

## **From Heresy in Religion to Heresy in Culture: The Symbolic Power of the 15th Century Spanish Inquisition: The Case of the Arab Muslims (Moriscos)**

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### **Abstract**

*The Spanish Inquisition that took over following the collapse of the Islamic rule in Spain in the 15<sup>th</sup> century is, commonly, associated with the persecution of heresy in its strict religious sense. However, a deep probing into the history of the Spanish Inquisition, and more particularly, into its dealing with the Arab Muslims of the epoch, belies other facets to its notorious heresiological discourse. The Arab Muslims, known historically as Moriscos, who stayed in the Iberian Peninsula after being forcibly converted to Christianity, were, nonetheless, subjected to other forms of abuse that had nothing to do with religion. I hold in this paper that the Spanish church-state rule-- another name applied to the Spanish Inquisition-- exhibited features of a modern nation-state in the making that sought to consolidate its political hegemony, mainly by using what Pierre Bourdieu calls symbolic power. Symbolic power is the accumulation of all capitals in the hands of the modern state, a privileged status that grants the latter an unlimited scope of power, enabling it to enforce its will and establish its hegemony. The forcible conversions of the Andalusí Arab Muslims to Christianity did not spare them the Spanish violence, and the Spanish authorities sought doggedly to strip them of all power. The Arab Muslim culture was exterminated, and the Spanish state worked on divesting this, hitherto, Iberian minority of its political, social, and economic capitals in order to establish a modern nation-state as early as the 15<sup>th</sup> century.*

**Keywords:** Spanish Inquisition, symbolic power, heresy, Pierre Bourdieu, hegemony, capital

## **I. Introduction**

The Spanish state-church rule that superseded the Muslim rule in Al-andalus, what historians, also, refer to as the Spanish Inquisition, is commonly portrayed as an institution concerned mainly with matters of faith. The war against heresy, which this institution waged from the 15<sup>th</sup> century throughout to the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, is, generally, associated with the purging of the Christian faith from what is, then, regarded as sparks of heresy. Such belief, though, has obscured significant facts about the discourse of power that lies behind this religious façade. The treatment of the Arab Muslims who remained in Spain after 1492, the date coinciding with the capitulation of Granada, the last stronghold of Muslims in the Iberian Peninsula, reveals a Spanish church-state rule that used heresy as a cover to ensure its political hegemony and establish a modern nation-state as early as the 15<sup>th</sup> century. A critical study of the various ways in which the Spanish Inquisition operated lifts the veil from very modern ways of rule; symbolic power resulting from the state's firm control over the political, cultural, social, and economic fields being the most conspicuous one.

The present paper brings into question the theological, traditional discourse of heresy linked to the 15<sup>th</sup> century Spanish Inquisition. The treatment the Arab Muslims-- known historically as Moriscos after their forcible conversions into Christianity-- received in the epoch provides indispensable clues attesting for a contest for power and for a budding project to establish a modern nation-state that was pioneer in harboring both Pierre Bourdieu's socio-political theory of symbolic power and cultural capital and Max Weber's charismatic politics, which both put a cultural revolution at the very core of the building of a modern nation-state. The type of Heresies the Spanish Inquisition targeted swerved drastically from matters related to religion to the type of food eaten by Moriscos, their Moorish style of dressing, their songs and dances, their marriage ceremonies, their language and books, in a word, everything that singles them out as different from the Spanish Christians. The dogged determination of the Spanish Inquisition to obliterate all signs of the Arab Muslim culture presents this medieval institution as an out and out modern nation-state that sought to establish its hegemony by crashing the opposing subordinate Muslim other.

The present paper investigates the intricate ways in which the Spanish Inquisition operated to stamp out the Arab Muslim Andalusian culture and civilization. The use of law to issue bans on bathing, on the Moorish long garments, and on the Arabic names and Arabic language, among other things, demonstrates the alertness of the Spanish Inquisition to the sway of culture and to the importance of debunking the Muslim civilization in order to allow to the Christian Spanish one to gather momentum and survive. In the process, a great deal of violence ensued to finally culminate in ethnic cleansing and displacement of thousands of Arab Muslims. 1609 is commemorated as the date of the great exodus of Muslims in history and their practical expulsion from a Europe at the threshold of modernity. For the record, Jews were first to be expelled from Spain in 1492, with the collapse of the Muslim rule in Granada. It is worthy to mention, though, that Spain has recently issued a formal apology to the Jews for their Spanish "Holocaust" and went as far as offering them Spanish citizenship<sup>1</sup>. No similar apology was granted to the Arab Muslims up to date, and it would be unrealistically too ambitious to think of Spanish citizenship

accorded to Moriscos, who were victims of expulsion in as much the same way, and who sought refuge in North Africa, namely, in Morocco, Algeria, and Tunisia.

The present study attempts at dispelling the mystification surrounding the the apparatuses of power grounding the 15<sup>th</sup> century Spanish Inquisition's war on heresy. Moriscos emerge as the scapegoat in a bitter struggle for power. They were subjected to unspeakable forms of violence while the Spanish church-state rule of the epoch set out to establish what can be regarded as the first modern nation-state in Europe. The first part investigates the Spanish cultural attack on the Morisco *habitus*, a coined term Pierre Bourdieu uses to refer to culture and history in their most precise meanings. The second part sheds light on the power of nomination. It is explained how such stately prerogative enlarges the scope of power of the modern nation-state, allowing for the generation of unsustainable levels of violence in the process.

## **II. The Persecution of Morisco Culture: A Bourdieusian Perspective**

### **I. 1. Pierre Bourdieu's Symbolic Power and Cultural Capital**

The Spanish Inquisition's persecution of heresy started religious and gradually changed course to prey the cultural and genealogical origins of Moriscos. The violence the Spanish Inquisition perpetrated was not only of a physical nature, designed at torturing Moriscos suspected of practicing heretical rites of Mahomet and at confiscating their possessions. Such view of the institution belies a naïve understanding of history at large and of the dynamics of power motivating it. Pierre Bourdieu believes that, in the exercise of political power, physical violence alone can prove useless unless it is backed up by what he calls "symbolic power".

Symbolic power is what the state gains after a long struggle to monopolize all the capitals in a social field. Bourdieu opts for an economic register to coin the words of his political theory. Like Karl Marx, he argues that social practices are motivated by external factors that exert an immediate influence on the life of a particular community. Unlike Marx, though, he does not agree on anchoring these external motives exclusively in economy. For Bourdieu, such view of the study of sociological phenomena fails short of accounting for acts or practices in which material gain plays only a minor part. He argues that the social, cultural, religious, and political variables are as much important and decisive as is economy. Hence, in tandem with economic labor, capital, economic goods and services, and economic profits, Bourdieu evokes the religious, cultural, and political capital together with goods, services, and profits related to them. 'Capital' represents power "over the accumulated product of past labour ... and thereby over the mechanisms which tend to ensure the production of a particular category of goods and thus over a set of revenues and profits" (qtd.in. Swartz 74). Capital can take many forms. In *The Logic of Practice*, Bourdieu points out that capital is a kind of "energy of social physics" that can exist in a variety of forms. David Swartz explains Bourdieu's view claiming that "The image of capital suggests a conceptualization of power where no one form is given theoretical priority over the other...power is analogous to energy in that it occurs in many forms and no one form is more fundamental than the others or can be treated independently of the others"(78). In other words, economic capital entails power over the cultural, social, and political fields. In like

manner, cultural capital has immediate consequences on the other fields. The capitals do vary but remain convertible to each other; hence, the relationship of cooperation rather than rivalry that holds between them<sup>2</sup>.

In his theory, Bourdieu generally speaks of four major types of capital: economic capital (money and property), cultural capital (cultural credentials of a community), social capital (acquaintances and networks), and symbolic capital (legitimation). This set of capitals, distinct as they may seem, overlap and are convertible to each other as, for example, in the way certain educational qualifications can be cashed in for lucrative jobs.

Power, in Bourdieu's view, is the accumulation of all capitals and their concentration in the hands of the state. Such concentration of capitals provides the state with a 'symbolic capital', which, in turn, transforms into "symbolic power". Symbolic power enables some kind of 'mystification', which papers over the state's violence. Violence, as a result, is tolerated, euphemized (Swartz 170), and treated as an inevitability to preserve the state's high interests.

It follows that the Spanish Inquisition's terror, its chambers of torture, and its cult of persecuting heretics were downplayed or euphemized in the eyes of both the dominant and the dominated. Such euphemization of violence is realized by virtue of the symbolic power the Inquisition had within its purview. This symbolic power, Bourdieu argues, operates on two major, distinct levels: the first concerns the legitimization of the dominant's culture, which renders the latter the sole viable culture and the one that is granted credence and recognition; the other, running in parallel with the first, involves the de-legitimization of the already established, hitherto, dominated culture.

After the historical defeat of Arab Muslims in the Iberian Peninsula and the fall of their last stronghold, Granada, in 1492, the victors and the vanquished found themselves in front of a deeply entangled and complicated status quo. Spain had been under Arab Islamic rule for more than seven centuries, a fact that singled out Spain as the only swathe of European territory where Islam and Arabic culture had had a strong foothold. The Spanish *habitus* encountered a totally different type of *habitus*: the Arab Islamic *habitus*, long established and entrenched in the soil of Spain. By *habitus*, Bourdieu means:

A set of dispositions which incline agents to act and react in certain ways. The dispositions generate practices, perceptions, and attitudes which are 'regular' without being consciously governed by 'rule'. The dispositions which constitute the *habitus* are inculcated, structured, durable, generative, and transposable...dispositions are acquired through a process of inculcation in which early childhood experiences are important. Through a myriad of mundane processes of training and learning, such as those involved in the inculcation of table manners ('sit up straight' 'don't eat with your mouth full' etc. The individual acquires a set of dispositions, which literally mould the body and become second nature. (*Language and Symbolic Power* 12)

One can easily perceive the yawning gap sundering the Arab Muslim *habitus* and the Spanish Catholic one. In a field of struggle and contest of power, such encounter of two

different, mutually exclusive forms of habitus heralds premonitory signs with regard to the future of the relationship between the social groups in question. The Spanish Inquisition sought to debunk the Morisco *habitus* while, at the same time, putting the Spanish one to the fore. Bourdieu emphasizes the arena of conflict the dominant and dominated occupy. Both engage in a struggle to preserve *habitus* and accumulate capitals, goods and services, and profits, be they religious, economic, cultural, or symbolic (like honor or chivalry). This arena of struggle Bourdieu labels “field” (champs). This is

a structured social space, a field of forces, a force field. It contains people who dominate and people who are dominated. Constant, permanent relationships of inequality operate inside this space, which at the same time becomes a space in which various actors struggle for the transformation or preservation of the field. (*On Television* 40)

Depicted as such, the field is synonymous with an arena of battle, which houses conflicting bodies of thoughts and practices. In a particular field, whether cultural, economic, religious, or other, the dominant *habitus* strives to grab all capital to ensure its symbolic power. This power, however, remains contested and never declared absolute, as the subordinated *habitus* fights back and often develops its own weapons of resistance.

In the modern state, people struggle to get hold of capital in order to garner recognition and legitimacy and climb the social ladder. The state, for its part, sets as its primary concern the monopoly of all capitals and, then, their distribution according to what best serves its interests.

*Habitus* is constructed by whatever experience the individual undergoes in his lifetime. The bulk of this experience is inculcated in childhood. Table manners can be a variable that denotes a different *habitus*, in other words, a different culture. What some historians were unable to fathom is the reason why the Spanish inquisitors would burn a Morisco because he was found taking a bath, because instead of cooking with fat, he used oil, or because he abstained from eating bacon or drinking alcohol. It is interesting how the Spanish Inquisition was unique in anticipating the symbolic power of culture, no matter how negligible or minute the cultural trait might sound. Consider the case of Madalena Morisca, who stood before the inquisitors of the tribunal of the holy office of Seville in 1609, after being charged of washing herself as a Muslim. Mary Elizabeth Perry provides details of the incident:

Inquisitors called Madalena to appear before them to answer the accusations of two witnesses. Both people had testified that they had seen her very early one morning, when she came into their common courtyard, in the town of Medina Sedonia, to bathe herself, they watched as she washed her legs and thighs, face and head. One witness swore that she had washed her “shameful parts” but the other said that he had arrived too late to see that particular part of her bathing. (38)

The Spanish Inquisitors took such testimonies of bathing very seriously, as for them, they constituted hard evidence of a relapsing into the Islamic ritual of ablution after having being baptized Christian.

Madalena's case is similar to that of another Morisco named Cristobal de la Cruz, who confessed before the commissioner of the Holy Office of the Inquisition in Veracruz, Mexico. De la Cruz described an event that occurred while he was sailing to Santo Domingo. He confessed that "...sometimes when it was calm, the soldiers and sailors and this confessant would also swim in the sea, which he did with the intention of doing the çahala [and] bathing in the way that is customary for the Muslims ...although this bath should be done in water that is fresh and not of the sea"(Cook 70). De La Cruz noted that he had to be careful when performing the ritual of ablutions in public "because those soldiers and sailors are so skilled and accustomed to seeing Muslims and renegades, [that] he did not do those ceremonies, because the said sailors and soldiers could not help from seeing him"(Cook 70)

The detention of Madalena and De La Cruz because of their bathing brings to mind the traditional essentialist distinction between body and soul, between subjectivity and objectivity. In the examples cited above, the Inquisition targeted bathing, which is an embodied act. Dualist thinkers, especially the disciples of Rene Descartes, with his notorious legacy of mind-body dualism, would ask how the body could be accorded such importance when the intellect is the source of all action. The duality of mind and body is categorically rejected in Bourdieu's theory. Bourdieu regards that accounts of human subjectivity that conceive of it as essentially "disengaged" (Taylor 143), that is, as maintaining a cognitive and contemplative relation to the world, are beside the mark. With Bourdieu, the "pure" subjectivity viewpoint is dismissed in favour of a perception of the human agent in its radical "facticity" (Merleau- Ponty). He is extremely critical of the strong polarization of mind/ body. Gabriel Peters further delineates Bourdieu's stance:

The rejection of intellectualistic and contemplationist accounts of the agent/world relation carries a critique of dualistic views of the relationship between mind and body that conceive the latter solely as an object of the agents' representations. Against this perspective, Bourdieu, as Merleau Ponty before him, argue fiercely that the agent's body (or better, that the agent as an inescapably embodied agent) is the very operational locus of the practical intentionalities and competencies based on which she intervenes in the societal universe: "What is 'learned by body' is not something that one has...but something that one is"". (70)

Such fusion of mind and body is best exemplified by the "field", which, together with *habitus*, occupies a central position in Bourdieu's theory. The field is beyond both subjectivity and objectivity. It is the social network where subjectivities and objectivities interpenetrate and become interdependent.

The concept of embodied subjectivity Bourdieu advocates finds full expression in 15<sup>th</sup> century Spanish rule. Moriscos were barred from holding arms, from putting on their Moorish dresses, from performing acts of circumcision and from taking baths, to mention just a few of the trailing shortlist of proscriptions. Obviously, all these acts are performed on the body. Here, bodies are also bearers of heresy the Inquisition sought doggedly to eradicate. Mary Elizabeth Perry speaks about the "embodied knowledge" of Moriscos, while commenting on Madalena's story mentioned above:

Madalena's story is not simply that of one isolated woman sneaking an early morning bath in what she thought was a deserted courtyard. In early modern Spain, tens of thousands of other Moriscos literally embodied their own identities in dress and bathing, dances and songs, prayers and fasts, remedies and love magic, food and family, and in celebrations of birth, marriage, and death. Morisco men also embodied their identities, but historical records often subsume this into accounts of their rebellions and military actions." (39)

Bourdieu is a staunch advocate of an embodied subjectivity that bears the scars of the encounter, or, rather, the struggle that holds between the dominant and dominated. To illustrate the way embodied subjectivity operated in 15<sup>th</sup> century Spanish society, Perry cites examples of Morisco women and men who transform their bodies into sites of resistance. She argues that such embodied knowledge "...demonstrate[s] the power of oppression and the strength of resistance, as well as significant evidence of "muted groups" in history", adding that "Moriscos left few written records of their thoughts and ideas, but historical documents describe their bodies, how they used them and identified themselves through their bodies." (39)

The Spanish Inquisition was ahead of its time when it targeted the bodies. Bathing has to do with more than a simple practice of hygiene. It is a constituting part of *habitus*, in other words, of capital. Bourdieu explains the relationship between *habitus*, body, and capital as follows:

The *habitus*, as the word implies, is that which one has acquired, but which has become durably incorporated in the body in the form of permanent dispositions. So, the term constantly reminds us that it refers to something historical, linked to individual history, and that it belongs to a genetic mode of thought, as opposed to existentialist modes of thought...Moreover, by *habitus*, the Scholastics also meant something like property, a capital. (*Language and Symbolic Power* 86)

The Spanish labored to strip the Moriscos of all capital. As a dominated minority group, these were not entitled to possess any form of symbolic power supposed to challenge the nascent Spanish state. Well aware of the empowering potential of culture, the Spanish inquisitors sought to wipe out bathing because, albeit mundane and trivial, it, nevertheless, stands out as a distinguishing marker of the antithetical Arab Islamic identity. As Bourdieu explicitly states, the *habitus* of a people is also their history, and, clearly, the Spanish stalked all that singled out Moriscos as bearers of history, culture, and civilization.

The embodied subjectivity of Moriscos was repressed by the Spanish church-state rule, mainly, through the legal system. The institution issued an avalanche of decrees designed to stamp out the religious and cultural rituals of Moriscos, what Moriscos revere solemnly and consider as their most cherished capital. Because the Spanish state accrued all capitals, it had the symbolic power to sanction legal statements and enforce their execution. Following Pierre Bourdieu, the symbolic power the state obtains as a result of its accumulation of capitals endows it with legitimacy, so that all its acts are tolerated however queer or inhumane.

Law, then, emerges as the most effective tool to establish legitimacy. It is the inexhaustible source of decrees and sanctions that possess the aura of indisputable truth. Law stands for another capital that the modern state monopolizes to ensure its sovereignty. Bourdieu traces the historical emergence of law in Europe to the 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> centuries, long time before the Spanish Inquisition:

The process of concentration of juridical capital, an objectified and codified form of symbolic capital, follows its own logic, distinct from that of the concentration of military capital and of financial capital. In the 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> century, several legal systems coexisted in Europe, with, on the other hand, ecclesiastical jurisdictions, as represented by Christian courts, and, on the other hand, secular jurisdictions, including the justice of the king, the justice of the lords, and the jurisdiction of municipalités(cities), of corporations, and of trade. (“Rethinking the State” 7)

Bourdieu talks about “the concentration of juridical power in the hands of the king”. Such concentration of juridical capital bestows legitimacy on the king’s use (and abuse) of power. Moreover, the process of concentration mentioned is accompanied by what Bourdieu calls differentiation. Differentiation occurred when “The judiciary body grew organized and hierarchized.” This organization and hierarchization “led to the constitution of an autonomous juridical field” (“Rethinking the State”10). Such autonomy of the law granted the latter a symbolic power that contributed significantly to the consolidation of the new ruling system. The organization, hierarchization, and autonomy of the legal system are elements that reinforce the bureaucratic system of the state. Bourdieu explains, “the construction of the juridico-bureaucratic structures constitutive of the state proceeded alongside the construction of the body of jurists” (“Rethinking the State” 10).

The Spanish Inquisition was alert to the sway of law and drew upon it heavily to promulgate its worldview and systematically destroy the Morisco one. The state-church rule issued a series of decrees, what it labeled “edicts of faith”, to dismantle the Morisco capital and devalue all that constitutes the Arab Islamic *habitus*. The decrees targeted the minute details of Morisco culture and civilization. Consider the following “edict of faith” that issued a ban on baths. L.P. Harvey cites it in his *Muslims in Spain*, commenting that it was one of the regulations that, at first, “puzzled” him, before he could figure out the real motives behind it. The decree reads as follows:“The public baths are not to be lit [or «heated”] on Sundays, nor feast days nor Fridays, and any bath-keeper who disobeys incurs the penalty of 600 maravedis on the first occasion, and 100 lashes for a second offense, the same penalties apply to those making use of the bath”(52).

Harvey’s state of “puzzlement” is supposed to grip any common reader of the decree. Bathing, as has been demonstrated by the example of Madalena Morisca, is a petty mundane practice that, on its own, sounds insignificant. However, in line with Michel Foucault, Bourdieu argues that power inhabits the mundane and the everyday, things people tend to overlook because they sound too natural to be held notice of. Seen from a Bourdieusian and Foucauldian lens, the Spanish prohibition of bathing is very intelligible within a framework that transcends both objectivity and subjectivity, and where the act and the actor are seen as one indissociable whole.



The Spanish rulers regarded bathing as a challenge to their authority. It was a practice that spoke of the Morisco religious and cultural capital.

In a field of struggle such as the fifteenth century Spanish society where the Spanish scrambled for goods and profits, the ban on baths was meant to strip Moriscos of one of their main symbolic capitals, thus, further weakening them by estranging them from their *habitus*. In his charismatic politics, Max Weber talks, as well, about the role of law in both consolidating a new rule or overturning an already existing one. After the military triumph of the Spanish, a great deal remained to be done to establish and stabilize their hegemony in the other fields of struggle, namely, the religious and cultural ones. Legal jurisdiction is an incarnation of the symbolic struggle underway. Andreas Kalyvas explains Weber's view, saying that:

In the case of law, for instance ...any legal innovation and genuine juridical founding rests on the instituting power of charisma and presupposes the existence of a stable and inclusive worldview. Radical legal transformations depend upon previous symbolic struggles among charismatic movements and hierocratic organizations. Against a purely formal juridical approach that focuses exclusively on the internal coherence and logical consistency of the law, Weber maintained that "the really decisive element [i.e., of original law transformation] has always been a new line of conduct which then results either in a change of the meaning of existing rules of law or in the creation of new rules of law. (88)

The "stable inclusive worldview" Weber evokes is precisely what Bourdieu means by *habitus*. What the Spanish Inquisition was after was to supplant the already existing Islamic Arab worldview/ *habitus* and substitute it with the Spanish Catholic worldview/*habitus*. To attain this goal, the Spanish Inquisition used legal jurisdiction in an instrumental way, bending it to its will. Kalyvas further explains this instrumental use of law, claiming that "Radical juridical changes lean on a web of extra-legal substantive axiological meanings and imaginary significations established by the victorious charismatic movement after a protracted symbolic struggle" (88).

Juridical capital was Spanish 'no trespass' zone. The Spanish sanctioned whatever decree goes in the direction of stripping Moriscos of their cultural capital. These decrees prowled all aspects of the Morisco life. An instance of these decrees is one issued by Queen Juana in 1513. It was addressed to Old Christian women in Granada, summoning them to stop dressing like Muslim women. In Granada and similar areas, the ways of life of the Muslim community were still capable of exerting their attraction on the new comers, the Christian settlers. Moriscos were diehard opponents, and cultural influences were still not all flowing in a Christianizing direction:

I strictly forbid any Old Christian woman to dress in the Moorish style from this day henceforward, under the penalty, for a first offence, of loss of the clothing thus worn, and a hundred strokes of the whip, and, for a second offence, the same penalties together with perpetual exile from the whole Kingdom of Granada. (qtd. in Harvey 52)

Again, Harvey makes no secret of his “puzzlement” at this “odd piece of legislation” (52). What is ironical is that the edict was addressed to Old Christian women who, as a result of their long mingling with Moriscos during the Nasrid dynasty and long before, had no misgivings dressing in the Moorish fashion, a fact that attests to a considerable level of assimilation and coexistence that prevailed during the Arab Islamic era.

The Spanish church-state’s new policy consisted of extirpating all the cultural traits of the dominated Morisco group. As a consequence, the Morisco *habitus* underwent a rapid process of disintegration, with the Spanish targeting all and every part of this *habitus*, however trivial or minute. Harvey’s study of the Spanish edicts of faith brought him to the conclusion that the Spanish “had set out to eliminate a range of manifestations of local culture and identity: the Arabic language, local dress and costume, jewelry, baths...it was the whole inherited culture that was being banned, and not just the religion itself” (106). Effectively, heresy in the Spanish Inquisition terms was not only religious. The forcible conversions were a stepping-stone towards expunging the Morisco *habitus* and stripping Arab Muslims of all symbolic power. In the course of laying the foundation for a nation-state, the Spanish Inquisition strove to hoard all sorts of capital. Such concentration of capital in the hands of the Spanish church-state rule accelerated the process of legitimation of the dominant Spanish worldview and de-legitimation of the dominated Morisco one. Andreas Kalyvas explains how Max Weber perceives this dual mission in his charismatic politics as follows:

The key strategy in these confrontations is to subvert solidified structures of domination by attacking their symbolic and motivational foundation and by disrupting the ethical and rational presuppositions of their legitimation discourses in order to weaken the sources of internal obedience and tacit consent upon which the existing social order is based...In order to succeed in its de-legitimizing project, a charismatic movement has to launch a hegemonic, cultural attack against the dominant worldview. Its aim is to weaken and disqualify the validity of the instituted reality... (84)

This double process of legitimation and de-legitimation rests at the core of the modern state. It is a process built upon the concentration of all capitals in the hands of the state. Pierre Bourdieu defines the state as “the *culmination of a concentration of different species of capital*: capital of physical force or instruments of coercion (army, police), economic capital, cultural or (better) informational capital, and symbolic capital” (emphasis in the original, “Rethinking the State” 4). Bourdieu further explicates that it is

this concentration as such which constitutes the state as the holder of a sort of meta-capital granting power over other species of capital and over their holders. Concentration of the different species of capital, (which proceeds hand in hand with the construction of the corresponding fields) leads indeed to the emergence of a specific, properly statist capital (capital étatique) which enables the state to exercise power over the different fields and over the different particular species of capital...(Rethinking the State 4)

The Spanish church-state's invincible strength, and the terror it struck in the hearts of its own population and overseas, depended largely on a hoarding of capital, a fact that endowed it with a symbolic power that has the effect of "magic", to quote Marcel Mauss.

### **III. 2 The Power of Nomination**

Bourdieu singles out another type of power equally important and decisive: the power of nomination, or the exclusive prerogative that the state possesses to nominate people, acts, and various representations in a way it deems correct and profitable. Bourdieu cites the example of the nobles of Aragon, who called themselves "ricohombres de natura", that is, men by nature or by birth, in contrast to the nobles created by the king. This distinction is of paramount importance, as it demonstrates that the state has the mandate of "ennobling" people, thus elevating their status and granting them special privileges.

Such authority of the state to bestow favors and honors on its subjects has immediate implications on the social, economic, and cultural levels. In the field of struggle for power, the state distributes symbolic capital in the form of statutes, honorific names, certificates, and edicts. It follows that the state determines people's situation in the present and their prospects for the future. The state has the power of shaping individuals, of fabricating human beings by the mere act of naming. Bourdieu claims that:

By stating with authority what a being ( thing or person) is in truth (verdict) according to its socially legitimate definition, that is, what he or she is authorized to be, what he has a right ( and duty) to be, the social being that he may claim, the State wields a genuinely creative, quasi-divine, power. It suffices to think of the kind of immortality that it can grant through acts of consecration, such as commemorations or scholarly canonizations, to see how, twisting Hegel's famous expression, we may say that: "the judgment of the state is the last judgment" ("Rethinking the State" 12)

In effect, the Spanish church-state's judgment of Moriscos was despotically the final judgment. The Spanish invested in the craft of naming to an immeasurable degree. They produced, rather, baptized, to quote Saul Kripke, names to the Arab Muslims, calling them Moriscos, which means little Moors, a way of exposing their weakness and pettiness. Chejn, Anwar.G cites some of the names that the Spanish used to dub the Arab Muslims in the aftermath of 1492:

Shortly after the conquest of Granada in 1492 by the Catholic kings, their Muslim subjects in Spain became known derogatorily as Moriscos (little Moors), Moros, Muhammadans, Hagarans (bastards or descendants of Hagar), and Saracens, despite the fact that they were forced to accept the sacrament of baptism. Such appellations remained in use throughout the sixteenth century, applied indiscriminately to all Moriscos, regardless of the degree of their devotion to Christianity. The appellations differentiated between the new converts and the Old Christians, believed to be of the pure Spanish stock and possessing purity of blood (*limpieza de sangre*). (vii)

By virtue of the act of naming, the Spanish church-state divided the population into Old Christians, whose genealogical roots were free from Moorish and Jewish blood (though this proposition is much contested among historians, given the intermarriages that occurred between the different ethnic groups that lived under the Arab Muslim rule before the Reconquest) on the one hand, and the New Christians, who stood for the newly converted, mainly Muslims and Jews, on the other. Such broad division of the population entailed political, social, economic, and cultural implications that mapped the Spanish society and determined the distribution of goods and profits.

The term “Moriscos”, which the Spanish used to name the Arab Muslims, whom they had always regarded as their most declared enemy, is, in itself a political exercise of power. It is a “rigid designator”, to use Saul Kripke’s coinage, which is meant to fix its subject within clearly articulated boundaries. Subsuming Moriscos under the category of the New Christians, *Nuevos Christianos* brought along with it a number of prohibitions, restrictions, and retributions.

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As early as the fifteenth century, the power of naming had already been in operation. S.I.Hayakawa writes about the rhetorical importance of naming and labeling, showing how labels serve to identify individuals by squaring them into definable categories: “when we name something, then, we are classifying. *The individual object or event we are naming, of course has no name and belongs to no class until we put it in one*”(emphasis in the original, 201). Names are descriptions that arguably influence our reaction to individuals. The story of Madalena, cited earlier in this paper, is one speaking example. The Spanish records referred to her as Madalena Morisca instead of mentioning her family name or her husband’s name as is usually the case. Mary Elizabeth Perry comments insightfully:

Rather than including a family name or the name of a husband or owner, as most Inquisition records listed women, the clerk who recorded testimony in this case added to Madalena’s Christian name the term “Morisca”. His choice of this term indicates the social and political significance of religious status in this period. It also reveals a politics of difference in which people in power attempted to transform into a badge of shame those identifications that less powerful people held for themselves and sought to preserve as an honor. (38)

The Spanish Inquisition started by changing the names of the Arab Muslims, enforcing upon them Spanish Christian names. The harm that resulted from this act was that by choosing new names-- Christian ones for that matter—Arab Muslims had literally cut off all ties with their ancestry. They were rendered uprooted and without a history. Francisco Nunez Muley is a Morisco from the nobility of Granada who sent a petition to the king complaining, among other things, about the ban on the Arabic names. He argued his case speaking for Moriscos and trying to expose the devastation resultant from the ban:

With respect to Morisco surnames: how are we supposed to know one another if we only make use of Castilian surnames? The people will know nothing of the person with whom they are speaking, from whom they are purchasing, and with whom they are marrying, given that they have no knowledge of his or her lineage. What benefit is derived from erasing from our memories... our surnames...? (Barletta 88)

Banning Arabic names and substituting them with Castilian, Spanish ones was an explicit exercise of power meant to stymie Morison's sense of the self as a prelude to transform them into an extinct species, which, effectively, was the case. Nunez Muley argued that the use of Castilian names would make Moriscos forget about their origins. For the Spanish Inquisition's discourse of power, if the use of Castilian names caused Moriscos a permanent brain damage amounting to amnesia, so much the better.

In a parallel arrangement, the Spanish church-state resorted to an arsenal of denigrating epithets in order to further accentuate Moriscos' difference or, rather, deviance from the Spanish Catholic mainstream. Perry claims that "using their imagistic power, Christian writers portrayed Morisco men as flabby and effeminate sodomites and pedophiles—perhaps in an effort to discredit their masculine reproductive and military powers. Christian critics described Morisco women as obstinate, lewd, and treacherous, slyly hiding behind veils" (59). Kings and intellectuals emerge as the leading figures of the anti-Morisco propaganda. In his biography, James I, the great king of the crown of Aragon, described the Muslims as "traitors... ever seeking to do us harm", while Sancho VI, in his book of advice to his son, argued that "the Moor is nothing but a dog" (qtd. in Ruiz 155).

The Spanish Inquisition availed itself of branding Moriscos with disparaging epithets, confident that their point of view will be *the* point of view widely held in the Spanish society. It is little wonder that literary productions of the epoch were replete with depictions of Moriscos as doughnut peddlers, poor and illiterate hands to mouth agriculturists, and stupid "quixotian" creatures, unable to rise up to the level of their Spaniard masters. Here is the account of Father Pedro Aznar Cardona, a Spanish bishop and a humanist of the period, describing Morisco ways and manners:

Having spoken of their nature, their religion, and their heretical beliefs, what remains for us to deal with now is what they were like and how they behaved. In this respect, they were the vilest of people, slovenly, and in no way given to those helpmeets of virtue, noble letters, and sciences. In consequence, they were far removed from all urbane, courteous, and polite manners and customs... They brought their children up to run wild like brute beasts, giving them no rational teaching or instruction for salvation, except what was forced upon them, and what they were obliged by their Superiors to attend, because they had been baptized. Their sentences were clumsy, their discourse bestial, their language barbarous, and their way of dressing ridiculous... (qtd. in Harvey 413-416)

Historical records conserved the view of Father Pedro Aznar Cardona because his opinion mattered with regard to the position he occupied: a renowned Bishop in the Spanish Inquisition. His views about Moriscos were the more outrageous and prejudiced. Aznar's description of Moriscos was largely upheld and acquiesced among Old Christians, and in a sense, transmits to us how Moriscos were looked down upon by the society of 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> century Spain.

The role of Aznar was particularly decisive in shaping the image of Moriscos. According to both Pierre Bourdieu and Max Weber, figures like him stand for the intellectual elite that support the realpolitik of the state and contribute to the strengthening of the latter's symbolic power.

One needs not much intelligence to read between the lines and discern what James Boon designates as a "cultural exaggeration" in anthropological research, an intensification of perceived cultural differences within a shared discursive space (26). Moriscos emerge from this discourse as illiterate, uncivil, and lacking all manners.

Because it hoarded all types of capital, the Spanish Inquisition had, as a result, complete mandate to name and, thus, categorize, classify, identify, and draw clear and unambiguous lines, determining who Moriscos were and what they could ever aspire to be or have in a field of power, where violence was spelled out both tacitly and explicitly. Naming is the most straightforward way of producing meaning and truth. It is the vehicle by means of which common sense and conventional wisdom are forwarded to the laity. In Bourdieu's language, a whole "worldview" is implanted.

Orthodox Spanish Catholicism was particularly engrossed with pinning down the truth against which all other faiths were viewed as sparks of outright heresy and grave error. Pierre Bourdieu accords the act of naming a special importance in his political theory of power. He claims that

In the symbolic struggle for the production of common sense or, more precisely, for the monopoly of legitimate naming as the official-i.e. explicit and public imposition of the legitimate vision of the social world, agents bring into play the symbolic capital that they have acquired in previous struggles... the symbolic strategies through which agents aim to impose their vision of the divisions of the social world and of their positions in that world can be located between two extremes: the insult, that idios logos through which an ordinary individual attempts to impose his point of view ...and the official naming, a symbolic act of imposition which has on its side all the strength of the collective, of the consensus, of common sense, because it is performed by a delegated agent of the state, that is, the holder of the monopoly of legitimate symbolic violence. (*Language and symbolic power* 239)

Of the strength of the collective, of the consensus, of the common sense, the Spanish church-state enjoyed a good amount, as it was the sole legitimate authority that issued judgments of value and taste, fashioning the Spanish worldview. This worldview was monolithic, homogeneous, and dismissive of all other differing worldviews.

Edward Iricinshi and Holger M.Zellentin argue in "Making Selves and Marking others: Identity and Late Antique Heresiologies" in favour of the constructive nature of heresy and of its essentially political, social, rhetorical, and literary production that obtains from naming:

The act of naming "heretics"...shape[s] the perception and organization of social space, political status, and group boundaries...one profitable way to approach heresiological writings is as "performative" discourses that strive to bring the

“heretic” into being by the “social magical” act of naming—whether performed from within ecclesiastical structures of power or as expressions of fantasies of such power...Ancient heresiological discourses re-read similarity as difference; they turned religious formations akin to their own into utterly different configurations through appellations, the construction of hybrid genealogies, and/or the exaggeration of existing differences. (20)

Seen from this angle, the heretical Morisco was more of a rhetorically constructed subject than any real historical object. Orthodox discourse invariably constructs its anathema: heresy, which is, then, the standard measurement against which the former is constantly reappraised. In a field of struggle, such as the one prevalent in 15<sup>th</sup> century Spain, the subordinate and the super ordinate engaged in a deadly war over capital: the religious, the cultural, the economic, and the symbolic one. The dominant Spanish group expropriated all sources of power and weaved discourses that systematically excluded the heretical, infidel Morisco Other, calling him names, discrediting his prophet, and throwing his beliefs into shame and derision. William E. Arnal talks about the process of creating “artificial Jews” in his “Heresy, Doxa and self- construction”. I find Arnal’s argument is compelling and quite applicable to fifteenth century Moriscos<sup>3</sup>.

Set against the historical state of *convivencia* that characterized the Iberian Peninsula under the Muslim caliphs when Muslims, Jews, and Christians lived side by side in a historically remarkable coexistence, free from forms of overt violence and state persecution, the artificiality with which the Spanish created heretical Moriscos gets all the more conspicuous. The edict of faith, cited earlier in this paper, where Queen Juana orders the Old Christian women to abandon the Moorish long white malafas, corroborates the fact that the Arab Muslim ways of life, their food diet, their dressing style, and their ceremonies were quite acceptable, even appreciated and appropriated by their Christian counterparts and posed no real problem to the interaction between the two communities. It follows that the discursive vilification of Morisco culture, their misrepresentation using labels and names, did not emanate from the Spanish average person. Rather, it was a political exercise of power, aimed at excluding an Other, who apparently did not fit in the project of the nation-state launched by the Spanish Inquisition. This was implemented largely using language and discourse, which, while it served to *make* the Spanish national identity, it acted in favour of *marking* Moriscos as outsiders, misfits that have to be disposed of.

### **III. Conclusion**

In this paper, I have tried to shed light on the modern political side of the Spanish Inquisition, which superseded the Islamic rule in what was known as Al-andalus. Heresy in the Spanish Inquisition was not only religious. What the Arab Muslims endured after the collapse of Granada in 1492: the obliteration of all signs of their culture and their systematic, unrelenting process of dispossessions and divestment of all capitals can only be understood within the framework of a well identified political agenda, of which main objective is the exclusion of an Arab Muslim Other that fits badly within the project of making a Spanish Christian modern nation in Southern Europe. Moriscos emerge as the scapegoat in an early modern struggle over power and hegemony. They also present the first symptomatic features of what Samuel

Huntington labels the clash of civilizations. The persecution of the Arab Islamic culture and history, what Bourdieu refers to as *habitus*, and the use of the power of nomination to bring about a radical change in worldview and establish and impose a new one in something akin to Mao's cultural revolution in 20th century China grants the Spanish Inquisition (the very name of which belies a actual use of the power of nomination to conceal the political activity of the institution) the driving seat among modern nation-states.

Seen from another angle, the object lesson the Arab Muslims' historical expulsion from Europe in 1609 teaches us is that unlike Huntington's perception of the clash of civilizations as a one way street and contrary to the western media picturing Islam and Muslims as a threat, the latter have invariably been the scapegoat in an ongoing David and Goliath struggle that has started as early as the 15<sup>th</sup> century. Inquisitions, burnings at the stake, enforced mass conversions, ethnic cleansings, displacements, and cultural exterminations are all Christian European commodities par excellence. Both Pierre Bourdieu's theory of symbolic power and Max Weber's charismatic politics agree upon the fact that culture is a determining factor in the establishment of the modern nation-state. The Spanish state-church rule had remarkably born these two theorists out. The result was catastrophic. A whole civilization was extirpated. It turned out that the Spanish Inquisition's war on heresy was only the tip of the iceberg. The remarkable alliance between church and state in early modern Spain had set the founding stones of the modern world, and the Foucauldian discourse of knowledge and power has its anchor, there, in 15<sup>th</sup> century Spain and in the collapse of Islam in Europe. Western scholarship continues to gloss over early modern Inquisitions, preferring to prudishly reject them as mere religious orthodox discourses. More research is invited, though, to enlighten the still black holes of this period that immediately precedes the entry of the world into modernity. Michel Foucault was daring to trace the genealogical origins of western civilization to some pronounced Christian practices like confessions. The Arab Muslim experience with the Spanish Inquisition offers even more fertile areas of study and research and will certainly help revisit and correct many of our perceived notions about what Samuel Huntington brazenly labels "the Clash of Civilizations". One final question: Are Arab Muslims entitled to ask for an apology following the Jewish model? As it seems, this is a question that awaits no answer. The discourse of power the Spanish Inquisition initiated as early as the fifteenth century is still in vogue and there is no sign of it losing edge any time soon.



### Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> For more details, see Stavans, Ilan. "Repatriating Spain's Jews." [www.nytimes.com](http://www.nytimes.com). 2 Apr. 2014. 19 Aug. 2015. <[http://www.nytimes.com/2014/04/02/opinion/repatriating-spains-jews.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2014/04/02/opinion/repatriating-spains-jews.html?_r=0)>

<sup>2</sup> In *Language and symbolic power*, Bourdieu demonstrates how the acquisition of a 'legitimate' language, that is a language officially recognized by the state, enables one to access profits from the other fields of power, for example, social promotion and noble jobs.

<sup>3</sup> Arnal uses the term "artificial Jews" to refer to the community of disciples that fled the Roman persecution and followed Paul's Christian precepts. These disciples were stripped of their identity, driven out of their lands, and ostracized by the Roman society of the time. I find the term compelling in that it applies squarely to the Arab Muslims under the Spanish Inquisition. They equally were made "artificial" Arab Muslims, as they lacked all that would make them live up to the appellation "Arab Muslims". They were the pure artifact of the Spanish Inquisition, with no meaningful lineage (after they were enforced to change their names), no commune identity, and no citizenship rights either.

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