

Categorization in Civilization: Newness and Expansion of Cosmology: A New World Case Study

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The discovery of the New World made it necessary for the Old World to change its cosmology. As it was completely unexpected, it left the Europeans grasping for ways to describe the newness they had encountered. It also left the Old World searching through every inch of their worldview in order to find some explanation about the existence of this New World and, in particular, the Amerindians that they had found. The initial reaction of the Europeans was to simply utilize their preexisting vocabulary when describing the new, using generalities as a starting point. The same sort of thing was done with the Amerindians, as there was no real explanation for their existence that the Europeans could find within their cosmology. They were, perhaps, one of the lost tribes of Israel, and thus Jewish, or they were followers of Satan. They were Moorish in character, or the worst of pagans.¹ Whatever they were, it was clear that there was no aspect of Christian goodness in their being. Thus, lumped with unbelieving religious others, they were treated in a similar manner as those they were classified with, intentionally, or otherwise. They were also treated as obstacles in the road of Spanish conquest of their “new” territory, and thus, the zealous and militant attitude of the Reconquista (1492) took precedence over any attempt at categorization.

After some time clarifications occurred concerning the nature of the Amerindians. Distinctions and differences were apparent between the Amerindians and the unbelieving Moors and Jews. Thus, these new peoples were starting to be categorized as something completely different: pagans and either, natural slaves or fully rational human beings. The categorization process went from transference of the known to re-

¹ George Mariscal, “The Role of Spain in Contemporary Race Theory,” *Arizona Journal of Hispanic Cultural Studies* 2 (1998):14.

categorization with it the expansion of the Spanish, and European, cosmos. What was unique, in the case of the Spanish, was the deliberate and deceptive transference of the identity of the religious other by Hernando Cortes (1485-1547) during his conquest of Mexico. His *Five Letters to the Emperor* were written in such a way that he played on preconceived notions and stereotypes in order to justify his, and in general Spain's, conquest and actions in the New World. This deception did not go unnoticed as Bartolome de Las Casas (1484-1566), noted and argued vehemently against the deceptive nature of these accounts and the lack of true knowledge on the monarchy's part. This showed a unique aspect of the categorization cosmos, because, some of these incorrect and deceptive transferences were retained and remain part of the modern Latin American identity.

The purpose of this essay first is describing Cortes' intentional transference of the Moors to the Amerindians and deliberate deception of Emperor Charles V (1500-1558). By connecting the Amerindians with the hated other during the time of re-conquest of the Iberian Peninsula, Cortes was capable of doing whatever he desired during his conquest, despite how many laws he broke and his blatant disregard of the edicts of the Church. He also was given free reign to prosper from his illicit actions. Cortes' account was a mixture of a play on stereotypes, spiritual desire and the desire for economic prosperity by the Spanish crown fresh from the *Reconquista*, in search of glory.² More importantly, however, the purpose of this essay is to explain the natural expansion of worldviews when they encounter something inherently new. In general this process of cosmological expansion and re-categorization goes through three steps. The first is direct transference, which is the imposition of a known identity to something that is similar or shares quasi-characteristics of the other. The second step is a philosophical explanation that is given about the nature of the other and their place within the existing cosmological order. For example, the claim of the "natural slave" being the nature of the Amerindians, which was imposed by Spanish philosophers. This allows cosmologies to remain firmly in tact. The final step is the

² Many of the scholars mentioned in this paper agree with this assessment, but in particular Charles Braden, *Religious Aspects of the Conquest of Mexico* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1930.)

reconstruction of the society and cosmology. The social hierarchy is re-evaluated and changed to include the others; it is the expansion and re-categorization of the Old World cosmologies. Though the focus of this paper is specifically on the Spanish example, this process can be utilized for all civilizations when their cosmologies' are forced to expand and re-categorized.

First Encounter: Describing the New

The New World was a shock to Europeans. Instead of finding a route to India they stumbled upon a discovery that would, literally, change their world. While they were stationed at this New World they encountered flora, fauna, and peoples that they had not seen before. Naturally, the first thing they did was use their limited understanding and vocabulary in order to, somehow, categorizes everything as Antony Pagden in, *The Fall of Natural Man*, argued. He noted that, "In first instance he [the European] tended to describe things which looked alike as if they were, in fact, identical. For men like Gonzalo Fernandez de Ovideo, chief overseer of the mines of Hispaniola and author of earliest natural history of America, pumas were lions, jaguars tigers, and so on."³ Thus identities, even if they were not fully identical, were at first, interchangeable in order to begin the categorization process. Over time these errors were realized and corrected. However, this was an easier process with the various plants and animals that were inappropriately categorized. With men it would become a far more daunting task.

The most startling aspect of the discovery of the New World was the encounters Europeans had with the various peoples they found there. Without a category for these unknown peoples within their cosmology Europeans were left with the task of finding out where, and how, they would fit within their worldview. This categorization process was different as men required observation and an understanding of actions, which, in turn, allowed them to determine who these people were and where they fit within the preexisting taxonomy of Europe. Pagden called this a more urgent task as the nature of the European world called for everyone to fit and conform to their understanding of the world and

³ Anthony Pagden, *The Fall of Natural Man: The American Indian and the Origins of Comparative Ethnology* (Cambridge: University of Cambridge Press, 1982), 11.

cosmos.⁴ So if it turned out that these people were a threat or too different than the Europeans deemed acceptable, they would have to be made, by choice of force, to fit within the true taxonomy of the Old World.

The initial methods that were utilized to describe the new peoples were observation based, especially with behavioral patterns. The Europeans specifically looked at the Amerindian society as a whole. As Pagden noted

To decide what qualities any group of men possessed, the observer had inevitably to examine the society in which that group lived: and the things he looked for ranged from systems of belief and government, marriage rituals and laws of descent, to the means of subsistence, sumptuary norms and the ways in which food is prepared.⁵

By observing the things that were important to European society, they could determine where these natives fit within their own worldview. Abel Alves in *Brutality and Benevolence: Human Ethology, Culture, and the Birth of Mexico*, expanded on this argument as he noted that letters and the arts were not to be observed, or considered, because they were complex and unfamiliar. The basic necessities of life, the practices that were central and important to all Spanish, were the focus of observation and categorization.⁶ Despite that being the case, this preexisting understanding of the other tended to take precedence over the observation process as the other was deemed to be at the same level that all non-Christians were: unbelievers. The question of which type of unbeliever became central to the initial treatment of the Amerindians by the Spanish: were they heretical unbelievers like Jews and Moors, or were they pagans who had yet to hear Christ's message? Clearly they were the latter, so why were they treated to be as the same heretical caliber as the first?

The general explanation that many scholars agree on is that it stemmed from the nature of the *Reconquista* of the Iberian Peninsula.

⁴Pagden, *The Fall of Natural Man*, 13.

⁵Ibid, 13.

⁶ Abel A. Alves, *Brutality and Benevolence: Human Ethology, Culture, and the Birth of Mexico*, 12.

The other was an intolerable enemy of Christendom. The reason for such a militant take was, of course, because the conquistadores and those that came to the New World in order to claim it for Spain were faced with opposition. More to the point, if they were not met with resistance, due to their sense of self-entitlement combined with the Papal bull which granted them permission to claim whatever they found, the Spanish felt that this land was there for the taking, and thus they had to cleanse it in a similar manner that was done during the *Reconquista*. Without even knowing the peoples they had encountered, they had unfairly placed them within the same categories as the Moors and Jews -- they were simply the Moors and Jews of the New World.

Transference of the Reconquista

The *Reconquista* was a proud moment in Spanish history as the soldiers of Ferdinand (1452-1516) and Isabella (1451-1504), with crusade-like zeal, took control of Granada from the Moors and annexed it in 1492, thus ending a nearly eight hundred year struggle for control of the Iberian Peninsula. This victory also led to the decision, by the monarchy, to create religious unity within the Peninsula.⁷ The choice was either expulsion from the Spain or conversion to Christianity. Those who chose to convert, by choice or force, were questioned relentlessly on the sincerity of their conversion through the Spanish Inquisition (1480-1834). New converts were racially categorized, as faith was combined with lineage, and thus it was a matter of purity within the blood, rather than true religious conviction. So Moors and Jews who converted to Christianity were still treated as heretical infidels, and this same racial attitude was transferred to any Amerindian convert in the New World inferring that not only were the Amerindians infidels from the start, but further, they would not be sincere in their acceptance of the Christian faith. One example of the equation of Amerindians as infidels can be found in Bartolome de Las Casas' discussion of a Portuguese chronicle concerning the conquerors on the island of Las Carzas, "[the Portuguese] had killed and sent to hell so many infidels they left the whole Island in a

⁷ Ferdinand and Isabella are quoted to have said that the Moors should be baptized and, if they refused, then their children and grandchildren. For more information see: Henry Karmen, *The Spanish Inquisition: A Historical Revision* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997), 215.

shock.⁸” Thus, the Amerindian was already being classified as a heretical unbeliever rather than a general pagan.

This religious zeal, along with the racial attitude concerning the religious other, was the cause of transference for many of the categorizations of Amerindians in the New World. Drunk off of Spanish victory, they brought the mood of the crusades with them, thus intertwining the *Reconquista* of Spain to their current exploits. Countless scholars support this assessment, linking the zeal not just to the *Reconquista*, but to the crusading nature of their Spanish predecessors, like *El Cid*, St. James of Compostela “The Moor Slayer,” and James “the Conqueror” of Aragon (1213-1276). Alves explained that Bernal Diaz certainly made this link with Santiago Matamoros, as he used it as a “battle cry” on the field, where the saint was said to appear. Thus this connection with the great conquerors of Spanish history was an essential component of the early modern Spaniards.⁹

Another aspect of this transference, brought forward by Las Casas and others, concerning this dispossession and inappropriate categorization of the Amerindians as infidels, or Moors, was done for economic prosperity rather than religious fervency. It could be argued that the completion of the *Reconquista* in the Peninsula, along with the conquest of Granada, as Pagden and others note, was done so for economic gain.¹⁰ Andree M. Collard, in the introduction of Las Casas *History of the Indies*, noted that, “The colonists wanted only to acquire personal wealth-gold, silver and pearls.”¹¹ This greed was what drove their brutality, as Las Casas noted further,

The Spaniards found pleasure in inventing all kinds of odd cruelties, the more cruel the better, with which to spill human blood. They build a long gibet, low enough for the toes to touch the ground and prevent strangling, and hanged thirteen of them at a time...the Spaniards tested

⁸Bartolome de Las Casas, *Indian Freedom: The Cause of Bartolome de las Casas: A Reader*. Trans. Francis Patrick Sullivan, S.J. (Kansas city: Sheed& Ward, 1995), 162.

⁹Santiago Matamoros is Spanish for St. James. Alves, *Brutality and Benevolence*, 19.

¹⁰ 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)

¹¹Bartolome de las Casas, *History of the Indies*. Trans. Andree M. Collard. (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1971), xviii.

their strength and their blades against them, ripping chests open...and exposing entrails.¹²

These brutalities were done in order for the Spaniards to obtain more gold from their captives, which Las Casas pointed out. Thus the association with the Amerindians as Moors and the ideals of the *Reconquista* justified any cruel action, which resulted for the in personal, and Spanish gain. The transference excused them of any actions taken for the greater good of Spain proper.

Pagden further supports and expands on these theories of connections with the *Reconquista*, ideologically and economically. In *Lords of All the World*, he explained that the language of the *Reconquista* was brought with the conquistadores to the New World. While the conquest of the New World was similar to the wars of Italy that than with the Peninsula, the ideological language was similar to that of the *Reconquista* especially with the rich literature of Spanish conquest, such as *El Cid* and the contemporary accounts of the conquest of Granada. Since the *Reconquista*, as Pagden noted, brought with it a semblance of “divine favor” the Spanish used that as part of their justification for their conquest of the New World and the dispossession of Amerindians liberties and land.¹³ This attitude of justification and the ideologies of *Reconquista* would not simply be transferred by Cortes, but mangled and made into a deceptive narrative which would hinder true understanding and re-categorization of the Amerindians in the New World.

Cortes Demonizing and Deception

Since it was common practice to use the ideology and language of the *Reconquista* when describing and justifying the conquests of the New World, what was deceptive about Cortes’ account? It was the blatant use of, not just mere generalized language such as infidel, Moor, Jew, or heretic, but the descriptions that surrounded his various discussions of religious practices, houses, and other aspects of the Aztecs thus presenting an image very similar to the accounts of conquest in Granada and the Moors as a people.¹⁴ As Pagden argued, the *Letters* were intentionally written to reflect the *Reconquista*. Las Casas also realized

¹²Ibid, 121.

¹³Pagden, *Lords of All the Worlds*, 66,74.

¹⁴Pagden, *Lords of All the Worlds*, 66.

this fact, which he pointed out in his *History of the Indies*. The intent of Cortes' *Letters* was clear. If the conquest of the New World greatly resembled the *Reconquista*, and what Charles V was dealing with during the period of expulsion and Inquisition, then, not only would he support Cortes, he also would not question any actions that were taken during the conquest, however horrid they may have been.

To begin with, in his *Letters*, Cortes used deceptive language when he described the houses of worship of the Amerindians. The term that was constantly used throughout the text was "mosque," though "temple" was sometimes used in seemingly strategic places. For example, in his description of the city of Cholula, he noted not only the fertility and fineness of the city, but the towers that existed there; the mosque, in particular. As he noted, "I can myself vouch to your Majesty to having counted more than four hundred of them [towers] from the height of a little mosque, and they were all turrets of mosques."¹⁵ He also took note how this city was the "most suited" for Spanish occupation for its excellent location and construction. His description of the religious houses of Tenochtitlan was very similar. After noting the large markets within the cities, he also mentioned their places of worship. "There are a very large number of mosques, or dwelling places for their idols throughout the various districts of this great city, all fine buildings." He also describes the "great mosque: which is located at the center near the palace of Montezuma."¹⁶

This distinctive language used to describe the houses of worship was not something done by Bernal Diaz, a follower of the "Captain" during his conquests of the New World. (Though he did claim to witness St. James on the battlefield during their conquest.) It was distinctive to Cortes, as well as his descriptions of other social and cultural aspects that, linked the Amerindians to the Moors beyond their "mosques." By noting the separation of gender and fasting he presented other attributes which would link the Amerindian with Moors especially since these aspects were things that were unique to the Moors. Thus they were things that were ingrained in, not only Charles V's mind, but also Spaniards as a

¹⁵Hernando Cortes, *Five Letters of Cortes to the Emperor* Trans. J. Bayard Morris, (New York: Norton, 1962), 59.

¹⁶ Cortes, *Letters*, 89, 90.

collective. In this manner he further deceives the emperor in his equation of Amerindians with Moors and with the ideals of the *Reconquista*.

Cortes's discussion, in his *Letters*, of the separation of gender and noting that women were forbidden in Amerindian houses of worship made it clear that he was describing very well known Moorish practices: just his luck that the Amerindian culture was so similar to that of the Moors!¹⁷ As he noted, "They [the men] are denied all access to women, and no woman is ever allowed to enter one of the religious houses." He also, briefly, noted the fasting rituals of the Natives. "Certain foods and times they abstain from and more so at certain points of the year."¹⁸ This, like the separation of gender, was very Islamic in nature: women were separated from men on a social and religious level, and they also observed a very stringent fast during the month of Ramadan. Thus, Cortes utilized these similarities in deceiving the Emperor into believing that the Amerindians were equated to the Moors and Cortes' conquest of Mexico was a justified extension of the *Reconquista*.

With this deceptive language Cortes was allowed to construct his own Inquisition in the New World to enforce the new conversions of the Amerindians. The quick establishment of the Mexican Inquisition easily resembled that of the Spanish in its eagerness to make sure that new conversions were done so with the greatest sincerity, and that the conforming religious unity of the New World would be maintained. This falls well into Pagden's argument of the European need to create a "uniform humanity" reflective of the Old World. Cortes' effort was met with the same "success" as the Spanish Inquisition, but it furthered the direct deception that Cortes was attempting to maintain with the Spanish monarchy. Richard E. Greenleaf in *The Mexican Inquisition of the Sixteenth Century*, discussed how the initial movements against blasphemes was of Cortes making: "Cortes initiated the Movement to punish blasphemers in 1520 with a stern ordinance...the conqueror heard that man were blaspheming in Mexico in such a way as to insult or express ingratitude to the deity...Cortes warned that Spanish legal

¹⁷ It is understandable that Cortes, and the Spanish in general, believed that women were forbidden to go to mosque. The reason being is that only men were required to attend weekly services at the mosque; it was optional for women.

¹⁸ Cortes, *Letters*, 89.

punishment prescribed for blasphemes would be enforced.”¹⁹ One of the first to be tried by the Mexican Inquisition was Marcos of Acolhuracan, a newly converted Indian, for the crime of concubinage in 1522. There was no discussion of how he converted to Christianity, but the swiftness of the Inquisitorial courts with newly converted natives showed that there was a rapid response equivalent to Granada, with the same level of distrust towards any conversion to Christianity. At the time when Charles V was converting, mostly by force, Moors in Spain, Cortes was doing the same in Mexico; resulting in crypto conversions, trials by inquisition, and an undoubted disdain for the Christians from the indigenous population.

Cortes’s account to the emperor was thus a deceptive equation of Mexican conquest to the *Reconquista* of the Peninsula. Through the equation of religious houses, to social and religious practices and the development and activeness of the Mexican Inquisition, Cortes created a second Spain which faced the same problems and, thus, needed the same military force that Charles V used while he was in the process of solidifying Spanish control of the Peninsula. Bartolome de Las Casas would further note this deception, and, with the help of other moral theologians, attempt to create a new category and taxonomy for the Amerindian in the European cosmology.

Deception Revealed, Cosmology Expanded

While Cortes’s deception may have gone unnoticed by the Spanish monarchy, it did not go beyond the sight of Bartolome de Las Casas. He observed the atrocities committed by the Spanish on the Amerindians and realized that it was permissible through Cortes’ transference and deception, along with a clear lack of understanding, on the part of the monarchy, of the place Amerindians place within Europe’s current social hierarchy. Las Casas, knowing the battle he would face, first attempted to clear the question of social hierarchy. Quoting Thomas Aquinas’s *Summa Theologia* in his treatise *The Only Way*, Las Casas noted,

There are some pagans who...have never been under Christian rule, who live in lands never reached by the name of Christ. Their rulers, though they are pagans, are legitimate authorities, whether they are

¹⁹ Richard E. Greenleaf, *The Mexican Inquisition of the Sixteenth Century* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1969), 9.

governed in a monarchy or a republic. They are not to be deprived of their authority because of their pagan belonging. Such authority is a matter of positive law. Divine law deals with pagan belief. Divine law does not invalidate positive law...the reason: Jesus Christ, the King of Kings, did not send armed soldiery to take possession of the earth but holy men, preachers, sent sheep among wolves.²⁰

The Amerindians were not to be displaced by the Spanish or claimed to be natural slaves. After all, they had a preexisting category which placed them well within the Old World's cosmological scope. Las Casas, in an incorporation of Medieval scholasticism had sought to use natural law to argue against misappropriated Spanish justification for conquest and dispossession in the New World. The Amerindians, as general pagans, should have been treated in a manner which allowed them to maintain their "positive law," for Christ did not come in a militant manner to convert the unbelievers. The part which called for a change of the pagans hearts to the Christian faith was to be undertaken by the preachers and the missionaries, such as Las Casas himself. As misguided as their actions and piety were, they were not to be disposed of but permitted to maintain their agency and were to be religiously guided through the proper channels of missionaries.

Las Casas also noted that the church had previously dictated that there should be no ill treatment, enslavement, or forced conversions of the Indians in the New World, which obviously was ignored, as deceptive accounts made it seem as if they were no more than the Moors moved to newfound Spanish territories. In the text *Indian Freedom*, there was a quoted papal bull on the matter:

The Indians we speak of, and all other peoples who late come to the knowledge of Christians, outside the faith though they be, are not to be deprived of their liberty or the right to their property. They are to have, to hold, to enjoy, both liberty and dominion, freely, lawfully. They must not be enslaved. Should anything be done, it is void, invalid, of not force, no worth. And those Indians and other peoples are to be invited into the

²⁰Las Casas, *Indian Freedom*, 205.

faith of Christ by preaching of God's word and the example of a good life.²¹

What is significant in this mention of the Papacy's teleological views of such matters is that Cortes, in his account, wrote that his conquest was justifiable, and the dispossession of Amerindian land was done for the greater good of Christendom and Spain: the fulfillment of the *Reconquista*. It was, in fact, in complete opposition with the orders of the Church.

When Las Casas stated that the Amerindians should not be treated in the same manner as Moors because they were inherently different, he realized that there was a clear deception at play. As Las Casas had written in his *History of the Indies*, "You see how Cortes has the world deceived and those who read his false history are to blame for not reflecting that...Indians are not Moors or Turks who plague and mistreat us."²² Thus Las Casas not only notes the deception of the monarchy, but also reminds the readers that they were not Moors and the transference of the *Reconquista* was incorrect. In another instance, he stated that the treatment of the Natives at the hands of the Spaniards was far worse than any Moor deserved. "Soulless, pitiless men, who clubbed the Indians, hit them, whipped them with tipped lashes...Indeed it would be cruelty to drive heartless Moors who had done great violence to Christians the way that these overseers drove the Indians."²³ The deception of Cortes to equate them with Moors was revealed through this and other writings of Las Casas.

With the direct statement revealing that the Amerindians were not Moors, what then, were they to be classified as? The classification that came after the direct transference of the religious other was the Aristotelian category of the natural slave. Pagden, within *The Fall of Natural Man* noted, through the works of John Major, that the Amerindians were categorized as natural slaves because they lacked the ability to control themselves and their passions.²⁴ This of course, was

²¹ Las Casas, *Indian Freedom*, 215.

²² Las Casas, *History of the Indies*, 237.

²³ Ibid, 95.

²⁴ Pagden, *The Fall of Natural Man*, 55.

often the argument used when things were taken into consideration such as the brutal killings of captives, cannibalism, and also the following of a brutish faith. Thus they lacked the capacity to be more than servants in the world; perpetual children to be used for European benefit and economic prosperity. However Bartolome des Las Casas, and others from the Salamanca School, argued against these misplaced identities and logic with the concept of moral theology justified through natural law. First, Francisco de Vitoria had noted that the Amerindians possessed *potentia*, which allowed them to be more than a natural slave. They had, after all, a great civil community and were capable of building cities, possessing families, an aristocracy, and laws, thus they were capable of doing more with their lives, and becoming greater people, than natural slavery argued.²⁵

The re-categorization of the Amerindian was a slow process. Those arguing for moral theology and natural law, individuals of the Salamanca School such as Vitoria and Las Casas, had to change the transferable preconceived notions of the conquistadors and had to argue against Spain's desires for instant riches and economic gain. Removing the stigma of the *Reconquista* was difficult however, over time; they were capable of removing it enough so the Amerindian was not another Moor, and that gradations of other would be outlined, thus they were the new Amerindian other. Yet prejudices and racism remained. It took a great deal of time for Amerindians to be permitted to become members of the clergy, for example, due to the impurity of their blood.

Beyond the simple fact of clerical appointment, there were festivals, which were and are still part of today's Mexican and Latin American culture, that depicted this interchangeable identity of the Amerindian to Moor, as well as several unfavorable others. Max Harris, in his work, *Aztecs, Moors, and Christians: Festivals of Reconquest in Mexico and Spain*, presented the festivals that idealized the *Reconquista* of the Old and New Worlds. Portrayals of mock battles between Moors and Christians had originated in Spain around the end of the twelfth century and their purpose was to depict Christian, or in this case Spanish, victory over the hated other. Richard Trexler, quoted within Harris' monograph, argued, "Mock battles between Moors and Christians in colonial Mexico

²⁵Ibid, 72.

constituted a 'military theater of humiliation,' in which the indigenous performers, linked emblematically to the Moors' exhibited their own defeat."²⁶ Harris continued

The Long popularity of...festivals of Moors and Christians...is due to the traditions remarkable flexibility of historical fervency a contemporary application. The Christians can be Carolingian knights, Medieval crusaders, invaders of the Alpujarra, sailors at Lepanto, New World Conquistadors or New Mexican Settlers. The Moors can be Moriscos, Turks, Saracens, Jews, Aztecs, Chichimec, or Comanche.²⁷

Therefore these festivals, in their depictions, suggest the divine providence that Spain had over the religious other: worshippers of false gods or idols. The Indians, who always played the role of the 'other' in such enactments, signified the conquered peoples who were not pure in blood by their religious conversion, or who were unbelievers by their very nature. Thus there lands should become Spain's and Spanish providence should take precedence, in order to bring these others into the true, Christian way of life. Thus transference was justified as it was convincingly correct in the Spanish mind.

Conclusion

The discovery of the New World brought wealth to the Old, along with a great paradigm shift. The Old World had to reexamine and redevelop its worldview in order to make room for the new peoples that they had encountered. This process went through stages and spurts, from transference and justification, to a digestion of newfound material and a re-categorization, which expanded the worldview instead of interchanging and slotting peoples into categories that, generally fit at best. This process was a shared experience by all Europeans that came to the New World, but the Spanish led the way as they were the first to begin the process.

Utilizing faith and crusading zeal, the Spanish justified their conquest of the New World by simply interchanging the identity of the

²⁶ Max Harris *Aztecs, Moors and Christians: Festivals of Reconquest in Mexico and Spain* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2000), 21. This becomes more apparent when festivals like "The Beheading of the Moor" are taken into account.

²⁷ *Ibid*, 237

Amerindians with the Moors that they were fighting in the Peninsula. The transference was not entirely direct, but just enough to justify their conquest of the New World without any argument, at least at the outset. The Spanish, also, simply put the people aside and treated the New World as an expansion of Spain; they continued to clear and conquer it, without any thought to the peoples that were there. All were other that needed to go. Cruel actions, like the Spanish Black Legend, and rumors of the most atrocious treatment towards the Amerindians spread across Europe and created a call for a moral theology and an examination of the preconceived category of the mere natural slave which was placed upon the Amerindians.

While debates of the Amerindians' nature continued, Cortes was conquering Mexico and deceived the monarch into believing the expansion of Granada to Mexico was all the more plausible. By carefully pointing out common attributes that the Amerindians shared with the Moors, he was capable of disposing the peoples there unhindered. The monarchy saw this directly corresponding with their situation and allowed Cortes to continue. However, Las Casas, and others, were fully aware of this deceptive nature, and revealed through their writings, the falsehood of his account. The arguments of conquest for religious piety and goodness were no more than wolves in sheepskin, hiding the desire for greed, conquest and monetary prosperity beneath a cloak of Christian righteousness. The re-categorization that followed would change this transference and interchanging of identity by creating something that reflected the true, *potentia* of the Amerindian.

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