

“The Best Land Yet Discovered”

Spanish Migrants, Lettered Culture, and Peruvian Patriotism

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A Thesis

In the Department of

History

Presented in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements

For the Degree of Master of Arts (History) at

Concordia University

Montreal, Quebec, Canada

April 2026

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CONCORDIA UNIVERSITY

School of Graduate Studies

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ABSTRACT

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In attempting to understand the formation of a distinct Spanish American identity in early colonial Peru, scholarship usually relies on the production of the lettered elite. Yet the letters of non-elite colonists contain valuable representations of the Peruvian landscape, the peculiarities of their American lifestyle, and the sense of self these actors were forging as their realities alienated them from Iberian Spanish society. Migrants, in particular, were torn between their old life “there” and the new customs “here.” In this thesis, late sixteenth-century Spanish migrants’ letters are considered in the historical and intellectual contexts of their era, going beyond the study of letters as standalone documents and instead examining the collective representations of the colonial space they were creating. Arguing that in these letters are found the roots of a creole identity, this work calls attention to the self-understanding of non-elite Spaniards as they participated in the building of colonial Peru.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Those to whom this section is addressed can surely imagine my difficulty in writing it. I will keep it brief. Thank you to my family for supporting me throughout my academic journey, it would never have been possible without your help. Thank you to my partner, Fernando, for your advice on translation, your interest in my research, and your support during my frenzied writing spells. Thank you to my supervisor, Nora Jaffary, for all your advice and for guiding me through this journey. I have grown so much as a writer thanks to you.

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Introduction

How did sixteenth-century Spanish migrants understand their position in colonial Peru? Writing from Peru in 1578, Inés Alonso Cervera confessed in a letter to her son García de Escobar that she feared returning to “*that land*, considering the comforts and ease of this one, in which God was pleased to place me, one cannot bear to go where so many hardships are endured, as in Spain.”¹ Though she longed to see her children after years apart, the aging woman dreaded the difficult journey across the Atlantic and the misfortunes she had escaped from when she migrated from Spain to Los Reyes (Lima, Peru). Three years prior, she had begged Escobar to join her in America so he could take care of her and manage her estate; recently widowed, she found herself all alone in a New World (“I have no protection at all, nor someone to look after my *hacienda*, which diminishes daily”).² The desperate tone of this 1575 letter contrasted with one she wrote three years later in which she again urged her son to join her, only this time Alonso Cervera emphasized how migration would improve Escobar’s life since he would be free to enjoy his mother’s plentiful resources. Alonso Cervera attempted to convince her son that life was better in the colonies than in Spain, writing that in *this land* “it is not necessary for men to go about dragging themselves to eat.”³ She further sought to entice her daughters by suggesting that they would be able to marry favourably and be well cared for. Finally, she explained that she was sending 700 reales and 40 ducats to be distributed among her children, proving to them that she was indeed living in prosperity, and thus further tempting them to migrate so they could also begin a better life in America.

¹ Enrique Otte, *Cartas privadas de emigrantes a Indias, 1540-1616* (V Centenario Consejería de Cultura, 1988), 397-98. Emphasis mine. All translations from Spanish unless otherwise indicated are my own.

² Otte, *Cartas privadas*, 391.

³ Otte, *Cartas privadas*, 397-98.

Alonso Cervera's praise of the New World, her defense of the land and its opportunities, and the contrast she illustrates between her old life and her new reality in Peru reflects the debates in which nineteenth-century American Spanish descendants (*criollos*) and European Spaniards (*peninsulares*) engaged. This conflict is often understood as a principal cause in the development of Latin American identities distinct from European culture and, consequently, in the various independence movements across the continent.⁴ Can it really be traced back to the first generation of migrants? While Latin American historians continue to complicate understandings of Independence and the ideology behind it by offering perspectives from subaltern groups, studies about the origin of *criollismo* and criollo identity remain heavily dependent on articles, books, and chronicles written by the educated 'clerical-creole' colonial elite. Those outside this group, then, remain unheard. This thesis raises the question: can alternative sources, namely personal correspondence, provide enough evidence to posit new theories about the origin of *criollismo*?

Although some historians locate the rise of creole patriotism in the later periods of colonial rule, others argue for an earlier articulation of the idea. Accepting key analyses that argue that the ideology's roots can be found as early as the late sixteenth century, this thesis is specifically interested in the experiences of non-elite Spanish actors. When and how did *criollismo* develop across various sectors of Spanish American society? Did non-elite Spaniards

⁴ For Bernard Lavallé, the tension between *criollos* and *peninsulares*, present since the very early years of the colonial state (and itself emerging from even older regional patriotisms), repeatedly reared its head throughout history. He writes that "this major issue will be added to existing problems, will feed on them, and exacerbate, in many cases, latent oppositions aroused by other motives, or give a new mask to old resentments." David Brading is also of the opinion that 'Mexican nationalism' in the post-Independence era is directly influenced by patriotic creoles who, in the colonial era, adopted distinctly American symbols, myths, histories, identities. Bernard Lavallé, "Recherches sur l'apparition de la conscience créole dans la Vice-Royauté du Pérou: l'antagonisme hispano-créole dans les ordres religieux (XVIème - XVIIème siècles)," (PhD diss., Université Michel de Montaigne Bordeaux, 1978): 320, <https://hal.science/tel-01585336v1/document>; David A. Brading, *Los orígenes del nacionalismo mexicano*, 1st ed., trans. Soledad Loaeza Grave (Mexico, 1973); David A. Brading, *The First America: The Spanish Monarchy, Creole Patriots and the Liberal State, 1492-1867* (Cambridge University Press, 1991).

consider themselves criollos, or was it exclusively an upper-class identity? Is it even possible to answer these questions, to study the realities of historical actors who “do not produce documents”?⁵ How did women connect or disconnect with this identity?

Elena Altuna contends that a shift in mentality away from peninsular Spanish identity occurred immediately at migration:

[Migrants’ letters] bring into play two spaces: ‘here’ (*aquí*) and ‘there’ (*allá*), which are mutually defined in their confrontation, reflecting a double sense of belonging strained between the past and the present. ‘Here’ and ‘there’ therefore express something more than the life circumstances of individuals: they act as markers of a colonial situation that encompasses and permeates them, and at the same time they expose one of the modalities of expression of the complex nature of the ‘migrant subject.’⁶

Though these early migrants did not explicitly refer to their shift in mentality, it began forming as soon as they conceptualized their migration as permanent, creating a tension between the old traditions and the new reality. Altuna calls this *protocriollismo*.

This thesis follows Altuna’s concept of *protocriollismo* in arguing that criollo identity takes root with the birth of the colonial project itself. As Altuna observes, the distinction between past and present, “here” and “there,” exposes the migrants’ “consciousness of the difference that being in the new land entails.”⁷ It is essential to consider these expressions in the context of migration—the tension between longing for old, familiar traditions and new realities—“not as an expression of the subjects’ individual circumstances, but as a textual space for the elaboration of

⁵ Carlos Monsiváis, introduction to *La ciudad letrada*, Ángel Rama (Tajamar Editores, 2004), 9.

⁶ Elena Altuna, “Imágenes del Perú y protocriollismo en las cartas privadas de los inmigrantes,” *Revista de Crítica Literaria Latinoamericana* 26, no. 52 (2000): 215, <http://www.jstor.com/stable/4531129>.

⁷ Altuna, “Imágenes del Perú y protocriollismo,” 222.

images of Peru.”⁸ Furthermore, I posit that the development of a creole identity occurred through the redefinition of the self, which now contained uniquely American components, but remained connected (albeit more distantly) to Spanish identities; this means creolization as a tension, a negotiation.

This thesis uses letters written by Spanish migrants and therefore addresses the development of a creole identity among people of Spanish descent. Many scholars are interested in the negotiations (the creolization) of self-identity for Indigenous, African, and mixed race people across Latin America. For example, Rolena Adorno discusses Andeans who adopted Spanish customs in “Images of Indios Ladinos in Early Colonial Peru”; Alexandre Coello de la Rosa and Paulina Numhauser identify variants in the definition of ‘criollo’ between Lima and rural Peruvian regions in his introduction to criollismo; and Rachel Sarah O’Toole asks “How did Africans become ‘Blacks’ and Andeans become ‘Indians’?”⁹ In *Creolization*, editor Charles

⁸ Altuna, “Imágenes del Perú y protocriollismo,” 216.

⁹ Rolena Adorno, “Images of *Indios Ladinos* in Early Colonial Peru,” in *Transatlantic Encounters: Europeans and Andeans in the Sixteenth Century*, eds. Kenneth J. Andrien and Rolena Adorno (University of California Press, 1991); Alexandre Coello de la Rosa and Paulina Numhauser, “Criollismo y mestizaje en el mundo andino (siglos XVI-XIX),” *Illes i imperis*, no. 14 (2012): 13-48, <https://raco.cat/index.php/IllesImperis/article/view/263959>; Rachel Sarah O’Toole, *Bound Lives: Africans, Indians, and the Making of Race in Colonial Peru* (University of Pittsburgh Press, 2012): 1. On mestizo identities, see also Kathryn Burns, “Gender and the Politics of Mestizaje: The Convent of Santa Clara in Cuzco, Peru,” *Hispanic American Historical Review* 78, no. 1 (1998), <https://doi.org/10.1215/00182168-78.1.005>, and Verena Stolke, ““Los mestizos no nacen sino que se hacen,” *Avá Revista de Antropología*, no.14 (2009), <https://www.redalyc.org/articulo.oa?id=169013838002>. On Indigenous perceptions of the self, see Rocío Quispe-Agnoli, “Yo y el Otro’: identidad y alteridad en la ‘Nueva Corónica y Buen Gobierno,” *MLN* 119, no.2 (2004): 226-51, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3251771>, and José Rabasa and Jehudah Abarbanel, “Porque soy Indio’: Subjectivity in La Florida del Inca,” *Poetics Today* 16, no.1 (1995): 79-108, <https://doi.org/10.2307/1773224>. On Afro-Peruvians, see Rosario Márquez Macías and María Luisa Candau Chacón, “Las otras mujeres de América : las esclavas negras en tiempos de la Colonia, un estudio a través de la correspondencia privada,” *Vistas Al Patio*, no. 10 (2016): 75-92, <https://doi.org/10.32997/2027-0585-vol.0-num.10-2016-1789>, and Karen B. Graubart, “The bonds of inheritance: Afro-Peruvian women’s legacies in a slave-holding world,” in *Women’s Negotiations and Textual Agency in Latin America, 1500-1799*, eds. Rocío Quispe-Agnoli and Mónica Díaz (Routledge, 2016): 130-149. See also Sarah Albiez-Wieck and Raquel Gil Montero, “The emergence of colonial fiscal categorizations in Peru. Forasteros and yanaconas del rey, sixteenth to nineteenth centuries,” *Journal of Iberian and Latin American Studies* 26, no. 1 (2020): 1-24, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14701847.2020.1717109>; Julie Hardwick, Sarah M. S. Pearsall, and Karin Wulf, “Centering Families in Atlantic Histories,” *The William and Mary Quarterly* 70, no. 2 (2013): 205-224, <https://doi.org/10.5309/willmaryquar.70.2.0205>; Sara Vicuña Guengerich, “Capac Women and the Politics of Marriage in Early Colonial Peru,” *Colonial Latin American Review* 24, no. 2 (2015): 147-67, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/10609164.2015.1040275>; Ida Altman, “Marriage, Family, and Ethnicity in the Early

Stewart presents various definitions of the term ‘creole’ in order to explore how different global contexts affect these mixed identities: in some places it refers to biological miscegenation, in others to language, animals, or customs; it is at times self-identified or reclaimed, at other times imposed, pejorative.¹⁰ This project begins with the definition of ‘criollo’ referring to the colonial (Spanish) white elite, and questions how lower class people of Spanish descent in the sixteenth century fit in this definition.

The first chapter of this thesis paints the portrait of a sixteenth-century (proto) creole. Unlike later creoles, the sixteenth-century predecessors did not confidently assert their identities, but they expressed sentiments of alienation from Spain and Spanish culture, and a familiarity and acceptance of (at least parts of) colonial American lifestyle; this is the prototype necessary for the growing self-assurance of seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth century creoles. Based on the overarching themes found across the letters of migrants, this thesis sketches the birth of this new identity and concludes that the mix of economic success in the New World, attachment to local customs, and abiding connections to the Old World all helped cultivate creole identity. The second chapter returns to studies on sixteenth-century criollismo in the lettered class to compare the grievances of elite and non-elite actors. It contends that the elitist complaints which forged a shared consciousness among Spanish American upper class creoles differ significantly from lower class creoles, for whom pride in their new identity came from practical realities. But despite their divergences, both groups penned the first patriotic expressions of a new community,

Spanish Caribbean,” *The William and Mary Quarterly* 70, no. 2 (2013): 232, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.5309/willmaryquar.70.2.0225>; Karen B. Graubart, “The Creolization of the New World: Local Forms of Identification in Urban Colonial Peru, 1560-1640,” *Hispanic American Historical Review* 89, no. 3 (2009): 471-99, <https://doi.org/10.1215/00182168-2009-003>.

¹⁰ Charles Stewart, ed., *Creolization* (Routledge, 2007).

and their ideas would be repeated, renovated, revitalized, recognized by future generations, continuously influencing colonial and postcolonial social dynamics.

Cartas de Llamada: Sources, Issues, and Methodology

It is impossible to ascertain how Inés Alonso Cervera's life ended. Like most other middle-class migrants, traces of her existence are extremely limited. Her two letters (the only known ones) were discovered, transcribed, and published alongside 648 similar letters by the historian Enrique Otte in his 1988 *Cartas privadas de emigrantes a Indias, 1540-1616*. His extensive collection is well known, though new sources continue to emerge, making personal correspondence a rich source for colonial Latin American historians.¹¹ Alonso Cervera's letters and many more were preserved in Seville's General Archive of the Indies (AGI), usually as standalone documents or in pairs, and occasionally complemented by a relative's *licencia para pasar* (licence to migrate)

In Alonso Cervera's case, her letters are supplemented by records of her children's existence; two 1578 records indicate that her son Jerónimo de Escobar and her son-in-law Juan Martín each obtained a licence to migrate to Lima.¹² A required document for all Spaniards heading to the colonies as of 1503, the licence was granted by the Casa de Contratación de las Indias (the House of Trade) in Seville once its officials had deemed the future migrant an acceptable candidate. In the case of Escobar and Martín, their requests were approved on the basis that they were needed in Lima to care for Alonso Cervera. Indeed, her first letter was

¹¹ For an overview of other collections and of methodological issues in the use of letters as a historical source, see Werner Stangl, "Un cuarto de siglo con *Cartas privadas de emigrantes a Indias*. Prácticas y perspectivas de ediciones de cartas transatlánticas en el Imperio español," *Anuario de Estudios Americanos* 70, no. 2 (2013): 703–36, <https://doi.org/10.3989/aeamer.2013.2.11>.

¹² "Jerónimo de Escobar," 1578, INDIFERENTE, 2090, N.28, Archivo General de Indias, <https://pares.mcu.es/ParesBusquedas20/catalogo/show/443685?nm>; "Juan Martín," 1578, INDIFERENTE, 2090, N.180, Archivo General de Indias, <https://pares.mcu.es/ParesBusquedas20/catalogo/show/443837?nm>.

preserved alongside the two men's *licencias para pasar*, suggesting that it was used and consulted by Casa de Contratación officials in their investigation into Escobar and Martín's migration requests. This was no isolated case: 'private' letters from relatives or friends who had already migrated were so commonly used in future immigrants' requests for licences that the appellation *cartas de llamada* (recruitment letter) was coined.

Werner Stangl defines the distinction between a *carta privada* (private letter) and a *carta de llamada* by the presence of two criteria: first, in the latter, the author explicitly mentioned the recipient's potential migration, and second, the author assumed the responsibility of helping the future migrant settle in, either through shelter, money, or personal connections.¹³ The letter could have either a positive tone (encouraging the recipient to come enjoy the author's wealth) or a negative tone (begging the recipient to come as soon as possible as they were the author's last hope of avoiding financial ruin, death, or any other catastrophe). Additionally, because the use of letters in migration cases was so frequent, authors were likely conscious of the potential impact of their letter. While the majority maintain the appearance of a private letter, others directly address this legal usage.¹⁴ Thus, the letters were not 'private' because, overtly or covertly, their authors' desire to facilitate the recipient's migration process shaped them.

This raises a critical question: are *cartas de llamada* a valuable source for historians if they do not reveal the "true person" behind the pen? In this thesis, I aim to follow Stangl in a critical, less "gullible" reading of the 'private' letters migrants sent home.¹⁵ But that does not

¹³ Werner Stangl, "Consideraciones metodológicas acerca de las cartas privadas de emigrantes españoles desde América, 1492–1824. El caso de las 'cartas de llamada,'" *Jahrbuch für Geschichte Lateinamerikas* 47, no. 1 (2010): 20, <https://www.vr-elibrary.de/doi/pdf/10.7767/jbla.2010.47.1.11>.

¹⁴ For example, see Gabriel Hernández's letter in which he told his nephew to "make ready on the first fleet that shall come, for the licence will require no more than presenting this [letter] at the Council, for it shall straightway be given to you with warrant and dispatch." Otte, *Cartas privadas*, 408-9.

¹⁵ Stangl, "Consideraciones metodológicas," 11-12.

mean that everything penned in those letters is unreliable or unrevealing. First, even a basic sampling of cartas de llamada reveals that they reveal fluctuations between effusive praise and deep distaste for the New World. While in 1558 Sebastián Carrera wrote to his wife that “this land where I live is the most abundant in the world, no man here wishes to return to Spain unless he is exceedingly rich,”¹⁶ doña María de Córdoba told her sister twenty years later that the Indies were “the worst land that there is in the world, that in the end it is a copy, as if they took everything from Spain [...] since I left that land, I have had but a thousand hardships.”¹⁷ This fluctuation prompts the conclusion that to be useful as cartas de llamada, letters were not required to fabricate either a positive or negative view of the colonies, and therefore, that a certain degree of sincerity on the author’s part can be presumed. Though they might be incentivized to exaggerate their situation, it was not necessary to entirely invent a new one.

Second, through their formulaic structure, cartas de llamada include valuable insight into their creators’ mentalities as they often deviate beyond the rigid framework required of such texts. Rebecca Earle notes that though few letters were written by women, most were written to women.¹⁸ She analyzes terms of affection in migrants’ letters, remarking that although sixteenth-century letter writing manuals recommended simply addressing women as “señora,” men often employed such expressions as “my desired wife” or “he who loves you more than himself.”¹⁹ The intimacy found in such letters reveals how they often contain private thoughts or emotions, even if they held the dual function of cartas de llamadas.²⁰ Just as Earle established that

¹⁶ Otte, *Cartas privadas*, 378-79.

¹⁷ Otte, *Cartas privadas*, 396-97.

¹⁸ Rebecca Earle, “Letters and Love in Colonial Spanish America,” *The Americas* 62, no. 1 (2005): 26, <https://doi.org/10.1353/tam.2005.0120>.

¹⁹ Earle, “Letters and Love,” 32-33.

²⁰ For Yamile Silva, letters are written between “two people whose relationship was considered equal and symmetrical,” and they can therefore reveal inter-personal dynamics. For Roger Chartier, they represent an intimate sphere, hidden from the eyes of the community. Yamile Silva, “Letters from the Río de La Plata: Agency and identity in colonial women’s petitions,” in *Women’s Negotiations and Textual Agency in Latin America, 1500-1799*,

maintaining romantic relationships was a main concern for many migrants, María Sánchez Serrano and María Herranz Pinacho's respective studies reveal that female authors prioritized writing to children, and Miguel Ángel Quesada Pacheco highlights how fathers' letters to their sons displayed a particularly profound intimacy.²¹ These studies demonstrate that although it is impossible to fully dissect authors' minds, there is still much that can be deduced from their letters.

Finally, it must also be said that, though cartas de llamada are not completely truthful representations of their authors, they are an immensely valuable source because they are largely written by Spaniards outside of the lettered elite. Letters are generally the only evidence preserved for those who "do not produce documents." Although it is hard to determine with certainty the authors' exact social standing, context sometimes allows for deduction.²²

In this thesis, the letters serving as the basis for my primary sources all come from Enrique Otte's *Cartas privadas de emigrantes a Indias, 1540-1616*. From this compilation, I selected the 146 letters sent from the viceroyalty of Peru. Of these, 97 were sent from Lima, 21 from Cuzco, 7 from Trujillo, and the rest from smaller cities within modern-day Peru's frontiers. Originally, what drew me to these sources was an interest in women's letters—women's

eds. Rocío Quispe-Agnoli and Mónica Díaz (London: Routledge, 2016), 155; Roger Chartier, "Las prácticas de lo escrito," in Blanca López de Mariscal, "El viaje a la Nueva España entre 1540 y 1625: el trayecto femenino," in *Historia de las Mujeres en América Latina* ed. Sara Beatriz Guardia. Centro De Estudios La Mujer En La Historia De America Latina, 2013, 74, <https://www.um.es/documents/2187255/2187765/historia-de-las-mujeres-en-america-latina.pdf/246b8a1e-1c1c-47b4-9f23-cfafbe084bc3>.

²¹ María Sánchez Serrano, "Madres en la relación epistolar durante la emigración a Indias en los siglos XVI y XVII," *Fundación Española de Historia Moderna* (2023): 1268–75, <https://dx.doi.org/10.15304/9788419679314>; María Herranz Pinacho, "La infancia y su entorno familiar a través de la correspondencia privada en el siglo XVI," *Fundación Española de Historia Moderna* (2015): 187–96, <https://doi.org/10.20350/digitalCSIC/11656>; Miguel Ángel Quesada Pacheco, "Uso de las formas de tratamiento en cartas privadas escritas en América en el siglo XVI," *Lingüística* 14, no. 2 (2015): 123–28, <https://doi.org/10.15517/rfl.v14i2.18974>. Quesada Pacheco argues that because father-son letters are the only letters in which the subject is addressed as "tu" (as opposed to "vos" or "vuestra merced (v.m.)"), the father-son bond was more intimate than other familial relationships.

²² See chapter one.

experiences in migration. However, of the 146 Peru letters, only fifteen were written by women, and not all are as rich as Inés Alonso Cervera's. Faced with the choice to expand my region of interest, my time frame, or to include letters written by men, I chose the latter because I believe it to be the best angle to discuss the development of *protocriollismo*, the central focus of this thesis. Additionally, I chose to only use Otte's *Cartas privadas* rather than search for other letters, firstly due to accessibility (I could only rely on published works or digitized items in the AGI collection), and secondly to remain focused in the second half of the sixteenth century.²³

Criollos and Criollismo: An Overview

The general consensus among historians is that the term *criollo* originates from the word *criar* and was first used by the Portuguese to differentiate between slaves born in Africa (*bozales*) and those born in the Americas (*crioulos*).²⁴ In addition to birthplace, the distinction referred to *crioulos*' ability to speak Spanish and also to their Christian faith, meaning that one could become a *criollo* within a lifetime. Thus, from its first recorded use, the term *criollo* indicated the mixing of cultures rather than the idea of biological miscegenation. Karen Graubart writes: "Within a few decades, *criollo* was also being used by Europeans in the Americas to name their own American-born generation, sometimes pejoratively through the association with slavery. [...]" By the end of the sixteenth century, when Spanish-born immigrants to the American mainland referred to 'criollos' they generally meant American-born peoples of Spanish descent."²⁵ How, then, did the label 'criollo' become associated with the white colonial elite? This section first

²³ Raúl Porras Barrenechea's *Cartas del Peru, 1524-1543* is a well-known collection of letters from Peru, but as it engages with the early sixteenth century, it falls outside of my designated time frame.

²⁴ Graubart, "The Creolization of the New World," 488.

²⁵ Graubart, "The Creolization of the New World," 489.

explains how the term is most commonly understood and presents key studies that expand upon this subject and that are of great influence on this thesis.

Studies on criollismo and criollo identity typically focus on the Latin American wars of Independence because that is when usage of the terms peaked. Throughout the colonial period, the elite—viceroys, judges, lawyers, other officials and local magistrates, influential clerics, wealthy landowners, and to some extent successful merchants—formed a class largely defined by its whiteness but divided between those born in Europe and those born in the Americas. The latter complained that peninsular Spaniards occupied the most powerful posts, were favored by the crown, and used their positions to enrich themselves to the detriment of colonial society.²⁶ In the late eighteenth century, criollos' frustrations with Spanish administration intensified as the crown introduced the Bourbon Reforms to strengthen its hold over the empire. Across the colonies, Spanish subjects understood the reforms as particularly egregious examples of peninsular favoritism.²⁷ Finally, these tensions sprouted anti-monarchy rebellions across the region, which led to the wars for Independence.²⁸

²⁶ In his chapter “De ‘l’esprit colon’ à la revendication créole,” Lavallé explains that since the very foundation of the American colonies, there was a split between those whose fortune was tied to the New World (like landowners) and were therefore bound to the continent, and those whose fortune was independent. The latter were thus accused of using political appointments and/or business endeavours in the colonies to get rich quickly before returning to Spain, leaving the region and its people with less resources and opportunities. Furthermore, viceroys were accused of using their powers to reserve the better positions for their friends. Lavallé, “La conscience créole, » 355-380.

²⁷ José Antonio Mazzotti uses the expression of a “second conquest” to refer to criollos' discontent with the Bourbon Reforms. José Antonio Mazzotti, *La heterogeneidad colonial peruana y la construcción del discurso criollo en el Siglo XVII*, Asociación Internacional de Peruanistas (1996): 189, https://bibliotecadigital.uchile.cl/discovery/fulldisplay/alma991006463659703936/56UDC_INST:56UDC_INST. A notable alteration to Peruvian life organized by the new crown was the reform of colonial administration, in which peninsular officials were appointed as “agents of the metropolitan authority” at the expense of local officials and interests. John Fisher, *El Perú Borbónico 1750-1824*, 1st ed., trans. Javier Flores (Instituto de Estudios Peruanos, 2000), 69.

²⁸ David Brading explains that anti-Bourbon rebellions did not start as an independence war but rather morphed into it due to opportunism. Furthermore, the impact of Napoleon's victory over Spain and the subsequent appointment of his brother on the Spanish throne is explored by John Fisher, who specifically addresses the impact

To gather support from the general population and legitimize their rebellion, the criollo faction adopted Indigenous history and symbolism. They especially embraced features of the great Inca and Aztec civilizations to create a myth of ancient ‘American’ cities and peoples that could rival Europe’s rich history. Criollos also used Indigenous symbolism to emphasize the difference between Spain and Spanish America, thus arguing that Spanish rule was antithetical to American society and portraying Spaniards as conquerors who needed to be expelled by the rightful owners of the land.²⁹ Despite the paradox that descendants of the actual conquistadors were those who wielded this argument, the fabrication of a distinctly American identity that blended Spanish and Indigenous cultures successfully caught on. This new form of late colonial criollismo, then, was the cultural movement born from this idea; sprouting from Independence ideas, it reflects themes of American patriotism and identity.³⁰ For the new Latin American

of the Bourbon reforms on Peruvian society. Finally, exploring how criollos expressed their discontent publicly, Margarita Eva Rodríguez García highlights the importance of newspapers like *El Mercurio Peruano* to stoke Peruvian nationalism. Brading, *Los orígenes*, 111; Fisher, *El Perú Borbónico*; Margarita Eva Rodríguez García, “El criollismo limeño y la idea de nación en el Perú tardocolonial,” *Araucaria. Revista Iberoamericana de Filosofía, Política y Humanidades* 5, no. 9 (2003): 1-19, <https://www.redalyc.org/articulo.oa?id=28250908>.

²⁹ Calling this phenomenon “indianesque nationalism”, Rebecca Earle explains how criollos selected certain elements of Indigenous cultures that appealed to them, like a fabricated historical continuum, while discarding those they did not like. But by portraying themselves as the inheritors of these great societies, criollos dismissed contemporary Indigenous people, whom they looked down upon, and dismissed the fact that many of them were the descendants of the conquistadors that had brought these great empires down. Earle further demonstrates the fetishism behind indianesque nationalism by bringing to attention the abundance of symbols presenting an Indigenous woman naked but with feathers, refashioning the very concept of “the Indian” that Europeans had created to modern sensibilities. Because it was self-interested, indianesque nationalism faded after Independence, where a new origin myth was born. Criollos, who remained the elite class of these new societies, discarded Indigenous identity and symbolism as they forged a new origin myth for themselves, portraying the Independence heroes as the founding fathers of their new state. Cecilia Méndez adds that the criollo ideology and its relationship with Indigenous people and history remained into the modern Peruvian state and continues to shape Peruvian nationalism and state ideology. Rebecca Earle, *The Return of the Native: Indians and Myth-Making in Spanish America, 1810-1930* (Duke University Press, 2007) and Cecilia Méndez G., “Incas Si, Indios No: Notes on Peruvian Creole Nationalism and Its Contemporary Crisis,” *Journal of Latin American Studies* 28, no. 1 (1996): 197–225, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0022216X00012682>.

³⁰ In her book *Exemplary Ambivalence in Late Nineteenth-century Spanish America: Narrating Creole Subjectivity*, Elisabeth Austin studies literary works belonging to the criollismo tradition. She draws attention to the multifaceted definitions of *criollo* identity, arguing that this confusion was somewhat purposeful as the nebulous nature of the term made it appealing for a wide audience. Additionally, see Earle’s *The Return of the Native* for examples of criollo symbols in public spaces and Jorge Cañizares-Esguerra’s *Creole Colonial Spanish America* for an analysis of criollismo’s famous artworks. Elisabeth L. Austin, *Exemplary Ambivalence in Late Nineteenth-Century Spanish America: Narrating Creole Subjectivity*, 1st ed. (Bucknell University Press, 2012); Earle, *The*

states, independence was a rebirth. The old foundational myth in which colonial subjects inherited the histories and customs of both Spanish and American empires was replaced by a new origin myth with its own heroes: the (creole) fathers of the emerging nations. Thus, the old form of criollismo faded.

To explain the success of criollismo, some historians have looked further in the past, finding the roots of this movement in the sixteenth or seventeenth centuries.³¹ David Brading's work is particularly influential here. In his book *The First America: The Spanish Monarchy, Creole Patriots and the Liberal State, 1492-1867*, he compiles and analyses the works of important intellectuals in Latin America and Spain who debated on the nature of the American continent and its peoples. By drawing attention to the continuities in this discourse throughout centuries, Brading finds the roots of Mexican creole patriotism in the early seventeenth century.³² Additionally, focusing on the Peruvian region, Bernard Lavallé's immensely detailed *Recherches sur l'apparition de la conscience créole dans la Vice-Royauté du Pérou: l'antagonisme hispano-créole dans les ordres religieux (XVIème - XVIIème siècles)* explains how Peruvian criollismo was more local than national. Studying conflicts within religious communities—the heart of colonial lettered society—Lavallé places the birth of Spanish-Creole conflicts as early as the sixteenth century.

Return of the Native; and Jorge Cañizares-Esguerra, "Creole Colonial Spanish America" in *Creolization*, ed. Charles Stewart (Routledge, 2007): 26-45.

³¹ In the Peruvian context, the success of criollismo was surprising since it overlapped with the Túpac Amaru II rebellion of 1780-1, in which the Inca descendant mobilized Indigenous people against the Spanish government. This rebellion stoked racial tensions in the colony and the harsh punishment for rebels speaks to the fear it caused for both peninsulares and criollos. Méndez, "Incas Si, Indios No": 220-1 and Brading, *Los orígenes*, 56.

³² Partly because of the Túpac Amaru rebellion and more generally because of the greater visibility of contemporary Indigenous people in Peru, Peruvian criollos were slower to adopt Indigenous imagery. Thus, Peruvian creole patriotism was more localized and less unanimous. Brading, *Los orígenes*, 55-57.

To explain how ideas of race were deeply interwoven with the issue of criollismo and criollo identity, Jorge Cañizares-Esguerra connects intellectual trends in Latin America, Spain, and northern Europe in his book *How to Write the History of the New World: Histories, Epistemologies, and Identities in the Eighteenth-Century Atlantic World*. Demonstrating how the Enlightenment brought new ideas about history, religion, race, and science, Cañizares-Esguerra details how criollos reacted to European concepts of race and created their own.³³ María Elena Martínez' *Genealogical Fictions: Limpieza de Sangre, Religion and Gender in Colonial Mexico* takes this discussion further, illustrating how miscegenation and fear of racial mixing impacted the categorization of race and class in Spanish America.³⁴

As well as discussing these ideas, this thesis draws attention to the fact that studies on the origins of criollismo are predominantly dependent on the writings of intellectuals. In his influential book *La ciudad letrada*, Ángel Rama outlined how the intellectual elite shaped Spanish American society, from the inception of the colonial state into the independent nations. As Fernand Braudel remarked, the American colonial context is unique as the city grew *before* the countryside; rather than an organic urbanising process, the American city was designed explicitly and intentionally to be the heart of the colonial state:³⁵ “To carry out the ordered

³³ In a different article, Cañizares-Esguerra explains his desire to question the generally accepted theory that modern concepts of race were imported to the Americas from Europe and to instead center the “colonial peripheries.” Jorge Cañizares-Esguerra, “New World, New Stars: Patriotic Astrology and the Invention of Indian and Creole Bodies in Colonial Spanish America, 1600-1650,” *American Historical Review* (1999): 36, <https://doi.org/10.1086/ahr/104.1.33>.

³⁴ Despite the prevalence of miscegenation, intellectuals who debate race and racial classification throughout the sixteenth to eighteenth century mostly do not mention it at all. Martinez’s book also addresses how the distinction we make today between biological and cultural traits was not the same during this period.

³⁵ Fernand Braudel, *Civilisation matérielle, économie et capitalisme, XVe-XVIIIe siècle, t.3* (Paris: Armand Colin, 1979), 343, quoted in Rama, *La ciudad letrada*, 49. Rama added: “More than a fabulous conquest, the triumph of the cities over an immense and unknown territory was certified, reiterating the Greek conception that opposed the civilized polis to the barbarism of the non-urbanized.” Further elaborating on the Greek ideal of the city, Rama quoted Lewis Mumford: “the form of the city was the form of its social order.” These Greek concepts heavily influenced Spanish Renaissance leaders in shaping American cities (and therefore, American society). Lewis Mumford, *The City in History* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1961), 172, quoted in Rama, *La ciudad letrada*, 38.

system of the absolute monarchy, to facilitate the hierarchization and concentration of power, to fulfill its civilizing mission, it was essential that the cities, which were the seat of the delegation of powers, had a specialized social group, to whom these tasks could be entrusted.”³⁶ This elite class who functioned as the heart of the city (a city within a city), shaping language, ideologies, cultural norms, and social order, were the lettered intellectuals. A consolidated class, conscious of their power to influence the illiterate majority, they were the architects who built Spanish American society.

Some works interact with *La ciudad letrada* to study subaltern voices in the lettered city. These include Rolena Adorno’s article “La ‘Ciudad letrada’ y los discursos coloniales, Alcira Dueñas’ *Indians and Mestizos in the ‘Lettered City’: Reshaping Justice, Social Hierarchy, and Political Culture in Colonial Peru*, and Joanne Rappaport and Tom Cummins’ *Beyond the Lettered City: Indigenous Literacies in the Andes*.”³⁷ Here, Adorno and Dueñas center Indigenous authors, exposing Andean resistance to the Spanish lettered elite’s ideology, resistance which shaped the dominant discourse of the lettered city. Rappaport and Cummins expand the definition of literacy by arguing that alternate, non-alphabetic literacies existed alongside and within the lettered city. The framework of the lettered city is of interest for this thesis as I recognize the ways in which intellectuals shaped the definition(s) of the term criollo, but question if it is possible to use personal correspondence as an alternative source to find the voices of those who “produced no documents.”

³⁶ Monsiváis, *La ciudad letrada*, 8.

³⁷ These authors analyse how Andean authors interacted in and around the ‘lettered city’ to highlight how Indigenous writers influenced colonial culture. Rolena Adorno, “La ‘Ciudad letrada’ y los discursos coloniales,” *Hispanamérica* 16, no. 48 (1987): 3–24; Alcira Dueñas, *Indians and Mestizos in the “Lettered City”: Reshaping Justice, Social Hierarchy, and Political Culture in Colonial Peru* (University Press of Colorado, 2010); Joanne Rappaport and Tom Cummins, *Más allá de la ciudad letrada: letramientos indígenas en los Andes*, trans. Mercedes López Rodríguez (Editorial Universidad del Rosario, 2016).

The following section presents an overview of the intellectual debates around criollos and the Americas in the late sixteenth century, accompanied by historical contextualization of Peru in the same era in order to present the origins of criollismo for intellectual elites in this period. I draw heavily on Brading's definition of early criollismo as a nostalgic upper-class ideology that emerged among the sons of conquistadors who saw themselves as noblemen disgraced by an ungrateful and unjust Spanish crown. I also follow Lavallé's definition of the colonial mindset as a spirit of possession; criollismo as a spiritual association with the colonial world, which allows for an understanding of creole identity that precedes the birth of the first generation of Spaniards born in America.

Criollismo in the Sixteenth Century

In 1492, Columbus captured the European imagination with his voyage diaries. His hypothesis that he had found in the Antilles "one of the four rivers that watered the Garden of Eden," coupled with Vespucci's later descriptions of a "terrestrial paradise" inhabited by people who "neither [have] their own goods, but hold everything in common. They live together without a king, without authority, so that each man is lord of himself. [...] [They] live according to nature and can be more justly called epicureans than stoics" brought to life ancient and biblical myths.³⁸ As a result of this great 'discovery,' Spaniards thought their empire was favored by divine will.

³⁸ David A. Brading, *The First America*, 14-15. For more on the influence of chronicles on the Spanish literary and historical canon, see Catherine Poupeney Hart, "La Crónica de Indias entre 'historia' y 'ficción,'" *Revista Canadiense de Estudios Hispánicos* 15, no. 3 (1991): 503-15; Delfín Ortega Sánchez, "Aplicaciones metodológicas para el estudio de las 'Crónicas de Indias,'" *Revista de Historia de América*, no. 145 (2011): 129-46, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/24641975>; David A. Brading, "The Incas and the Renaissance: The Royal Commentaries of Inca Garcilaso de La Vega," *Journal of Latin American Studies* 18, no. 1 (1986): 1-23, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/157202>. In addition to allusions to Paradise, the Garden of Eden, and the Genesis flood, Lavallé enumerates other mythical references chroniclers make use of: "The discovery of the New World had revived the credibility and vigor of the oldest myths: those of the great Mediterranean tradition, the Bible, Greek mythology, and the works of ancient historians and geographers like Strabo, Herodotus, and Xenophon; those, more recent, that had been conveyed or transformed by chivalric romances; and finally, those that the conquerors

Furthermore, the Catholic Kings' framing of their 1492 victory over Muslims in Granada as the culmination of the Reconquista "resuscitated a crusading spirit."³⁹ Brading writes that these ideas were transported to the Americas when

bands of Spanish adventurers fought their way into the mountainous interior of the New World, subjugating entire provinces and great states, they annexed their conquests in the name of his Caesarian Majesty, Charles V, Holy Roman Emperor, King of Castile and León, and thus gave yet more substance to the expectations that he would create a world-monarchy.⁴⁰

Alongside conquistadors were missionaries; the creation of a Christian kingdom entailed the christianization of the Native Americans, and their early successes in conversion only heightened Spanish enthusiasm for the colonial project and justified their presence in the New World.⁴¹ However, as the sixteenth century progressed, this utopianist excitement was dampened on multiple fronts.

First, the conquest of Peru challenged previous European ideas about colonization. While the early explorers had written of the New World's "natural savagery" (thus explaining that conquest would benefit Indigenous people by introducing them to civilization), their grandiose descriptions of the Inca Empire cast doubt on previous theories.⁴² Also challenged was Europeans' image of the heroic conqueror. Brading explains:

themselves had forged or adapted to the new American taste: the fountain of eternal youth, the seven enchanted cities, the Dorado, the Amazons, the mountain and river of silver, the empire of the great Paititi, the lake where the sun slept, the wandering city, etc..." Lavallé, "La conscience créole," 962.

³⁹ María Elena Martínez, *Genealogical Fictions: Limpieza de Sangre, Religion, and Gender in Colonial Mexico* (Stanford University Press, 2008), 35.

⁴⁰ Brading, *The First America*, 23.

⁴¹ Because of the context of the Reconquista, Spaniards compared Native Americans to Muslims: while the latter waged war against the Christian empire, the former seemed much more welcoming of the gospel, meaning they could in time become vassals of the Spanish crown. Brading, *The First America*, 93.

⁴² Brading, *The First America*, 18, 49 and 74.

If public opinion in Spain in the 1540s turned so decisively against the conquerors, in part it was because of the shock of the news from Peru, where the adventurers who had seized possession of the Inca empire not merely executed Atahualpa on trumped-up charges but thereafter set about each other in an entire cycle of fratricidal conflict. [...] It was a story which lacked both the drama and the nobility of events in Mexico. For both Francisco Pizarro and Diego Almagro were grimy, illiterate veterans of Darien, notable only for their tenacity of purpose and endurance of hardships.⁴³

Tales of Cortés and other earlier conquistadors were modeled on the medieval Spanish hero of the Reconquest El Cid, but Pizarro and Almagro's violence was decidedly unheroic.⁴⁴

Continued Indigenous resistance also anguished Spaniards. The death of Atahualpa and the collapse of the central Inca government did not signal the defeat of all Andeans. Indeed, Manco Inca led a revolt against the Spanish in 1536, and after being forced to retreat the rebels established a neo-Inca state in Vilcabamba.⁴⁵ Other rebellions continued into the mid sixteenth century, and when Toledo was appointed viceroy one of his key duties was to put down these rebels. In 1572, Túpac Amaru, the last direct descendant of the royal line, was executed on Toledo's orders.⁴⁶ But even after this, occasional rebellions continued and Andean lifestyles, especially in remote regions, resisted unwanted Spanish culture, language, and religion, which challenged Spaniards' beliefs in the superiority of their ways.⁴⁷

⁴³ Brading, *The First America*, 30.

⁴⁴ Cortés presented himself as a hero in his own accounts, writing extensively about his triumph over idolatrous barbarians and depicting himself to the Spanish court as a Christian warrior. In addition to El Cid, other heroes conquistadors were compared to include Alexander the Great and Caesar. Brading, *The First America*, 23-6.

⁴⁵ Merluzzi, *Gobernando los Andes*, 221.

⁴⁶ Merluzzi, *Gobernando los Andes*, 219-31.

⁴⁷ Some Inca women of the royal family resisted by using their status to infiltrate the ranks of Spaniards, coupling with conquistadors. See Guengerich, "Capac Women," 147-67. For Andean elite men, one avenue of resistance was to appeal to the Spanish public. Notably, El Inca Garcilaso de la Vega, a mestizo author at the turn of the seventeenth century, wrote a chronicle of Inca history to counter Spanish aggrandizing narratives of the Conquest, which he believed mischaracterized the Incas. In the same period, Felipe Guamán Poma de Ayala wrote

Nevertheless, Spain introduced colonial structures across the American continent. The crown created the model of two republics (one of Spaniards and one of *Indios*) based on the idea that Indigenous people were ‘uninfected gentiles’ as they were ‘uncontaminated’ by Islam and Judaism and based on Spain’s desire to exploit Indigenous labour and resources through tribute collection—inspired by European medieval social organization—and to facilitate their evangelization.⁴⁸ It was also intended to keep Spaniards and Natives separate to avoid miscegenation.⁴⁹ As the Conquest Era transitioned into the colonial period, debates about how to govern Indigenous people, the fear of racial mixing, the issue of abuses of power among the ruling classes, and the need to legally justify colonialism increasingly dominated public discussions of the New World in Spain (and later, across Europe).

Indeed, the second factor that tarnished Spaniards’ romantic view of the Americas was the public denunciation of the conquistadors’ violence by some missionaries like Bartolomé de las Casas. In contrast to his acceptance of African slavery, the humanist friar argued that Native Americans’ inherent gentle nature would allow them to readily embrace Christianity, and therefore that military conquest was unnecessary.⁵⁰ Las Casas was the most prominent protestor

El primer nueva corónica y buen gobierno, addressed to the king of Spain as a denunciation of the colonial Spaniards’ abuses of power and mistreatment of the local population. See Castro-Klarén, “Writing Subalterity,” 229-44; Rabasa and Jehudah Abarbanel, “Porque soy Indio,” 79-108; Quispe-Agnoli, “Yo y el Otro,” 226-51.

⁴⁸ Martínez, *Genealogical Fictions*, 96.

⁴⁹ For some conquistadors like Pizarro, relationships with Inca elite women were acceptable because they served as political alliances; the practice of powerful men using women as bargaining for their own political gains was a ‘common language’ spoken by the Incas and the Spanish, which helped Spaniards legitimize themselves among the Incas and diminish the power of Inca noble families by inserting themselves in already established lineages. This was also a strategy to decrease the risk of Inca revolts. Outside of this context, miscegenation was thought to threaten racial hierarchies. María Rostworowski de Diez Canseco, *Doña Francisca Pizarro, una ilustre mestiza 1534-1598*, 2nd ed. (Instituto de Estudios Peruano, 1989): 16-30; Jorge Cañizares-Esguerra, “Creole Colonial Spanish America,” 32.

⁵⁰ Las Casas believed all men to be of the same nature, invoking Ciceronian and Aristotelian ideas on human development and the city. Relying on philosophical concepts from Antiquity and comparisons to Ancient Rome was a common framework for Renaissance intellectuals like Las Casas. Furthermore, Las Casas contrasted the early successes of missionaries in the Americas to Christian-Muslim conflicts in Iberia in order to defend his theory that Native Americans were “the most gentle, humble, and kind people in the world, the most ready and fit for conversion to the true faith.” Las Casas thought Indigenous leadership should be respected, but placed under the

of the conquistadors' attempts to transform themselves into a feudal nobility, successfully influencing the newly appointed Philip II to thwart this concentration of power. Additionally, the 1542 New Laws sought to ban the *encomienda* system.⁵¹

Since their first forays into the American continent, Europeans had assessed that wealth in the New World was tied to the land—the exploitation of its resources, achieved through the control of labour forces. Thus, the *encomienda* system was established to reward conquistadors for their military 'exploits' by granting them tribute and Indigenous labourers to work said land. Indigenous people, in exchange, were to receive Christian education. This system also benefited the crown: "on the one hand, it guaranteed the control and indoctrination of the Indians; on the other, it ensured the loyalty of those being rewarded with the grant; and, finally, it incentivized and consolidated the population of the new territories."⁵² Although some *encomenderos* made fortunes from this system, it was a departure from the crown's tradition of granting nobility statuses for military exploits.⁵³ By the 1540s, the old conquerors were incensed over the crown's decisive refusal to grant hereditary *encomienda* titles. This anger was amplified with the difficulties many *encomenderos* had in retaining their wealth, and the enrichment of later arriving Spaniards.

Although Philip II wanted to completely abolish the *encomienda* system, he was unable to deal the institution a decisive blow because of the fierce protests of *encomenderos*. Some even

authority of the Church. After his successful appeals to the crown, Las Casas' works were translated and distributed across Europe and would be used by other Europeans to discredit the Spanish colonial project as particularly violent and 'barbarous.' Las Casas' ideas would also be repeated in later iterations of criollismo and pro-Indigenous movements. Brading, *The First America*, 58-101. See also Brading, "The Incas and the Renaissance," 1-23.

⁵¹ Martínez, *Genealogical Fictions*, 97-8.

⁵² Liliana Pérez Miguel, "*Mujeres ricas y libres*": *Mujer y poder: Inés Muñoz y las encomenderas en el Perú (s. XVI)*, Colección Americana 72 (Editorial Universidad de Sevilla, 2021), 40.

⁵³ Additionally, it was the custom of the Spanish crown to grant the monopoly of offices to 'natives' of a region—this issue would quickly become one of the main complaints of criollos. Martínez, *Genealogical Fictions*, 128; Jorge Cañizares-Esguerra, *How to Write the History of the New World: Histories, Epistemologies, and Identities in the Eighteenth-Century Atlantic World* (Stanford University Press, 2001), 220.

threatened revolt over this issue. In Peru, both violent clashes between conquistador factions and the Gonzalo Pizarro rebellion of 1546 made the menace tangible for peninsular onlookers.⁵⁴

When Francisco de Toledo arrived in the colony in 1569, this period petered out as the viceroy implemented multiple reforms to stabilize the region and further exploit its resources.

Disagreeing with Las Casas's stance against forced labour, Toledo extensively mobilized Andeans to exploit the region's silver mines.⁵⁵ He justified this decision by arguing that "state direction of labour was a necessary remedy for native sloth"—an argument that followed the theory posited by Las Casas' opponents that Indigenous people were servile by nature—and by citing Inca antecedents of forced labor.⁵⁶ Furthermore, Toledo harshly persecuted Indigenous dissidents like Túpac Amaru.

Finally, Toledo attempted to mediate between the crown's desire to abolish encomiendas and encomenderos' desire to make the concessions permanent.⁵⁷ The viceroy's repeated calls to a continuation of Inca rule and a Spanish American nobility would come to define criollos' self-identification. But in Spain, the public was much less convinced in the rectitude of their position; encomenderos' insistence of their right to violently mandate Indigenous forced labour (even in

⁵⁴ Additionally, Indigenous resistance to Spanish contributed to the unstable climate in the region. See Kenneth J. Andrien, "Spaniards, Andeans, and the Early Colonial State in Peru," in *Transatlantic Encounters*, 121-148.

⁵⁵ For Toledo, the goals of civilizing (europeanizing) and of christianizing Indigenous people were intertwined. He believed forced labour was necessary to rectify their natural 'idleness.' Manfredi Merluzzi, *Gobernando los Andes: Francisco de Toledo virrey del Perú (1569-1581)* (Fondo Editorial de la Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú, 2014), 263.

⁵⁶ While the Inca state collected tribute and had a system of corvée labour called the mit'a, Toledo and the Spanish state constructed a much more demanding version. Notably, many tribute collectors did not account for the extreme loss of Indigenous lives and continued to demand the same quota from the reduced number of tributaries. Brading, *The First America*, 137-145. See also Merluzzi, *Gobernando los Andes*, 243-73 and José L. Gasch-Tomás and Susana Münch Miranda, "Imperial Economies," in *The Iberian World* (Routledge, 2020): 431-48.

⁵⁷ Toledo proposed that a few encomiendas be granted in perpetuity, others a second life, and still others should be returned to the state. His reasoning was that "the Christian kings of Europe had always governed their realms with the assistance of a nobility which either possessed landed entails or feudal jurisdiction." Brading, *The First America*, 131-2.

the face of this population's demographic collapse)⁵⁸ received much criticism. This continued to tarnish Spaniards' ideal of a 'virtuous' colonization of the Americas.

The third factor altering Spanish interest in the colonial project was that the growing divergence among Spaniards. As the sixteenth century progressed, they became increasingly divided between those whose socio-economic interests remained in the Old World and those who had become tied to the New World. Lavallé argues that the old conquerors became criollos because they regarded colonial society with a 'spirit of possession' by virtue of their military accomplishments.⁵⁹ Thus, criollismo could even precede the appearance of a generation born in the Americas because "to be *criollo* was more related to a state of mind, to an adherence to local interests, than to being born on American soil."⁶⁰ Because their fortunes and perceived statuses as an American nobility were tied to the New World, criollos differentiated themselves from other Spaniards, especially those who arrived in the colonies after them. Brading also asserts that criollismo was born "from the angst of those encomenderos in decadence," already nostalgic for a past in which they were the heroic conquerors of a New World.⁶¹ He continues: "it was an identity, however, that found expressions in terms of anguish, nostalgia and resentment. From the start, creoles appear to have conceived of themselves as dispossessed heirs, stripped of their patrimony by an unjust crown and the usurpations of recent migrants from the Peninsula."⁶² Thus, concludes Brading, at its inception, criollismo centered around the revendications of a bereaved elite.

⁵⁸ Extensive calculations into pre- and post-contact Andean demographics have been researched by Noble David Cook. See Noble David Cook, *Demographic Collapse: Indian Peru, 1520-1620* (Cambridge University Press, 1982).

⁵⁹ Lavallé, "La conscience créole," 364.

⁶⁰ Lavallé, "La conscience créole," 359.

⁶¹ Brading, *Los orígenes*, 15.

⁶² Brading, *The First America*, 293-5.

European Spaniards also increasingly felt distanced from their American-born peers, especially as criollos became more numerous. They and the crown questioned the loyalty of those who “do not know the king in the colonies,” worrying that this made them “inclined to rebellions and uprisings.”⁶³ Using this argument, they justified the appointment of peninsulares in secular and religious offices.⁶⁴ And when criollos accused peninsulares of only going to the colonies to enrich themselves rapidly without care for the interests of the “native-borns,” peninsulares retorted that they should be granted more authority in colonial government to protect Indigenous people from the abuses of the self-interested encomenderos.⁶⁵ As the two factions feuded for the control of the colonial state, they both claimed moral superiority and condemned the violence of the other. They arrived at these opposite conclusions because their denunciations were self-centered—a defining trait of criollismo.

Indeed, in seeking to distance themselves from peninsular Spaniards and portray themselves as the rightful rulers of Spanish America, criollos developed an ambiguous narrative about Incas and the Conquest. Just as Toledo had defended the mobilization of forced Andean laborers as a continuation of an Inca practice, the encomenderos fabricated a myth in which they, as the descendants of the conquistadors, were the successors of the Inca Empire and had inherited their practices, lands, and riches, but also their history.⁶⁶ Criollos crafted a narrative in

⁶³ Lavallé, “La conscience créole,” 364, 375.

⁶⁴ For example, Mexican viceroy José de Gálvez claimed that “the creoles were too constrained by the ties of family and faction to provide a disinterested and impartial government in the New World.” Though written in the eighteenth century, this citation aptly illustrates the sentiment that was rapidly growing among sixteenth-century Spaniards. Brading, *The First America*, 477. See also Lavallé, “La conscience créole,” 829-92.

⁶⁵ Brading, *The First America*, 294. The term ‘native-born’ here refers to criollos, the argument being based on the Spanish tradition of granting offices to natives of a given region. For more examples of criollos and peninsulares’ accusations of the other’s character, see Brading, *The First America*, 220-5; Lavallé, “La conscience créole,” 374-6.

⁶⁶ It was important for conquistadors and their descendants to insist on the legitimacy of their rule since an alternate neo-Inca state continued to contest Spain’s victory until 1572.

which they both triumphed over a tyrannical empire and protected Indigenous people.⁶⁷ They thus distanced themselves from the violent accounts of conquest—already in the past—and legitimized themselves as noblemen.

But while criollos were keen to distinguish themselves from peninsular Spaniards, they were unwilling to completely cut ties with their European ancestry, especially as peninsulares accused them of all being *mestizos*, as Martínez explains:

Maintaining a system of ‘proving’ purity in the ‘Spanish republic’ necessitated the creation of birth records, classifications, and genealogies and obliged those who wanted access to the institutions or offices with *limpieza* requirements to submit lineages, produce witnesses, and keep records of their ancestors. Among creoles (Spaniards born and/or raised in the Americas), these administrative and archival practices helped foster a historical consciousness that encouraged their identification with a broader Spanish community of blood even as they developed a strong attachment to the land.⁶⁸

Lavallé adds that this creation of a shared history solidified the mythologization of criollos’ conquistador ancestors as a dynastic nobility.⁶⁹ This historicization would only gain importance through time as criollos “each day became more conscious of their condition.”⁷⁰ Each cry of

⁶⁷ Brading, *The First America*, 189-90. However, Brading argues that because of the visibility of Incas (especially until 1572) in colonial society, Peruvian creoles were slower to adopt Indigenous imagery and history than their Mexican counterparts. See also Mazzotti, “La heterogeneidad colonial peruana,” 178.

⁶⁸ Martínez, *Genealogical Fictions*, 6. The concern around purity of blood (*limpieza de sangre*) was a consequence of Spanish Christian intolerance of Muslims and Jews in the context of the Reconquest. Following the waves of expulsions of non-Christians from Spain, fears of fake conversions were strong. Thus the importance of maintaining family records to prove purity, as descendants of Jews and Muslims were also considered impure. As the Reconquest context faded with time and distance in Spanish America, the idea of purity became linked to whiteness and, therefore, to emerging ideas of race. Furthermore, with the rising theories of climatologic determinism, concerns (especially among elites) of purity of blood, and the increasing distance between criollos and peninsulares, Spaniards worried they would become ‘Indian’ simply by living in the New World. They thus generalized all criollos as “mutated” and worried criollos would rebel against the crown on the side of mestizos and mulattos. Martínez, *Genealogical Fictions*, 112 and 135-40; Lavallé, “La conscience créole,” 364 and 799-828.

⁶⁹ Lavallé, “La conscience créole,” 368.

⁷⁰ Lavallé, “La conscience créole,” 359.

favoritism fueled peninsulares' fears of American rebellion, renewing the crown's efforts to reduce criollo power, and the distance between both sides continued to grow.

The fourth and final nail in the coffin for early sixteenth-century utopianist enthusiasm for colonialism was the rise of determinism. The humanist theories that Indigenous people would readily accept conversion and 'civilization' turned into disillusionment as idolatry and ancestral cultural practices persisted. Cañizares-Esguerra comments: "by the seventeenth century, the Creole clergy in the viceroyalty of Peru began to blame Indian idolatry on the flawed operation of the Indian body and not on the machinations of the devil. Indigenous religious deviance thus became a psychological problem largely attributable to the physical malfunctioning of the internal senses of Indians."⁷¹ Furthermore, Indigenous social structures Europeans had so admired in the Inca and Aztec empires collapsed during the conquest, leading Spaniards to complain that "the Amerindians had been corrupted by the disappearance of the native ruling class and the evil effects of contact with urban commoners, particularly *castas*, who had introduced them to their vices, including idleness, alcoholism, and theft."⁷² European onlookers questioned how sixteenth-century Natives, with all these defaults, could be the same people who built the Aztec and Inca empires.

⁷¹ Cañizares-Esguerra, "New World, New Stars," 67-8. The thesis of this article is that this is the origin of modern conceptions of race as biological categories. Ronnie Po-chia Hsia and Federico Palomo further note that with the decline of Christian humanism in the late sixteenth century and doctrinal reformation and standardization especially in the context of American missions, idolatry was redefined. The pagan became the idolater, and idolatry needed to be eradicated because it was the work of the devil. Ronnie Po-chia Hsia and Federico Palomo, "Religious identities in the Iberian worlds (1500–1700)," in *The Iberian World*, 86.

⁷² Cañizares-Esguerra, *How to Write*, 272. In Chapter 3 of *Nature, Empire, and Nation*, Cañizares-Esguerra further explains that the Conquest had caused the disappearance of Indigenous polities, and therefore "formal systems of science." The new elites adopted Christianity, creating a hybrid tradition, while Indigenous religion (and therefore science) went underground. Jorge Cañizares-Esguerra, *Nature, Empire, and Nation: Explorations of the History of Science in the Iberian World* (Stanford University Press, 2006): 46-63; Brading, *The First America*, 121-2.

Thus, Europeans abandoned humanism, instead finding new theories to explain the Indigenous ‘nature’ in climatologic determinism. They altered Aristotelian and Hippocratic-Galenic ideas to fit the American context. Indeed, while Aristotle found humid climates to be synonymous with great intellect and civilization, late sixteenth-century Europeans contended that the American tropical climate was “overly ‘humid’ and thus emasculating.”⁷³ The excess humidity caused degeneration, explaining why American flora and fauna were inferior to European nature and why Indigenous people were inherently lazy.⁷⁴ This also resolved how ancient Native Americans were able to build great civilizations while their modern descendants were prone to vice.

Peninsulares soon projected this negative characterization of Indigenous people by Europeans onto criollos. To defend themselves from the accusation that they were degenerating and turning into Natives, “sapped [of] the courage and wandering spirit of the Spanish,” criollos hypothesized that Europeans and Native Americans were innately different and thus not equally

⁷³ Cañizares-Esguerra, “New World, New Stars,” 37. Aristotle held that people from colder climates were “full of animal spirits, which cloud mental images” while those from warm climates had “less vital heat inside their bodies, and therefore [...] were expected to be more intelligent.” This had led Las Casas to argue that Indigenous people were equal to (and in some cases superior to) Europeans, but few others were willing to stake such a position. Additionally, Hippocrates argued the superiority of Asia over Europe for the cultivation of crops, and the Galenic theory of humors implied that all, not only Natives, were negatively affected by the American humidity. Finally, America’s warm and humid climate did not fit neatly with European associations of masculinity with warm and dry environments and femininity with moist and cold ones. Thus, intellectuals debated whether to reject entirely “the Ancients” for modernity, or to adapt their theories—since after all the Ancients had no knowledge of the Americas. The compromise broadly reached was that the Americas were excessively humid, to the detriment of all organisms. See Cañizares-Esguerra, “New World, New Stars,” 33-68; Brading, *The First America*, 88-93; Lavallé, “La conscience créole,” 751-86.

⁷⁴ This argument is succinctly demonstrated by the Franciscan friar Bernardino de Sahagún. Cañizares-Esguerra presents his position: “The Franciscans, unable to understand that heavenly constellations had caused Indians to be lascivious and idle and that only strict corporal and labor discipline could offset such negative astral influences, had relaxed their original high monastic standards, causing Indians to slip back into promiscuity and idleness. According to Sahagún, Aztec lords had long understood the dangers of the constellations and had therefore punished drunkards, vagrants, adulterers, and liars harshly. Only a reversion to traditional high standards of Aztec discipline, Sahagún suggested, could save Santa Cruz and Mexico from total collapse.” Cañizares-Esguerra, “New World, New Stars,” 45.

affected by climate.⁷⁵ They proposed a new theory: Indigenous people, like Africans, descended from Noah's cursed son Ham, and therefore were a different 'race' from Europeans.⁷⁶ If they were inherently a different race, this could explain why the climate had degenerative effects on Natives which did not affect Europeans. By mixing the premises of climatologic determinism with the emerging theory of biological determinism, some criollos began arguing their own superiority over Europeans: "creoles had been born to Peninsular parents whose temperament was choleric, but they were slightly transformed in the Indies to acquire an even better sanguine complexion, which gave them better mental qualities than their parents born in colder climates."⁷⁷ By the turn of the seventeenth century, the classic criollo argument that they were not only equal to Europeans (by virtue of being pure-blooded descendants of Christian Spaniards) but rather superior to them (as their birthplace in the historically rich American continent distinguished them as a unique group) began to truly take shape.

Finally, the turn of the seventeenth century also increasingly saw northern Europeans commenting on Spanish colonialism. Though European portrayal of Spaniards as "ignorant

⁷⁵ Cañizares-Esguerra, "New World, New Stars," 46. For example, the Spanish intellectual Juan de la Puente wrote in 1612 that "The heavens of America induce inconstancy, lasciviousness and lies, vices characteristic of the Indians and which the constellations make characteristic of the Spaniards who are born and bred there." Compromise between classical and medieval determinism and the realities of the New World was reached by adapting the Aristotelian definitions of "natural" and "accidental" forms; Indigenous people were natural inhabitants of the Americas, but not Europeans, therefore they were affected differently from the climate even if they were of "similar bodies and minds." This accidental nature explained the physical differences between them and why migrating Spaniards often became sick in the New World. The theory continued: if Europeans and Native Americans shared a common ancestor, it was plausible that Europeans would 'turn into' Natives due to exposure to the American environment. Cañizares-Esguerra, "New World, New Stars," 33-4, 46-7, and 60-6.

⁷⁶ The theory of 'nations' having separate creations was previously used by some Europeans to explain the differences between themselves and Africans: namely, their physical differences and the latter's 'servile nature,' which was used as justification for slavery. This argument clearly resembles the faction that argued in favour of Indigenous slavery and forced labor. For Cañizares-Esguerra, this is where the modern notion of race originated. Furthermore, around this period, José de Acosta's theory of societal evolution was rapidly adopted by intellectuals. Rejecting the savage/civilized binary, Acosta proposed a tiered model to judge the level of 'barbarity' of non-Christian societies across the globe. This popularized comparisons between the Inca and Aztec empires and East Asian societies like China and Japan, and consequently made comparisons to Ancient Rome (implying a similarity to European past) unpopular. Cañizares-Esguerra, "New World, New Stars," 33-35 and 68; Brading, *The First America*, 187-8.

⁷⁷ Cañizares-Esguerra, "New World, New Stars," 61.

religious fanatics” inferior to other Europeans particularly took shape in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, engendering a crisis for Spanish intellectuals over how to present themselves and their colonies, already by the 1590s Spanish colonialism was beginning to be seen by other Europeans as particularly violent and inhumane.⁷⁸ And when Spaniards defended their actions by denigrating the Americas, “creoles set out to demonstrate that this was not the case, and that on the contrary their country was in every way worthy of praise.”⁷⁹ Thus the defense of the American land, which hinged on the chroniclers’ writings, became inextricable from criollismo.

The multiple paradoxes in these criollo assertions are ultimately unimportant because the debate, more than an intellectual endeavour, was motivated on both criollo and peninsulares’ side by their self-interested aspirations to control colonial society. Thus, peninsulares fiercely insisted on climatological determinism in order to justify the exclusion of criollos in most high ranking positions. Meanwhile, criollos emphasized their American exceptionalism to argue the opposite and to automatically discredit all European critics on the basis that they could not understand American affairs as they were not native-borns of the region. Nevertheless, these sixteenth-century debates set the stage for the intensification of scientific racism during the Enlightenment and the solidification of the *casta* system of racial classification across Spanish

⁷⁸ Cañizares-Esguerra, *How to Write*, 32. In *The First America*, Brading makes the argument that “The effect of Las Casas’ denunciations was to query the very legitimacy of Spanish dominion in America.” His success spread a negative public opinion against conquistadors and encomenderos (even criollos distanced themselves from the violence of Conquest in their revendications). Because his ideas superseded those of his opponents, northern Europeans based their knowledge of the Spanish Conquest on Las Casas’ writings. As the seventeenth century progressed, Spain’s reputation would suffer even more negative characterizations by northern Europe, who increasingly doubted fifteenth and sixteenth-century Spanish writers. This caused great anxiety for Spaniards, seeing themselves at the crossroad between northern Europe and Spanish America—should they defend their colonialism or fall in step with European intellectuals? This positioning would further increase the gap between peninsular and criollo intellectuals. Brading, *The First America*, 78-9 and 203-5. See also Cañizares-Esguerra, *How to Write*, 130-203.

⁷⁹ Bernard Lavallé, “La *patria criolla* entre localisme exacerbé et solidarité continentale dans la vice-royauté de Lima au XVIIe siècle,” *E-Spania*, no. 14 (2013): 3-4, <https://doi.org/10.4000/e-spania.21931>.

America. After following the evolution of sixteenth- century elite criollismo, we can now return to the non-elite, whose identities developed alongside these ideological shifts. This overview should serve as a reference point for the movements of non-elite actors in creole society.

Chapter One

“You will not feel the needs of Spain”: The Case for Creolization

Can the feelings Spanish emigrants expressed in their letters be extrapolated to reveal an emerging criollismo? When in 1591, Juan de Carvajal wrote to his brother-in-law that “In your letters you wrote to me indicating the need that you suffer in Spain. [...] As we are in these parts without that need, we almost do not believe it,” does this indicate the formation of a unique psychosocial reality divorced from Spain, or is it just a consequence of being away from home for too long?⁸⁰ When, five years earlier, Pedro de Nájera voiced his disapproval of the viceroy by exclaiming that “for the kingdom it would have been better that he had not come, and even for the king, because with him have come all the storms and evils that there have been in it,” was he disclosing a personal grievance or is this accusation indicative of criollos’ distrust of peninsular officials?⁸¹ And when in 1570 Alonso Hernández requested his brother “to entreat Lady María de Salazar on my behalf to come to this land, and let her not fear the journey nor the sea, for once she arrives in this land, she will live like a queen and will not remember Santa Olalla, nor even if such a place exists in the world, for here women do not spin, nor labour, nor trouble themselves with cooking or any other chores,” was he simply trying to entice his wife to go live with him, or does this echo the alluring descriptions of Peru by patriotic criollos?⁸²

This chapter examines the letters of sixteenth-century Spanish migrants, not as standalone documents, but rather in conversation with each other and within the wider context of sixteenth-century lettered culture. The theme of alienation and otherness found across the vast majority of

⁸⁰ Otte, *Cartas privadas*, 444.

⁸¹ Otte, *Cartas privadas*, 417.

⁸² Otte, *Cartas privadas*, 383.

letters, considered in this framework, reveals that Spanish identity was already splintering along the lines of the New and Old Worlds. Despite their birthplace, Spanish migrants found themselves dissociated from peninsular society; more at home in creole society, they themselves became criollos.

This chapter first provides a demographic overview of Iberian migrants, then demonstrates how they became rooted in creole society. It contends that although migrants often triumphally defined their new life “here” in opposition to the hardships found “there,” success was not a prerequisite to rooting themselves ideologically in Peru. Migrants adopted certain elements of the New World that benefited their circumstances, but they also maintained Spanish frameworks; they were embedded in Spanish society, but on its periphery. Unlike early sixteenth-century travelers, later sixteenth-century migrants remained permanently in Peru. This geographic stability, especially if combined with personal stability through the establishment of new personal networks in the New World or the migration of family members, facilitated their embrace of creole society.

Migrants and Letters

Pilar Ponce Leiva and Alexander Ponsen define the three guiding principles of Iberian rule in the Americas as accession, replication, and territorialization: the incorporation, through various means, of new territories under the crown(s), the imposition of Iberian law on these territories, and the populating of the new regions according to Iberian custom.⁸³ Thus, while the typical picture of an early sixteenth-century Spaniard in America might resemble a Pizarro-like soldier, or perhaps a young single man of lower nobility seeking riches in order to return to Spain in

⁸³ Pilar Ponce Leiva and Alexander Ponsen, “Administration and government of the Iberian empires,” in *The Iberian World*, 303.

glory, in reality the crown was quick to encourage Spaniards of diverse backgrounds to establish themselves permanently in America.⁸⁴ The rapidly evolving world map of the sixteenth century meant that legislation regarding migration also developed quickly. Notably, to obtain control over the territories captured by unsanctioned conquistadors, the Casa de la Contratación and the Council of the Indies were created by the Spanish crown in 1503 and 1528, respectively, forming a joint monopoly over American affairs by “functioning as the civil and criminal jurisdiction of last resort, dealing with political and administrative governance, the appointment of functionaries, general regulation for the organization of the fleets, expeditions of discovery, and the treatment of the Indians.”⁸⁵

Other important crown legislation included: the obligation as of 1510 to obtain a license to migrate; the 1530 provision regulating the marital status of migrating men; the 1542 New Laws which, in addition to their unpopular judgment on the legal status of encomiendas, set stricter rules on migration such as the exclusion of non-Christians; Phillip II’s added requirement of the probanza de limpieza de sangre and his efforts to quell illegal immigration through the 1550s;⁸⁶ the regulation of the fleets in the 1560s which increased and regularized the amount of migrants able to make the crossing; and the 1610 introduction of a fee for all migrants that

⁸⁴ For example, Allyson M. Poska and Kirsten Schultz note that “Peninsular women accompanied Columbus on his second voyage and, as early as 1502, the crown urged women to move to the Caribbean along with their husbands, as authorities believed that women’s presence would provide stability for the new settlements and their reproductive ability was critical to increasing the Spanish population.” Allyson M. Poska and Kirsten Schultz, “Women and gender: structures and roles (1400–1820),” in *The Iberian World*, 172.

⁸⁵ Amelia Almorza Hidalgo, “No se hace pueblo sin ellas” *Mujeres españolas en el virreinato de Perú: Emigración y movilidad social (siglos XVI-XVII)* (Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas; Editorial Universidad de Sevilla, 2018), 73, , <https://archive.org/details/almorza-hidalgo-a.-no-se-hace-pueblo-sin-ellas.-mujeres-espanolas-en-el-virreinato-de-peru-2018/page/6/mode/1up?view=theater>.

⁸⁶ The probanza certified one’s purity of blood. To be officially recognized as “pure” Old Christians, applicants petitioned Inquisition tribunals, who investigated the candidate’s lineage and questioned witnesses to ascertain if they were deserving of the certificate. For Phillip II and his entourage, the concern was that “stained” Christians or non-Christians would migrate to the New World and disturb the efforts to Christianise the local populations, who were “pure” pagans, untouched by the influences of Jewish and Muslim faith. See Martínez, *Genealogical Fictions*, 128-40.

stunted their numbers.⁸⁷ These major regulations and other smaller ones had a drastic impact on the demographic makeup of migrants.

Using Peter Boyd-Bowman's calculation that 450 000 people migrated to the Americas between the sixteenth century and the mid seventeenth century, Amelia Almorza Hidalgo estimates that an average of 4 000 migrants arrived each year between 1560 and 1600.⁸⁸ Of these, 20 to 30% were women. This period witnessed the highest number of migrants until the eighteenth century, as the crown's increasingly restrictive migration policies and a population decline in Spain created a sharp reduction in migration after 1600.⁸⁹ Furthermore, during the late sixteenth century, there were more migrating women (and an increase of migrating children and older people) and the workforce was progressively diversified: merchants, government officials, artisans, and other professionals began arriving in greater numbers as of the 1540s.⁹⁰ Between eight and nine percent of migrants were servants (*criados*) accompanying upper class passengers on the voyage.⁹¹ While on one hand the various costs and laws regulating migration meant that migrants were generally more affluent in the second half of the sixteenth century compared to the first half, the labour demands of colonial society also meant that lower class Spaniards retained access to the Americas.

Another effect of the expansion of family and professional migration was that migrants now saw their status as permanent, unlike the conquistadors. They searched for familiar customs to feel at home in this New World, thus mostly migrating to urban centres which were built

⁸⁷ Almorza Hidalgo, "*No se hace pueblo sin ellas*," 44-5, 76-80, 100 and María Ángeles Gálvez Ruiz, "Emigración a Indias y fracaso conyugal," *Chronica Nova*, no. 24 (1997): 90-92, <https://doi.org/10.30827/cn.v0i24.2088>.

⁸⁸ Almorza Hidalgo, "*No se hace pueblo sin ellas*," 20-21 and 41-45.

⁸⁹ Almorza Hidalgo, "*No se hace pueblo sin ellas*," 60-61. See also Gálvez Ruiz, "Emigración a Indias," 79-85.

⁹⁰ Almorza Hidalgo, "*No se hace pueblo sin ellas*," 43 and Gálvez Ruiz, "Emigración a Indias," 84.

⁹¹ Gálvez Ruiz, "Emigración a Indias," 96-7. Gálvez Ruiz explains that *criados* were able to obtain licenses through their employment and that the employer was responsible for paying the migration fees of all their entourage.

according to the Spanish model and recreated Spanish social order.⁹² Migrants became isolated as they were physically detached from the families and communities of their homeland. This separation inherently made them foreigners, and most would never see their loved ones ever again.

Letters, then, were of utmost importance because they were often the only link to one's relatives. From America, migrants could reassure family members in Spain that they had settled well, and in turn they could receive news like information about the death of a relative or about family relocation.⁹³ Letters could be sent from either side of the Atlantic to provide or request financial aid, to settle legal disputes, conduct trade, or with migration processes.⁹⁴ In a 1586 letter to his wife, Francisco de Meza Matamoros demonstrated the importance of literacy for colonists: "Señora, you know well that I do not know how to read nor write, and I do not dare to trust anyone, because, as I have said, married men have in this land great risk, and if they do not write with a secret person, they do not know whom to trust."⁹⁵

Crucially, this letter also highlights that some letters were penned by scribes; analysis of personal letters must consider this a possibility for each case, though Meza Matamoros' letter is the only one that directly references such a practice. Furthermore, while illiteracy was a barrier

⁹² See Delfín Ortega Sánchez, "Procesos migratorios hispánicos hacia y en América: Dinamismo humano y transposición de mentalidades, el cumplimiento de un sueño en la ciudad del 'Orden' humanista," *Revista de Historia de América*, no. 138 (2007): 77-9. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20529551>.

⁹³ For example, Melchor de la Peña worried he had lost touch with his mother: "It must be that my letters do not reach Your Mercy, because they tell me that you moved from San Bernardo to inside the city near Santa Cruz, where I direct this letter, may it please God that Your Mercy receives it." Otte, *Cartas privadas*, 439.

⁹⁴ For an example of a legal dispute, see Jimeno de Berio's two letters, in which he attempted to resolve the matter of his nine years of military service which remained unremunerated. For an example of financial assistance, see Ana García's letter, in which she begged her brother to help her avoid the foreclosure of her estate. For an example of transatlantic trading, see Pedro de Nájera's letter in which he mentioned that his friend brought him textiles from Spain to sell in Peru. Otte, *Cartas privadas*, 382, 417, and 447-8.

⁹⁵ Otte, *Cartas privadas*, 416. Though Meza Matamoros did not explain why he believed married men have greater risk, perhaps he was referring to the legislation that obliged married men to bring their wives to the colonies. See also Juan de Godoy's letter, in which he rejoiced at having obtained his medical license because "being a lettered man makes one very rich." Otte, *Cartas privadas*, 472-4.

to writing letters, the price to send letters to Spain was another. From this fact, we can assume that those who sent letters to Spain had some disposable income. Moreover, the authors' anonymity in historical records hints that none were of high nobility or other fame.⁹⁶ Beyond this, any precise estimation of their social standing is highly dependent on contextual clues. These include, among others: the title of the authors (e.g. don/doña or references to hidalgo status);⁹⁷ personal connections to elites;⁹⁸ land ownership and/or references to Spanish, Indigenous, or African workers or slaves on their property;⁹⁹ and business profits or other mentions of personal fortunes.¹⁰⁰

Because of the difficulty of accurate assessment of the socio-economic status of the letters' authors and the challenges of reading them critically (as discussed in the introduction), this thesis does not find it possible, or useful, to create absolute categories within the collection of letters. Rather than attempting to rank the author by social class or to place them in a false binary such as 'successful/unsuccessful,' it focuses on common themes and trends found across the entire collection of letters from Peru. Some citations in this thesis are unique outliers that

⁹⁶ On the study of epistolary practices among the high nobility, see Gabriela Martínez Pérez, "Práctica de representación, práctica de relación: Notas para el análisis de cartas de mujeres de la nobleza en la temprana Edad Moderna," *Studia Aurea*, no. 17 (2023): 389–410, <https://doi.org/10.5565/rev/studiaaurea.411>. See also Alejandra Franganillo Álvarez, "La relación epistolar entre la Gran Duquesa Cristina de Lorena y algunas nobles españolas durante las décadas de 1590 y 1620," *ARENAL* 20, no. 2 (2013): 369–94, <https://doi.org/10.30827/arenal.v20i2.1571>.

⁹⁷ For example, see Gabriel Ramírez de Arellano's letter to his son: "you are of Spanish caste, *hijosdalgo*, and not a Vizcaíno." Otte, *Cartas privadas*, 380-81.

⁹⁸ For example, see Celedón Favali's letter to his father: "I joined up with a nephew of President Hernando de Vega, a very great friend of mine, and with a friar, a great preacher, and with other very honorable men." Otte, *Cartas privadas*, 433.

⁹⁹ For example, see Alvaro González de la Vega's letter to his son: "Son, the estate I have is a farm with vineyards in Chacay, with much land and livestock, which is worth many ducats, and it is of such value that twelve black men work on it, not counting the Indians they give me to work this estate. For if you, son, had come here, it would have yielded me more than four thousand pesos every year, which are almost four thousand ducats." Otte, *Cartas privadas*, 455.

¹⁰⁰ For example, see Juan Sanchez de Gálvez' letter to his sister: "I have, thanks be given to God, more than sixty thousand ducats with which to marry my niece very well, which is a good fortune for this land." Otte, *Cartas privadas*, 498-99.

serve as interesting case studies, like the example of the illiterate Meza Matamoros. Others illustrate recurrent sentiments or topics, in which case additional examples appear in the footnotes.

Becoming Criollo

In his introduction to *Creolization*, Charles Stewart suggests that “creolization may occur through a falling out of synchrony with the homeland; creolization as temporal restructuring.”¹⁰¹ By existing outside of their original homeland, migrants are inherently othered from it, and inherently become creolized. “One must be prepared to consider situations as involving creolization even when the people concerned do not use the terms ‘creole’ or ‘creolization,’” continues Stewart.¹⁰² This negotiation between the original homeland and the place of residence creates a tension, both on the personal level (the sense of self being splintered) and on the societal level (the national identity being splintered): us and them, here and there, then and now.

Elena Altuna holds a similar position, writing that migrants’ letters “express the complex position of those who live strained between the uprooting from the land left behind and a tradition they wish to continue, and the already inevitable rootedness in a different environment, which demands new responses.”¹⁰³ While migrants communicated their nostalgia, they detached themselves from their past lives in Spain as they asked relatives to come “here” rather than speak of going back “there.” After all, maintains Lavallé, the act of inhabiting Spanish-like settlements and bringing Spanish customs to America demonstrated a desire to be at home (*volonté d’être chez soi*) that differentiated the colonists from the earlier conquistadors, but also from peninsular

¹⁰¹ Stewart, *Creolization*, 13.

¹⁰² Stewart, *Creolization*, 13.

¹⁰³ Altuna, “Imágenes del Perú y protocriollismo,” 222.

Spaniards and from Native Americans.¹⁰⁴ This section argues that migrants began to see themselves as creoles, despite not using the word ‘creole,’ through the understanding or acceptance that their migration was permanent. Whether the voyage itself caused them to see themselves as ‘others,’ apart from European Spaniards, or whether they adopted this framework over time through a negotiation of their personal feelings and material realities, this section establishes that the majority of subjects writing letters to Spain identified themselves more closely to creole society than to their original homeland.

Building on Altuna’s argument that the words “here” and “there” take on a “radical preponderance” through their repeated oppositional definition in migrants’ letters, I propose that this was a strategic response to migrants’ alienation from peninsular society.¹⁰⁵ Instead of viewing colonial society as an exact transposition of Spain in the New World, their use of these terms implies that migrants were creating their own societal model, a third space. I also draw on Rolena Adorno’s assessment that Rama’s lettered city “contrasts the illusion of order with the chaos of social reality and proposes the representation of the imposed hierarchy over the continually subversive character of the citizens.”¹⁰⁶ Though Adorno is concerned with Andean voices and resistance to the Spanish order, I find her framing of the polyvocality within the lettered city relevant to non-elite Spanish subjects. It allows for the construction of a model of self-positioning among the lower classes of Spanish American society.

A common strategy among migrants was the use of their own experiences to define the Peruvian space, sometimes in direct contradiction to the ideas peninsular relatives expressed.

¹⁰⁴ Lavallé, “La conscience créole,” 356.

¹⁰⁵ Altuna, “Imágenes del Perú y protocrisollismo,” 217-8.

¹⁰⁶ Rolena Adorno, “Nuevas perspectivas en los estudios literarios coloniales hispanoamericanos,” *Revista de Crítica Literaria Latinoamericana* 14, no. 28 (1988), 14-5, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/4530388>.

Andrés Chacón, a modest encomendero who had been chastised by his family in earlier correspondence for not sending money to Spain despite his success, explained to his brother his financial situation:

I know well that over there those who go from here say that I am rich. Certainly I have more than I deserve, thanks to God, but, as I have said, everything gets spent, and at the end of the year what is eaten comes out equal to what is earned, and sometimes it does not even reach that. And as my Indians give me nothing, I mean that I take little from them, and I have expenses with them to resolve [...] It seems to me that they will say over there that what I give to the Indians would be better given to my relatives. To these children I owe it for they have served me for thirty-some years, and it is a debt of life, and if I did not give it to them I would go straight to hell. And to my relatives I am obliged to do what I can for them, but if I did not do it I would not go to hell for it.¹⁰⁷

In the same letter, Chacón advised his nephews to come to Peru “and get out of that misery they are stuck in there,” as they would benefit from his connections to a wealthy merchant: “if there are any boys who are inclined to learning, they should be set to become lettered men, or to become clerics, because if everything is to be plowing and digging, in this they are and will be all their lives, they and their parents.”¹⁰⁸ To justify this recommendation, Chacón pointed to the thousands of “destitute men” he had seen come to Peru looking to improve their situation in the forty years since his own migration. Chacón himself set foot in Peru before the conquistadors seized the best lands of the region for themselves. His advice was anchored on the dashed hopes of the later arriving migrants who failed to replicate the ‘exploits’ of the earlier colonizers; becoming a cleric was a surer path to success, although a humbler one. Here, the experienced

¹⁰⁷ Otte, *Cartas privadas*, 470.

¹⁰⁸ Otte, *Cartas privadas*, 469.

migrant positioned himself as a superior source of knowledge about colonial society by virtue of his personal experiences.

Another strategy employed by migrants was to stress how Spain had become alien to them. For example, in a 1590 letter in which he presumably replied to his sister's laments of financial hardships, Diego Hurtado replied that he was "amazed by what they say about Castile, that it is ruined, and I believe it according to what people say around here. God be praised, for here we suffer neither hunger nor thirst, nor do we go naked."¹⁰⁹ While this can be read as bragging, the fact that peninsular complaints of financial hardship are especially found in letters sent after 1580 could potentially be related to the agricultural crisis in Spain in the last quarter of the sixteenth century and the ensuing demographic changes across the Iberian peninsula.¹¹⁰ Following this theory, the disbelief migrants conveyed could be directed at the changing realities of the Spain they once called home, a realization of the deepening split between peninsular and creole societies.

While this strategy emphasized the foreignness of Spain for migrants, a similar tactic was to highlight how incomprehensible Peruvian society was for peninsulares. For example, the cleric Francisco Gil, a missionary, preferred to not describe his work to his brother: "I do not wish to send you to tell particulars of the land, for there are many, because you will not

¹⁰⁹ Similarly, Pedro de Nájera told his brother "and in what Your Mercy writes to me about the necessities that are suffered there, especially with these years, I believe it all as Your Mercy says it, because by others I have seen what there can be." Otte, *Cartas privadas*, 418 and 442.

¹¹⁰ Soares da Cunha and Knezevic explain the situation as follows: the last quarter of the sixteenth century was characterized by a slow agricultural yield, which resulted in price inflation and mass indebtedness across Iberia. They also point to Spain's model of land rentals as a factor that exacerbated this crisis. As a result of the widespread poverty of the rural population, many peasants were drawn to urban centres, which in turn were strained from the influx of people. Furthermore, Castile and Andalucia were the regions most affected, which are also the regions from which most migrants to America came from, lending credit to this theory. Soares da Cunha, Mafalda and Igor Knezevic, "Iberian Society," in *The Iberian World*, 151-2. See also Almorza Hidalgo for information on the place of origin of migrants. Almorza Hidalgo, "'No se hace pueblo sin ellas,'" 51-71.

understand them.”¹¹¹ Whether the migrants emphasized the foreignness of “here” for their peninsular relatives or of “there” for themselves, the prevalence of such expressions among the collection of Peruvian letters illustrates how common it was for migrants to feel deeply alienated from their homeland.

Although Altuna’s article crucially highlights how migrants created a “here” of abundance and prosperity by contrasting it with the “misery” found “there,” the opposition of “here/there” is not exclusively found in the letters of migrants who had a positive outlook on their migration, though the contrast is certainly more obvious in such letters. Using examples previously mentioned, we see that a range of sentiments existed: in 1599, Cristóbal Páez de Becerril encouraged his wife to come because “if you decide to come to this land, it will be very good for you [...] Because it is a very comfortable land, and Spanish women are highly regarded, for they do not serve nor do anything, for the black women do everything, [...] let the sea not cause you distress, for there is no greater pleasure in the world”;¹¹² nine years earlier, Diego Hurtado adopted a more neutral stance, telling his sister to come with her daughter so she could be married in Peru and that he would remedy her hardships “for I promise you that from my poverty I will share with them”;¹¹³ and in 1569, Andrés Chacón complained of his expenses, the climate, and the barrenness of the land, writing that “this land is very poor at the end, and all the estates are not worth three *tomines* now, for if it were not for a breeding stock of mules that I have, I would have nothing to rely on, for with this I have sustained myself, because I have great expenses.”¹¹⁴

¹¹¹ Similarly, Cristóbal Páez de Becerril wrote to his wife “I give you my word that if I were to start telling you about the way of life in this land it would be never-ending.” Otte, *Cartas privadas*, 452 and 489-90.

¹¹² Otte, *Cartas privadas*, 452.

¹¹³ Otte, *Cartas privadas*, 442.

¹¹⁴ Otte, *Cartas privadas*, 469.

This clarification is noteworthy because it attests to the idea that migrants' contrast between "here" and "there" was more than an expression of satisfaction at the success of their migration or a strategy to attract loved ones to America. Instead, it points to the construction of a new model of self-identity. To cite Altuna again: "the experience of travel radically alters a state of stillness, of certainties provided by a life horizon, to transform the subject into the outsider, the foreigner, the immigrant: thus, decentering is the operation at the base of that experience."¹¹⁵ The migrant inherently became othered through this experience.

Colonial and postcolonial discourses of Latin American studies have long emphasized the importance of the "self" and the "other."¹¹⁶ Although Spanish migrants accepted the European conception of the self, as a peripheral group, they also experienced tension with it. Adorno explains the importance of "[understanding] colonial literary culture not as a pale imitation of that of the metropolis, but as new hybrid constructions that are greater than the sum of their parts and multicultural sources."¹¹⁷ We can therefore see the tension in migrants' opposition of "here/there" as a reflection of the tension in the heterogeneous concept of Spanishness they were confronted to through their migration. By defining the "here" and "there," they expanded the definition of the self and created a new other.

¹¹⁵ Elena Altuna, "Introducción: Relaciones de viajes y viajeros coloniales por las Américas," *Revista de Crítica Literaria Latinoamericana* 30, no. 60 (2004), 9, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/4531334>.

¹¹⁶ Adorno's works are particularly relevant here because of her use of Rama's lettered city. Other authors like Sara Castro-Klarén and Rocío Quispe-Agnoli study Andean perspectives in Peruvian colonial society. Mazzotti and Russotto focus on heterogeneous definitions of criollo identities. See also Coronil for an examination of postcolonial scholarship in the Latin American context. Adorno, "Nuevas perspectivas," 11-28; Adorno, "La 'ciudad letrada,'" 3-24; Rolena Adorno, "Reconsidering Colonial Discourse for Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-Century Spanish America," *Latin American Research Review* 28, no.3 (1993): 135-45, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2503614>;; Sara Castro-Klarén, "Writing Subalterity: Guaman Poma and Garcilaso, Inca," *Dispositio* 19, no.46 (1994): 229-44, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/41491515>; Quispe-Agnoli, "Yo y el Otro," 226-51; Austin, *Exemplary Ambivalence*; Fernando Coronil, "Latin American Postcolonial Studies and Global Decolonization," in *The Fernando Coronil Reader: The Struggle for Life Is the Matter* (Duke University Press, 2019): 399-424, <https://doi.org/10.1215/9781478004592-019>.

¹¹⁷ Adorno, "Nuevas perspectivas," 12.

The definition of the self and the other—the normal and the abnormal or foreign—can be parsed in migrants’ letters through their descriptions of colonial society. By examining how they framed their personal experiences, what they chose to highlight and what they hid or dismissed, we can observe which aspects of creole society they adopted and which did not fit into their new identities. When assuming certain aspects of Indigenous cultures and/or the American continent, they embraced certain foreign characteristics, but they also explained this otherness through European frameworks.

There is no better example of this than their use of Indigenous vocabulary. According to Łukasz Grützmacher, the Indigenous word *maiz* (corn) was, by the second half of the sixteenth century, “a word that is already well assimilated and whose use generally did not require any clarification.”¹¹⁸ Indeed, among the Peruvian letters, the few migrants who made reference to corn presumed that their peninsular readers would understand its meaning and so did not define it (“I have corn from tribute and a mill...”¹¹⁹), though corn cultivation was not yet widespread across Europe.¹²⁰ Contrastingly, Celedón Favalis found it necessary to include the following definition in 1587: “we only found corn tortillas, which is the wheat of the Indies they call there but it is very bad food for whoever is not accustomed to it, because then the whole body swells with bumps and blotches, and it is a food that creates much blood.”¹²¹ Favalis further complained about American food, writing that “certainly there were no pheasants then that would have tasted better to me,” and that he ate too many chickens “because there is nothing else which cost a real, and every four chickens cost a real, but, although they are very fat, they do not have that flavour

¹¹⁸ Łukasz Grützmacher, “Indigenismos americanos en cartas de particulares del siglo XVI,” *Itinerarios*, no. 24 (2016): 245, <https://bibliotekanauki.pl/articles/2080931>.

¹¹⁹ Otte, *Cartas privadas*, 470.

¹²⁰ See Alfred W. Crosby Jr., *The Columbian Exchange: Biological and Cultural Consequences of 1492* (Praeger Publishers, 2003), 165-207.

¹²¹ Otte, *Cartas privadas*, 432-3.

and substance of those from Spain.”¹²² Favalis, who had landed on American soil less than a year prior, was unfamiliar with the land; he consciously rejected its food customs, and his body unconsciously rejected them too by making him sick. The contrast between the rooted migrant Andrés Chacón, for whom consuming corn was a commonplace practice after forty years in Peru, and the newcomer Favalis exemplifies how migrants became (mentally but also physically¹²³) creolized through the adoption of an American lifestyle.

Furthermore, the fact that all Indigenous words (except one¹²⁴) found in the collection of letters are related to sustenance is symbolic of what migrants chose to adopt from Peru. Though not very common, a few use the Quechua words *coca* and *chacara*. Miguel de Arriba provided a lengthy description in his letter, describing *coca* as

an herb like sumac, as tall as a man, no more no less, [growing on lands which] are called coca farmhouses (*chacaras*¹²⁵), and it is an herb that the natives of this land eat, and they do not swallow it but only chew it, and it is of great esteem among them, and it is in our power, for they are people who sustain it very little. It is the best currency there is in this land, because through it one finds everything these Indies have, gold and silver and cloth and livestock, and whatever they have they give only to chew it.¹²⁶

¹²² Otte, *Cartas privadas*, 432-3.

¹²³ Stewart importantly highlights how creolization involves a physical alteration as the body acclimatizes to a new location. Stewart, *Creolization*, 14-15.

¹²⁴ The exception is found in the letter of Pedro de Nájera, who described the process of sending letters from Peru to Spain through the service of a “*chasque*, which is an Indian like a courier.” Otte, *Cartas privadas*, 423.

¹²⁵ According to Grützmacher *chacara* (also spelled *chacra*) is defined in Spanish as *alquería* (farmhouse) or *granja* (farm). Grützmacher, “Indigenismos americanos,” 245.

¹²⁶ Otte, *Cartas privadas*, 488.

The association of *coca*, but also of the other Indigenous terms mentioned here, with an “economic well-being and an idle life” reveals how migrants successfully adapted to colonial society: by using Indigenous resources for their own benefit.¹²⁷

Furthermore, migrants’ letters repeatedly mentioned the different valuation of money and honour in creole society, reflecting realities that emerged from the colonial world. The importance migrants granted these topics is noteworthy of their “representation system of the Peruvian space.”¹²⁸ A common refrain, exemplified by Chacón’s lengthy account of all the costs associated with his *encomienda* in the previous section, is that Peru offered great wealth to migrants, but only alongside great costs, so that currency there was actually worth less than in Spain. With these explanations, migrants sought to clarify to their peninsular audience that they faced similar class divides “here” and “there”; measured in the Spanish standard, their riches would make them upper class, but this success did not translate exactly in Peru. Migrants thought it necessary to elucidate their social standing. In a letter to his sister, Cristóbal Alvarez de Figueroa wrote that he was not very prosperous because his assets of eight thousand pesos “[are] nothing considering the expenses in this land.”¹²⁹ Similarly, Sebastián Carrera explained to his wife that he was unable to send her money although he was wealthy because “my estate is always entangled in debts, though not excessively, for as soon as I finish paying off two hundred pesos, I borrow three hundred more to expand my means, because I see that in this land property is what sustains us.”¹³⁰

¹²⁷ Grützmacher, “Indigenismos americanos,” 248. James Lockhart puts it bluntly: “What resources mattered, then, depended in the first instance on who the immigrants were and what their goals and needs were.” James Lockhart, “Trunk Lines and Feeder Lines: The Spanish Reaction to American Resources,” in *Transatlantic Encounters*, 91.

¹²⁸ Altuna, “Imágenes del Perú y protocrisollismo,” 218.

¹²⁹ Otte, *Cartas privadas*, 449.

¹³⁰ Otte, *Cartas privadas*, 374.

Because Spaniards often made the decision to migrate for social mobility, migrants' letters prioritized descriptions of their finances and an explanation of their successes or failures. This was especially true of men who migrated ahead of their families, and particularly obvious in letters husbands wrote to wives. Seeking to convince them to make the journey across the Atlantic, these men often insisted that "Here, by God's grace and favour, I trust your fortunes await you, for women of your station are greatly lacking in these parts."¹³¹ Fathers and uncles also encouraged daughters and wives to come to Peru for "here they would marry far more advantageously."¹³² To brothers, sons, or nephews, migrants brandished their connections to government officials or wealthy merchants to assure them that they would find satisfactory employment. For example, Alonso Martín del Campillo assured his brother that despite some troubles in his business ventures, "He who wishes to be virtuous and work can earn his living. But few apply themselves to work, for the land is so abundant that even without working, a man lacks neither food nor clothing [...] and so it happens daily that men lose much by various means yet remain as cheerful as if they had lost nothing, for they know they are in a land where, if they apply themselves, they easily recover."¹³³ While not all migrants found success in Peru, very few were those who categorically told their family not to come.¹³⁴

Hand in hand with the promise of upward social mobility was the promise of being attended to by servants or slaves. For example, Juan de Ribera counseled his brother-in-law to "bring a servant or a slave and secure a license for it, because this is very necessary at sea,"

¹³¹ Otte, *Cartas privadas*, 379.

¹³² Otte, *Cartas privadas*, 380.

¹³³ For another example, see Juan de Carvajal's letter, in which he offered to help his brother-in-law live honorably as a merchant: "If you should wish to arrange to come to these parts of Peru with only your trade you will be able to live honorably, and I will occupy you in things in which you can be of use, because your good ingenuity can be of much profit in these parts." Otte, *Cartas privadas*, 389-90 and 444.

¹³⁴ See doña María de Cordoba's letter to her sister: "do not come for anything. I am quite discontented." Otte, *Cartas privadas*, 396.

while Alonso Hernández assured his wife that she would not need to work and that she “will live at ease, without traveling to fairs or through the mountains, for I assure you I have a servant in my house whom I pay three hundred pesos a year.”¹³⁵ This was a status symbol, as Ribera illustrated in the same letter (“Understand that in these parts, a person is judged by their appearance, so Your Mercy must comply by forgetting having been a craftsman”¹³⁶). In promising their relatives that they would escape their hardships in Spain and find success in Peru, migrants also explained that the class dynamics of creole society were similar to Spain, but included the chance of upward mobility. Gonzalo Guillén precisely illuminated this by advising his brother that “once here, [you] will need to serve no one.”¹³⁷

Additionally, migrants explained that Spanish noble status and blood purity were just as relevant if not more imperative in creole society. Francisco Alvarez asked his nephew to bring the documentation proving that he and his wife were Old Christian hidalgos “because in this land those who are of pure blood are very respected and held in high esteem,” while Rodrigo de Oviedo explicitly stated that “here it is more necessary than there.”¹³⁸ While it is noteworthy that the Spanish conceptions of nobility, honour, and purity of blood were transported to creole society, it is unsurprising that migrants specifically stress that proof of status was particularly important in a society far from the established communities of Spain.¹³⁹

¹³⁵ Otte, *Cartas privadas*, 383 and 388.

¹³⁶ Otte, *Cartas privadas*, 388. Roquinaldo Ferreira and Pablo Miguel Sierra Silva explain why owning slaves was important to colonial elites: more than simply an unpaid labourer, an enslaved person, especially those in urban centers where public visibility was greater, signaled to other elites the upper class status of the slave owner. Roquinaldo Ferreira and Pablo Miguel Sierra Silva, “Portugal, Spain, and the transatlantic slave trade,” in *The Iberian World*, 378.

¹³⁷ Otte, *Cartas privadas*, 376.

¹³⁸ Otte, *Cartas privadas*, 411-2 and 475.

¹³⁹ In *Genealogical Fictions*, Martínez explains that the concept of purity of blood gained popularity among Spanish aristocrats in reaction to the threat of upwardly mobile *conversos*. Old Christians in Spain worried that “with the passage of time, memory of ‘stained’ lineages would fade; that false genealogies were proliferating” and so the legal process of acquiring proof of purity was created. In the colonial context, it would have been easier for “stained” people to hide their religious ancestry since this system relied heavily on the communal memory and

Through the themes presented in this section, the image of a creole society as defined by its inhabitants emerges clearly. On one hand, creole society transported Spanish ideas of religion, race, and class, though adapted these to reflect the ethnic makeup of Spanish America. In some ways, this society also reinforced the oppressive functions of Spanish religious ideology and social status makeup, as seen by various authors' insistence on the importance of documentation of blood purity or nobility. This rigidity was, however, a reaction to the reality that upward social mobility was easier to accomplish in America than in Spain. On the other hand, creole society adapted to some elements of American lifestyle, but chose these selectively by virtue of their usefulness to the colonists. As migrants defined these elements for their peninsular peers, they used frameworks Spaniards would understand, such as when they compared native Andean plants to European ones. Through these descriptions, they controlled the definition of their society, delineating what was foreign and what was natural. This allowed them to control their own positioning within this heterogeneous society.

If migrants did not become creoles through socio-economic success, in a determined period of time, or because of a complete rejection of Spanish values, when did they become creolized?

Where is the distinction between a creole and a peninsular marked? I argue here that the criollo was born when the migrant accepted or understood their migration as permanent.

To examine this idea, it is useful to take note of the migrants who did not develop 'spiritual associations' with creole society. Only a few migrants, one of whom was Pedro del

judgement of one's character, a community which was absent in early colonial society. Further, in America, more than converts of Jewish and Muslim descent, the fears of the elite centered on people with mixed-race ancestry. African ancestry was particularly stigmatized because it could not be 'redeemed'—one's blood remained 'tainted' by the association to slavery and servitude (inherently attributed to dark skin), while Indigenous blood could be 'absorbed' into Spanish Old Christian lineages over time. Martínez, *Genealogical Fictions*, 61-90 and 152-61.

Castillo, writing from Trujillo in 1592, described unambiguously negative experiences in Peru. Castillo lamented to his cousin that “those of us who live in such remote parts live with no other desire but to enjoy God and die in our own lands. And as I see myself already so old and sick, I have no such hope that my bones will be buried with those of my people.”¹⁴⁰ Fewer still wrote of concrete plans to go back to Spain. Some did express a desire to return, but a lack of finances or poor health impeded them, while others could not go back because their money was tied to the land.¹⁴¹ For example, the coca farm owner Miguel de Arriba disclosed that he sold his estate “intending to go to Spain,” but that the value of it fell and he was left with no choice but to “[take] back my estates with great loss to them.”¹⁴²

Among these disappointed migrants, a clear trend is visible: most people who expressed explicit desire to go back to Spain permanently had no relatives in Peru. Alone, they found it difficult to make creole society their home, to borrow Lavallé’s expression again.¹⁴³ For example, Salvador Camacho received a letter from his brother in 1590 after eight years of complete silence from “anyone from that land,” and he was so happy to know that his brother was alive that he resolved to go back to Spain as soon as possible.¹⁴⁴ Indeed, since migrants with conflicted experiences in Peru were much more common than those who completely regretted

¹⁴⁰ Similarly, María Alfonso discouraged her sister from migrating, revealing that “I have much hardship and I feel extremely my need, so ill and in foreign lands and foreign houses.” Otte, *Cartas privadas*, 467 and 491.

¹⁴¹ Salvador Camacho was one of the only migrants who actually made plans to leave Peru. He reassured his brother that his departure was imminent as he wanted to arrive in time for his niece’s marriage, writing that “although I am over here, I have not forgotten her, and so I would like her not to marry until I go, which will be very soon, God willing.” For an example of the more common expression of a desire to go back, see Antón Sánchez’s letter to his wife in which he explained to her that “the doctors have ordered me not to embark, because I will die on the journey due to my illness which is very great. Because otherwise I would have sold my estate and embarked before having you come.” Otte, *Cartas privadas*, 440 and 492.

¹⁴² Otte, *Cartas privadas*, 488.

¹⁴³ “The ‘colonial spirit,’ which manifested itself above all as a ‘spirit of possession’ [...] a ‘desire to be at home.’” Lavallé, “La conscience créole,” 368

¹⁴⁴ Among all the other examples selected in this section, none of the men have any relatives in Peru. Otte, *Cartas privadas*, 440.

their migration, the letters often expressed a decision: to definitely root oneself in creole society, or to leave it.¹⁴⁵ Thus, a common theme is the elderly migrant who, accepting that they were no longer able to survive the voyage across the Atlantic, now wished for younger family members to join them.¹⁴⁶ In encouraging such migrations, they were formally cutting ties with their life in Spain, as Jimeno de Berio demonstrated: in inviting his daughters to join him in Lima, he also requested that the recipient of the letter, a city councilor in Avila, sell all his property in Spain.¹⁴⁷ For others, the decision to remain in Peru was triggered by the death of a loved one. After learning of the death of his uncle and sister, Juan de Contreras urged his mother to join him before she died as “the lack of relatives I have here is enough for me, which gives me ample sorrow, without having it doubled, by losing those I have there.”¹⁴⁸ By choosing to invite relatives instead of going back, they demonstrated their lives were grounded in Peru rather than in Spain.¹⁴⁹

Ida Altman, focusing in the Spanish Caribbean context, explains the importance for European migrants of establishing households that replicated Iberian norms, and draws attention to the fact that “for longtime residents of the islands [...], marriage to a woman who would

¹⁴⁵ Conflicted experiences could be related to bad business endeavours, illness, natural disasters, fear of the violence from the Spanish explorers in Chile and Indigenous resistance to this incursion, or simply homesickness. Additionally, some migrants who had been in Peru for many years (such as Chacón, Arriba, or Pedro de Nájera) cautioned relatives that if they came it would be more difficult for them to become wealthy. For example, Cristóbal Gónzalez noted to his brother that “although silver may be lacking here, life is better than there. Another example is Gonzalo Guillén. In 1559, He sent three letters inviting his mother and brother to join him in Lima because “this is a land without hunger, where men who apply themselves grow rich in little time.” However, the following year, he added that a great illness was spreading around the region. In 1561, he sent an ultimate letter expressing his and his wife’s desire to “go there to die, God willing.” Otte, *Cartas privadas*, 375-9, 424-30, 460, 468 and 488.

¹⁴⁶ For example, Juan Sánchez proposed his sister come to Peru with her children and he would finance his niece’s wedding since he was growing old and still had no heir. Otte, *Cartas privadas*, 498-9.

¹⁴⁷ Similarly, Diego Hurtado asked his sister to sell everything in Spain before she and her family joined him in Peru. Otte, *Cartas privadas*, 382-3 and 442.

¹⁴⁸ Another example is Pedro Ruiz de Baena, who wrote that while he previously hesitated to request his wife and son join him, after hearing that his wife had died in Spain before they were reunited, now insisted his son come to Peru as soon as possible. Otte, *Cartas privadas*, 389 and 486.

¹⁴⁹ Altuna, “Imágenes del Perú y protocriollismo,” 219.

establish a household could signal a commitment to a life in the Indies,” in contrast to early settlers who delayed marriage or returned to Spain unmarried.¹⁵⁰ This is comparable to the Peruvian context. For instance, in the letters of Rodrigo Hidalgo and in those of an anonymous man who wrote that he wanted to go back to Spain, and therefore “I have not settled myself, although good marriages have been offered to me.”¹⁵¹ These men understood their migration as impermanent, and therefore deliberately did not form attachments to creole society. By contrast, many more men invited their families to join them in Peru, often inciting daughters, nieces, or sisters to not get married in Spain (which would embed them in Spanish society).¹⁵² While they assured these women it would be to their benefit to marry instead in America as they could marry advantageously, Altman stresses that marriage was also a strategy migrants used to create new alliances in colonial societies, for example marrying off daughters to wealthy merchants or officials.¹⁵³ Thus, when migrants wrote in their letters of bringing their family to Peru, they demonstrated a willingness to become rooted in creole society. This, more than financial success, represented how migrants cut ties with their former lives in Spain and embraced their new ones, despite hardships.

This section has established that although the word “creole” is not used in any letter, migrants understood themselves as different, foreign, othered from peninsular society. They defined their life “here” in opposition to their past “there,” adapted to the realities of colonial society even when they were unhappy with their circumstances, and actively rooted themselves in Peru. The inherent difference between the peninsulares and the migrants/creoles, who were

¹⁵⁰ Altman, “Marriage, Family, and Ethnicity,” 232.

¹⁵¹ Otte, *Cartas privadas*, 446 and 477.

¹⁵² For example, see Francisco Hernández or Bartolomé de Saldaña’s letters. Otte, *Cartas privadas*, 409 and 484.

¹⁵³ Altman, “Marriage, Family, and Ethnicity,” 233. See also the letter of Pedro Fernández de Lascoyn, who informed his mother he was engaged to the “daughter of a citizen of this city.” Otte, *Cartas privadas*, 430-1.

more conscious of their condition everyday lay at the root of the conflict that developed between the two factions.¹⁵⁴ Referring to these simple regional conflicts as the origin between this tension, Lavallé concludes that “When it comes to the problems arising from criollismo, it will always be necessary to take them into account, and bear in mind that this major issue will be added to them, that it will feed on them, in many cases exacerbate latent oppositions aroused by other motives, or give a new mask to old grudges.”¹⁵⁵

Becoming Criolla

In a letter to his young son Jerónimo Leandro Maldonado, Gabriel Ramírez de Arellano encouraged the boy to dedicate himself to his studies, assuring him that once he finished his education, he could join his father in Peru and work as a priest on his encomienda. He would earn a good salary, live comfortably from his father’s income, and be left with an inheritance that would allow him to provide for his entire family. Arellano also invited his siblings and their children to join him on his estate, for he would provide for them. However, along with his father’s letter, Jerónimo received another from his mother, doña Francisca Maldonado. Her tone was much more somber as Maldonado agonized over the lack of news from her relatives in Spain. Unlike her husband who enthusiastically pondered future employment opportunities, Maldonado wrote of homesickness and the hardships she and her daughter experienced.¹⁵⁶ Although there are only fifteen letters written by women in the Peruvian collection (written by eleven authors), Maldonado’s is representative of a trend found in most: women’s letters are

¹⁵⁴ Lavallé, “La conscience créole,” 359.

¹⁵⁵ Lavallé, “La conscience créole,” 332.

¹⁵⁶ Otte, *Cartas privadas*, 380-2.

much more likely to recount negative experiences than men's. This section questions the reasons for this disparity.

Women's experiences in transatlantic migration and their participation in the establishment of colonial societies across Spanish America continue to receive increasing attention from historians.¹⁵⁷ Additionally, since letters were often the only text women authored, especially in the case of lay women, many scholars have turned their attention to women's epistolary practices.¹⁵⁸ I base this section on this scholarship, placing it in the context of my present interest in the formation of a creole identity. Although working class women are underrepresented in the letters—only one mentioned being employed—they nevertheless reflect the experiences of the (upper echelons of the) non-elite, and are of interest specifically because of their frequent tonal dissonance with men's letters. I argue here that women's dependence on networks for security and stability, which were inherently fragmented through migration, made

¹⁵⁷ Credit must here be given to Asunción Lavrin, see especially Asunción Lavrin, ed., *Latin American Women: Historical Perspectives*, 1st ed. (Greenwood Press, 1978). See also: María del Carmen Martínez Martínez, "Inquietudes, viajes y equipajes," in *Viajeras entre dos mundos* (Biblioteca Virtual Miguel de Cervantes, 2011), <https://www.cervantesvirtual.com/nd/ark:/59851/bmc1219575>; Lauren Beck, "Women's Power and Material Exchange in Transatlantic Spain, 1550s–1650s," *Journal of Women's History* 30, no. 1 (2018): 35–55, <https://dx.doi.org/10.1353/jowh.2018.0002>; Rocío Quispe-Agnoli, "Taking Possession of the New World: Powerful Female Agency of Early Colonial Accounts of Perú," *Legacy* 28, no. 2 (2011): 257–89, <https://doi.org/10.5250/legacy.28.2.0257>; Ana María Presta, "Portraits of Four Women: Traditional Female Roles and Transgressions in Colonial Elite Families in Charcas, 1550–1600," *Colonial Latin American Review* 9, no. 2 (2000): 237–62, <https://doi.org/10.1080/713657422>; Gálvez Ruiz, "Emigración a Indias," 79–102; Leo Garofalo, "A Gendered History of Colonial Spanish-American Cities and Towns, 1500s–1800," in *The Routledge History Handbook of Gender and the Urban Experience*, ed. Deborah Simonton (Routledge, 2017): <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315276236>.

¹⁵⁸ To name a few, see: María Sánchez Serrano, "Madres en la Relación epistolar durante la emigración a Indias en los siglos XVI y XVII," *Fundación Española de Historia Moderna*, 2023, 1268–75, <https://dx.doi.org/10.15304/9788419679314>; Rocío Quispe-Agnoli and Mónica Díaz, eds., *Women's Negotiations and Textual Agency in Latin America, 1500–1799*, (Routledge, 2016); Rosario Márquez Macías, "Vida cotidiana e historia de mujeres. Guanajuato en las cartas privadas del Archivo General de Indias de Sevilla," *Temas Americanistas*, no. 44 (2020): 293–317, <https://doi.org/10.12795/Temas-Americanistas.2020.i44.11>; Yamile Silva, "Prácticas escriturales femeninas: Espacialidad e identidad en epístolas en la colonia (Río de la Plata, Siglos XVI–XVII)" (Ph.D. Diss., University of Massachusetts Amherst, 2011), <https://hdl.handle.net/20.500.14394/38858>; Teodoro Hampe Martínez, "Imagen y participación de las mujeres en la cultura del Perú virreinal: Una aproximación bibliográfica," in *Historia de las Mujeres en América Latina*, ed. Sara Beatriz Guardia. (Centro De Estudios La Mujer En La Historia De America Latina, 2013), <https://www.um.es/documents/2187255/2187765/historia-de-las-mujeres-en-america-latina.pdf/246b8a1e-1c1c-47b4-9f23-cfafe084bc3>.

their position in early colonial society more precarious. Though Spanish women often migrated with the aspiration of upward social mobility, this did not diminish the uncertain nature of their social standing, which made them less likely to root themselves fully in creole society.

Throughout the sixteenth century, the Spanish crown passed various decrees that promoted family migration and reunification to counter the gender imbalance in migrant demographics. This legal pressure—for some husbands directly impelled their wives to migrate on the basis that they were under risk of imprisonment—combined with a religious culture that emphasized and enforced obedience to husbands and honourable behaviour, could compel women to migrate against their will.¹⁵⁹ Some studies have remarked that husbands' letters to their wives used particularly flowery language in their descriptions of American life, which likely served to convince their spouses to migrate.¹⁶⁰ This could perhaps cause disappointment or disillusionment after migration. Single women, on the other hand, were attracted to America with promises of favorable marriages, but bad matches were possible. Maldonado's complaints of hardship centered on the poor marriage she had arranged for her daughter.¹⁶¹ Others, like Luis Díez de Morales or Diego de Espina, reassured their wives that their migration would be temporary—but if their finances took a turn for the worse, they might find themselves unable to go back to Spain.¹⁶²

¹⁵⁹ See Atman, "Marriage, Family, and Ethnicity," 228-9; Almorza Hidalgo, "*No se hace pueblo sin ellas*," 84-9; María Alba Pastor, "Criollismo y contrarreforma. Nueva España entre 1570 y 1630," *Ibero-amerikanisches Archiv* 22, no.3-4 (1996): 247-66, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/43392741>.

¹⁶⁰ See Altuna, "Relaciones de viajes," 9-23 and Earle, "Letters and Love," 17-46.

¹⁶¹ Maldonado told her son: "The hardships I have suffered here have been because your sister's marriage is so bad, and her and I being so short of fortune in having this old man last so long that that God or my sins gave him to her as her fate, and had it not been for this, she and we would be there in much comfort. But since God has willed it so, may the angels give Him much thanks for all He does. Pray to God that He may free her from this old man, and she will have great remedy." Otte, *Cartas privadas*, 381-2.

¹⁶² Otte, *Cartas privadas*, 458 and 495.

Once in the colonies, women could find themselves particularly isolated. Spanish women were particularly slow to migrate towards Peru, leading to a severe gender imbalance among the colonists.¹⁶³ Additionally, common ventures for men such as trade or ‘adventuring’ meant they were highly mobile, while women were generally barred from these activities.¹⁶⁴ Upper class ideals of honour restricted women’s movements, a theme common in men’s letters to wives, sisters, or daughters.¹⁶⁵ But life for working class women, who could not afford to emulate upper class gender expectations, was by no means easier. María Alfonso explained her financial difficulties to her sister, writing that “here women without a husband are worth nothing, nor can they earn their living, because here there is no domestic service.”¹⁶⁶ Having fallen ill, she was unable to collect her salary, which demonstrates the importance of personal networks for migrants.

Indeed, across social classes, women tended to rely partially or fully on others for their economic stability. For example, Jerónima Ramírez de Aguilera begged her brother to come to Peru as she was on the verge of being evicted due to debt. She chided his poor money management (“you should conduct your business as an honourable man, and that you remember the post in Granada, that you would be rich today if you had known how to keep it”), which served as a reminder that her fate depended on his fortune.¹⁶⁷ Inés Alonso Cervera, for her part, was left in a precarious position after the death of her husband, and asked her son to take over his father’s role.¹⁶⁸ Though the state or the Church could provide some relief for impoverished

¹⁶³ Almorza Hidalgo, “*No se hace pueblo sin ellas*,” 25.

¹⁶⁴ Garofalo, “A Gendered History,” 409.

¹⁶⁵ For example, Juan Martínez de Huaguaqueca provided his sister with a list of appropriate clothing to bring to Peru and reminded her to voyage with someone honourable, which would help her marry well once arrived. Diego de Espina expressed a similar sentiment to his wife but added that she should get a maid. Otte, *Cartas privadas*, 441-2 and 458-9.

¹⁶⁶ Otte, *Cartas privadas*, 491.

¹⁶⁷ Otte, *Cartas privadas*, 449-50.

¹⁶⁸ Otte, *Cartas privadas*, 387.

women, this does not negate the fact that women relied on others for economic well-being.¹⁶⁹

Thus, many women in particular demanded that sons or brothers migrate to expand their familial support networks, in an effort to replicate the communities they had left behind in Spain. Doña María de Córdoba, on the other hand, took the opposite approach, insisting to her sister “do not come for anything” in an attempt to spare her the hardships she herself had faced.¹⁷⁰

In addition to their isolation from relatives and friends, creole society also entailed a redefinition of the household or the family for Spanish women.¹⁷¹ As Ida Altman remarked, “life for Spanish women [...] would have presented many contrasts to the world they left behind.”¹⁷² However, descriptions of the household are absent from the fifteen letters at hand. Homesickness is instead a recurrent theme. Some women found success in Peru. These included Inés Alonso Cervera who wrote to her children of “the goods and the rest in which God was pleased to cast me”; Inés de Cabañas, who assured her brother she could afford to support him and his entire family; and Juana Farfán’s niece, doña Nicolasa, who was “well and fat.”¹⁷³ Nevertheless, most female writers stressed the fear of abandonment or destitution. This points to the conclusion that, in comparison to men, women’s precarious social standing made them less likely to cut ties with their old lives in Spain, where their communities had often provided them with more of a safety net. From this small sample of letters, the case for the development of a creole identity among women in the late sixteenth century is thin. Perhaps it grew as more women migrated and

¹⁶⁹ For social welfare in the later colonial period, see Francisco Quiroz Chueca “Alms for the Rich: Impoverished Spanish Women in Pursuit of Making a Living in Late Colonial Lima,” *The Americas* 81, no.3 (2024): 401-34, <https://doi.org/10.1017/tam.2024.6>. For more on the economic avenues available to working class women, see Karen B. Graubart, *With Our Labor and Sweat: Indigenous Women and the Formation of Colonial Society in Peru, 1550-1700* (Stanford University Press, 2007). For a counterexample in which women found avenues of agency in these systems, see Presta, “Portraits of Four Women,”: 237–62.

¹⁷⁰ Otte, *Cartas privadas*, 396-7.

¹⁷¹ See Jane Mangan, *Transatlantic Obligations: Creating the Bonds of Family in Conquest-Era Peru and Spain* (Oxford University Press, 2015) and Altman, “Marriage, Family, and Ethnicity,” 225-50.

¹⁷² Altman, “Marriage, Family, and Ethnicity,” 228.

¹⁷³ Otte, *Cartas privadas*, 387, 397, and 406-7.

they strengthened their networks in America, though this would call for further research. Another potential area of interest could be the study of letters from encomenderas or other successful women who had greater financial independence.

The comparison between men and women's experiences in migration highlights how creolization relied on stability in the New World. Because they remained with one foot in Spain and the other in Peru, many women could not adapt to creole society, struggling with the tension between the two worlds, the disconnect between "here" and "there," then and now, us and them. For those who had the means to dissociate the two, especially those who achieved success in Peru or severed their ties to Spain by relocating their personal networks to America, creolization was a naturally occurring process, similar to the physical adaptation of the body to a new environment. Thus, without using the word "creole," they experienced this shift in identity, becoming creole.

Chapter Two

“Each day the wealth goes from this kingdom”: The Case for Patriotism

In 1630, the friar Buenaventura de Salinas y Córdoba, heir to a line of powerful Limeños, took to the pen to defend his fellow creole clerics. He addressed his memorial to the king, advocating for the canonization of a Peruvian friar, and more generally for the equal treatment of American-born brothers within his order. In order to advance his argument, he wrote appraisingly of the Peruvian landscape and climate, making repeated comparisons to Europe with the implicit thesis that if their geographies rivaled each other, the people should be granted identical treatment.

Neither with the excessive heat of the sun is it scorched in the Summer, nor with the icy colds is it numbed, nor does it shiver in the Winter, because it is bathed by very pleasant, temperate, and healthy airs. It is not exposed to the long and abundant rainfall that would hinder it. It is not frightened by thunder nor does it reek of lightning, because it enjoys a tranquil and serene sky, where we also find that quality of Egypt praised by scripture, [...] [farmers] take the waters from its mighty river that runs through the middle of the city [...] with which they irrigate the land and give vegetable life to the sown fields.¹⁷⁴

This patriotic defense is one of the first of its kind, especially since it was published in Lima rather than Spain.

In New Spain, Baltazar Dorantes de Carranza's 1604 compilation of the conquerors of Mexico and their descendants was designed to illuminate the injustices the “native-borns (creoles)” were subjected to by peninsulares. Carranza layered praise and reproach of both the conquerors and the conquered in his description of the fall of Tenochtitlan, but ultimately

¹⁷⁴ Lavallé, “La conscience créole,” 913-4.

lamented that “all hope [was] lost for any general and perpetual distribution of Indians.”¹⁷⁵ Other arguments that would find their way into the criollismo canon were articulated in these early years by non-creoles: the émigré physician Juan de Cárdenas’ treaty on the creole body in which he surmised that the illnesses creoles suffered in the Indies “gave them better mental qualities than their parents born in colder climates”;¹⁷⁶ viceroy Toledo’s justification that his policies were a continuation of Inca practices; the mestizo grandson of the last Inca king El Inca Garcilaso de la Vega’s epic descriptions of Inca civilization and history full of comparisons to the classical world;¹⁷⁷ Las Casas’ defense of Indigenous peoples.

Which of these core ideas of criollismo, if any, can be found in the writings of non-elite creoles? What revendications did they make vis-à-vis peninsulares, the king, or other non-creole actors? How did they envision their position in the class conflict that opposed declining encomenderos and wealthy Spanish newcomers, who both saw themselves as the colonial upper class? This chapter builds on the previous one. There I concluded that some migrants became strongly rooted in creole society in spite of their birthplace, usually due to the acceptance of permanent settlement and the presence of familial networks. Once rooted, early creoles borrowed from the ideology of the encomenderos because like them, their success (no matter how small), was rooted in America. To family in Spain or more broadly to European society, they defended creole society and lifestyle based on the amelioration of their material realities, their day-to-day activities. The early colonial state was characterized by rapidly changing circumstances, and anxieties about one’s future placed non-elite and elite creoles in the same camp. Non-elites sought to ensure the legacy of their families in America and worried peninsular legislative bodies

¹⁷⁵ Brading, *The First America*, 295-7.

¹⁷⁶ Cañizares-Esguerra, “New World, New Stars,” 60-1.

¹⁷⁷ See Brading, “The Incas and the Renaissance,” 1-23.

did not reflect their interest, and they defended their landscape from negative characterizations by Spaniards. This chapter is separated into three sections based on these attributes. Before addressing these, it offers an overview of the economic avenues available to late sixteenth-century Peruvian-based creoles to elucidate the causes for their anxieties.

Labour and Social Mobility

Many Spaniards crossed the Atlantic with the hope that in migration they would find a better life. The making of colonial society was “a moment of accelerated social mobility [...] [in which] newly minted elites achieved heights that would be unthinkable if they had stayed in their Old-World hometowns.”¹⁷⁸ During the conquest period, this ambition lay in military distinction. James Lockhart and Enrique Otte note the story of Melchor Verdugo, a successful conqueror from an impoverished line of Castilian hidalgos who redeemed the family name through his exploits in Peru.¹⁷⁹ Ana María Presta highlights the case of the Almendras clan, who became an influential family in Charcas (Sucre, Bolivia) after the patriarch rose through the ranks in Pizarro’s army, having gained the favour of the brothers due to the birthplace they shared.¹⁸⁰ Like Francisco de Almendras, Francisco Martín de Alcántara left Spain a simple peasant and fought alongside Pizarro. For his success he received an encomienda, a coat of arms, and his wife earned the title of doña.¹⁸¹ These three examples demonstrate how Spaniards of humble

¹⁷⁸ Ida Altman and Thiago Krause, “Europeans, Indians, and Africans in the making of colonial societies,” in *The Iberian World*, 427.

¹⁷⁹ James Lockhart and Enrique Otte, eds., *Letters and People of the Spanish Indies: The Sixteenth Century*, Cambridge Latin American Studies 22 (Cambridge University Press, 1976), 43-4.

¹⁸⁰ Ana María Presta, “Encomienda, familia y redes en Charcas colonial: los Almendras, 1540-1600,” *Revista de Indias* 57, no.209 (1997): 21-53, <https://doi.org/10.3989/revindias.1997.i209.793>.

¹⁸¹ Pérez Miguel, “*Mujeres ricas y libres*,” 140-5.

backgrounds could become powerful lords through military conquest, fashioning themselves into a new American nobility.

But by 1542, the passage of the New Laws marked the beginning of a slow decline for the *encomienda* institution, despite the *encomenderos*' efforts to retain their power and wealth. While in the 1530s an *encomienda* grant could be the key to securing elite status, by the 1550s, a diversified income was essential to maintain this status, let alone to improve it. Meanwhile, later arriving migrants who chased this dream were forced to leave in disappointment, or turn their ambitions to other prospects. Some sought to replicate the early achievements of the conquistadors in territories not yet under Spanish control, but the most lucrative *encomiendas* remained around Lima, the capital of the newly created viceroyalty.¹⁸² As the administrative, political, and economic centre of the Peruvian region, the most prestigious roles of colonial governance were also found in Lima. Although instability persisted in Peru as conquistador-*encomenderos* vying for dominance fought factional wars against each other and rebelled against the first viceroy, Blasco Núñez Vela, the conquest era officially transitioned into the colonial period under the leadership of viceroy Toledo.¹⁸³

Toledo was indeed an important figure in the making of colonial Peru. Appointed in 1569, he successfully solidified the crown's hold over the region through multiple reforms. He headed the transition from *encomiendas* (in which the *encomendero* collected tribute and mandated forced labour of the Indigenous population in an assigned territory) to *corregimientos* (in which the *corregidor*, who was appointed to his role, acted as an overseer of the *mita* labour draft, the primary form of labour in the Andean silver mines).¹⁸⁴ Through this reorganization,

¹⁸² Some letters mentioned relatives 'adventuring' in Chile for this purpose. See Otte, *Cartas privadas*, 439, 453 and 456.

¹⁸³ Merluzzi, *Gobernando los Andes*, 179-85 and 276.

¹⁸⁴ Merluzzi, *Gobernando los Andes*, 237-74. See also Andrien, "Spaniards and Andeans," 121-148.

encomenderos' power was weakened, Indigenous populations were forcefully relocated, and the mining industry was developed through the labour of *mitayos*.¹⁸⁵ Toledo also conducted a series of urbanization projects to transform Lima, and to a lesser extent other urban centres of the region, into the replica of a Spanish city.¹⁸⁶

Though Spaniards ventured into mining in Peru as early as the 1520s, business (and profits) expanded dramatically at mid-century, especially due to the discovery of the Potosí silver mines.¹⁸⁷ Forced and paid laborers in the mines and free and enslaved workers in urban centres toiled in this industry, while the crown collected enormous income through tax and transatlantic trade.¹⁸⁸ More than 50% of American silver was produced in Peru, with 70% of Peruvian silver coming from Potosí alone.¹⁸⁹ The mining sector's impact on American economies was enormous, allowing the colonies to develop independently from Spanish controlled industry. In Peruvian urban centres, artisans, factory workers, domestic workers, and others formed a growing, multicultural working class.¹⁹⁰ While these small businesses could prove extremely

¹⁸⁵ Though Toledo's reforms were a severe blow to the encomenderos, he did not eliminate their roles as he believed in the importance of a strong, local elite—he simply wanted the elite to be subservient to the viceroy. The dramatic decline in the Indigenous population was equally, if not more, important to the weakening of the *encomiendas*.

¹⁸⁶ Included in this project was the christianization of Indigenous people, which was already the crown's official position, but until then had not been put into practice on a wide scale. Toledo used the Túpac Amaru rebellion as an excuse to persecute 'idolatry.' Additionally, he considered the forced labour of Indigenous Peruvians necessary for their christianization and 'civilization' (europeanization). Evangelization was also the reason for the forced relocation of Indigenous people into *reducciones*. Finally, Toledo's policies regarding the Indigenous population was based on the system of the two republics, which was meant to keep Indigenous and Spanish people apart (with Africans falling under the Spanish republic, though with a different legal status). Though the mining industry used slave labour, enslaved Africans more commonly worked in urban centres. Merluzzi, *Gobernando los Andes*, 286-306.

¹⁸⁷ Almorza Hidalgo, "No se hace pueblo sin ellas," 95-6.

¹⁸⁸ The Spanish crown held the monopoly over transatlantic trading through the *Carrera de Indias*. However, there was also private trading in certain sectors. Additionally, the crown collected taxes from imports and exports as well as 20% of mining revenue. Gasch-Tomás and Münch Miranda, "Imperial economies," 431-48. See also Roquinaldo Ferreira and Pablo Miguel Sierra Silva, "Portugal, Spain, and the transatlantic slave trade," in *The Iberian World*, 375-391.

¹⁸⁹ Merluzzi, *Gobernando los Andes*, 269.

¹⁹⁰ This was especially true of cities like Trujillo, since the colonial government and elites were concentrated in Lima. While some avenues of labour were flexible, artisan positions were often inherited. Labor also tended to be segregated. For more on urban labour, see Graubart, *With Our Labor and Sweat*, 60-94.

lucrative for some, the higher levels of trade were generally monopolized by white Spaniards, especially later arriving migrants or peninsulares.

Through trading, a new mercantile bourgeoisie emerged on both sides of the Atlantic. In Peru, creoles increased their complaints of peninsular favoritism, especially targeting Toledo's successors.¹⁹¹ Encomenderos in decline were still fighting to retain their wealth and status; "the ideal of a noble life defined by owning land, exercising dominion over others, and above all not working with one's own hands was a powerful one."¹⁹² A common strategy was to organize marriages between an encomendero family, which boasted an impressive name in America, and a trading family, which contributed the fortune.¹⁹³ While in Spain, some upwardly mobile bureaucrats and merchants were *conversos* or foreign Europeans, in Peru, some Native Americans and mestizos rose through the ranks.¹⁹⁴ At the same time, white urban poverty was also growing and, despite the system of the two republics, miscegenation and interracial relationships continued to grow.¹⁹⁵ "The increase in poor Spaniards during a period in which a small but significant portion of the population of mixed ancestry was showing signs of economic advancement might have made ancestry increasingly important for the maintenance of colonial boundaries," explains María Elena Martínez.¹⁹⁶ As the sixteenth century came to an end, old

¹⁹¹ Andrien, "Spaniards, Andeans, and the Early Colonial State in Peru," in *Transatlantic Encounters*, 128.

¹⁹² Altman and Krause, "Europeans, Indians, and Africans," in *The Iberian World*, 427.

¹⁹³ For example, see Pedro Fernández de Lascoyn's letter to his mother. Otte, *Cartas privadas*, 430.

¹⁹⁴ Graubart surveys how the ownership of *solares*, sought-after properties in city centres, was initially only for Spaniards, but with time many were sold or rented to Natives and mestizos. Graubart, "The Creolization of the New World," 471-99. See also Mafalda Soares da Cunha and Igor Knezevic, "Iberian society," in *The Iberian World*, 142-165.

¹⁹⁵ Population data before 1600 in Peru is somewhat uncertain due to variances between urban and rural regions (since population counts were first used for the purpose of collecting Indigenous tribute) and a non-standard categorization of race (for example, mestizos were initially considered under the Spanish designation, but were later added to the non-Spanish category). For population data around 1600, see Almorza Hidalgo, "*No se hace pueblo sin ellas*," 152-64.

¹⁹⁶ Martínez, *Genealogical Fictions*, 147.

Spanish elites, feeling threatened by this social mobility and racial mixing, placed increasing importance on their 'pure' lineages.

By 1600, encomendero hegemony had long faded, though some maintained their status through marriage or other ventures, allowing them to remain powerful in colonial society. Political appointments, to such positions as *corregidores*, were extremely sought after and were often decided through bribery or nepotism and clientelism. Outside of the upper class, economic avenues were increasingly diverse, but as the colonial period took shape, the accelerated social mobility that had originally attracted so many Spaniards to America became nearly impossible to recreate. Most of the migrants discussed in this thesis arrived too late to amass enormous fortunes in the first spoils of the conquest and they instead settled into humbler occupations. They still had aspirations of social mobility, however, and many expressed their pride in their success, even if it was not as exceptional as the achievements mentioned at the top of this section. Thus, they were protective over their standing and accomplishments, no matter how small. The following section illustrates how they defended this success.

Non-Elite Creole Revendications

Although the decline of the encomiendas is usually presented as the “anguish, nostalgia and resentment” of the waning elite, small estates were also affected.¹⁹⁷ Andrés Chacón, introduced in the previous section, illustrates this precarity.¹⁹⁸ His 1569 letter contains a lengthy description of all his expenses, and an invitation for his nephews to join him, as he confessed that, alone, he was struggling to manage his estate: “as I am already old, I cannot oversee everything, and the estates in this land have this characteristic that, if their owner does not oversee them, they soon

¹⁹⁷ Brading, *The First America*, 293.

¹⁹⁸ See Lockhart and Otte, *Letters and People of the Spanish Indies*, 64-70.

go to ruin.”¹⁹⁹ Chacón’s finances were limited because his Indigenous tributaries were “destroyed from the past wars [...] and so few remain, for there were more than two thousand Indians, and there will be now up to two hundred.”²⁰⁰ For Lockhart and Otte, Chacón’s financial support of his tributaries was less motivated by benevolence than by an understanding that “it is better to have a little maize and fish and keep the Indians as potential employees in his enterprises than to push tribute demands and see them run off as servants with Spanish passers by.”²⁰¹ Like other encomenderos, Chacón ventured into the mining industry in an attempt to maintain his elevated social standing and influence on local economic affairs.

Similarly, Ortuño de Vergara, another modest encomendero living in northern Peru on an estate one hundred and fifty leagues away from Lima, wrote of his visit to the viceroy (Andrés Hurtado de Mendoza, 1556-61): “he has granted me many favors, both for the town and myself, confirming the Indians I already held and giving me three hundred more, which at present do not serve, because they are at war, and altogether it may amount to up to six hundred Indians, and at present they provide no more than sustenance. In time, it may be that they yield some profit.”²⁰² His finances secured for the time being, he resolved to stay in Peru, “for even in poverty, I have never lacked the means to live as a man of honour.” Here, Vergara referred to himself as a *hidalgo*, indicating that despite his hardships his encomendero lifestyle gave him some upper-class privileges he wished to keep. Modest *encomiendas*, like their ostentatious counterparts, were a status symbol won by one’s social mobility and encomenderos clung to them for as long as they could. In this context, non-elite landowners’ interests aligned exactly with the aspiring American nobility.

¹⁹⁹ Otte, *Cartas privadas*, 469.

²⁰⁰ Otte, *Cartas privadas*, 470.

²⁰¹ Lockhart and Otte, *Letters and People of the Spanish Indies*, 65.

²⁰² Otte, *Cartas privadas*, 373-4.

Because successful colonial exploitation relied on the maximization of (legal) advantages and the minimization of restrictions, the ecomenderos' 'spirit of possession' also characterized other creoles whose socio-economic status was rooted in America.²⁰³ In a 1586 letter, the merchant and mining investor Pedro de Nájera mourned the total loss of his sixty thousand pesos investment after the new viceroy refused to "give us Indians."²⁰⁴ This "cruelty" was amplified when the viceroy (Fernando de Torres y Portugal, 1584-9) forbade further expeditions in a newly discovered mine near Potosí. Nájera enumerated other recent "injustices," accusing the viceroy of holding his own interests above those of Limeños: he insulted the local elites who met him upon his arrival in the city by calling them traitors and snubbed them when he was invited to their homes as a gesture of goodwill; he did not offer his support to the victims of a massive earthquake; and he refused to renew the corregimiento of one of the "first discoverers," instead granting it to a personal acquaintance.²⁰⁵

For Nájera, viceroy Torres was responsible for all the hardships the colony was facing: "and to see how this land is, and how it goes, that by moments it is being destroyed, and it seems that all this the viceroy brought with him, because since I have been here I had not seen hunger, and after he came there is not to eat of bread and meat..."²⁰⁶ However, he blamed only Torres for these problems. And despite these setbacks, Nájera indicated his desire to stay in Peru for his money and business were tied "here." It was therefore to his advantage to align himself with the "first discoverers" and the "traitors" who were "present at the battle of Gonzalo Pizarro." Other letters express a similar mistrust for specific viceroys and their policies ("The land is very strained since the viceroy [Toledo] came..."), while noting that their financial ventures kept

²⁰³ Lavallé, "La conscience créole," 356-7.

²⁰⁴ Otte, *Cartas privadas*, 418.

²⁰⁵ Otte, *Cartas privadas*, 416-29.

²⁰⁶ Otte, *Cartas privadas*, 420.

them “accredited and rooted” to creole society.²⁰⁷ Small landowners, miners and some other professionals owed their successes or statuses to Peru and so, unable to leave without significant losses, entrenched themselves deeper in the colonial world. Even without grand achievements, Peru had provided them upward social mobility—a better life than in Spain—so they defended their positions from potential obstacles.

To protect their achievements, creoles were anxious to find heirs that would cement their legacy. Creole identity was born from, and nurtured by, familial ties. For Brading, this is why it gained momentum especially in the early seventeenth century: as the sons and grandsons of the conquerors slowly but surely lost the privileges gained at conquest, they petitioned the crown and wrote family histories in which they framed their identity in the accomplishments of their ancestors. But instead of rooting their identity in pride, these creoles were “haunted by an all-pervasive fear of dispossession.”²⁰⁸ The fear of dispossession made peninsulares into their main rivals and allowed creoles to first disassociate their families from the events of the Conquest (and even adopt a pro-Indigenous stance). Non-elites also feared dispossession because they too had achieved upward social mobility through migration in a way that could not be replicated in Spain, or often even by later migrants. Consequently, when migrants became rooted in creole society, they immediately sought to ensure their successes would be passed on to heirs. Almost all letters speak of inheritance in this manner, urging younger relatives to not let their accomplishments be squandered.

Since many migrants accepted that they had become part of creole society after becoming comfortably settled, often in their old age, their letters stressed their age as a factor to encourage

²⁰⁷ Otte, *Cartas privadas*, 395 and 384. See also 455-7.

²⁰⁸ Brading, *The First America*, 2-3 and 332.

children or relatives to migrate quickly. These letters explicitly stated that this was necessary for inheritance purposes. Francisco Ojalvo wrote to his nephew that “if I were to die, the greatest sorrow I would carry would be that you were not here to gather what I left, because this land is of such a condition that almost everything is lost as soon as a man closes his eyes”; Sebastián Carrera told his wife he lived “without kin or brother, fearing that if God takes me, half my estate would vanish, as happens to others who die here”; and Salvador Camacho asked his nephew to take over his business “so that, if God takes me, that Your Mercy would remain, so that the pittance that a man has earned with so much work would not be lost.”²⁰⁹ These fears were caused not by a legal inability to bequeath property to heirs abroad, but by the difficulties of transatlantic legal processes.

Indeed, many letters indicate the uncertainties inherent to intercontinental law across the Spanish empire; those who employed it did so only if they had no other option. For example, Hernando Caballero informed Juana García that her husband Pedro Martín had died in suspicious circumstances and without a will. Finding himself the guardian of Martín’s sons, Caballero explained to García that he was working to bring justice to the deceased, settle his debts, sell his mine, and allow the widow to collect what was left.²¹⁰ In another case, Diego Díaz’s nephew died unexpectedly in Huamanga and Díaz became embroiled in a lawsuit concerning money owed to his nephew. Díaz sent a detailed request of documents needed to resolve the issue, including: a sworn statement that Benito Díaz and his wife (the grandparents of the deceased) were lawfully married; proof that their daughter Catalina (mother of the deceased) was their legitimate daughter; a copy of Catalina and her husband’s marriage certificate from the church

²⁰⁹ Otte, *Cartas privadas*, 374-5, 440-1, and 462.

²¹⁰ See also the case of Alonso Carrasco who explained his difficulties enacting the will of Bartolomé Chico Halía, who died in Peru and left over three thousand pesos for his wife and children in Spain. Otte, *Cartas privadas*, 480-2.

registry; the birth certificate of all their children; and a document proving they had all come to Peru legally. Diego stressed that “all this must be exhaustive, as I have said, leaving nothing out.”²¹¹ These processes were complex, extremely lengthy since the royal fleets only crossed the Atlantic twice a year, risky because documents were often lost during the voyage, and undoubtedly expensive.²¹² These costs ate at the inheritance, hence why migrants insisted that their relatives needed to migrate or it would be lost.

Furthermore, as more and more Spaniards crossed the Atlantic every year, having contacts in the colonies was particularly helpful to enjoy a successful migration. Those already established offered their support to relatives so they could escape the hardships of Iberia. For example, Alonso del Castillo suggested to his father that waiting until he found his footing in Peru would improve the elderly man’s experience. He elaborated: “and from there [Panama], seeing that it was such a bad land, I came to this one, which everyone said was the best in the world for men to earn their keep, which is true if a man has some start.”²¹³ Celedón Favališ penned a succinct description: “the land is very rich, and never so much as now, but since there are so many people, money is very distributed.”²¹⁴ To his great disappointment, he had arrived in Peru after the best mines in Potosí had been discovered, and had brought too little money to be settled comfortably, explaining to his father that “in this land a man’s fortune lies only in having six hundred pesos at least,” with which he would have been “rich forever.”²¹⁵ Indeed, although encomenderos’ wealth shrank throughout the sixteenth century, their early success and quasi-

²¹¹ Otte, *Cartas privadas*, 386-7.

²¹² For example, Gabriel Ramírez de Arellano informed his son that he had previously sent him documents (royal provisions) but that the messenger had lost everything at sea, while Pedro del Almendro believed that since he had not received responses to any of his letters they must have all been lost, and Rodrigo Alvarez assured his brother that he would have sent him money if only he knew someone on the ships who could be trusted with it. Otte, *Cartas privadas*, 380-1, 445, and 471.

²¹³ Otte, *Cartas privadas*, 372-3.

²¹⁴ Otte, *Cartas privadas*, 434.

²¹⁵ Otte, *Cartas privadas*, 434.

noble status allowed the shrewd ones to invest their money elsewhere, a benefit later arriving migrants did not have.

While more upper class peninsulares migrated in the second half of the sixteenth century than in the first—attracted by the success stories—their wealth and connections brought opportunities the lower classes did not have. For the latter, chain migration was the more secure, though also more modest, arrangement to leave Spain. Conscious of this, migrants reassured relatives that they would support them if they came to Peru. This support was usually mentioned alongside the topic of inheritance: a bargain. The relative in Europe was offered a chance at a better life abroad, and the one in America would gain an heir to protect his achievements. “I am very old, and I have no children nor a wife to whom to leave all the estate that I have, except to you, whom I beg to procure a license to come to these parts with your wife and children, so that your poverty may be remedied,” wrote Alonso Gómez to his cousin.²¹⁶ Finding an heir would also allow one to live with less worries in their old age, and ensure the legacy of their name would survive.

One did not have to be tremendously wealthy to worry about being dispossessed. Even if Spanish migrants and creoles were only moderately successful, America represented social mobility for them. And in an era when colonial society was evolving at rapid speeds (economically but also legally, as Nájera’s squandered sixty thousand pesos investment in the silver mines indicated), the fear of losing everything could plague anyone across social classes. While encomenderos’ anxieties centered on their status and legacy, non-elites worried about the loss of their achievements—ultimately a fear with a similar origin.

²¹⁶ Otte, *Cartas privadas*, 445. See also 451, 486, and 489.

Addressing the origins of the growing distance between creoles and peninsulares, Lavallé finds three main causes:

- The limitations imposed after the fact by the crown on a land conquered and populated, most often, thanks to the efforts of the colonists alone, without any official assistance.
- The burden of a ‘remote’ administration (*por control remoto*) that, in many cases, ignored the living conditions in the country and, through its measures, acted against the interests of those who had conquered or lived there.
- The questioning of the unconditional validity of the sovereign’s rights over American lands, rights so hotly debated in the 16th century.²¹⁷

Though this distance certainly grew over time, within the first generation of creoles—migrants themselves—this division can be observed in some letters, especially those whose authors had settled in Peru long ago. But while intellectual creoles and peninsulares argued over racial and biological differences, the concerns found in the letters of the non-elite centered on everyday concerns.

The main grievance they expressed revolved around the royal fleet system. The ships controlled their ability to communicate with loved ones, to support them financially, and to reunite scattered families. The cost of international shipping was sharply criticized in many letters, and others frequently blamed thieving peninsular officials, or even the crown itself: “Five hundred ducats I wanted to send you, and I have not dared, because they told me that our lord the king was seizing everything that was taken from here,” wrote Francisco Sanz Herrero.²¹⁸ For his part, Francisco Núñez heatedly explained that he refused to send “a single real of mine” because

²¹⁷ Lavallé, “La conscience créole,” 358.

²¹⁸ Similarly, Ortuño de Vergara stated “I send nothing, as the king takes everything,” and Gabriel Ramírez de Arellano wrote that “Sending money now is impossible: after surviving the perils of sea and wind, the king takes it for his expenses. Until this changes, no one sends silver.” Otte, *Cartas privadas*, 373-4, 380-1, and 407-8.

of the corrupt officials: “they say that upon registering the estates, in the name of the king they take them in Castile. And so there are many men who do not provide for their relatives nor dare send anything to invest in their estates, because those who come from there tell endless tales of the vexations and annoyances that this causes them.”²¹⁹ He ended his letter with the following question: “I live in this land rich and honourably, who would have me go to Spain, as you say, and have the king take my estate and see me poor?” More than an excuse to not send money to distant relatives, these examples highlight ardent frustrations with royal authority.

Because the letters’ authors were migrants themselves, they did not complain about newcomers, though some resented how crowded and even strained Peru had become with the increasing flow of immigrants. Miguel de Arriba, whose finances were hit after his coca farm suffered significant devaluation in the 1560s, lamented that “things are worth so little that a cow is worth no more than three ducats, and it was worth when I came to this land a hundred ducats, and a ram that used to be worth thirty ducats is worth no more than three or four reales.”²²⁰ For his part, Juan de Ribera warned his brother-in-law not to act like a *chapetón* if he decided to migrate.²²¹ Finally, as mentioned above, a few complaints were made towards specific viceroys.

Although no-one besides Nájera accused peninsular officials of receiving better appointments than criollos, a few letters were written by migrants hired through personal connections in Spain.²²² Thus, the foundation of the creole-peninsular conflict is exposed at this

²¹⁹ Otte, *Cartas privadas*, 474.

²²⁰ Otte, *Cartas privadas*, 548. Other reasons that caused financial difficulty in the late sixteenth century have been mentioned previously, namely the decline of the encomiendas, natural disasters (see Nájera’s letters, 416-29), waves of illness (see Guillen’s letters, 375-9), and the fact that the best lands, mines, and administrative posts had already been distributed (see Favali’s letter for the mines of Potosí, 431-6). See also 455-6 and 461.

²²¹ Otte, *Cartas privadas*, 388. Chapetón here refers to a European newly arrived in America with little experience in the realities of the New World.

²²² For example, Luis Díez de Morales assured his wife that he made a very comfortable salary thanks to the viceroy Luis de Velasco and that “in three or four years we will earn more than thirty thousand pesos with God’s help, and we will return to Castile.” Otte, *Cartas privadas*, 495. See also 392 and 400-01.

non-elite level: peninsular favoritism extended to smaller roles, and the masses also harboured the known creole criticism of the crown. This is particularly significant since letter writers were often aware that their compositions would be presented to the officials of the Casa de Contratación. Such expressions were leveraged by peninsulares to allege that criollos were of “unstable” character and “inclined to rebellion and revolt,” a justification harnessed by the former to explain the latter’s exclusion from administrative appointments, which only exacerbated creoles’ complaints.²²³ Whether or not the authors of these letters intended their anxieties about dispossession to be construed as disapproval of Spanish governance, they existed in the context of this unease growing on both sides of the Atlantic.

In 1576, Alonso Martín del Campillo wrote a letter to his brother in which he enumerated recent hardships that had plagued him. Campillo had been imprisoned in Panama for travelling without a license, which resulted in “other troubles, which have cost me only God knows how much.” Once freed, he met his brother in Peru and the two invested four thousand pesos in merchandise (half of Campillo’s brother’s estate), but the fleet carrying this merchandise sank and all was lost except two slaves. Not to be deterred, Campillo borrowed another thousand pesos from his brother to invest at Potosí, but he fell gravely ill and could not go. As he recovered, the royal fleet made landfall, and Campillo penned the above letter containing the following description of Peru:

This is the best land yet discovered: rich, most fertile in bread, meats, fish, and all the fruits there are in Spain. It is a land where it never rains, nor thunders, nor are there storms, nor is it very cold or very hot, nor do the days grow longer or shorter all year.

²²³ Lavallé, “La conscience créole,” 373. See also 829-902.

[...] In short, it is such that no man who sees it will remember Spain. He who wishes to be virtuous and work can earn his living. But few apply themselves to work, for the land is so abundant that, even without working, a man lacks neither food nor clothing, and some profit more by idling than others do by working. [...] And so it happens daily that men lose much by various means yet they remain as cheerful as if they had lost nothing, for they know they are in a land where, if they apply themselves, they easily recover, which cannot be said of Spain.²²⁴

This section returns to migrants' descriptions of the New World, now placed in the context of creole revendications. Like the friar Salinas y Córdoba, Campillo effused about the Peruvian climate and landscape, considering Spain inferior. These authors reserved themselves the right to portray Peru accurately as residents of the colony and dismissed potential peninsular opposition to their depictions. Like other non-elites, Campillo's aggrandizing description focused on the everyday concerns of colonial subjects rather than intellectual contentions.

Praise for the land and climate generally revolved around agricultural production; sustenance motivated many to emigrate and accounts of abundance painted an attractive picture for relatives. For example, Pedro García simply wrote to his brother that "there is no need to advise of this land, because the nobility and fertility of it is already notorious."²²⁵ For his part, Francisco Sanz Heredero bragged that "here is the best husbandry that is in the world, we reap five hundred fanegas of bread from one fanega, without a drop of rain falling all the year, which will seem to you a miraculous thing, but all is by irrigation. Meat costs nothing. Gold and silver there is no need to speak of, for it is as common as earth, and if [my nephews] come they will live like princes [...] For this land is glorious, lacking nothing but paradise to be entirely

²²⁴ Otte, *Cartas privadas*, 389-91.

²²⁵ Otte, *Cartas privadas*, 402-3.

heaven.”²²⁶ Considering how this image of abundance was juxtaposed with the “misery” or “hardships” of Spain, these descriptions are particularly meaningful. Though the social standing of these authors and their families in Spain are unknown, the direct comparisons between Spanish and Peruvian farms make it likely that a contrast to rural Iberian farmlands was purposely crafted.²²⁷

Descriptions of the climate are especially noteworthy because of their evident exaggerations. Sebastián Carrera reported to his wife that “this is the finest land under the sun for Christians: no hunger, no cold, and so fertile that sowing a fanega of wheat yields fifty. It never rains, yet crops thrive,” while Francisco Rodríguez remarked that “it is the best that the sun warms, for it is never cold nor hot, it never ever rains [...] There is in it much meat of cow, sheep, pigs and goats, many fruits such as quinces, pomegranates, figs and grapes and many others...”²²⁸ Although the mentions of the environment contain similarities to the climatologic defense of the lettered creoles, weather was of importance to these authors because of its contribution to the propitious husbandry. These embellishments were meant to contrast the realities of relatives in Spain, either to brag or to entice them to migrate, but they also read as proto-patriotic eulogies.

In addition to comparisons between Peruvian and Spanish farming, migrants’ letters commended the American lifestyle. They emphasized how easy it was for them to make money or how they did not have to work at all. This latter strategy was a favourite of husbands seeking to convince their wives to migrate.²²⁹ Indeed, though many husbands assured their wives that servants or slaves would labour for them, a few instead referred to the fortune their wives could

²²⁶ Otte, *Cartas privadas*, 407-8.

²²⁷ For example, see Otte, *Cartas privadas*, and 489-90 and 498-9.

²²⁸ Otte, *Cartas privadas*, 374-5 and 462.

²²⁹ See the first chapter for examples.

earn. For example, Sebastián Carrera demystified the secret to a wealthy lifestyle for his wife: “the reason is that they all wear clothes made here, and an outfit does not last more than a year, because the dust is so great that it eats the clothing. And therefore, Your Mercy’s trade is very valuable.”²³⁰ Single women were told they would enjoy a better marriage “here,” and some widows were similarly tempted.

Men were enticed through descriptions of economic opportunities, which often featured extravagant praise. Francisco Hernández wrote to his brother that “in this land clerics earn their living very well, and they marry their sisters off with much advantage, and they greatly favour their mother, and so I say that, having seen this, Your Mercy should hurry to be ordained and come here,” and Juan de Carvajal told his brother-in-law that “If you should wish to arrange to come to these parts of Peru with only your trade you will be able to come honorably, and I will occupy you in things in which you can be of use, because your good ingenuity can be of much profit in these parts [...] once you have arrived here, you will not feel the needs of Spain once you are gone.”²³¹ Even when not inviting their relatives to join their profession or to migrate at all, men wrote flattering descriptions of their employment opportunities. Gonzalo Guillén told his mother that “this is a land without hunger, where men who apply themselves grow rich in little time,” and Blas Arroyo wrote to his brother that “This land pleases me greatly, and more to see the provision so good as there is in it, for being a rich man in it, and to see the costumes and the things that there are here, as everything costs cheaper than in Castile. I give my word that there is much to tell of seeing the grandeurs of here.”²³² Like Arroyo, many authors reassured relatives that the cost of living in Peru was minor compared to Spain, which contributed to an

²³⁰ Otte, *Cartas privadas*, 374-5.

²³¹ Otte, *Cartas privadas*, 409 and 444.

²³² Otte, *Cartas privadas*, 376 and 410.

inflated lifestyle. Again, these descriptions were certainly meant to entice relatives or reassure them that they were doing well, but when migrants contrasted such generous descriptions of Peru to the barrenness of Spain, they reflect a pride in the migrants' new homeland.

More than boasts of a comfortable lifestyle, these references to labour were an indication that migration had offered the author upward social mobility. Having servants or slaves was a status symbol for them, an indication of proximity to the upper class. For example, when writing of his friend Gregorian Morán, Carrera described how Morán "gives his servants [more than what] all that those over there earn, because in the two years that he has had a shop there have not been six months in which he did not ride on a horse, and he does not take a step on foot unless he wants to."²³³ Migrants reinforced that their new life in Peru allowed them to live with honour, explained the importance of an Old Christian status, and mentioned owning slaves or employing servants because it reflected their elevated status. The enthusiasm for social mobility and economic opportunities, as well as the abundance of the Peruvian husbandry due to the favourable climate, reveals what aspects of the New World these migrants were most proud of.

Early criollismo's most striking feature is the effusive praise patriots had for the American environment. A close second is the inception of the fused mythologies of Spanish and Indigenous traditions and history. Unlike the former, this latter trait is entirely absent from the collection of Peruvian migrants' letters. This conforms with Lavallé and Brading's conclusion that Peruvian creoles did not adopt Indigenous symbols as rapidly and enthusiastically as their Mexican counterparts due to Inca resistance to Spanish rule. In fact, except for a single nod to a

²³³ Otte, *Cartas privadas*, 374-5.

rebellion in Potosí and a few mentions of faraway “adventuring” or “wars,” both negative and positive characterizations of Indigenous people and society are absent from the letters.²³⁴

Other recognizable attributes of criollismo include the theories of climatologic and biological determinism, also unsurprisingly absent from these letters since they only began gaining popularity among lettered people at the turn of the seventeenth century. Use of the word “kingdom” is, however, quite frequent, and for Martínez this is an indication of patriotism. She writes that “the increasing militancy of their claims was reflected in their more frequent deployment of the term kingdom (sometimes kingdoms) for their territory. Although the term had already surfaced in some creole writings of the late sixteenth century, it appeared more regularly around the 1650s.”²³⁵ Pedro de Salvatierra derisively wrote that “in the end everything over there is a joke in comparison to what is over here [...] Your Mercy sees with your own eyes each day the wealth that comes from this kingdom,” and Francisco Gómez Marrón boasted that he and his family “have taken up residence and citizenship in this city of Cuzco, which is the best in this kingdom.”²³⁶ But while lettered creoles spoke of American ‘kingdoms’ and ‘nations’ especially when making European or ancient classical references, these letters make no such association.

The absence of these intellectual topics is expected, not only because these letters were not intended to be memorials or treatises, but also because these topics were the speculations of the upper class. In particular, the narrative of a shared American history unambiguously asserted that Spanish-American elites were the true heirs to the Inca Empire because of their ‘nobility.’ I

²³⁴ Writing from Lima in 1599, Juan Delgado de Salido commented: “And in Chile the Indians of that province have killed the governor and many soldiers. There have also been persons who rebelled in Potosí, and God was served to remedy it, because the leaders have been beheaded.” Otte, *Cartas privadas*, 452-4.

²³⁵ Martínez, *Genealogical Fictions*, 196.

²³⁶ Otte, *Cartas privadas*, 401-2 and 478-9. See also 417 and 472-4.

do not find these omissions to deter from the expressions of local pride found in the letters, rather it is poignant that despite the explicit class-based tenets of creole ideology the non-elites resonated with some aspects of it. Moreover, the argument of this thesis is that the elite and non-elite roots of patriotism come from the same seed; I did not seek to make a one-to-one comparison.

The main distinction this chapter has discussed is that for non-elites, patriotism emerged from more practical experiences. Having migrated with the desire for upward social mobility, migrants flaunted their relaxed lifestyle, expressed disdain for the stagnating, difficult, or miserable circumstances they had left behind “there,” and encouraged loved ones to make the same journey. They penned effusive praise for the land that had brought them their achievements, but as later arriving migrants they were not concerned with the preservation of a quasi-noble status based on the conquest. Among those who were economically rooted in Peru, their interests often aligned with this elite group, and so both complained about peninsulares, but still non-elites’ frustrations stemmed from practical concerns like communication with loved ones. And while the true feelings of these authors can never be accurately revealed, it is necessary to examine these letters in conversation with the writings of the elites, in this context of the growing resentment of waning local elites and emerging American patriotism.

Conclusion

“It was the distance between the rigid letter and the fluid spoken word, that made the *lettered city* into a *scripted city*, reserved to a strict minority.”²³⁷ This thesis’ starting point was to engage with the “documents” of the non-elite. Without disproving the notion that within the city, a small group of lettered elites composed the “protective ring of power and the executor of its orders,” I aimed to blur the lines between the lettered and non-lettered by considering personal letters as literate production.²³⁸ The main objective of this thesis was, then, to expand studies on the roots of criollismo by considering these letters alongside the memorials, petitions, and documents produced by elite criollos.

In the first chapter, I addressed the marker of ‘creole’ and concluded that, although the letters’ authors were all migrants, many ‘spiritually’ identified with creole society—without calling themselves creoles, they distanced, alienated themselves from peninsular society and adopted the customs and ideologies that defined Peruvian creole society. That is not to say all authors were criollos. While migration inherently provokes a tension within the self who has become othered, some authors spoke of plans to go back permanently to Spain or despair at not being able to do so. These remained rooted in peninsular society despite the distance separating them. But many more embraced their new lives. Either enthusiastically, especially when they had achieved great success and social mobility in Peru, or more reluctantly, through an understanding that their migration was permanent, these proto-creoles rooted themselves in creole society by adapting to American customs, cutting ties with their old life in Spain, and making themselves

²³⁷ Rama, *La ciudad letrada*, 71. Charles Chasteen’s 1996 English translation transforms Rama’s concept of “La ciudad escrituraria,” into “The City of Protocols.” Rama, *La ciudad letrada*, trans. John Charles Chasteen (Duke University Press, 1996), 29.

²³⁸ Rama, *La ciudad letrada*, 57.

feel more at home by inviting relatives to also migrate. With the conclusion that this rooting and distancing was not purely a result of financial achievement, rather it was more likely to come from the presence of a network that allowed a more total distancing from Spain, I argued that becoming creole preceded the first generation of Spaniards born in Peru.

In the second chapter, I continued from this definition of early creoles to argue that like the elite and/or later militant creoles, these authors also sought to define their new identities and homelands in their own terms. This chapter particularly interacted with elite creole revendications, since many non-elites found their interests aligned with those of the landowners, miners, and other professionals whose socio-economic standing could not be removed from the Peruvian context. The overarching conclusion in this chapter was that non-elite revendications were grounded in more material, day-to-day concerns than the class-based argument touted by anxious declining encomenderos. Despite this difference, which must remember the nature of the documents produced by these elites and those of the non-elite, the two existed alongside each other; together, they form a broad representation of the early Peruvian creole identity.

“Language is the companion of Empire,” famously wrote Nebrija in his 1492 Grammar of the Castilian Language.²³⁹ This thesis and the letter writers it studied cannot be removed from the context of the formation of the Peruvian Viceroyalty, ruled by the Spanish crown. This thesis sought to place the self-definitions of these authors, their pride, anxiety, hopes and apprehensions, in the historical context which surrounded their letters. While it largely focused on the contribution of non-elites in the formation of a criollo identity, and at the same time in the growing distance and tensions vis-à-vis peninsulares, criollos of this era also defined themselves in opposition to Native Americans (and Africans). As we have seen in this thesis, many aspects

²³⁹ In Rama, *La ciudad letrada*, 78.

that brought pride to these proto-creoles was created by this colonial context, and the subjugation of Indigenous and African people. Although it occupied a background role in the letters and therefore in this thesis, the participation of non-elites in the establishment and growth of the Spanish colonial project was another central theme to this project. Criollismo is and always was tied to the ‘self’ and ‘other’ unique to colonial contexts, to colonial and decolonial movements, and to scholarship on the interaction of race and class in the Latin American world.

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