine law itself permits war to put an end to these crimes. Such a war is fought under papal leadership, because it is the right and duty of the pope to punish infidels who commit these sins. These infidels, therefore, may legitimately be subjected to the Imperium of the Christians, not for the purpose of enslaving them or of expropriating their possession, but in order to liberate them from their crimes.[56]

However the alacrity with which Christians, both *conquistadors* and clergy, raped the newly discovered territories in search of gold, and the impunity with which they enslaved and murdered, alarmed Oviedo, who considered such acts a subversion of the Spanish chivalrous tradition.[57] For Oviedo, this was manifest in the morally bankrupt rule and subsequent ill-famed policy of

---

[55] G.F. Dille, *Introduction to Writings from the Edge of the World, the Memoirs of Darien, 1514-1527*, by Gonzalo Fernandez de Oviedo. (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2006), 24.

[56] *De Iudaeis et Aliis Infidelibus*, I, 14. Quoted from Kenneth R. Stow, *Catholic Thought and Papal Jewry Policy*, 1555-1593. (New York: Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1977), 90-91. Interestingly the *De Iudaeis* was intended as a handbook for judges in cases involving Jewry law and was widely popular. This existence of this tract emphasizes the typological connection that early moderns had between Indians and Jews. The fact that the 'New World' is even mentioned in a tract involving Jewry is telling of the early modern 'presupposition' of the religious Other.

[57] Ibid, 24.

Pedrarias Davilá (1440-1531), Governor of Castilla del Oro.[58] While Oviedo, along with a large cross-section of Iberian and European society, glorified in the Castilian enterprise of the Indies, his anti-indigenism has been thrown in too dark a relief by the work of Bartolomé de las Casas (1484-1566), the first resident Bishop of Chiapas.

De las Casas is a notable figure in Atlantic World history, best known for his *Brevisíma Relación de la Destruyción de las Indias (A Brief Account of the Destruction of the Indies*), and is often seen as a prophet of anti-imperialism in post-colonial literature. Whereas both authors worked on historicizing the Indies into the narrative of Europe, de las Casas' writings brought attention to the atrocities committed by the *conquistadores* in the Americas, most particularly, the Caribbean, Central America and Mexico. De las Casas was an implacable critic of Oviedo's work, taking the position that his rival was an enemy of the Indians. But did they perhaps share some ideological common ground? Today de las Casas is an anti-imperial icon in spite of the ideology, held by the majority of Spaniards (and Europeans), including de las Casas himself, that Spain had a necessary right to intrude into and own the Indies as outlined in Alexander VI's bull *Inter caetera* of 1493.[59]

In de las Casas' assessment of the Americas the Indian question was central and, although the bishop was indignant towards Oviedo it appears, and this chapter will show, that he took issue with the methodologies of Christianization, not Spain's right of possession. Furthermore, de las Casas neither doubted the Church's right to souls nor the inferiority of an indigenous religion which would be eventually brushed aside, in lieu of the Indian' pre-disposition to Catholicism. "They [the Indians]," de las Casas writes, "are capable and docile towards good doctrine, they are apt to receive our Holy Catholic Faith and are given to virtuous habits..."[60] Friar Diego Durán (1537-1588) echoed this sentiment later in the century: "O, the strange bestiality of these people, in many things they have good discipline, government,

---

[58] See, Gonzalo Fernández y Valdes de Oviedo, *Historia General y Natural de las Indias*. Ed y studio prelimiar de Juan Perez de Tudela Bueso. (Madrid: Ediciones Atlas, 1959), Vol. III,. Book, XXIX; for specifics on Oviedo's view of Pedrarias Davilá.

[59] "We, by the Authority of Almighty God, granted unto us in Saint Peter, and by the Vicarship of Jesus Christ which bear on the Earth, do forever, by the tenor of these presents, give, grant, assign, unto you [Catholic Monarch], your heirs and successors...all those Lands and Islands, with their Dominions, Territories, Cities, Castles, Towers, Places and Villages, with all the Rights and Jurisdictions thereunto pertaining; constituting, assigning, and deputing you, your heirs and successors, the Lords there of, with full and free Power, Authority, and Jurisdiction." Alexander VI (pope). "Inter caetera," in *Hakluytus Posthumus or Purchas His Pilgrimes*. Translated by Richard Eden. Vol. 2. (Glasgow: J. MacLehose, 1906), 40-41. Quoted in Dille, *Introduction to Writings from the Edge of the World, the Memoirs of Darien, 1514-1527.*

[60] Bartolomé de las Casas, *Brevisíma Relación de la Destruyción de las Indias*, edición de Jean-Paul Duviols. (Buenos Aires: Stockcero, 2006), 10:..."Son eso mismo de limpios e desocupados e vivos entendimientos, muy capaces e dóciles para toda Buena doctrina; aptísimos para recibir nuestra sancta fe católica e ser dotados de virtuosas costumbres..."

understanding, capacity and polish but, in others, strange bestiality and blindness."[61]

De las Casas was a proponent of what I term 'cool' or 'passive' conversion which appears as an imprint of the Iberian precedent set by Juan of Segovia's (early fifteenth-century) 'method' for dealing with Islam during the *Reconquista*, specifically Point 11 which indicates that:

> ...converting the Saracens to the sacraments of the faith [by] unleashing wars against them does not work [as] is shown both by experience and also by basic reason. For since one never gives credence to one's enemy, they will not believe their Christian teachers as long as the struggle continues. Their hatred of them, and even more so of Christ, will grow, and they will draw back completely from embracing the latter's faith.[62]

The carrot takes further precedence over the stick in Point 20, which argues, "By examples of Holy Scripture, and many others, it is shown that the sword of the divine word is more successful in converting the infidels than is the material."[63] The material sword, nonetheless, had appeal. In counter, the *De Iudaeis* stated that, "As for the additional objection which some advance, that infidels must be won by preaching alone, in the manner of Christ and the Apostles, it is an ideal and obtains only if infidels can be won in this way."[64] Oviedo was adamant that Indians "are a people very loathe to understand the Catholic faith, and to believe that they will become Christian, except after considerable passage of time, is like working cold iron with a hammer."[65] Oviedo believed that holding the Indians to fire and ruling over them by force was the best way to instill Christianity in the West Indies. Here a homology exists between Oviedo's discourse and the de las Casas's counter-discourse: the violent or, in light of Oviedo's statements, the 'hot' approach to Christianization in the Indies also appears rooted in the *Reconquista* which marked Castilian Indian interaction in the precedent of Rome-approved *cruzadas* (crusades) against the Moors and the conversion of the Jews. 'Hot' Christianization was a 'trace' of the belief that in a different epoch the Indians, much like the Jews, rejected the word of God. Oviedo states,

---

[61] Diego Durán, *Historia de la Indias de Nueva Espana*, 2 vols., ed. Angel (Garibay, Mexcio, 1967), Vol, I, 260.

[62] See, "A summary of the chapters in a letter from John of Segovia to Cardinal Nicholas of Cusa, 2 December 1454, expounding his 'method' for dealing with Islam," (144-147) in *Documents on the Later Crusades, 1274-1580*, by Housley, Norman ed. (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1996), 144. [Henceforth referred to as 'Segovia'.] Later in the 16th century, the Jesuit Joseph de Acosta (1540-1600) would also argue for the 'passive' approach to Christianize the Indies. In the *Historia Natura y Moral de las Indias*, Acosta saw the encounter with the Americas as a gift from God and should be governed accordingly. See Joseph de Acosta. *Historia Natura y Moral de las Indias*. (Mexico: Fondo de Cultura, 1964; 1590).

[63] 'Segovia,' 144.

[64] *De Iudaeis et Aliis Infidelibus*, I, 14. As quoted in Stow, 91.

[65] Oviedo, *Historia General y Natural de las Indias*. Vol. I, p. 111: "Estos indios, por la mayor parte de ellos, es nación muy desviada de querer entender la fe católica; y es machacar hierro frio pensar que han de ser cristianos, sino con mucho discurso de tiempo..."

> ...the Holy Church had already preached the mystery of His Redemption in all parts of the world; for Saint Gregory the Great, a doctor of the church, who assumed the pontificate and chair of Saint Peter in the year five hundred and ninety and held and governed it fourteen years, said these words....it follows that Saint Gregory ascended into Heaven in the year 604, and as he said that in the final year of his life they had finished preaching the mystery of our Redemption to all parts of the word, 888 years had passed until Columbus came to these parts in 1492. And since Columbus came to these Indies, and the Christians came out to them, another fifty-six years have elapsed up to the present time, which would make 944 years since Saint Gregory.[66]

Here Oviedo's 'mathematical proof' was related to the theological-academic-scriptural and what can be understood as a Christian 'hawk'-approved reading of Romans 10:18, "...Have they not heard? Yes, verily, their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world."[67] To Christian ears, this presents a dangerous argument that states there is no excuse for Indian apostasy. There is a religious 'accrediting'; that is, the *Cristiano* possesses special credentials, to his determinate beliefs, with its associated notions of a chosen people, sacred language etc. Indians don't fit the mold. Via this interpretation Oviedo writes, "...these people should have already come to an understanding which is as important to them as is the salvation of their souls...since the banner of Christ and the King of Castile came to this place to teach them about it anew since they had forgotten it."[68] Here, typological thinking is inserted in the form of the reoccupation of the Americas by the Christian faithful, and, moreover, the Indians are viewed as relics in the Christian timeline. Of course, to further understand this dimension of thought, we must also take into account the letter written by Christopher Columbus (1451-1506) to the Catholic Monarchs, King Ferdinand of Aragon (1452-1516) and Queen Isabella of Castile (1451-1504). Columbus's letter, written in 1501,

---

[66] Ibid , 111. "...La Sancta Iglesia ya tenia en todo el mundo predicado, en todos las partes del, el misterio de su redempción; pues estas palabras dijo Sanct Gregorio Magno, doctor de la Iglesia, el cual tomo el pontificado e silla de Sanct Pedro ano del Señor de quinientos y noventa, e la tuvo e gobernó catorce anos;...y aunque el postrero ano de su vida se acabara de predicar en todas las partes del mundo (como el dijo), el misterio de la redempción nuestra, han pasado después, hasta que Colom vino a esta partes (ano de mil e cuatrocientos y noventa y dos anos), ochocientos e ochenta y ocho. Y después que vino Colom a esta Indias e pasaron los cristianos a ellas, corren, hasta el presente ano de mil e quinientos y cuarenta e ocho, otros cincuenta y seis anos mas, que serian novecientos e cuarenta y cuatro anos después de Sanct Gregorio."

[67] *King James Bible*, Romans 10:18.

[68] Oviedo, *Historia General y Natural de las Indias* Vol. 1, p. 111. "Estas gentes debrían ya de haber entendido una cosa en que tanto les va, como es salvar sus animas...después que las banderas de Cristo y del Rey de Castilla pasaron acá, puesto que lo tuviesen olvidado, o que de Nuevo se les tornase a enseñar."

advocated the restoration of the 'Holy House' to the 'Holy Church Militant.'[69] Columbus wrote:

> St. Augustine said that the end of this world would come in the 7th millennium of its creation... to the coming of Our Lord Jesus Christ; there are 5343 years and 318 days. Adding 1500 years, and an unfinished year, we reach a total of 6845 years. According to these calculations there are only 155 years to the year 7000, around which, the said authorities state, the world will come to an end.[70]

In this society, worldviews were fraught with theology. In the case of Oviedo, 'hot' Christianization was to articulate itself as a disciplinary function. 'Hawkish' Christian strategy emphasized the lapsed nature of Indians by viewing the Indies in terms of the always already omnipresent nature of Christ; the belief that European Christianity always already preceded contact and therefore Conquest. Indians, therefore, were negligent and either a) rejected Christ and were thus subject to punishment and slavery or b) too incompetent to be good Christians and thus needed to be under constant supervision. In the case of de las Casas, 'cool' Christianization meant the undermining of indigenous beliefs in favor of Catholicism. 'Passive' Christian strategy also emphasized the always already triumphant jurisdiction of the Christian tradition over the *whole* world; the belief in inevitability, the fate of God's victory. Here, however, every human pound of flesh always already belonged to God, should be respected as such and there is no need to discipline the Indians because their final destiny would enter the Christian fold anyway.[71] On the surface, de las Casas and Oviedo may have disagreed on the manner and method of treating the 'new' subjects of Castile but their texts suggest the necessity of a Castilian Amerindian and *Catholic* Monarchy. It is fundamental

---

[69] "In a letter to Ferdinand and Isabella written in 1501, Christopher Columbus advocates a crusade to recover Jerusalem," (169-172) in *Documents on the Later Crusades, 1274-1580*, by Housley, Norman ed. (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1996), 169. [Henceforth referred to as 'Columbus.']

[70] 'Columbus,' 170. In the case of St. Augustine, Columbus is referring to *Civitas Dei* XXII.30. Columbus lived during a period in which millenarian and apocalyptic movements were common. See J.H. Elliot, *Empires of the Atlantic World.* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006). And Sara Tilghmen Nalle, *Mad for God: Bartolomé Sánchez, the Secret Messiah of Cardenete.* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 2001).

[71] This perspective is closely related to Catholic thought on Judaism throughout the medieval and early modern periods. Pope Paul IV's 1555 re-injunctions of Canon Laws, specifically consolidated in the bulls named *Cum nimis* and *De Iudaeis*, re-stated Church Jewry policy that had as its on-going basis the active pursuit of the conversion of the Jews. The goal of toleration was conversion as part of the movement toward the Last Judgment. Kenneth Stow's work on Judeo-Christian relations demonstrates the soteriological roles of Jews in Christian theological frameworks. In this light, the promotion of Christianity and the inevitable fulfillment of the Jewish destiny through conversion appears closely related to Castilian views on the Indians. See Kenneth R. Stow, *Catholic Thought and Papal Jewry Policy, 1555-1593.* (New York: Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1977), Kenneth Stow, *Popes, Church, and Jews in the Middle Ages.* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007).

to underline that there was nothing 'new' about the natives in this context—they were always already subjects of Christ and the Castilian Crown.

The foregoing ideas can be more properly understood within the context of a form of meta-theology that was prominent throughout academic institutions in Castile during this period.[72] Meta-theology claimed to give an account of 'what is,' in its various epistemological and ontological layers, and insinuated an implicitly futuristic, or messianic, standard of how things 'ought to be'—under the aegis of notions like order, harmony and intelligibility. That is, putting the world in order before the Second Coming. In the case of de las Casas, his writings portray him as a precocious archaeologist of the ruins-in-the-making that are Castile's possessions governed by (mis)guided policy, yet he still viewed the Indies through a messianic medium: that which 'ought to be', that which is 'to come'; that is, Catholicism in the Americas and Apocalypse. In *A Brief Account of the Destruction of the Indies*, de las Casas wrote:

> I have great hope that because the Emperor and King of Spain, our Lord Don Carlos, fifth of this name, will understand the wrongs and treacheries that those men and lands, against his will and God's, do and have done, and that he extinguish all the evils and heal this New World that God has given him, like the love and culture that is justice, with glorious and happy life and the imperial state of all powerful God, to remedy all of his universal Church and his own final salvation.[73]

Another good example is de las Casas' 12-point memorandum, written in the same year, which called on the Castilian government to improve the welfare and make respectable Catholics out of the indigenous population. These necessities included: instruction in religion, lessons in *castellano*, implementation of the Castilian legal system, direction in table manners (Indians normally sat on the ground or stood) and a ban on sleeping on the ground.[74] The ill-received reform orders of 1516 further illustrate this point, which were oriented towards Indian policy and created in collaboration between Cardinal Jiménez de Cisneros (1436-1517), the lawyer Palacios Rubios (1450-1524) and heavily influenced by de las Casas. It instructed Spanish Christians "to think and observe what was best for the service of God and the instruction

---

[72]See Richard L. Kagan. "Universities in Castile 1500-1700," in *Past and Present*, No. 49. (Nov 1970): 44-71.

[73] De las Casas, *BRDI*, 83. "Tengo grande esperanza que porque el emperador y rey de España, nuestro señor don Carlos, quinto desde nombre, va entendiendo las maldades y traiciones que aquellas gentes e tierras, contra la voluntad de Dios y suya, se hacen y han hecho, que ha de extirpar tantos males y ha de remediar aquel Nuevo Mundo que Dios le ha dado, como amador y cultor que es justicia, cuya gloriosa y felices vida e imperial estado Dios todo-poderoso, para remedio de toda su universal Iglesia e final salvación..."

[74] *Coleccion de documentos ineditos relativos al descubrimiento, conquista, y organizacion de las posesiones espanolas en America y Oceania*, 42 Vols., Madrid 1864-89, ed. Joaquin Pacheco and Francisco Cardenas. Vol. 23, 310-331. Quoted from Hugh Thomas, *Rivers of Gold*. (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 2003).

of the Indians in our faith, for their own good, as also for the settlers of those islands and, whatever you think should be provided, provide it."[75]

The most obvious mistake, however, is to overlook the implications of these formulations and the presence of Cardinal Jiménez de Cisneros's name. Since the eighth century, Iberian Christians locked themselves in a battle against the mixture of Arabs, Berbers, Egyptians, Slavs and Syrians collectively referred to as the Moors. By 1492 the city of Granada, in the kingdom of the same name, was all that remained of their once mighty Caliphate, which had for a time threatened *all* of Christian Europe. J.N. Hillgarth shows that the impact of what Iberian Christians termed the *Reconquista* had a particular effect on the Castilian historical consciousness, such that, Castilian historians writing in the fifteenth century viewed their Christian kingdom as waging a divine war with Granada.[76] I argue that this historicized ideology in turn interpellated Christian society—always already operating on Cisneros, the so-called 'the hammer of the Moors', and manifest in his intolerance and belligerence towards Islam.[77] In 1492 the Moorish King Abu "Boabdil" Abdullah (1460?-1533) surrendered the last bastion of Islamic Spain to the Catholic Monarchs under, among other things, a stipulation that there would be toleration of Muslim practices.[78] Granada's Muslims thought their new existence would be based in the standard *convivencia* of the period, meaning a violent relationship between religions but no specific powerful move towards a structured or institutionalized homogenization and indoctrination of faith.[79] However, starting in 1498, the Church, under the auspices of Cisneros, promulgated regulation in a move

---

[75] Ibid, Vol. 7 14-65.

[76] J.N. Hillgarth, *The Spanish Kingdoms, 1250-1516*. Vol. II 1410-1516, "Castilian Hegemony," (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978), 198-199. I agree with Hillgarth's research and conclusions; however I also believe that this process started to occur much earlier than the fifteenth century. Kenneth Baxter Wolf's "Muhammad as Antichrist in Ninth-Century Cordoba," in Mark D. Meyerson and Edward D. English, eds. *Medieval and Early Modern Spain: Interaction and Cultural Change*, (University of Notre Dame Press, 1999), 3-19; is an example of how the ideology of inscribing Islam as the enemy in Iberian historical consciousness began earlier than previously thought.

[77] Christopher Bracken outlines an effective way to think of interpellation. He writes, "Ideology literally molds the body from the inside out to make it 'fit' already established apparatuses. What makes this molding possible, moreover, is the fact that the body is innately accessible to ideology—always ready to invite it in to begin work. Ideology approaches [your accessible space] and 'hails' the subject from the inside. You respond to this hailing by thinking that ideology is really yourself; you recognize it just as you would recognize your own reflection in the mirror. 'Yes, that's me!' you say, and in doing so you invite ideology into yourself, just as you might welcome a familiar stranger into your apartment." See Christopher Bracken, "Coercive Spaces and Spatial Coercions: Althusser and Foucault," *in Philosophy and Social Criticism*. Vol. 17, No. 2, (March 1991), 228-241. The term 'interpellation' is originally a neologism introduced by Louis Althusser, which he describes as the process by which ideology addresses the pre-ideological individual, thus producing him as a subject.

[78] Through the reference to King Bodabilla we get the saying, "You cry like a woman for what you should have fought for like a man," which is how, supposedly, Bodabilla's mother scolded her son in the aftermath of his surrender.

[79] It's not that during seven centuries of *Reconquista* there was no religious intolerance, it's that no religious group was ever powerful or organized enough to implement a specific programmable regimen of faith.

towards segregating religions and preventing Christians from associating with infidels. Christians were prevented from renting accommodation to Muslims, barred from the consumption of meat from *halal* butchers, banned from Moorish bathhouses and forbidden from employing Moorish midwives.[80] Eventually, in 1499, the *Mudejars* rose up in response to the disturbances in the city, and their revolt became known as the First Rebellion of the Alpujarras. In 1501, while the *Mudejar* uprising slowly choked, Royal Order decreed that Arabic manuscripts in the region be consumed by huge bonfires lit in Granada under the patronage of Cisneros as a direct means of forced conversion.[81] The new social group of the *Moriscos* eventually rose out of the 'cinders'—from then on Islam would be neither quite present nor absent in the peninsula. Here it might prove insightful to compare these 'cinders' to their Derridian counterpart. Jacques Derrida's usage of 'cinders' is articulated as a (non)-concept expressed as the warmth of a cinder from which one can feel the effects of fire even if the fire itself is inaccessible.[82] It is only a short step from here to compare this philosophical supposition and its historical manifestation. For instance, the alert "*Moros en la costa*" ("Moors on the coast") was still used well after the final defeat of Islam on the Peninsula. In 1517, Charles V traveled to Spain because he was inheritor of the throne of Castile and, as his fleet approached Aragon, Christians at first believed his ships were a Turkish invasion force. The (non)-concept 'cinders' is also suggested by Mary Elizabeth Perry in *The Handless Maiden, Moriscos and the Politics of Religion in Early Modern Spain.* Although 'cinders' is not specifically mentioned, she observes that although pure Islam itself remained inaccessible and outside cognition for the *Moriscos*, its heritage was certainly felt.[83] Modern historians may conclude that Islam had been defeated in the Iberia by 1492, but certainly contemporaneous Christians did not think so nor was it cognitively possible for 'victory' to register. Surely this serves to reinforce the argument of the religious urgency and the power of its ideas in this period's worldview.

Let us return to Jiménez de Cisneros and remind ourselves that he was no friend of the Jews either. The Cardinal had been Inquisitor General of the Spanish Inquisition, an institution created, as argued in the widely accepted thesis of Henry Kamen, to root out Judaic activity among the suspicious New Christian *converso* class, not, as it is commonly thought, as an institution of social fear or a Monty Python-like brigade that 'nobody expects' using 'amongst their weaponry such diverse elements as fear, surprise, ruthless efficiency, an almost fanatical devotion to the Pope, and nice red uniforms' (not to mention 'comfy chairs'). Crypto-Judaism was not necessarily an obsession, but, for Christians of this period, a commonsensical and explicitly reasonable threat to the Christian community who watched nervously as *conversos*

---

[80] L.P. Harvey, *Islamic Spain, 1500-1614.* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005), 329.
[81] Henry Kamen, *The Spanish Inquisition: A Historical Revision.* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997), 112.
[82] See Jacques Derrida. *Cinders.* Translated by Ned Lukacher (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1987).
[83] Mary Elizabeth Perry. *The Handless Maiden, Moriscos and the Politics of Religion in Early Modern Spain.* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005).

attainted position of influence and power during the fifteenth century. Many thousands of Jews were forced to convert to Catholicism in the pogroms of 1391 and, again, in 1492—in many cases converting 'voluntarily' to save their lives. *Converso* status remained dubious for excellent reasons, the fifteenth-century obsession with *pureza de sangre* (purity of blood) was the result of forcing Jews to convert, which led to 'Judaizing' among such converts, who were not allowed to 'revert' to Judaism (and it made all remaining Jews suspect of influencing *converses*). Hence, the logic of expulsion in 1492 became another obvious step because it removed the temptation and possibility of reversion on the part of *conversos*. Another example occurred in Toledo: ideological religious fear of converted Jews who did not appear to be fully Christian practitioners prompted two attempts, first in 1449 and again in 1467, to remove *conversos* from municipal offices by the enactment of purity of blood statutes and, although the statutes failed to remove *conversos* from their posts, the Inquisition was installed in 1485 to enforce 'sincere' acceptance of Christianity.[84] The predominance of the symbolization of *conversos* as crypto-Jews was a result of a struggle for religious hegemony latent throughout the Peninsula's history, but also within the context of Castile's push for religious homogeneity. It seems that Cisneros' intolerance towards Jews and Muslims was balanced by a belief that placid policies be pursued in the Indies, as portrayed in the partnership and assistance that he gave to de las Casas. Perhaps in the context of Europe, the Muslim and Jewish theological ox deserved goring, while the Indians were somehow naturally inclined towards Catholicism, less capable of doctrinal perversion and less (at first) polluted religiously.

What is clear is that religion was a primary referent in understanding the Other and the Same. De las Casas mobilized Islam to contrast the Spanish actions in the Americas, writing that the Conquest was a 'violent invasion by cruel tyrants' condemned by the 'laws of God' and the 'laws of humanity' and so evil that they were worse than 'the Turk's attempts 'to destroy the Christian Church.'[85] The double movement here is, of course, a critique of *conquistadores* and, more demonstrative of the *Zeitgeist*, de las Casas' negative reference to Islam. In fact, the 'spirit of the times' was so ideologically loaded with religion that, as perhaps Derrida would have put it, its framework was part of the epistemological frame. For instance, within the Iberian Peninsula, during the *Reconquista* and afterwards, the entire system of understanding one another was based in a religious context. Let us reflect on the following terminology: '*mozarab*', a term for a Christian living under Muslim rule, '*mudejar*', a term for a Muslim living under Christian rule, '*muladi*', a term for a convert from Christianity to Islam, '*morisco*', a term for a convert from Islam to Christianity,

---

[84] Linda Martz, "Relations between Conversos and Old Christians in Early Modern Toledo: Some Different Perspectives," in *Christians, Muslims and Jews in Medieval and Early Modern Spain, Interaction and Cultural Change*, Mark D. Meyerson and Edward D. English (eds). (Nortre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1999), 220.

[85] Las Casas, *BRDI*, 33. "...lo que ellos llaman conquistas, siendo invasiones violentas de crueles tiranos, condenadas no solo por la ley de Dios, pero por todas las leyes humanas, como lo son e muy peores que las que hace el turco para destruir la iglesia cristiana."

and '*marrano*', a term for a convert from Judaism to Christianity, more commonly designated today by the term '*converso*'. L.P Harvey makes an excellent point when he discusses the terms 'Spain' and 'al-Andalus', when he points out that there are two terms for roughly the same geographical space: Spain was a term used by Christians and al-Andalus was a term for Muslims.[86] Bearing this in mind, I suggest that although Muslims of al-Andalus must have felt as secure in their entitlement to land as modern-day Canadian citizens feel in theirs, Christian claims to the space (and all spaces, including the Indies) generated an ideology in which Islam was an invader, performatively setting Christianity as natural and the religious Other as an unnatural alien. Here a charge offers itself: the religiously saturated referential authority of all the above-mentioned terms reflects the importance of religious ideology when early moderns described themselves in relation *to* and *from* one another.

David Nirenberg's deft thesis of violence as a stabilizing force in community, as explained in his survey of medieval Spain and France entitled *Communities of Violence*, provides food for thought in understanding the relation between the vilification of the religious Other in the (Re)Conquest and daily religious coexistence. Nirenberg argues that in tripartite Iberia, violence steeped in religious ideology was integral for communal existence, stabilizing authority and social order.[87] A medieval Christian, in negatively defining him or herself, contrasted what he represented as Other and Same. This process appears as a device of intelligibility, the implication being that the community of Christian Iberians solidly founded themselves on conflict, displacement and referent with the Other in order to formulate a definition of the Same and beginning with the Christian narrative of supersession over Judaism. Essentially, the Christian 'makes' himself by 'making' the Other. As Michael Adas notes in *Machines as the Measure of Men: Science, Technology and Ideology of Western Dominance*, the Christian faith was seen as a key source of European-perceived distinctiveness *from* and superiority *to* non-western peoples.[88]

I have demonstrated las Casas' views of the Indians, but what of Oviedo? Let us conduct a simple mental experiment: Oviedo's texts, faced with the ontological question: 'who are the Indians?' answer:

> [A people with] such hard thick skulls that the principal concern of Christians who fight them is not to slash their heads in case the strike

---

[86] See also Gil Anidjar, *"Our Place in al-Andalus", Kabbalah, Philosophy, Literature in Arab Jewish Letters.* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002). Here Andijar questions the 'ends' of epochs which inform our representations of medieval Spain. This is pertinent because it interrogates the notion of disappearing contexts, in this case, al-Andalus.

[87] Nirenberg's thesis is chillingly echoed in Philip Gourevitch's brutal aphorism about Rwanda, "genocide, after all, is an exercise in community building." See Philip Gourevitch, *We Wish to Inform You That Tomorrow We Will be Killed With Our Families: Stories from Rwanda.* (New York: Picador, 1998), 95.

[88] Michael Adas, *Machines as the Measure of Men: Science, Technology and Ideology of Western Dominance.* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1989), 22,31.

> breaks their swords. And just as the Indians' heads are thick, so is their understanding bestial and ill-inclined...[89]

How does he know the Indians are 'bestial' and 'ill-inclined'? An answer to this question may be located in the ideological nexus of Iberian academic institutions. Secularism was an undiscovered country and intellectuals were ecclesiastics, who held a monopoly on a number of important services: religion, that is, the philosophy and science of the age, together with schools, education, morality, and justice. Within the ecclesiastical intellectual circle, the works of the Greek and Roman philosophers were canonical and their 'readability' was negotiated through a meta-Christian lens.[90] The most pertinent example of the meta-Christian reading of a classical philosopher is the authoritative use of Aristotle's idea of the innate inferiority of certain classes of human existence, which was then folded into the framework of religious doctrine prevalent at the time.[91] It is as if the narrow epoch of Christian creationism and infinitism appropriated the resources of Greek conceptuality. Aristotle's natural slave was bound by nature to a life of perpetual labor, and the Indians, being fully devoid of rational 'souls', were marked for an existence based on exploitation. The theoretical power of Aristotelian thought is reflected in the Great Debate at Valladolid in 1550-1551 between Juan Ginés de Sepúlveda (1494-1573) and de las Casas, which represented Aristotle's academic currency during this period. The debate was far from an argument between a mean-spirited justification of atrocities and passionate defense of an anachronistic sense of human rights. It had a complex architecture in which learned and dedicated Christians of the same nation were bitterly divided and implacably ranged against one another.[92] Hence it should be thought of in terms of modern discourses bearing resemblance to the Cultural Wars, the Science Wars, or the vehement bear-pit struggle over evolutionary theory between Richard Dawkins, E.O Wilson, Steven Jay Gould and Richard Lewontin. As I mentioned before, the Indian debate was closely related to Christian policy towards Jews. For the Catholic Church, Jews were to be taught the truth of the Catholic faith, the nature of their desolation, and the error of their messianic hopes through their continued, but emphatically subservient

---

[89] Oviedo, *Historia General y Natural de las Indias* Vol. 1, p. 111. "...Sino de tan rescios e gruesos cascos, que el principal aviso que los cristianos tienen cuando con ellos pelean e vienen a las manos, es no darles cuchillada en la cabeza, porque se rompen las espadas. Y así como tiene el casco grueso, asi tienen el entendimiento bestial y mal inclinado..."

[90] According to Joel. L Kraemer, Aristotelian thought also had considerable influence and was considered authoritative by Arab scholars from the Iberian Peninsula. Kraemer discusses the life of the Andalusian Abu Imran Musa ibn Maymun al-Qurtubi, also known as Maimonides, as a subject who revered Aristotle. See Joel L. Kraemer, "Maimonides and the Spanish Aristotelain School," in *Christians, Muslims and Jews in Medieval and Early Modern Spain, Interaction and Cultural Change*, Mark D. Meyerson and Edward D. English (eds). (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1999), 40-68.

[91] See Lewis Hanke, *Aristotle and the American Indians: A Study in Race Prejudice in the Modern World.* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1970); and Aristotle, *The Politics.* Translated by Trevor J. Saunders. (London: Penguin Group, 1962).

[92] Hanke, *Aristotle and the American Indians*, 106.

presence in Christian society.[93] The idea of Jewish slavery, much Indian slavery, served, even made, the truth of Christian scriptural faith and pointed directly to the erroneous ways of the religious Other or the false species. In this case, no matter how perverted their believes may seem today, while most Spaniards were devout and conservative Catholics, there also existed, thanks to this legacy of Aristotelian thought, a type of rationalism, a related jurisprudence and respect for its law.[94]

It is here that the ensemble of relations by which the Spanish Christian experienced the Indian forms an ideological constellation best thought of in terms of three co-ordinates or variables: a) given the Alexandrine bull *Inter caetera*, Indians were automatic subjects of their lawful Castilian overlord, b) according to the historical narrative, Indians could possibly be lapsed Christians and therefore subject to the penalties for heresy, and c) through meta-theology Indians possessed a representable identity as a lower form of life and were ill-disposed towards Christianity. Upon further inspection these variables actually served to symbolically represent an articulation of the Indies as experienced through legal, religious and academic ideology. The result is perhaps Louis Althusser's 'topicality of thought': the way a thought is inscribed into its object. Or, the essentially performative character of naming and understanding the Indians within the framework of these institutions acted as a precondition for all hegemony and politics within the Indies.[95] In other words, there is no Conquest *'avant la lettre'*, because it is the letter itself (the nomination) that makes the Conquest proper out of the bundle of elements.

An inscription of the political geography of the Indies, in the period of discovery and over the next centuries, with the language of religion formed part of the *bricolage* of ideology that served as a representation of the imaginary relationship of individuals to their real conditions of existence. Let us consider Fray Diego Durán's *Book of the Gods and Rites and the Ancient Calendar* as a historical source that demonstrates the imaginary distortion of ideology. Durán writes,

> I am moved, O Christian reader, to begin the task of [writing this work] with the realization that we who have been chosen to instruct

---

[93] See Stow, *Catholic Thought* and *Popes, Church, Jews.*

[94] See Anna Sapir Abulafia, *Christian and Jews in the Twelfth-century Renaissance* (London: Routledge, 1995). According to Abulafia, scholastic theologians defined Jews as 'irrational' allowing Christians to occupy the 'rational' moral ground. In Iberia there was already an imprint of the tradition of rationality in assessing a people. See also Sara Tilghman Nalle, *Mad for God: Bartolomé Sánchez, the Secret Messiah of Cardenete.* (Charlottesville, VA: University Press of Virginia, 2001), particularly the introduction. From my own standpoint I suggest that for us modern historians the illusion is that rationalism did not undergo a sort of Derridian *différance* from this period to ours. A good example is Rosa Parks: before her actions, it was legal, legitimate and authorized to force African Americans to the back of the bus.

[95] Here I move away from traditional understandings of the Conquest through modes of production and argue that the ideological apparatuses gave homogeneity and awareness to the Castilians, Estremadurans, Andalusians, Leonese, Aragonese and Austrians and their function in the Indies not only in the economic but in the social and political fields. The Conquest will produce conquistadores.

> the Indians will never reveal the True God to them until the heathen ceremonies and false cults of their counterfeit deities are extinguished, erased. Here I shall set down a written account of the ancient idolatries and false religion with which the devil was worshipped until the Holy Gospel was brought to this land.[96]

Is this not an arch-statement of ideology, the ambivalence of a historical subject that has a 'pre-understanding' of things? Durán is writing an account in which he makes reference to some self-evidence, that is, 'Look, you can see for yourself how things are!' 'Satan is a very real entity!' 'I have seen this for myself (perhaps one of the most common statements by chroniclers)! 'Let the facts speak for themselves!' My point is that the facts never speak for themselves but are always (already?) made to speak by a network of discursive devices. Durán *has* to see the Indians, and *has* to see them through the various networks in which he is engaged.[97] Although later in his text Durán remonstrates the brutality of the *conquistadores* during the Aztec campaign, writing, "May our Lord restrain my hand and pen so that I not protest too strongly against this atrocious, wicked deed—comparable to all the cruelties of Nero," he still can only express his understanding of the Indies through language negotiated through a Christian ideological configuration.[98] In Durán's writing on human sacrifice he can describe and understand it only by making reference to Christian practice, writing, "Let the reader note how cleverly this diabolical rite imitates that of our Holy Church," when talking of the 'communion' of 'venerated' flesh and bone of sacrificial victims.[99] In actuality, Durán's comprehension of the Indians relies on a system of descriptional differences rather than seeing the natives as independently meaningful units. His chronicle of sacrificial practices is a series of negative descriptions: the primary referent for what Indian religion 'is not' is Christianity—the 'meaning' of the Indians, in other words, is automatically *not* to be Christian or at least a corrupt, negative and undesirable version. The elucidation of the Indian himself/herself, which is not seen as a specific entity but rather articulated in a series of equivalences, is the hidden breach through which ideology has crept into the citadel of understanding.

As a second historical source, the 12-book *Florentine Codex*, written between 1540-1585 under the supervision of Fray Bernardino de Sahagún (1499-1590), is another piece of evidence that calls attention to Christian triumphalism and Christian ideology encoded within a text and is particularly important because, much like Durán's work, it represents the effort of a

---

[96] Diego Durán. *Book of the Gods and Rites and the Ancient Calendar*. (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1971), 51. Interestingly, the Castilian word *virtud* is present in the Nahuatl part of the text.

[97] See also Fernando Cervantes, *The Devil in the New World, the Impact of Diabolism in the New Spain*. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997). This work shows that the Devil mattered. He was everywhere and missionaries agreed that Satan and pagan superstition were the primary reasons for the failure to establish a Church. Cervantes discusses what was perceived as diabolism, as combated by Iberian Christians.

[98] Durán, *Book of the Gods and Rites*, 77.

[99] Durán, *Book of the Gods and Rites*, 95.

clergyman with parallel views of 'passive' conversion similar to those of de las Casas. The *Codex* has interesting features; some view it as a tool of Christian indoctrination applied to the Americas, and others see it as inadvertently preserving heretical knowledge. Most importantly it is a heterogeneous production, not just composed by Sahagún, but by over 400 mostly anonymous post-Conquest Mexicans in their native Nahuatl. I evaluate the *Codex* as an instrument of discipline, and as a guideline in Christian-cultural instruction and a record of Aztec history. As a whole, it is an initiative in a purification process that rehearses tensions between what Christians viewed as 'good' and 'bad'. I specifically scrutinize Book 10, *The People*, which discusses the "different virtues and vices which were of the body and of the soul, whosoever practiced them."[100] Castilian cultural instruction in the text describes the meat seller who, if 'good', sells "Castilian meats" while, if 'bad', "claims dog meat to be edible."[101] The point being of course, that this text is written after Castile took possession of this territory, and before the introduction of the European dog or Eurocentric ideas of what is suitable for eating. As a rule, the book portrays familial, societal, and economical niches of society in exemplary terms laden with Christian values and is structured in terms of dichotomies or polarities. For instance, the 'good father' is diligent, solicitous, a careful administrator and leads a model life while a 'bad father' is full of vice, lazy, and sullen; the 'good mature man' is a willing worker, energetic and resolute, in contrast to the 'bad mature man' who is irresponsible, impetuous and uncooperative.[102] 'Good merchants' always tell the truth, select and sort their best products while 'bad merchants' are evil and great congenital liars who never tell the truth, although they praise their shoddy wares.[103] Here there is a striking resemblance to examples in Matthew 7:16-19,

> Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire.[104]

The examples from the *Florentine Codex* reflect a binary, representing not simply an opposition of two meanings, but a hierarchical order which gives the first term priority in a very Christian sense. On the level of gender, virginity is portrayed as desirable throughout all the descriptions of females. The 'good daughter' is a virgin, untouched and pure, obedient and discreet, chaste, modest and respectful while the 'bad daughter' is a whore and a courtesan, pompous

---

[100] Bernardino de Sahagún, *Florentine Codex: The General History of the Things of New Spain*, translated by Charles E. Dibble and Arthur J. Anderson, 12 vols. (Salt Lake City: University of Utah, 1982.), Vol. X, 1.
[101] Ibid, 80.
[102] Ibid,1-3,12.
[103] Ibid, 59-94.
[104] *King James Bible*, Matthew 7:16-19.

and given to amusement; the 'good mature woman' is of the home, revered and dignified while the 'bad mature woman' is a courtesan and whore, drunk and tramp-like in gaudy dress. [105] This gesture represents a virgin/whore dichotomy and is further represented in the description of the 'good' and 'bad' maiden,

> The good women [is] modest, pure, pleasing of appearance, honest. She is not the subject of ridicule. The virtuous maiden [is] reserved, jealous of her virtue, chaste, continent, just, pious, pure of heart. She guards herself, guards her honor; she is jealous of her virtue; [she is] not ridiculed. The bad maiden [is] one who yields herself to others—a prostitute, a seller of herself, dishonored, gaudy. She goes about shamelessly, presumptuously, conspicuously washed and combed, pompously.[106]

Clearly the ideological demand here is the emulation of the Virgin Mary, who is someone pure, holy and to be venerated. This element of ideology associated with Catholic values of sexuality is also expressed in the description of the sodomite, who is,

> An effeminate—a defilement, a corruption, filth; a taster of filth, revolting, perverse, full of affliction. [He merits] laughter, ridicule, mockery; [he is] detestable, nauseating. Disgusting, he makes one acutely sick. Womanish, playing the part of a woman, he merits being committed to flames, burned, consumed by fire. He burns; he is consumed by fire.[107]

I find it highly doubtful that Mesoamericans in pre-Conquest times would have described sodomy in such blatant Catholic terms of sinful defilement or filth, much less warranting a cleansing by fire.[108] To further grasp this sexual logic, I suggest that the *Codex*'s descriptions inscribe and affirm sexuality (on an ontological level) as a singular, recognizable, and therefore reproducible identity. In short it makes certain Indian sexual practices legible within the period's textual Christian culture and serves an ideological imperative by 'reading' (and 'writing') the Mesoamerican body as a signifier of sexual orientation that needs discipline or instruction in proper sexual conduct.[109] Effectively, the Christian heterosexual order reproduces the ideology of identity by prescriptively articulating a hierarchal relation between

---

[105] Sahagún, *FC*, 2-3-12.
[106] Ibid, 12.
[107] Ibid, 38.
[108] See, Richard Trexler, *Sex and Conquest: Gendered Violence, Politcal Order, and the European Conquest of the Americas.* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1995). Trexler's work easily supplements my argument as he provides persuasive thorough outlines of the automatic negative and religiously loaded reaction Christian Iberians expressed towards sodomy when encountering it in the Americas—Christian European sexual values were considered the natural sexual values. He also demonstrates the Iberian belief that homosexuality was rampant and ingrained within Indian practice.
[109] Although somewhat under theorized, Trexler's *Sex and Conquest* is the first source one should look at to grasp my logic.

categories defined as polar opposites.[110] It would appear that the *Codex* itself is an organ of materialized ideology, organizing thought and practice.

Let us return to Oviedo and de las Casas and our cognitive term 'ideological web' and forward the thesis that it was not as if de las Casas saw things (the social reality as reflected in his works in terms of maltreatment of natives) as they 'really are' while Oviedo negotiated reality through the distorting spectacles of ideology. Moreover, it is not as if Oviedo framed his *Historia* in order to 'justify' mistreatment of Indians or to 'justify' Conquest while for de las Casas such rhetoric was transparent. Would that not involve a privileged place, somehow exempt from the historicality of Spanish society and be the most obvious proof of de las Casas' own subjection to ideology? Ideology itself was inescapable; the lived relations of Christianity determined the mode of everyday experience of reality *itself.* Of course there was room for theological debate and, as William Christian Jr. suggests, there were significant differences in early modern local religious practices (certainly in Iberia), but fundamentally Christianity and its archive of knowledge supported reality *itself.* In terms of what is often presented as a binary of opposing view, in the form of Oviedo/de las Casas, what is revealed is that the ideology of Conquest constituted itself more fully in one than the other as both could agree on the necessarily Christian presence in the Indies—this is an axiom of their reflections. However luminous de las Casas's mind appeared, Christian ideology, a subterranean element, resided within his texts. Here the Oviedo/de las Casas homology is clearly *a priori* dogma, the inevitable victory of Christianity, or, perhaps most precisely, Christian triumphalism-- the axiomatic of a belief.

Although the Oviedo-de las Casas discourses were stitched together differently, their patchwork was part of a general weave in which the Castilian expectation of what they were to encounter was always already there when *conquistadores* arrived, as if the Castilian past, both near and far, was sent to meet the Americas in the future. Both Oviedo and de las Casas exhibited the same Christian triumphalist doctrine, seeing things through a glass darkly and historicizing them into a presupposed narrative. The historical culture of Oviedo and de las Casas set the course of history in advance towards its *telos* as toward a future present, a foreseeable, anticipatable, future: the Apocalypse and the victory of Christ. "Be ye therefore ready also," states Luke 12:40, "for the Son of man cometh at an hour ye think not."[111] For us to ask them to think of history as secularized and non-eschatological would be like asking an airline to jettison its navigational equipment in mid-air while *en route* to its destination.

The implication of this is, perhaps, a somewhat perverted modulation of Georgio Agamben's 'Coming Community'—especially in light of Luke 12:32, "Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the

---

[110] In forming my argument of this paragraph I am heavily indebted to Lee Edelman's article "Homographesis," in *Homographesis: Essays in Gay Literature and Cultural Theory.* (New York: Routledge, 1994).

[111] *King James Bible*, Luke 12:40.

kingdom."[112] During this period, this 'coming community' was ideologically charged as aspiring to be the *communitas Christi* or the *republica cristiana.* To seize this logic of universalization of the Christian community we must make reference to the precedent or the Roman articulation of law to which early modern (and current) society are heavily indebted. David Lupher shows that Iberian Christians viewed the Romans as the example in which imperial behavior should follow, considering Rome the yardstick against which to measure the cultural levels of Indians.[113] For Romans, the law represented one expression and shielding feature of the *civitas,* which needed security from barbarians who were outsiders, lacking the qualities necessary for membership in society. For citizens, the only meaningful relationship the outsiders had with the *civitas* was one of servitude.[114] In this context the Roman people, who were responsible for the creation of the law, were in a sense the only ones who could be described as human. In the Castilian Catholic sense, the ideological framework of this period forged the *civitas* in Christian terms as the barbarian threat was replaced by the threat emanating from unbelievers and heretics.[115]

Spain saw itself as very much establishing and being a leader in the creation of a European *imperium* which could provide a defense against Islam, the Turks and later in the sixteenth century, religious heresy.[116] Let us recall Antonio de Nebrija's (1441-1522) famous production of the first grammar of a non-Latin language, *Grámatica de la Lengua Castellana*, written in 1492, in which he writes, in reference to antiquity, one conclusion that is very clear, "language always accompanies empire."[117] According to Nebrija, the Castilian language actually serves as a tool to establish Christian *imperium* and strength, in which the vanquished enemies of God are reduced to the justice and

---

[112] Ibid, Luke 12:32.

[113] See David A. Lupher, *Romans in a New World, Classical Models in 16th Century Spanish America.* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2003).

[114] Keep in mind that this understanding also fit into the Aristotelian framework of lesser forms of life already described earlier in the essay.

[115] Anthony Pagden, *Lords of all the World: Ideologies of Empire in Spain, Britain and France 1500-1800.* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), 41.

[116] This appears to be a fundamental theme among the following scholars and their works: Walter D. Mignolo, *The Darker Side of the Renaissance.* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2003), J.H. *Elliott, Imperial Spain, 1469-1716.* (London: Penguin, 2002), J.H. Elliot, *Spain and its World, 1500-1700.* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989), Américo Castro, *The Spaniards: An Introduction to their History.* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1971), John Edwards, *The Spain of the Catholic Monarchs.* (Malden: Blackwell Publishers, 2000), L.P. Harvery *Islamic Spain 1500-1614.* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990), Henry Kamen, *The Spanish Inquisition: A Historical Revision,* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), William Maltby, *Alba: A Biography of Fernando Alavrez e Toledo, Third Duke of Alba, 1507-1582.* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983);and Anthony Pagden. *Spanish Imperialism and the Political Imagination.* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998).

[117] Antonio de Nebrija, *Grámmatica de la Lengua Castellana*, Edicion preparada por Antonio Quilis (Editoria Nacional: Madrid, 1980), 97. "Cuando bien comigo pienso, mui esclarecida Reina, i pongo delante los ojos el antiguedad de todas la cosas que para nuestra recordacion y memoria quedaron escriptas, una cosa hallo y saco por conclusion mui cierta: que siempre la lengua fue companera del imperio..."

execution of the laws which govern the Kingdom and 'Republic' of Castile.[118] Through Roman precedent and their theory of knowledge, it then became easy for Christian academics to conclude that those who lived, and were capable of living, by the law of Christ were, by definition, human; those who did not, were not—the distinction is made between the full citizen and *homo sacer* who, although he or she is alive as a human being, is not part of the political community.[119]

In the context of Oviedo, the Christian community represented *communio*, the military formation: to have a *communio* is to be fortified on all sides, to make a 'common' 'defense' (*com-munis*), as when a wall is put up around the city to keep the stranger or the foreigner (and Indian) out. In other words: Christianity will inevitably become the universal Church without religious pollution existing in its community. De las Casas' understanding of the coming Christian community appears as a harmonious group and consensus, even fundamental theological agreement. Upon analysis, this community still appears self-affirming, self-protecting, a homogenous mixture of identities which excludes the religious Other— as Derrida would put it, 'exclusive inclusion' which is as much a threat as a promise. Both these instances portray perspectives which are communitarian and identitiarian, reflecting an assumption of some sort of deep truth in the tradition upon which these individuals draw. Here I invoke the notion of 'ideocide'[120]; that is, the subordination of the Indies to the Spanish through the structured and deliberate undermining and demolition of Amerindian culture and belief. The ideological entrenchment of this period's articulation of the Church Militant clearly resulted in an ideocide which turned this historical culture's sentiment outwards and targeted whole Other ideologies, large regions and ways of life as outside the pale of human and ethical concern. And that is what *really* makes these early moderns historical: their possession of certain idiosyncrasies, beliefs, legalities and rationalities which constituted their behaviors—a truly intriguing historical dynamic—which are different and are 'breaks' from today.

Broadly speaking, scholarship has identified the *presence* of religion and ideology as two factors in European contact with the Indies, but only on a very general level. This chapter has moved toward discussing their *realities*—how those terms hit the ground in articulation and practice and the influence that Iberian theology had on its representation and perceptions of the

---

[118] Ibid, 100.

[119] Here Giorgio Agamben's notion of *homo sacer* is particularly insightful in understanding the rationale ingrained in the exploitation and harsh treatment of Indians. *Homo sacer* is the one who is excluded from the human world and who, even though she or he could not be sacrificed, could be killed without committing homicide ('nesque fas est eum immolari, sed qui occidit parricidio non damnatur'). See Giorgio Agamben, *The Coming Community*. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993), 87. One may compare this to Caligula's statements, "The Roman people or, I should say, the human race." ("*Populus Romanus vel dicam humanum genus*").

[120] I tip my hat to Arjun Appadurai for the use of this term in *Fear of Small Numbers, An Essay on the Geography of Anger*. (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006). Although I evoke the notion of ideocide, my articulation is slightly re-jigged.

Amerindians. So, then, in conclusion, this chapter's investigation has striven to perform a deep(er) inquiry into religion and the function of ideology as determinate words in the study of the Castilian (re)action to the Americas. Somewhere in the endless recitation of histories, doctrine, the imprint of an archive of knowledge and that ideological trapping, those early moderns ended up above the dividing line between bestiality and humanity, or heathenism and Piety—the Indies end up serving Europe, giving it its own Truth.

The broader implications of this investigation on ideology affect our basic understanding of how the Castilian discovery of the Americas rippled into European thought, especially in religious matters. 'Justification' of Conquest in terms of religion appears much less of a convincing argument because it lacks historicity; that is, *Cristianos* arriving in the Americas knew very well what they were doing in terms of the patterns of thought of the times. In terms of the history of ideas, analysis of this period in terms of its temporality, that is, addressing the encounter and Conquest in terms of the immediate rather than the long term, and those 'pre-understandings' accompanying early moderns, may provide further insights. If we are to study those immediate factors within an ideological inquiry we must become familiar with not only the religious ideology of a period which served this chapter as an outline, but those 'background books' and conjoined ideas which delineated a worldview, or ideology, and implanted in travellers a variety of expectations.

Chapter 3
Cosmology of the *Conquistador*

This chapter will continue to explore the network of ideas that provided the context and historical framework of early modern Ibero-American relations. My main goal is to bring to light the texture of this period's system of knowledge which I referred to as 'background books'. If in the previous chapter I focused on the ideological religious saturation of the Castilian-speaking Iberian relationship with the Americas, this chapter reviews the structure of early modern historical cosmology, which is no less ideological. Furthermore, here I am discussing the material nature of ideology in the form of institutions or apparatuses. In practice these institutions and apparatuses 'depend' on the ideas that they purport. The historical individual is exposed to certain regular rituals and participates in them, which in this chapter's discussion are historical memory, municipal structures and literature; and the historical individual adopts the practical attitude that these institutions and apparatuses disseminate. The 'background books', the historical memory, municipal structures and literature (to name a few) of a culture, serve as the text of how to 'read' the world. The 'background books', then, demarcated an explanation of the nature of the world and universe, implanting within travellers a variety of expectations in an already made ontic-ontological scaffold. I describe, then, this section as a rough spatial map of ideas that navigated early modern Castilian-speaking Iberians' activity.

This gesture necessitates some (more) initial philosophical remarks in order to approximate the historical consciousness of those early moderns who interacted with the Indies on a practical and concrete level. In one respect, my term 'background books' simply means the (historical) beliefs that were available to early modern Iberians. The specific historio-cultural memory with which I am interested in conversing is that of the *conquistadores*. Let us consider the etymology of this signifier. Upon examination it broaches weighty elements for evaluation, especially when historians offer a reading of early modern Iberian-American relations. *Conquistador* stems from the Latin *conquærere*, 'to seek out' and 'to acquire' (*com-quærere*). What is in question here, and that which has been the general theme of this project, is that those *conquistadores* 'sought out' what was 'already there', 'acquiring' what already belonged to Europe both spiritually and materially. The historical *conquistador* made an abiding imprint on the Atlantic World, yet there is no outflanking a certain mythology (negative or positive) inherently projected in historicizing this subject. On a general level, history situates itself in relation to an assumption that history itself is natural, and that all it takes is a certain mental attitude to assess the past. This aptitude, however, appears fundamentally disturbed in terms of the signifier *conquistador*. He is a caricature, many-sided, taking form and color from the changing historical mental environment. Is he greedy? Lusty? Brave? Courageous? Imperial? Devout? Or, just trying to survive? The *conquistador* is fluid, his historical existence dependent on which

thoughts and actions a reader chooses to emphasize. I draw attention to the completely artificial character of this situation, not merely as a methodological device or tool, but rather to point out the synthetic nature that we already (and always) find in our own historical productions of this historical entity. My preliminary remarks in this chapter are perfectly serious and commonsensical and are meant to underline, but not efface, my technical conditions—a movement which does not feign a 'naturality' in my reading. This translates into an acute sensitivity to the contingency of the naming of our subject, '*conquistador*'.

This naming is a crucial process and amounts to the constitution of our subject, inscribing upon him descriptive features that form our understanding of his historical identity. The name itself, the signifier *conquistador*, supports that identity of the object: one who conquers. That is, the name performatively generates its own foundation of understanding. Therefore I ask what it is about the *conquistador*, beyond his descriptive features, that constitutes his identity. What are the substances, in the material form of Iberian institutions and apparatuses (historical, legal, culture) that function in the process of the subject's self-constitution? In a clear statement: this chapter asks the historical state of the *conquistador* via assessment of the types of ideas and traditions that were disseminated throughout Iberia (and Europe) during the early modern period.[121] I don't want to describe the *conquistador*, but I want to engage the ideas floating around during this period.

My reading strategy begins with the *Reconquista*. Inevitably my research and conclusions are miniscule in relation to this event's massive importance in Iberian history. Nonetheless my deductions are certainly important as they point out a crease left on the *conquistadores*' consciousness by their historical cosmology. Even with modern Spain's relative temporal distance from the *Reconquista*, emotions about this event run high; take for example the spray-painted slogan commonly seen in Andalusia protesting North Africa immigration, "*Moros Fuera*" ("Moors get out") or former prime minister Jose Maria Anzar's (1953-) statements that, "No Muslim has ever apologized to me for conquering Spain and being here for eight centuries. The West didn't attack Islam, they attacked us."[122] Even more significantly is the annual Festival of Moors and Christians, celebrated across the *Comunidad Valenciana* (Valencian Community) and the *Comunidad Autónoma de Castilla-la Mancha* (Autonomous Community of Castile and la Mancha). Here Mohammed effigies, giant turban-clad puppets filled with gun-powder, are exploded or dragged through the streets, and then followed by theatrical

[121] I use the term 'tradition' as elucidated by Eric Hobsbawm's articulation of the 'invented tradition', 'Invented Tradition' is taken to mean a set of practices, normally governed by overtly or tacitly accepted rules and of a ritual or symbolic nature, which seek to inculcate certain values and norms of behavior by repetition, which automatically implies continuity with the past." See, Eric Hobsbawm and Terrance Ranger (eds), *The Invention of Tradition.* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 1.

[122] *El País.* 2006. "El PSOE Critica la Actitud 'Irresponsable de Aznar con sus Declaraciones sobre el Islam." El País. September 23.

reenactments of costumed Moors converting to Christianity.[123] Given the manner in which some contemporary Spanish citizens perceive the *Reconquista,* one can only imagine, not even taking into account historical sources, the prevalent view of contemporaneous early modern Castilian-speaking Iberians toward the religious Other. However the term *Reconquista* appears double edged, referring both to the continuity of religious, Visigothic or imperial authority in the Peninsula as well as the process of Christian expansion in Iberia on a structural level.

Therefore, what of the configuration of society during the *Reconquista* and how could that have laid down a tradition which infused the *conquistadores* in the Americas with beliefs in relation to themselves and in relation to others? Students and teachers often take this question for granted, and there is very rarely a rigorous answer. The element to which I call attention is the municipality. This social unit faced the ebb and flow of the Christian-Muslim relationship during the *Reconquista* and seems particularly important in the history of the Mexican Conquest because the founding of the first Castilian municipality on the American mainland, la Villa Rica de la Vera Cruz, actually followed some of the same behaviors developed in the Iberian Peninsula in the wars against the Moors. It is here that the normative narrative of the founding of this township involving Hernan Cortés (1485-1547) and the *conquistadores* by scholars ranging from J.H. Elliot to David Brading or Glen Carmen is disturbed and given added complexity.[124] This narrative is as follows: the Cortés expedition (1519-1521) turned into a revolt against the local governor, Diego Velázquez (1465-1524), and Cortés, to give himself at least the appearance of legality, framed a sequence of events that portrayed his actions as yielding to the demands of his men to set up a permanent colony. Cortés founded a town, la Villa Rica de la Vera Cruz (1519), and appointed a town council and magistrates, which promptly elected him chief justice and captain-general of the municipal militia.[125] This is portrayed as a maneuver that was designed to server ties with Velázquez, creating an autonomous township that was under the authority of the king. On a superficial level this appears correct, but it does not account for the significance of this event for the *conquistador*

---

[123] See Mikaela Rogozen-Soltar, "Al-Andalus in Andalusia: Negotiation, Moorish History and Regional Identity in Southern Spain," in *Anthropological Quarterly*, Vol. 80, No.3 (Summer 2007): 863-886. I also have experience with this type of mentality. In Spain during the summer of 2002, I was helping a cousin move. After a hard day of work the man that had been hired to help offered me a beer, which I declined because I was dehydrated. He looked at me snidely and asked me if I was a Moor.

[124] See J.H. Elliot, "Cortés, Velázquez and Charles V," in *Letters from Mexico*. By Hernan Cortés. Translated and edited by Anthony Pagden. 2nd ed. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986), xi-xxxvii. David Brading, *The First America: The Spanish Monarchy, Creole Patriots and the Liberal State*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991); and Glen Carmen, *Rhetorical Conquests, Cortés, Gómara and Renaissance Imperialism*. (West Lafayette: Purdue University Press, 2006).

[125] For the most cited account of this process check out Hernan Cortés, *Cartas Relación*. (Madrid: Historia 16), 1985. Bernal Díaz del Castillo, *Historia verdadera de la conquista de la Nueva España (Manuscrito 'Guatemala')*. Editor. José Antonio Barbón Rodríguez. (Mexico: El Colegio de México, 2005; 1568).

who was privy to this process. For modern historians, the founding of la Villa Rica de la Vera Cruz is a more nebulous idea than we care to admit. Regarding the actions of Cortés in relation to this township as simply a political tactic conceals other historical ideological elements that were bundled in the very process of la Villa Rica de la Vera Cruz's foundation, resulting in a further concealment of the legal traditions entailed in early modern municipal structures.

Let us disclose those essentials. James Power argues in *A Society Organized for War: The Iberian Municipal Militias in the Central Middle Ages, 1000-1284* that the process of Christian expansion fundamentally depended on town militias scattered throughout Iberia. Townships were organized for military defensive and offensive operations and this certainly contributed to the legal independence of Iberian townships well into the 16th century. Only with the revolt of the *comuneros* (1520-1523), caused by the disengagement of Charles V (1500-1558) with local *fueros*, and the *communero* defeat at the battle of Villalar (1521), was there a significant change in the parliamentarian and soldierly character of Castilian-speaking municipalities.[126] It is fundamental that the establishment of Castilian townships during the *Reconquista* centered on the consolidation of territories newly acquired from the Muslims; and its militancy was institutionalized, especially in areas that were in contact with Moorish territories. In correlation to the Conquest of Mexico, many of those *conquistadores* fighting with Cortés left Spain during the period of initial colonization (of American *and* Moorish Spain), well before the social and political turmoil associated with Charles V's ascension to the throne. In relation to the origins of colonial Iberians, 80.6% of overall emigration from Spain to the Indies in the period from 1493-1519 came from areas that were the main theaters of engagement with Islam: 39.7% from Andalusia, 14.1% from Extremadura, 8.8% from New Castile, 18.0% from Old Castile.[127] This geographical trend is also reflected in the specific origins of the *conquistadores* of Tenochtitlan.[128] During the *Reconquista* these regional zones were the most heavily engaged with the Moors and this exercised on this area's municipalities the most structural influence.

From the historical cosmological perspective of the *conquistador,* the municipality itself provided an organizational structure that rapidly assembled a non-professional militia force that was effective and crucial in defending areas against threats.[129] In fact, the great Castilian code known as *Las Siete Partidas*, a body of law constructed by Alfonso X 'The Wise' (1252-1284), was a legal collection that codified the urban military tradition from the central middles ages. Today, seven centuries later, this code remains the foundation of modern

---

[126] See Stephen Haliczer, *The Comuneros of Castile: the Forging of a Revolution, 1475-1521.* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1981).

[127] Robert Himmerich y Valencia, *The Ecomenderos of New Spain, 1521-1555.* (University of Texas Press: Austin, 1991), 20.

[128] See Bernard Grunberg, "The Origins of the Conquistadores of Mexico City," in *The Hispanic American Historical Review,* Vol. 74, No. 2 (May, 1994): 259-283.

[129] James F. Power, *A Society Organized for War: The Iberian Municipal Militias in the Central Middle Ages, 1000-1284.* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), 108-111.

Spanish law. It laid a legal foundation that ran from Castile's confrontation with Granada's Nasrid dynasty (1232-1492), through the problems experienced by Fernando and Isabella's grandson Charles V with combative municipalities in the great *comunero* uprising, to the forging of the famous Spanish *tercios*. Although there was a considerable passage of time between all of these events, the *conquistador* could easily devise and define his actions by borrowing from the well-supplied warehouse of official ritual and legality. Naturally, the activity and the nature of the *Siete Partidas* changed with time and with situation, but the Castilian-speaking Iberians involved in the enterprise of the Indies founded American townships based on the legal principals of Castile and Alfonso X's code. I underline that the *Siete Partidas* was one of the important legal texts governing Castile and its corresponding territorial acquisitions. The force of the code in former Spanish colonies up until the 19th century, and its influence in Texas, Louisiana and California shows its significance.[130] The ghost of Alfonso 'The Wise' may have waxed and waned by the early modern period, but it still haunted the legal system and was impossible to expel from *Christiano* consciousness. In the context of the *conquistador*, it seems that he could easily respond to novel situations in the form of reference to the older precedent set in the legal code. This appears especially significant given that Cortés displayed extensive competency in the *Siete Partidas* and the Castilian legal system.

The vigor and military nature of the *Siete Partidas* in the early modern period complicates Matthew Restall and Henry Kamen's widely accepted argument that the *conquistadores* were not soldiers, but simple adventurers who were artisans, notaries, traders, seamen, traders and peasants.[131] On the level of occupational categorization this is unquestionably true. However, Restall's thesis hinges on the lack of the word *soldado*, which implies a professional solider, in contemporaneous texts describing *conquistadores*. "Cortés himself", says Restall, "writes *trecientos peones*, '300 men on foot' [and] not only avoids the word 'solider' but reveals in his letters to the king, despite his efforts to portray himself as firmly in charge, that the men following him are a motley bunch of individuals."[132] I disagree and point out that this is a definitional oversight and manipulation. On a philological level it appears that the *peon* was not a simple peasant but a highly valuable and trained infantryman or foot solider. This is clear given the description of these municipal figures and their

---

[130] Bernardino Bravo Lira, "Vigencia de las Siete Partidas en Chile," in *Derecho comun y derecho propio en el Nuevo Mundo*. (Santiago de Chile: Juridica de Chile, 1989), 89-142. Joseph W. McKnight, "The Survival of Spanish Law in North America," *The Brief* (Southern Methodist University School of Law) (Fall 1992): 2-7. Joseph W. McKnight, "Law Books on the Hispanic Frontier," in *Journal of the West* 27 (1988):74-84; and David T. Langum, *Law and Community on the Mexican California Frontier*. (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1987).

[131] Matthew Restall, *Seven Myths of the Spanish Conquest*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 27-44. Henry Kamen, *Empire: How Spain Became a World Power, 1492-1763*. (New York: Harper Collins, 2003), 95-96.

[132] Restall, 28.

relationship to warfare outlined in the *Siete Partidas*, specifically Title XXII, law VII in the *segunda partidas*,

> ...*alcalides* and *almocadenes* [commanders of horse and foot] should be careful to take with them in their foraging excursions and other warlike enterprises *peones*...practiced in warfare...They should also see that they are active, crafty, and have well made limbs in order to be well able to endure the hardships of war. And they should always be provided with serviceable lances, javelins, knives and daggers.[133]

Commanders saw the *peon* as an integral part of the combined tactics of war during the *Reconquista*. This law continues, using the term *omes* interchangeably with *peon*, "They [the commanders] should take with them *omes* who know how to shoot with the crossbow and are provided with the equipment pertaining to archery, for *omes* of this kind are very effective in warfare."[134] A *peon* was an *ome*, namely, a man who was active in the field. The law says that:

> ...the *peones* who march with the *alcalides* and *almocadenes* to engage in warfare should be physically qualified, accustomed to, and prepared for, exposure to open air and the hardships of the land. For where they are not of this description, they cannot long remain healthy, even though they are astute and valiant.[135]

Finally the law outlines the level of importance of these types of troops by expressing how they should be treated:

> ...*aclalides* and *almocadenes* should have great affection for them [the *peones*] and honour them in both word and deed...and where it happens that the *peones* of the above description cannot be obtained; they [commanders] should prefer to enter the enemey's country with a few good troops, than with many bad ones.[136]

---

[133] *Las Siete Partidas del Sabio Rey don Alonfo el nono, golfadas por el licenciasd Gregorio Lopez*. (Madrid: Boletin Oficial de Estado, 1974;1555), II:XXII:VII. "...los alcalides, e los almocadenes, deuen mucho catar, que lieuen cofigo peones en las caual gadas, e en los otros fechos de guerra, q fean ufados de guerra, e destas cosas, q de suso diximos. E que ande fiepre bien guisados, de buenas lancas, e buenos dardos, e cuchillos, e punales." This 1555 edition was specifically published for the Emperor Charles V. I know that *Almocadenes* are termed as the commander of the foot soldiers because of their term is used in *Siete Partidas* II:XXII:V.

[134] Ibid. "...duen traer configo omes que sepan tirar de ballesta, e q trayan los guisamientos, que pertenescen a fecho de ballesteria: ca estos omes, cumplem mucho, a fecho de guerra.

[135] Ibid. "los peones, que andan con los adalides, e co los almocadenes, en fecho de guerra, ha menester que sean fechos, e acostubra dos, e guisados al ayre, e los trabajos de la tierra. E si tales non fuessen, no podria luego tiepo biuir."

[136] Ibid. "E quado tales fueren, deue los adalides, e los almocadenes, amar los mucho, e honrrar los, en dich, e en fecho...E si poraue tura, tales peones como estos, que sobredichos son, non pudiessen auer, ante deuen ellos querer entrar en tierra de los enemigos, con pocos peones, e Buenos, que con muchos e malos."

It seems clear that the *peon*, if he was trained, was thought of as a competent infantryman. During the *Reconquista* he was certainly semi-professional, as raiding provided much of his income. There is definitely a connection from this articulation of the *peon* to the *peon* of the early modern period. Cortés was not talking about a *peon* who was a farmer, but a *peon* in terms of the *Siete Partidas*, meaning a solider. This fact is crystallized in light of the military preparation of the Cortés expedition, the treatment he gave his men during campaign and, furthermore, Cortés' term at law school at Salamanca where he spent two years familiarizing himself with Castilian law, most particularly the *Siete Partidas.*

During this period, and in light of the military history of Spain, the distinction was blurred between solider and civilian. Culturally, Iberia was not necessarily a nation-at-arms, which would imply an anachronism, but was certainly a society organized for war. Under the *Siete Partidas* the common man was an integral part of the municipal militia and was categorically required to serve, providing a traditionally important role in the *Reconquista.*[137] Certainly the *conquistadores* were not professional soldiers (during this period those were very hard to come by in the first place), yet they were hardened men from a society whose very legal DNA, to use a biological metaphor, was structured to replicate a militant municipality. Moreover, in light of the significant scholarship done on the *conquistador* and the classical content of modern education, presumably their familiarity with Aristotle, Ptolemy and Pliny also extended to the ancient military authority of Vegetius (4th-century AD).[138] Military training was hardly a joke. Vegetius describes how, "A stake was planted in the ground by each recruit, in such a manner that it projected six feet in height and could not sway. Against this stake the recruit practiced with his wickerwork shield and wooden stave, just as if he were fighting a real enemy...Care was taken to see that the recruit did not rush forward so rashly to inflict a wound as to lay himself open to a counterstroke from any quarter." (Vegetius also recommends training with sticks weighing double the weight of a regular sword in order to build endurance.)[139] This tactical approach allowed the Castilian-speaking Iberians to maintain cohesion when facing much larger numbers of enemies. Essentially, they formed a *communio.*

It appears clear that the *Siete Partidas* made available to the *Cristianos* a sense of militant urgency. This seems related to Helen Nader's statement that "the practices of municipal government became entrenched in Castilian society not just because they seemed indispensable and natural but also because they were automatic. That which is most habitual most strongly resists change and

---

[137] James F. Powers, "Townsmen and Soldiers: the Interaction of Urban and Military Organization in the Militias of Medieval Castile," in *Speculum* 46 (1971): 641-55.

[138] It is clear that Vegetius was a source in Niccolo Machiavelli's (1469-1527) *L'Arte della Guerra* and it is also established that Vegetius was a source in the works of Juan Manuel Duke of Penafiel (1282-1348), a writer and one of the most powerful men of his time. Presumably the version of Vegetius that he used was also available to the drafters of the *Siete Partidas.*

[139] Vegetius, quoted in George Watson, *The Roman Soldier.* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1969), 57. See also Vegetius. *Epitome of Military Science.* Translated by N.P. Milner. (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1996).

also escapes notice."[140] However, those automatic gestures of municipal government entailed a tradition that organized a township for war. Fundamentally this is a de-centered articulation of the Castilian municipality, an emphasis of one building block: the legal apparatus within the town. Here there is a corresponding relation to militancy embedded in the makeup of the town and a subsequent imprint of this feature in the historical cosmology of the early modern Castilian-speaking Iberian. The *Siete Partidas* imposed order and structure on the nature of the township and acted not necessarily as a controlling organ but rather as capillaries in a social relationship. This means that the colonial towns of the Americas were constituted by and contingent on that same plasma diffused and habitualized through centuries of *Reconquista.* In the context of the founding of la Villa Rica de la Vera Cruz, this was not a repetition of the Castilian frontier municipality but a break that was potentially inscribed in the codes of the past, creating something new but also made from the materials of tradition, legality being one of them. By implication, the act of Cortés founding a town in Mexico is potent with a surplus meaning, being iterable, that is, decipherable in other substitutable yet different forms within this period's wider cultural movement. This should then engender the possibility that those early modern emigrants to the Indies became members of municipalities that ideologically inflected (in this case by legal apparatus) militancy and conquest.

As I mentioned before, the influence of the *Reconquista* upon *conquistador* consciousness invariably caused intolerance toward non-Christian identities. To be sure, for some early moderns the Conquest of Mexico was a continuation of the *Reconquista.* In the famous formulation of Francisco López de Gómara (1511-1566), biographer of Cortés, "Conquests among the Indians began when conquests among the Moors ended, so that there might always be Spaniards at war with infidels."[141] This not only provides a narrative, or a possible contemporaneous historical cosmology, of forced inclusion into a homogenous belief system (Catholic Christianity), but also a desire to wipe out those who resisted or could not be persuaded into the final triumph of the Christian Church. As Ann Ana Echevarría argues, Muslims in Iberia were seen as outsiders to *Cristianos* and were termed Chaldeans, Saracens, Hagarens, Ishmaelites, Arabs, Moors, Infidels, Pagans or just the Enemies.[142] Moreover, Islam was considered a heresy, a sect, a false religion, a superstition, an error, an invention of the devil, a deadly poison, an iniquitous law, a sacrilege or a forgery.[143] If, in retrospect, Islam in Spain was not monolithic, united or stable, this was not visible to early moderns. As the *Reconquista* progressed and climaxed in 1492, an ideological edge which would have seemed foreign to

---

[140] Helen Nader, "The Spain That Encountered Mexico," in *The Oxford History of Mexico.* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 21.

[141] Francisco López de Gómara, *Historia general de las Indias y vida Hernan Cortés.* (Caracas: Biblioteca Ayacucho, 1979; 1552), 8. "Comenzaron las conquistas de indios acabada la de los moros, porque siempre guerreasen españoles contra infieles."

[142] Ana Echevarría, *The Fortress of Faith: The Attitude towards Muslims in 15th-century Spain.* (Brill: Leiden, 1999), 103.

[143] Ibid.

medieval Iberia sharpened the encounter between Christians and Muslims. By virtue of Gómara's statements, this typology of the religious Other was extended to the Indies. So it is here that the thesis on evil expounded by philosopher Novalis (1772-1801) may prove germane on an ideological level: that the evil man does not hate good but, rather he hates evil excessively (the world he considers evil), and tries to hurt or destroy it as much as possible. Certainly *Cristianos* felt enjoined by Pope Sixtus IV's *cruzada* for war against Granada in 1482:

> We long passionately for the defense of the orthodox faith, which heaven has entrusted to our care, for the spread of the Christian religion, for the salvation of souls of barbarian peoples, and for the humbling of any infidels, and their conversion to the Faith.[144]

The implicit nomenclature of this *cruzada* seems to have applied its intrinsic structure of the Castilian-speakers understanding to the Americas. This is certainly reflected in the written testaments of the *conquistadores* whose texts offer insight into the social fabric of this period. The evil of the Indian is conceived of as something that ontologically precedes the good of Christianity, represented by the *peones* of that Iberian-American community.

The *relación* of Andrés de Tapia (1498?-1561), a *conquistador* and a member of the militia of la Villa Rica de la Vera Cruz, tells us about the religious drive in a textual expression of Conquest. After marching to Tenochtitlan, de Tapia describes Cortes' actions as he destroyed the idols of the Aztecs,

> Cortés said, "Oh God! Why do you permit such great honor paid the Devil in this land? Look with favor, Lord, upon our service to You here"... [then] Cortés said to the priests, "It gives me great pleasure to fight for my God against your gods, who are a mere nothing."...he [Cortés] took up an iron bar that was there and began to smash the stone carving. On my faith as a gentlemen I swear by God that, as I recall it now, the marques [Cortés] leaped supernaturally, and, balancing himself by gripping the bar in the middle, he reached as high as the idol's eyes and thus tore down the gold masks, "Something must we venture for the Lord.[145]

---

[144] See, "Pope Sixtus IV *cruzada* to Ferdinand and Isabella for the war against Granada, 10 August 1482," in *Documents on the Later Crusades, 1274-1580*, by Housley, Norman editor. (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1996), 156.

[145] Andrés de Tapia, "Relación de Andrés de Tapia," in *Crónica de la Conquista, segunda edición*. (México: Ediciones de la Universidad Nacional Autónoma, 1950), 72-73. "¡Oh Dios! ¿Por que consientes que tan grandemente el Diablo sea honrado en esta tierra? E ha, Señor, por bien que en el ate sirvamos"..."Mucho me holgare yo de pelear por mi Dios contra vuestros dioses, que son nonada"...e tomó con una barra de hierro que estaba allí, e comenzó a dar en los ídolos de pedrería; e prometo mi fe de gentilhombre, e juro por Dios que es verdad que me parece ahora que el marques saltaba sobrenatural, e se abalanzaba tomando la barra por en medio a dar en lo mas alto de los ojos del ídolo, e así le quito las mascaras de oro con la barra, diciendo: "A algo nos hemos de poner por Dios." [Henceforth referred to as '*Tapia*'.]

The 'good' of the *conquistador* opens up the space for the 'evil' Indian, whose very presence demands concrete displacement. We know that *conquistadores* landing in Mexico were very clear about their uneasiness in this new land. Bernal Díaz del Castillo (1496-1584), member of the Cortés expedition, wrote of 'houses' where Indians 'worshipped idols' which were in the 'figures of serpents' and 'covered in blood'[146]. The *Itinerario de Grijalva*, written by the cleric Juan Díaz (born late fifteenth century/died sixteenth century) a member of the expedition (1518) of Juan de Grijalva (1489-1527) that took place one year before the Cortés expedition, foreshadowed an impending confrontation with a land already suspected of being religiously unclean. "All the Indians of this the said island are circumcised, for which reason it is suspected that close by we may encounter Moors and Jews, and the said Indians affirm that close there are peoples that use ships, clothes and weapons like the Spanish..."[147] There appears to be a strong connection between the relationship of this understanding of the newly discovered lands and the historical cosmology of the early modern Iberian that I have described above.

Hostility to the religious Other is reflected in further documents. In Diego Velázquez's instructions to Cortés, *conquistadores* are told to keep an eye out for Grijalva and his men as he has not been seen or heard from in a year and might be in trouble.[148] Since the fall of Constantinople to the Turks in 1453, early moderns consciously acknowledged the menace of Islam and, given that the *Cristianos* were in the Indies (the backdoor to Jerusalem, as well as Constantinople), the historical cosmology of the *conquistador* fashioned a very real possibility of an encounter with Muslims. There are Moors in those ferns! Says Velázquez, "Take great caution in inquiring and knowing of the ways and forms...of the said islands or if some of them have any sects of beliefs or rites or ceremonies that they believe or in which they adore, or if there are mosques or some house of adoration for idols."[149] The Moor, the adversary of the

---

[146] del Castillo, *Historia verdadera de la conquista de la Nueva España*), 13. "...Heran adoratorios de sus idolos, y bien labradas de calicanto; y tenian figurados en unas paredes mucho bultos de serpientes y culebras grandes y otras pinturas de idolos de malas figures, y alderredor de uno como altar, lleno de goats de sangre muy fresca."

[147] Juan Díaz, "Itinerario de Juan de Grijalva," in *Crónica de la Conquista, segunda edición.* (Mexico: Ediciones de la Universidad Nacional Autónoma, 1950), 25. "...todos los indios de la dicha isla eran circuncidados; por donde se sospecha que cerca se encuentren moros y judíos, pues afirmaban los dichos indios que allí cerca había gentes que usaban naves, vestidos y armas como los españoles..." [Henceforth referred to as, 'Itinerario de Juan de Grijalva.'].

[148] José Luis Martínez (ed). *Documentos cortesianos*, Vol. 1-4. (Mexico: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1990), vol. I, 45-47.

[149] Ibid, 48. Conquistadores had very specific ideas about what they would encounter. If not Moors, the fantastic was the next closest probability. Velazquez writes to look out for, "people with giant ears...and those with the heads of dogs...and the race of amazons." ("...Gentes de orejas grandes...otras que tienen las caras como perros, y ansi mismo donde y a que parte están las amazonas..."). Ibid, 48. Such fantastic expectations came from the same sources as depictions of legendary peoples on the medieval *mappaemundi* which served to authenticate and augment them. Here the world Aristotle, Plin and Ptolemy was still basically the same world of Columbus and Cortes. See Laurel Nichols Braswell, *Western Manuscripts from Classical Antiquity to the Renaissance: A Handbook.* (New York and London: Garland Publishing, 1981), Bernard J. Muir and Margaret M Manion eds, *Medieval Texts and Images:*

Cristianos for the last seven centuries, seems far from completely vanquished. When they encountered the Indians, *conquistadores* utilized their understanding of the Moors as a reference. Cortés referred to the Indian places of worship as "*Mezquitas*" ("mosques") while Bernardino Vásquez de Tapia used the term "*Torre*" ("tower", i.e. minaret).[150] In the battles against the Tlaxallans (Cortes' future allies against the Aztecs), several accounts display fear of ending up like Pedro Carbonero (14th-century), a Castilian warrior who, during the *Reconquista,* led his men deep into Moorish territory and ended up having his entire contingent wiped out.[151] That there was a disjunction between the *Reconquista* and the *conquistadores*' interaction with the Indians does not appear to have been relevant to *Cristianos* in the Americas. Ideology jumped the gap between reality and memory and etched a hostile indigenous identity out of the Moorish experience. Memory, or what was considered 'memory' or 'history', in effect, constructed what was experienced as reality. That is, the Indian underwent a delimitation of his/her boundaries and was (re)constituted in a form the *conquistadores* could understand with reference to their own 'background books'. To those in tune with the Lacanian psychoanalytic project, this purports to show that the same signifier (Evil) may have different signifieds (Moors, Indians) so that correlations between signified (Moors) and signified (Indians) supply the standard for research into 'meaning'. That is, from a historical standpoint and to better understand this historicality of this period we must accept the sliding of the signified (Moors, Indians) under the signifier (Evil).[152]

At the same time, contemporaneous literature and its associated ideas in relation to the *Reconquista* were also a blueprint for early modern Ibero-American relationships. Epic chivalric romances were *en mode* and *conquistadores* were well-versed in these works. I will briefly mention *la*

Studies of Manuscripts from the Middles Ages. (Chur, Reading, Paris, Philadelphia, Tokyo, and Melbourne: Harwoord Academic Publishers; Sydney: Craftsman House, 1991), Michael Camille, *Image on the Edge: The Margins of Medieval Art.* Essays in Art and Culture. (Cambridge: Harvard University Pres, 1992), Evelyn Edson, *Mapping Time and Space: How Medieval Mapmakers Viewed Their World.* (British Library Studies in Map History I. London: British Library, 1997), Alfred Hiatt, "Mapping the Ends of Empire," in *Postcolonial Approaches to the European Middle Ages: Translating Cultures.* Ed. Ananya Jahanara and Deanne Williams. (Cambridge Studies in Medieval Literature 54. Cambridge University Press, 2005): 48-76, Ron Baxter, *Bestiaries and Their Users in Middles Ages.* (Stroud, Gloucestershire: Alan Suiton Publishers; London: Courtauld Institute, 1998), John Block Friedman, *The Monstrous Races in Medieval Art and Thought.* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1981); and David Williams, *The Function of the Monster in Medieval Thought and Literature.* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1996).

[150] Cortés, *Cartas de Relación*, 66, 67. Bernardino Vázquez de Tapia. *Relación de Meritos y Servicios del Conquistador Bernardino Vázquez de Tapia.* (Mexico: Antigua Libreria Robredo, 1953), 32. Juan Díaz also uses the term *torre* see "Itinerario de Juan de Grijalva," 7,8,9. *Torre* was the term used to describe the spires of mosques. The words *torre* and *mezquita* were interchangeable.

[151] See Cortés, *Cartas de Relación*, 96. del Castillo, *Historia Verdadera*, 166. And '*Tapia*', 54.

[152] For a full discussion of Lacan's 'sliding signifier' see Jacques Lacan, 'The insistence of the letter in the unconscious', reprinted in *Modern Criticism and Theory*, ed. David Lodge, (79-106). (Singapore: Longman, 1982). And Jacques Lacan, *Écrits.* (New York: Routledge, 2001).

Chanson de Roland, *la Poema de Mío Cid* and *la Poema de Almería*. The importance of *romancero* literature as a frame of reference for Castilian-speaking Iberians is reflected in Cortés' statements. In Bernal Díaz's account of the expedition, Cortés is said to have stated, "We give ourselves to God, venturing with arms like the paladin Roland..."[153] That this event was appropriated from the *Chanson de Roland* into the *conquistador* discourse inflected the entire encounter with the Indians in terms of an ideological expectation that was always already ready to fight. The *Chanson de Roland* itself is a dramatic account. Set in 778 in Spain, it tells the story of a heroically doomed rearguard action led by Roland, the captain and greatest warrior of the emperor Charlemagne. In a typical moment, Roland sees the Saracen army approaching and says to his friend Oliver, "The Emperor left us the French, the pick of them. He knew our strength, he knew there are no cowards here. We know what we have to endure, bitter cold and blazing heat, and if we have to bleed, we bleed. You have spears, I have Durandal, my sword the king presented. Small matter if I die. The next owner can say it belonged to a good man...Charles [Charlemagne] left us here, lord barons. He is king. It is our duty to die for him and Christianity."[154] The *Chanson* describes the Muslims as religiously perverse and at one time states, "Pagans are wrong and Christians right."[155] In relation to the *conquistadores,* this mimicked the solitary nature of their expedition, the structured relationship that *Cristianos* had as vassals of Charles V and the ideological demand to strike at non-Christian.

La Poema de Mío Cid shadowed the adventures of Rodrigo Díaz de Vivar (1043-1099), presenting the Cid as a hero who proves himself to be better than his fellow man. The Cid represents a time when there were lands to conquer and fortunes to be won; religious morality was of ultimate importance, not to mention that the Cid was portrayed as operating on the margins of *Christiano* Iberia during the *Reconquista*, deep in the land of the Muslims. It doesn't matter if this was true of the historical Cid or not, what matters is the effect of this poem on sixteenth-century audiences, most particularly the *conquistadores*. The Cid served as an example to be followed, and the early modern readers were much more concerned with the notion of Christendom set against Islam (what would be called paganism) than would have been the case in the eleventh century. In the poem, the primary goal of Christians is to get booty from heathens. The Cid says "Thanks be to God, the Lord of this world. Once I was poor and now I am rich, for have I land, gold and honor...I win battles as it pleases the Creator..."[156] *Conquistadores* could easily see themselves as mini-Cids acting on the ideological demand within the text. The Cid may fight the Moors and the *conquistadores* the Indians, but those are just variants of the same common denominator: the same religious Other. If, in the

---

[153] *Historia Verdadera*, 90. "Denos a Dios ventura en arma como al paladin Roldan..."
[154] C.H. Sisson. *The Song of Roland.* (Manchester: Carcanet Press: 1983), 48.
[155] Ibid, 45.
[156] Rita Hamilton and Janet Perry (translated). *The Poem of the Cid: A Bilingual Edition with Parallel Text.* (New York: Penguin Books, 1984), 152-153. "¡Grado a Dios que del munco es senor! Antes fu minguado, agor rrico so, que he aver e tierra e oro e onor...Arranco la lides como plaze al Criador."

poem, the events were those of an earlier time, the sentiments of the *Christiano* reading the poem, one might say the religious politics of the *conquistador* are those of a later age. This is where ideology as historical cosmology generated the effects of Conquest. What the early modern read was not a falsification of history, but a world of legend; and in that legend, there was enough reality that engaged not only a sense of wonder, but a sense of actuality.

This trend is also reflected in the *Poema de Almería.* The poem's relationship to the *conquistadores* is as follows: it was based on the campaign to conquer the port city of Almería in 1147 and, according to its author, this event was perceived as a Crusade. The author writes,

> I will announce, then, the chosen theme: the campaign of Almería, because then was beaten the pagan lineage. The united Hispanic and Frankish *caudillos*, by sea and by land gave battle to the Moors...they [the Moors] did not know God, with reason they had to succumb. That people deservedly perished, regretting their veneration of Baal, for Baal did not free them.[157]

To be sure, the action at Almería also coincided with the Second Crusade in the Holy Land. Almería was a Moorish cultural zone. In the sixteenth century, during the First Rebellion of the Alpujarras, Almería was a city in revolt. It gives me pause that the signifier 'Almería' was applied by the *conquistadores* to an area on the coast of Mexico full of hostile Indians.[158] A further examination is needed to explore the significance of this naming given the familiarity of *conquistadores* with these types of poems. It is fair to ask if early modern understanding of the Almería of Spain was inscribed into the Almería of Mexico reflecting the reproduction of hostility towards non-Christians. There is an equally strong likelihood that works of literature, with their warlike fantasies and frontier spirit, bedeviled the consciousness of the *conquistador* much like current media influence present-day tastes, desires and values.

The spatial map of ideas that I have presented throughout this chapter contains the underlying feature of a society that facilitated aggression against the religious Other. Those early modern 'background books' inflected a historical cosmology, specifically in reference to the *Reconquista,* which colored the pursuits of the *conquistadores* in the Americas. This bending of consciousness, the knowledge which wrought a cosmology forms a matrix that can be discerned in the dialectic of 'old' (*Reconquista*) and 'new' (the Americas). The event of contact announced a new dimension in global history but was (mis)perceived via the continuation of, or return to, past historical cosmology. My main argument revolves around ideological mystification, the complicated play of smoke and mirrors in human consciousness. This

---

[157] H. Salvador Martínez (ed), *El "Poema de Almería" y la Épica Románica.* (Madrid: Biblioteca Románica Hispánica, 1975.), 23-25. "Enunciare, pues, el tema escogido: la campana de Almería, porque entonces fue vencida la estirpe pagana. Reunieronse los caudillos hispanos y los francos: por mar y por tierra dan batalla a los moros...Esta gente merecidamente pereció pues a pesar de venerar a Baal, Baal no les libera."

[158] 'Itinerario de Juan de Grijalva,' 20.

destabilizes the notion of the *conquistador* by attributing to him a certain fluidity. I underscore that this study of ideology does not pretend to offer a full explanation of Conquest. Such an evocation would suggest an apologist's idea of a 'complexity of circumstances' in *conquistador* behavior that I have no desire to address. That does not interest me. Furthermore, it would imply a simplistic understanding of a complex historical event the full sum of which will always remain beyond our understanding. Rather this chapter has looked at several of the micro-elements of ideology present in early modern institutions, those historical, legal and literary apparatuses, which actively disseminated authorative ideas about human relationships. That is, I have addressed what is beyond the *conquistador*; the descriptive features which constituted his identity. My hope is that, in light of the evidence provided in this chapter, discussion can move towards the *possibilities* of Conquest, rather than an ideological *explanation* of Conquest.

Conclusion
Calisthenics in Conquest, Acts of Ideology

In this paper I have tried to outline something of the relationship between idea and event, and to disentangle some of the conceptual confusions attendant upon this relationship and the early modern American encounter. In doing so I have also been concerned with developing my own particular views on this issue, and it is to a summary of these to which we can finally turn.

What has become of the relation between idea and event in colonial Latin American history? As I have shown, a considerable amount of historiographical energy has gone into validating a modernist materialist paradigm that claims priority over other kinds of critical reflections, specifically over the idea that belief is a historical force. Here the idea/event dichotomy is either deemed un-insightful or is seriously misunderstood. The supposed obviousness of this period's history goes along with a lack of self-reflexiveness. The assumption here is illustrated by the unfortunate tendency by which the study of colonial Latin America is often termed the study of myths. Under this lens, early moderns appear as merely acting out their roles in a scripted hocus-pocus. However, this rationalist view is clearly inadequate: it misses the ideological dimensions of a structured reality, the way it constitutes a lived experience and can color daily life itself. Finally, such a rationalist view completely disregards the ideological presence of human thought, the fact that we all have our own ideologies and manners of seeing the world. George Bataille wrote that the absence of myth has itself become the myth of the modern age.[159] In this sense we live in as much a 'mythical' world as our ancestors did. I suggest that we are just as ideological as the next person, historical or current. Because ideas are essential features in cognitively processing events, the primary historiography of this period is not only flawed but as fantasmic as the *conquistador*'s worldview. It is, I think, instructive to recognize that the historians I critiqued in chapter 1 were, although materialists and seemingly hostile toward religion, nevertheless inclined to regard history through essentially 'mythical' spectacles, as though they could perceive a divine plan, but not a divine being whose plan it was. In this case we may make a comparison. For the Christians of the sixteenth century (and for those of today), Revelation stood at the beginning of history. For the influential rationalist historians critiqued in chapter 1 (most particularly as defined by Lockhart's 'hope'), it stands at the end. Two religions.

In this respect, we 'modern' academics are far closer to the Gonzalo Fernández de Oviedos of history than we care to admit. Therefore, it is not as if we can all meet in a seminar and have a good laugh at the expense of early modern belief if we are not willing to laugh at our own beliefs. Keep in mind that we live in a society which predominantly believes that tax relief of the obscenely wealthy will somehow benefit the steel or oil sands worker.

---

[159] See George Bataille, *The Absence of Myth: Writings on Surrealism*. Translated by Michel Richardson. (London: Verso, 1994).

Ideology is a factor in the creation of knowledge. Those writers considered in chapter 2 constructed the world according to certain axioms that governed their existence, or what they perceived as existence. This enables a historical case study which assesses how the new territories which early moderns encountered were brushed over with secondary meanings that were imputed to them by European thought, language or social and textual representations. The Indies were situated at the outer boundary of European knowledge, yet there existed an archive, which rapidly, violently and 'feverishly' imprinted itself onto every region that early moderns were to encounter.[160] Under the auspices of Castile, contact with the Americas was something new, an inauguration, a mutation, a break. But this break, at the same time, was developing something which was potentially inscribed in European traditions and institutions. It is as if Castile's knowledge of itself and the contrasting function provided by Europe's knowledge of America, and these subsequent 'beings', gave Castilians their own truth, playing a critical role in defining their early modern selves.

But ideology, then, can also construct day-to-day existence. As portrayed in chapter 3, experiences of city life, social expectations, or notions of 'good' and 'evil' all played roles in consciousness and cosmology. Those diffused ideas were webs into which early moderns fell, or were always already thrown. The dilemma is surely clear. Did the early moderns have a choice in their behavior? Could they have seen the world in any other way? In some respects this question is not approachable, if even answerable, because my project has left out many important historical factors. In this vein, I am sure (just like today) social ambition, a desire for a better life or pure greed had material effects in colonial Latin American history. However, the relation between ideology and materialism is complex, variable, in which it is sometimes appropriate to speak of ideology as a force which has a role in conflicting social forces (desire for dominance, inter- or intra- culturally), and at other times as a matter of internal relations between representation and significations of the world. Here I have deliberately chosen to reflect upon ideology and its modes of signification, the 'how' in its construction of reality. I do not suggest that economic materialism does not provide a valid interpretation of history; I only challenge it when it offers a teleological version or Grand Narrative presented in absolutes. Studies of belief in history should be treated in the same manner.

The very purpose of this study was an exercise or a general calisthenics in historical imagination. If we 'work out' with those early modern ideas and the potential consciousness associated with those ideas we can perhaps better relate to people we generally think of as historical. In terms of the Conquest, and as a final 'rep', I would bet that if the average person on the street

---

[160] I use the term 'fever' in relation to Jacques Derrida. *Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression.* Translated by Eric Prenowitz (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), which discusses, on a basic level, 'the archive' in terms of the human impulse of preservation. I suggest that the archive served as a place of origin for many of the ideas early moderns possessed in relation to the Americas. The result was an always already there premise of belief based in that which was located within the archive.

witnessed an Aztec sacrifice they would freak out. I know that if myself and 300 Canadians became isolated in a far away land and we saw different looking people dancing around while wearing the skin of a recent sacrificial victim, we would seriously wonder about the sanity of the 'new' culture. By admission, I would vomit if offered flat bread sprinkled with human blood. My own cultural ideological baggage represented in this final exemplum, and the comparison of those values to early modern ideologies, hints at a role for ideas in history. Although those ideas do not constitute a 'center' in history, they certainly serve as a buttress in its structure and it is there that an archeology of Conquest can begin.

References

Acosta, Joseph de. *Historia Natura y Moral de las Indias*. Mexico: Fondo de Cultura, 1964; 1590.

Adas, Michael. *Machines as the Measure of Men: Science, Technology, and Ideologies of Western Dominance*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1989.

Agamben, Giorgio. *The Coming Community*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993.

Althusser, Louis. *Lenin and Philosophy and other essays*. Translated by Ben Brewster. New York: Monthly Review Press, 2001.

Althusser, Louis. *For Marx*. Translated by Ben Brewster. New York: Verso, 2005.

Althusser, Louis. *Politics and History*. Translated by Ben Brewster. New York: Verso, 2007.

Alvarado, Pedro de. *Vision Española de la Conquista de Guatemala*. Guatemala: Universidad de San Carlos de Guatemala, 1967.

Anidjar, Gil. *"Our Place in al-Aldalus" Kabbalah, Philosophy, Literature in Arab Jewish Letters*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002.

Appadurai, Arjun. *Fear of Small Numbers: An Essay on the Geography of Anger*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2006.

Aristotle. *The Politics*. Translated by Trevor J. Saunders. London: Penguin Group, 1962.

Ballesteros-Gaibrois, Manuel. *Codices Matritenses de la Historia General de las Cosas de la Nueva España de Fr. Bernardino de Sahagun, II*. Madrid: Ediciones Jose Porrua Turanzas, 1964.

Barthes, Roland. "The Death of the Author," in *Image-Music-Text*. (142-148). New York: Noonday Press, 1999.

Bataille, George. *The Absence of Myth: Writings on Surrealism*. Translated by Michel Richardson. London: Verso, 1994.

Baxter, Ron. *Bestiaries and Their Users in Middles Ages.* Stroud, Gloucestershire: Alan Suiton Publishers; London: Courtauld Institute, 1998.

Bildhauer, Beltia, and Robert Mills, eds. *The Monstrous Middle Ages.* Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2003.

Bracken, Christopher. "Coercive Spaces and Spatial Coercions: Althusser and Foucault." in *Philosophy and Social Criticism*, Vol. 17, No. 3, (March 1991), 228-241.

Brading, D.A. *The First America: the Spanish Monarchy, Creole patriots, and the Liberal State, 1492-1867.* Cambridge: University of Cambridge Press, 1993.

Braswell, Laurel Nichols. *Western Manuscripts from Classical Antiquity to the Renaissance: A Handbook.* New York and London: Garland Publishing, 1981.

Camille, Michael. *Image on the Edge: The Margins of Medieval Art.* Essays in Art and Culture. Cambridge: Harvard University Pres, 1992.

Cañizares-Esguerra, Jorge. *Nature, Empire, and Nation: Explorations of the History of Science in the Iberian World.* Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2006.

Cañizares-Esguerra, Jorge. *Puritan Conquistadors: Iberianizing the Atlantic, 1550-1770.* Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2006.

Carman, Glen. *Rhetorical Conquests: Cortés, Gómara, and Renaissance Imperialism.* West Lafayette: Purdue University Press, 2006.

Castro, Américo. *The Spaniards: An Introduction to their History.* Translated by Willard F. King and Selma Margaretten. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1971.

Casas, Bartolomé de las. *Obras Completas, Vol. 3-5.* Edited by Paulino Castañeda Delgado. Madrid: Alianza Editorial, 1994.

Casas, Bortolomé de las. *Brevisima Relacion de la Destrucycion de las Indias* edición de Jean-Paul Duviols. Buenos Aires: Stockcero, 2006.

Caruth, Cathy. "Unclaimed Experience: Trauma and the Possibility of History (Freud, *Monotheism*)." In *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative, and History.* Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1996. 10-14.

Cervantes, Fernando. *The Devil in the New World, the Impact of Diabolism in the New Spain*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997.

Christian Jr, William A. *Apparitions in Late Medieval and Renaissance Spain*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981.

Christian Jr, William A. *Local Religion in Sixteenth-Century Spain*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981.

Columbus, Christopher. *Four Voyages to the New World: Letters and Selected Documents, Bilingual Edition*. Translated and edited by R. H. Major. New York: Corinth Books, 1961.

Conquistador anónimo. *Relación de algunas cosas de la Nueva España y de la gran ciudad de Temistitan*, Mexico. 1st ed. 1556. Translated by Francisco de la Maza. Edited by Federico Gómez de Orozco. Mexico City: Porrua, 1961.

Cortés, Hernando. *Cartas de Relación*, Madrid: Historia 16, 1985.

Cortés, Hernan. *Letters from Mexico*. Translated and edited by Anthony Pagden. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986.

Danto, Arthur C. *Narration and Knowledge*. New York: Colombia University Press, 1985.

Derrida, Jacques. *Glas*. Translated by John. P. Leavey Jr. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1986.

Derrida, Jacques. *Cinders*. Translated by Ned Lukacher. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1987.

Derrida, Jacques. *Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression*. Translated by Eric Prenowitz. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995.

Derrida, Jacques. *Margins of Philosophy*. Translated by Alan Bass. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984.

Derrida, Jacques. *Of Grammatology*. Translated by Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak. Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1997.

Díaz del Castillo, Bernal. *Historia verdadera de la conquista de la Nueva España (Manuscrito 'Guatemala')*. Ed. José Antonio Barbón Rodríguez. Mexico: El Colegio de México, 2005; 1568.

Durán, Diego. *Book of the Gods and Rites and the Ancient Calender*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1971.

Durán, Diego. The *Aztecs; the history of the Indies of New Spain*. New York: Orion Press, 1964.

Eagleton, Terry. *Ideology: An Introduction*. London: Verso, 2007.

Echevarría, Ana. *The Fortress of Faith: The Attitude towards Muslims in Fifteenth Century Spain*. Leiden: Brill, 1999.

Eco, Umberto. *Serendipities: Language and Lunacy*. Translated by William Weaver. New York: Harcourt Brace & Company, 1998.

Edson, Evelyn. *Mapping Time and Space: How Medieval Mapmakers Viewed Their World*. British Library Studies in Map History I. London: British Library, 1997.

Edwards, John. *The Spain of the Catholic Monarchs 1471-1520*. Malden: Blackwell Publishers, 2000.

Elliott, J. H. *Empires of the Atlantic World: Britain and Spain in America 1492-1830*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006.

Elliott, J. H. *Imperial Spain, 1492-1716*. London: Penguin, 2002.

Elliott, J. H. *Spain and its World, 1500-1700, Selected Essays*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989.

Elliott, J. H. *The Old World and the New, 1492-1650*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970.

El País. 2006. "El PSOE Crítica la Actitud 'Irresponsable de Aznar con sus Declaraciones sobre el Islam." El País. September 23.

Foucault, Michel. *The Order of Things*. Bristol: Tavistock Publications,1970.

Foucault, Michel. *The Archaeology of Knowledge*. Bristol: Tavistock Publications, 1972.

Foucault, Michel. *Discipline and Punish*. New York: Vintage, 1977.

Friedman, John Block. *The Monstrous Races in Medieval Art and Thought*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1981.

Gibson, Charles. *The Aztecs Under Spanish Rule: A History of the Indians of the Valley of Mexico, 1519-1810.* Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1964.

Glick, Thomas. *Islamic and Christian Spain in the Early Middle Ages.* Princeton: University of Princeton Press, 1979.

Gómara, Francisco López de. *Historia de la Conquista de Mexico.* Caracas: Biblioteca Ayachucho, 1979.

Gourevitch, Philip. *We Wish to Inform You That Tomorrow We Will be Killed With Our Families: Stories from Rwanda.* New York: Picador, 1998.

Gramsci, Antonio. *Selections from the Prison Notebooks.* Edited and Translated by Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith. New York: International Publishers, 2005.

Grijalva, Juan de. "Itinerario de Juan de Grijalva," in *Cronicas de la Conquista, Segunda Edicion.* Mexico: Ediciones de la Universidad Nacional Autonoma, 1950.

Grunberg, Bernard. "The Origins of the Conquistadores of Mexico City," in *The Hispanic American Historical Review*, Vol. 74, No. 2. (May, 1994): 259-283.

Hiatt, Alfred. "Mapping the Ends of Empire," in *Postcolonial Approaches to the European Middle Ages: Translating Cultures.* Ed. Ananya Jahanara and Deanne Williams. Cambridge Studies in Medieval Literature 54. Cambridge University Press, 2005: 48-76.

Haliczer, Stephen. The Comuneros of Castile: The Forging of a Revolution, 1475-1521. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1981.

Hamilton, Rita, and Janet Perry, trans., *The Poem of the Cid: A Bilingual Edition with Parallel Text.* New York: Penguin Books, 1984.

Hanke, Lewis. *Aristotle and the American Indians: A Study in Race Prejudice in the Modern World.* Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1959.

Harvey. L.P. *Islamic Spain, 1250-1500.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990.

Harvey, L.P. *Muslims in Spain, 1500-1614.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005.

Hassig, Ross. *Trade, Tribute and Transportation, A 16th Century Political Economy of the Valley of Mexico*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1985.

Hassig, Ross. *Time, History, and Belief in Aztec and Colonial Mexico*. Austin: University of Texas, 2001.

Hassig, Ross. *Mexico and the Spanish Conquest, 2nd Edition*. Norman: University of California Press, 2006.

Hegel, Georg W.F. *Philosophy of History*. New York: Prometheus Books, 1991.

Heidegger, Martin *Being in Time*, translated by John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson. New York: Harper and Row, 1962.

Hillgarth, J.N. *The Spanish Kingdoms: 1250-1516, Vol 1-2*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978.

Himmerich y Valencia. *The Encomenderos of New Spain, 1521-1555*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1991.

Hobsbawn, Eric and Terence Ranger eds. *The Invention of Tradition*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992.

Housley, Norman ed. *Documents on the Later Crusades, 1274-1580*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1996.

Kagan, Richard L. and Fernando Marias. *Urban Images of the Hispanic World, 1493-1793*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000.

Kagan. Richard L. "Universities in Castile 1500-1700." in *Past and Present*, No. 49, (Nov 1970): 44-71.

Kagan, Richard L. "Philip II and the Art of the Cityscape." In *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, Vol. 17, No. 1, (Summer 1986): 115-135.

Kagan, "Prescott's Paradigm: American Historical Scholarship and the Decline of Spain," in *The American Historical Review*, Vol. 101, No. 2, (April 1996): 423-446.

Kamen, Henry. *The Spanish Inquisition: A Historical Revision*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998.

Kamen, Henry. *Empire: How Spain Became a World Power, 1492-1763*. New York: Harper Collins Publishers Inc., 2003.

Kennedy, Hugh. *Muslim Spain and Portugal: a Political History of al-Andalus.* London: Longman, 1996.

Lacan, Jacques. *Écrits.* New York: Routledge, 2001.

Lacan, Jacques. 'The insistence of the letter in the unconscious', reprinted in *Modern Criticism and Theory*, ed. David Lodge, (79-106). Singapore: Longman, 1982.

Langum, David T. *Law and Community on the Mexican California Frontier.* Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1987.

Lira, Bernardino Bravo "Vigencia de las Siete Partidas en Chile," in *Derecho comun y derecho propio en el Nuevo Mundo.* Santiago de Chile: Juridica de Chile, 1989: 89-142.

Lockhart, James. *Of Things of the Indies: Essays Old and New in Early Latin American History.* Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999.

Lopez, Gregorio. *Las Siete Partidas del Sabio Rey don Alonfo el nono, golfadas por el licenciciado Gregorio Lopez.* Vol. 1-3. Madrid: Boletin Oficial de Estado, 1974;1555.

Lupher, David A. *Romans in the New World: Classical Models in 16th Century Spanish America.* Ann Arbour: University of Michigan Press, 2003.

Machiavelli, Niccolò. *The Prince.* Translated by N. H. Thomson. New York: Dover Publications, 1992.

MacKay, Angus. *Spain in the Middle Ages: From Frontier to Empire, 1000-1500.* London: Macmillan Press, 1977.

Maltby, William S. *Alba: A Biography of Fernando Alvarez de Toledo, Third Duke of Alba, 1507-1582.* Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983.

Manion, Margaret M,. and Bernard J. Muir, eds. *Medieval Texts and Images: Studies of Manuscripts from the Middles Ages.* Chur, Reading, Paris, Philadelphia, Tokoyo, and Melbourne: Harwoord Academic Publishers; Sydney: Craftsman House, 1991.

Maravall, Jose Antonio. *Antiguos y modernos: La idea de progreso en el desarrollo incial de una sociedad.* Madrid: Sociedad de Estudios y Publicaciones, 1966.

Martinez-Conde, Susanna. "Skewed Vision," in *The Scientific American Mind.* (Oct-Nov 2007): 55- 57.

Martinez, Salvador H. *El 'Poema de Almeria' y la Epica Romanica.* Madrid: Editorial Gredos, 1975.

Martínez, José Luis, ed. *Documentos cortesianos, Vol. 1-4.* Mexico: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1990.

Martz, Linda. *Poverty and Welfare in Habsburg Spain: The Example of Toledo.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983.

Martz, Linda. *A Network of Converso Families in Early Modern Toledo: Assimilating a Minority.* Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2003.

Marx, Karl. *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte.* New York: Mondial, 2005.

Marx, Karl. *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy, Volume I.* Translated by Ben Fowkes. New York: Penguin Books, 1990.

Marx, Karl, and Friedrich Engles. *The German Ideology.* Amherst: Prometheus Books, 1998.

McKnight, Joseph W. "The Survival of Spanish Law in North America," in *The Brief* (Southern Methodist University School of Law) (Fall 1992): 2-7.

McKnight, Joseph W. "Law Books on the Hispanic Frontier," in the *Journal of the West* 27 (1988): 74-84.

Meyer, Michael, and William H. Beezley, eds., *The Oxford History of Mexico.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000.

Meyerson, Mark D. and Edward D. English, eds. *Christians, Muslims and Jews in Medieval and Early Modern Spain: Interaction and Cultural Change.* Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1999.

Mignolo, Walter D. *The Darker Side of the Renaissance.* Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2003.

Mundy, Barbara E. The Mapping of New Spain: Indigenous Cartography and the Maps of the Relaciones Geograficas. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000).

Nader, Helen, trans. and ed. *The Book of Privileges Issued to Christopher Columbus by King Fernando and Queen Isabel, 1492-1502.* Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996.

Nader, Helen. "The Spain that Encountered Mexico," in *The Oxford History of Mexico.* Meyer, Michael, and William H. Beezley, eds. Oxford University Press, 2000.

Nalle, Sara Tilghman. *Mad for God: Bartolomé Sánchez, the Secret Messiah of Cardenete.* Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 2001.

Nebrija, Antonio. *Grammatica de la Lengua Castellana.* Madrid: Editora Nacional, 1980.

Nirenberg, David. *Communities of Violence: Persecution of Minorities in the Middle Ages.* Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996.

O'Callaghan, Joseph F. *Reconquest and Crusade in Medieval Spain.* Philadelphia, University of Philadelphia Press, 2003.

Oviedo, Gonzalo Fernandez y Valdes de. *Historia General y Natural de las Indias, Vol. 1-5.* Ed y studio prelimiar de Juan Perez de Tudela Bueso. Madrid: Ediciones Atlas, 1959.

Oviedo, Gonzalo Fernandez y Valdes de. *Writing from the Edge of the World, the Memoirs of Darien, 1514-1527.* Translated by G.F. Dille. Tuscaloosa: The University of Alabama Press, 2006.

Padrón, Ricardo. *The Spacious Word: Cartography, Literature, and Empire in Early Modern Spain* Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004.

Pagden, Anthony. *Letters from Mexico, 2nd edition.* New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986.

Pagden, Anthony. *The Fall of Natural Man.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986.

Pagden, Anthony. *European Encounters with the New World: From Rennaissance to Romanticism.* New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993.

Pagden, Anthony. *Lords of all the World: Ideologies of Empire in Spain, Britain and France, c.1500-c.1800.* New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995.

Pagden, Anthony. *The Idea of Europe: From Antiquity to the European Union.* Washington: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 2002.

Perry, Mary Elizabeth. *The Handless Maiden: Morisco and the Politics of Religion in Early Modern Spain.* Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005.

Perry, Mary Elizabeth and Anne J. Cruz, eds. *Cultural Encounters: The Impact of the Inquisition in Spain and the New World.* Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991.

Powers, James F. *A Society Organized for War: The Iberian Municipal Militias in the Central Middle Ages, 1000-1284.* Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988.

Rabasas, Jose. "Without History? Apostasy as a Historical Category," *Draft of paper presented at U of A*, 2007.

Restall, Matthew, *Seven Myths of the Spanish Conquest.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003.

Rogozen-Soltar, Mikaela. "Al-Andalus in Andalusia: Negotiating Moorish History and Regional Identity in Southern Spain," in *Anthropological Quarterly*, Vol. 80, No.3 (Summer 2007): 863-886.

Sahagun, Fray Bernardino de. *Florentine Codex: General History of the Things of New Spain.* Edited by Charles Dibble and Arthur J.O Anderson. Salt Lake City: University of Utah, 1982.

Sisson, C.H, trans. *Chanson de Roland.* Manchester: Carcanet, 1983.

Stow, Kenneth. *Catholic Thought and Papal Jewry Policy, 1555-1593.* New York: Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1977.

Stow, Kenneth. *Popes, Church and Jews in the Middle Ages.* Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007.

Taylor, Diana. "Remapping Genre through Performance: From 'American' to Hemispheric Studies," in *Publications of the Modern Language Association of America.* (October 2007): 1416-1430.

Tapia, Andres de. "Relacion de Andres de Tapia," in *Cronicas de la Conquista, Segunda Edicion.* Mexico: Ediciones de la Universidad Nacional Autonoma, 1950.

Tapia, Bernardino Vazquez de. *Relacion de Meritos y Servicios del Conquistador Bernardion Vazquez de Tapia. Vecino y Regidor de Esta Gran Ciudad de Tenustitlan, Mexico.* Mexico: Antigua Libreria Robredo, 1953.

Thomas, Hugh. *Conquest: Montezuma, Cortes, and the Fall of Old Mexico.* New York: Touchstone, 1993.

Thomas, Hugh. *Rivers of Gold, the Rise of the Spanish Empire.* London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 2003.

Trexler, Richard C. *Sex and Conquest: Gendered Violence, Political Order, and the European Conquest of the Americas.* Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1995.

Vegetius. *Epitome of Military Science.* Translated by N.P. Milner. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1996.

Watson, George. *The Roman Soldier.* Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1969.

Williams, David. *The Function of the Monster in Medieval Thought and Literature.* Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1996.

Williams, Raymond *Marxism and Literature.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977.

Yáñez, Agustín, ed. *Cronicas de la Conquista de Mexico, Segunda Edicion.* Mexico: Ediciones de la Universidad Nacional Autonoma, 1950.

Žižek, Slavoj. *Tarrying with the Negative, Kant, Hegel and the Critique of Ideology.* Durham: Duke University Press, 1993

Žižek, Slavoj, ed. *Mapping Ideology.* London: Verso, 1994.

Žižek, Slavoj. *The Sublime Object of Ideology.* New York: Verso, 1999.

Žižek, Slavoj. *Welcome to the Desert of the Real.* New York: Verso, 2002.