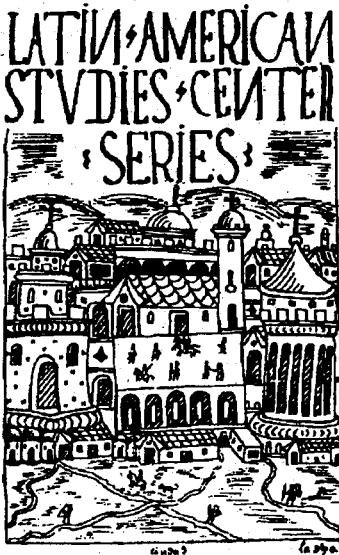


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Rockefeller Humanities Resident Fellow
1992-93

*Honor, Sex, and Civilizing Missions in
the Making of Seventeenth-Century Peru*



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This article explores some of the turns taken by Spanish conceptions of “civilized” life styles as the colonization process was intensified in the seventeenth-century Peruvian Andes.¹ The Spanish colonial enterprise understood preaching gospel and “family values” to be intrinsic to its broader mission, and concerns over proper sex, legitimacy, the structure of kin, and appropriate gender roles dominated its moral agenda. Efforts to impose Iberian “family values” were thus in the thick of colonial politics, and this essay hopes to make sense of them by exploring their role in the broader arena of colonialism’s cultural charge: The task of refashioning the humanity of colonized women and men.² Cultural identities and sexual activities sparked moral battle fields in the making of Spain’s Inca colony and here we will explore one facet of the colonial enterprise’s extraordinary conceit to make their Andean subjects into “Indians”. Novel and intertwined social relations, producing *mestizos* and *mulatos*, whores and virgins, bastards and legitimates—along with Spaniards and Indians—were at the heart of this endeavor.

¹ *Honor, Sex and Civilizing Missions in the Making of Seventeenth-Century Peru* owes its existence to my year as a Rockefeller Fellow in the Latin American Studies Center and the Department of Spanish and Portuguese, University of Maryland, College Park. I want to thank faculty, graduate students, and staff of a wonderful department for prodding my thinking, challenging my ideas in our small seminars, and, not least, for helping me navigate the practical details of my Maryland year. Thank you for all your many kindnesses.

This is part of a larger work in progress focusing on the cultural dimensions of colony-building in seventeenth-century Peru; and as an initial foray into questions of “family values” and colonial civilization, it points to directions of research and investigation.

² This exploration into the cultural dimensions of colony-building has been inspired by E. Genovesi (1974), by Corrigan and Sayer (1985), S. Hall (1986), and M. Foucault (1978).

80; Sánchez 1991: viii-xi). Peru's idol smashers were well aware that the Counter Reformation campaigns had been rehearsals for efforts in the Americas; and clerics, comparing the Old World with the New, were especially attuned to the weaknesses shared by Spain's more "barbarous" and "vile" inhabitants on both sides of the Atlantic (Arriaga 1919: xxxi, 3-4).

Reflecting the post-Trent Church's turn to family affairs as an arena over which it hoped to assert authority, Counter Reformation Spain was preoccupied with sexual matters (Perry 1990). Correspondingly, a growing concern to define and control sexual activities was carried to the Andes, where it was given vivid expression in the Catechisms, Confession Manuals, and sermons inspired by the Third Lima Council. Colonial Peruvian texts placed explicit constraints on sexual relations. Uniformly celebrating the state of chastity as humankind's highest attainment, they railed against various categories of sexual sin, often in astonishing detail. Sexual transgressions embraced a panoply of "unnatural" acts —i.e., any sexual practice that did not result in being fruitful and multiplying. Some of the more grievous included the abominable sin (sodomy), masturbation, homoerotic encounters, and bestiality. Licit sex was explicitly confined to the conjugal bed, duly and exclusively blessed in the holy sacrament of marriage (Doctrina 1985: 126-32, 143-44, 198, 204-13, 514-24, 618-19, 642-56; Perez Bocanegra 1631: 211-50).

Idolatry extirpators combing Indian settlements in the Department of Lima during the seventeenth-century were, then, not only on the look out for idols, but for all kinds of sexual crimes —the "bad customs" that were believed to be wedded to deviltry. Leading the list of sexual transgressions in "Indian" communities were *amancebamiento* (men and women living in sin, or the long standing *Quechua* custom of trial marriage), adultery, and several vices involving love magic.⁴ If the devil was behind Andeans' heathenous worship of the sun and moon, of *huacas* (Andean holy places and shrines) and ancestors, he was also goading on illicit love, the spread of *guacanquis* (Andean love charms), and, in general, making Indians deaf to explanations of how sex —unless practiced according to Church rules— was a mortal sin

⁴. This estimate comes from the catalogue of trials brought against native peoples in the Extirpation campaigns. The catalogue was first compiled by Lorenzo Huertas (1969).

precedence over those with less. Fashioning the Spanish body politic, honor's rule placed god in preeminence, followed by king, churchmen, aristocracy, vassals, peasants, and lastly, slaves —whose status, by definition, was bereft of honor (Gutiérrez 1991: 176-206).

The honor hierarchy, grounded in social relations of power and dominance, rested on the unmaking —the social disgrace— of others. Appraisals were made in the public arena, and Peru's forums, where judgements of honor framed relations between Indian and Spaniard, were legion. Sermons preached that god's honor was tarnished whenever Andeans worshiped their deities, ancestors or shrines (Doctrina 1985: 242). Human beings lost honor when they were publicly humiliated. Public shaming included punishments meted out to convicted Indian heretics (e.g. Duviols 1971: 385; AAL: Leg. 1, Exp. XII; BN: C4142), as well as public "scandals" like those suffered by a Spanish priest, tarnished because he could not contain the revelries of his Indian parishioners (AAL: Leg. 6, Exp. VIII); or by a Cusquenian Nusta (princess), claiming kinship to the great Inca queens, who was publicly shamed by "commoner" Indians daring to squat on lands she claimed title to (ADC: ACC, Top. 9, Leg. 5).

Public affronts to dignity, the scandalous behavior associated with disgrace and infamy, were gendered in the world of honor and virtue. Men lost face if they did not keep their word or if they were unable to physically defend themselves and protect their family. Women brought shame to themselves —and most weightily to their male kin— by engaging in illicit sex. Spanish and colonial honor codes directly tied feminine virtue to masculine reputation: The most common offense to men's honor, and by extension, to the entire kin group's (for honor had a way of overflowing) was for a kinswoman's virtue to be besmirched (Gutiérrez 1991: 207-26; Seed 1988: 61-74).

Spanish honor codes were directly tied to gender norms that turned on female sexuality: The sexually lascivious witch (and whore) —the mortal enemy of man and gods' kingdom— stood along side the sexually chaste virgin, idealized in the sacred figure of the madonna, intercessor to Jesus and god (Sprenger and Kramer 1970: 47; Warner 1976; Silverblatt in press). On the one hand, women, as a sex, were condemned for their alleged vulnerability to satanic advances; on the other, women, as the embodiment of family honor, found their virginity

tenets of ancestral purity —“blood” unsullied by Jew, Moor, or bastardy— set social possibilities in Castile and its dominions.⁸ As Spain’s inquisitional history makes clear, Iberian identities were obsessed by legitimacy, ancestry, and social boundaries (Kamen 1985: 61, 115-33, 220, 224, 235; Elliott 1963: 212-48).

Under colonial circumstance, Spaniards furthered this preoccupation as they manufactured, and institutionalized, the category of human beings they called “mestizos”, or mixed bloods (Morner 1967: 21-34). This “mala casta” (bad caste), part of colonialism’s racial taxonomy, was to become synonymous with disgrace, defective character, social decay, and bastardy. The native chronicler Guaman Poma de Ayala who, as we will see, shared Spaniards’ horror of “mixed blood”, so closely associated “mestizo” with illegitimacy that he called Inca secondary lineages, “mestizos” (Guaman Poma 1980: 96). The renowned legal scholar of Peru, Juan de Solorzano, holding comparable sentiments later in the seventeenth-century, inveighed against mestizos’ dishonor —their flawed nature, the product of an impure and soiled birth (1972 (vol. 252): 441-50).⁹

“Family values” —the contents of “civilized life styles”— thus entered the colonial fray; and conflicts over their meaning and moral significance charged the politics of identity-making at the heart of the colonial enterprise. Colonized Peruvians took up “family values” in a variety of ways: They could become standards to judge and criticize the colonial experience, the bases for narratives of blame, as well as inspirations for a gamut of political strategies. Now we turn to some of the uneasy and perhaps surprising ways they became part of Andeans’ lives.

⁸. The obsession with purity of blood was reenforced in the sixteenth- and seventeenth-centuries when proof of ancestral “purity” or “limpieza de sangre” was required in order to be able to hold political and religious posts. The Office of the Inquisition was responsible for certifying that no “stain” (Jewish or Moorish “blood”) sullied a candidates record (Kamen 1985: 115-33).

Also see Stolcke (1990) for an important discussion of the implication of these concerns for questions of “race” and “virginity” in the Spanish colonies.

⁹. Also see Spalding (1974) for an important look into colonial categories of race and their relation to social standing.

...among their women, they found no adulteresses, nor were there any whores...[W]omen were virgins when they married, and they held this to be a [matter of] honor and they [kept] virginity until thirty years of age. Then they married....

...And thus they multiplied greatly (Guaman Poma 1980: 48-49; also see 54, 56, 89, 275, 720, 871).

Keeping women chaste was half the key to pre-Columbian social order; the other half lay in “marrying well”, which for Guaman Poma meant ensuring women married their social equivalents. Before the Spanish conquest, rank would have been society’s principal concern; colonial rule, however, introduced the added complexities of “race”, and Guaman Poma exhorted Andeans to marry in kind. He directed *kurakas* —members of the colonial indigenous elite— to be sure that:

they do not give their daughters in marriage to either Indian peasants (*mitayos*) or to Spaniards, but rather to their equals, so that a good caste (*buena casta*) is produced in this kingdom (Guaman Poma 1980: 692).

If marriage between unequals in rank was a threat to good government, marriage outside of caste, Guaman Poma charged, would bring disaster. Guaman Poma linked the corruption of the social order to the corruption of women: Their essential disloyalty and wanton sexual impulses produced social decay, impure races, and muddled social boundaries. Decrying the villainy of Indian women, he explained that they were prone to men outside their caste, preferring Spaniards—even “*mestizos, negros or mulatos*”— to hard-working and honest Andeans. This was their insidious disgrace; worse, such “*indias* had no honor”, less even than “*negras*” who, as slaves, were at the bottom of honor’s barrel. Calling *Indias* women without virtue —“liars, thieves, great whores”— Guaman Poma bemoaned their treachery, disdain of authority, and betrayal of their “race” (1980: 800).

Guaman Poma offered two solutions. The first was in line with Viceroy Toledo’s policy of residential segregation. It maintained that all non-Indians —Spaniards, *Negros, mulatos, mestizos*— be outlawed from Indian settlements. If, in spite of this ban, native women had children by non-Indians, both the woman and her offspring should be exiled

reminded his readers that “the first sin ever committed was by a woman”, “thus you began the first idolatry”, and “served the devils” (1980: 122).

New Honor

Guaman Poma elaborated one vision of past and present Andean worlds, building a narrative of censure that drew on discourses of honor, purity, and disgrace; other native Peruvians —men and women, *kurakas* and *comuneros*— imagined themselves and their society through a similar discursive lattice—but came to different understandings. Records of the trials brought against the practitioners of idolatry and “*malas costumbres*” in the seventeenth-century Lima highlands offer us a glimpse into these transformations. For many of those accused of a gamut of deviltries —from worshipping mountains to fornication— questions of honor took on other shapes, promoting new slants on power and legitimacy, new insights into the social relations of colony, and new practices in honor’s defense. We must keep in mind, however, that these testimonies were products of the Andes’ most direct and pronounced culture wars —the campaigns to extirpate idolatry; and that living through them had its own effect on the particular moral and practical imperatives that “honor” would inspire.

Native Peruvians had experienced the arbitrariness of power before the Spanish invasion, but not in this particular dynamic, encrusted with legalistic form and a social logic of greed. Nor had they lived under a state religion that declared their very ways of living to be criminal. Andeans were torn by betrayals: Indigenous gods and colonial gods, the colonial state and native officials. Racked by terrible ambiguities and the generalized fears of colonial circumstance, Andeans were further visited by the terrors of the extirpation campaigns. “Honor” shored up these brambles of colonial experience, a frame both making colonial hierarchy and making sense of it; enforcing colonial exchanges and also —within the bounds of colonial hegemony— turning them around.

Hispanic notions of honor penetrated the etiquette of social relations in seventeenth-century indigenous communities; and public considerations of honor, along with public affronts, wed its ethos to the practices of day to day living. Honor contests were the mettle of status in a status-obsessed colonial world.

Andeans also turned words of honor around, taking Spanish titles and applying them to those whom they esteemed in community life. No matter that by Spanish law and custom such titles were carefully restricted, or that Andeans used them to designate women and men who, as curers and religious experts, were condemned by Church and State (AAL: Leg. 4, Exp. XVIII).

Andeans thus took some honor lessons to heart, and learned how to use them to mock the social hierarchy that colonial honor practices tried to enforce. They also broadened its venue from relations between persons to a whole social order: "Honor" and "purity" joined the Andean culture wars, and on the nativist side.

The Honor of Andean Nativists

In the early sixteen hundreds, idolatry extirpators uncovered that an emerging nativism —an "Indianist" movement challenging Spanish authority and orthodoxy— was gripping Andean imaginations.¹⁰ And throughout the century to follow, Indianist sentiments —while competing with a range of ideologies and allegiances— galvanized Andeans across boundaries of ayllu, ethnicity, gender and privilege (Silverblatt 1991). "Indianist" ideologies portrayed Andeans' experience as colonized subjects in devastating terms: Peru's staggering population loss haunted all assessments of life's fabric, to which was added apprehension over loss of lands, insufficient food and clothing, and anxiety over tribute and corvee labor service (AAL: Leg. 2, Exp. XVIII; Leg. 4, Exp. XVIII; Leg. 3, Exp. X).

Nativism articulated Andeans' gnawing insecurities and growing fears. It did so in a religious philosophy that protested Spanish dominion, even as it was framed in Iberian categories. Spanish gods were opposed to Andean ones; and Peruvians, abandoning native gods for Christianity's allure, had broken faith. *Huacas*, in response, had turned their backs on Andeans; while Spaniards' gods —in spite of their

¹⁰. Huertas (1969) gives us one of the earliest descriptions of this movement, based on a careful study of the Extirpation of Idolatry records. Also see Spalding (1984) for an examination of nativist practices in Huarochiri as well as Stern's analysis in 1983. I have explored aspects of nativisms's gendered nature (1987, in press) as well as its implications for the construction of colonial subjects (1991).

etiquette. While *costumbres* varied through out the region's many *ayllus*, colonial accounts suggest that sexual experimentation thrived, at least before marriage; that women as well as men were encouraged in sexual play; that some form of "trial" marriage guided eventual marriage choices; and, that, in a world where "being fruitful" was genuinely revered, "illegitimacy" had little meaning (Doctrina 1985: 217-20, 316, 514-24; Perez Bocanegra 1631: 211-50; AAL: Leg. 6, Exp. X; Leg. 6, Exp. VIII).¹¹

While Andean ethics authorized pre-marital sex (Guaman Poma, to the contrary), they seemed to frown on what we would call adultery.¹² Once a couple expressed a commitment to each other through marriage—Andean style, they were probably admonished not to engage in sexual relations with others. Interestingly, confession manuals praised Inca teachings in this regard, while severely criticizing other Andean sexual habits (Doctrina 1985: 514-24, 646; Arriaga 1919: 50-51, 59). When priest/inquisitors undertook comparative analyses of sexual sins, they discovered, to their chagrin, that fornication never made Andean lists, whereas having relations with someone already married, inevitably did (AAL: Leg. 6, Exp. X, f. 6; Leg. 4, Exp. XXVII, f. 2v).

In the colonial Andes, checks on sexual behavior seemed to be increasingly levied on nativism's ministers. Hernando Hacas Poma, the renowned Indianist from Cajatambo, chastised one of his pastors for flagrantly carrying out affairs with several women at the same time (AAL: Leg. 6, Exp. XI, f. 46). When Juan Raura would not change his life style to meet the demands of a stricter behavioral canon, Hacas Poma removed him from office. The development of this bit of sexual

¹¹ Andean traditions of sexual experimentation before marriage are confirmed by contemporary ethnography. See Barrionuevo (1973), Isbell (1978), Palomino (1984).

¹² This is what the evidence suggests.

I am not able to judge, with any degree of certainty, how Andeans evaluated homoerotic encounters. Peoples living on the north coast seemed to have freely engaged in male homoerotic activities, as well as in heterosexual anal sex—a long tradition to judge by Moche pottery. According to Cieza the "abominable sin" was roundly condemned by the Incas (1986:198-200). Nevertheless, at least one confession manual written for the Cusco area does ask very specific questions about homosexual—and human/animal activities. I do not know if this reflects a general concern of the Church—for questions about sodomy and bestiality are found in other Counter Reformation manuals—or if the great detail of Perez Bocanegra's manual reflects his experience in the Southern Highlands (Perez Bocanegra 1631: 218-20).

shrine, she suffered the public humiliations of Spanish-style punishments. Guatanenos publicly whipped her, paraded her through the streets, and then put her in Spanish stocks. And as they shamed her throughout the village, Guatanenos shouted her sin: "By condemning the worship of our Andean gods, she had lost the honor of [our] people" (AAL: Leg. 4, Exp. XLII, f. 14).

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