In the urban centres of Lima and Cuzco, the foods that entered the colonial body, from the Old World and the New, informed immigrants’ understanding of their emerging society. During the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, popular spheres of multiethnic sharing led Spaniards, and their Creole offspring, to develop a gut for maize and potato, and also to develop a thirsty demand for chicha (ancestral Inca maize beverage). The evolving cuisine that became gradually distanced from the trinity of Hispanic staples — meat, wheat, and wine — reflects an elasticity characteristic of bodies in migration, and speaks to processes of identity formation. Fluidity and flexibility ingrained within food choices eventually became present in the way colonizers and settlers detached from Peninsular Spanish identities and characters, turning them progressively a bit more Andean, a bit more Creole, and increasingly Latin American. Existing among an extensive body of studies focused on the indigenous experience of the conquest and colonization of the region, this research reminds that confluence is a two-way road. It locates temporal shifts in identities from the angle of first and second-generation Spanish populations. The objective is to present an understanding of the conception of a raison d’être and distinctly Hispanic-American character.
In his 1615 text, *Nueva corónica y buen gobierno*, Andean chronicler Felipe Guaman Poma de Ayala described Lima as a “land of much food and wealth,” while Cuzco was, unfortunately, a city with a “lack of food, wine, and meat.”¹ In these two urban centres within the Viceroyalty of Peru, food and edibility proved key to the colonial endeavour. Indeed, edibles and cuisines became essential markers — and makers — of identity within these cities during the periods of conquest and colonization. This research focuses on the period of Spanish conquest of the Inca Empire, from 1532, and moves temporally to the end of the 1600s, using sources such as chronicles, Jesuit records, and Diderot’s *Encyclopedia.*² During this time, the foods that entered the colonial body, from the Old World and the New, seasoned the inhabitants’ understanding of their emerging colonial society. The present article takes Lima and Cuzco as centres of reference, as they were centres for major ongoing interactions between native and Spanish bodies, and they reflect larger dynamics of food as markers of culture and identities within the viceroyalty. The aim is to engage with popular food choices and contributions from both Spanish and native populations.³ In this manner, it is possible to trace mechanisms of change and locate processes of identity formations.⁴ It is also the aim of this article to reimagine these colonial urban centres as places for active confluence and visceral negotiations of culinary behaviours and choices. In this way, this study doubles as a response to existent scholarship treating the subjects of food and colonization as narratives of vanquished and vanquisher, and bodily degeneration and regeneration.⁵

Although religious popular culture, histories of intermarriage, and visual art forms allow access into processes of identity formation, food and daily dietary choices allow a better grasp of the idiosyncratic, and sometimes unspectacular, features of local life.⁶ This inquiry into quotidian choices also decreases — though it does not eliminate — the degree to which official documents inform historical colonial narratives. To this end, the study first engages in examination of the diversity already existent among Spanish settlers, and explore their awareness of the alimentary necessities natural to the colonial enterprise. Moving temporally, the article will then assess the settlers’ natural yearning for Old World staples and comfort foods, which guided their interactions with New World edibles during the initial stages of colonization. Finally, to aid the colouring of early colonial realities, it is essential to look into the multiethnic socialization in popular public spaces that served a variety of Andean and European food and drinks, with particular attention to the popularity of *chicha* and grape wine in colonial Andean society.⁷ These aspects of colonial life and identity formation demonstrate that food was “not simply the cultural icing on the colonial cake,” and that what the colonial body ingested and digested speaks to the fluidity present within the early modern colonial body.⁸ Fluidity and flexibility ingrained within food choices eventually became present in the way colonizers and settlers detached from Peninsular Spanish identities and characters, turning them gradually into a bit more Andean, and a bit more Creole.⁹
“Spaniards,” “Spanish Bodies,” and the New World

To begin to grasp the Spanish colonizers’ interactions with foods in the New World from the outset of colonization onwards, it is vital to have a cultural and political understanding of these peoples’ places of origin. During the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the Habsburgs who ruled Spain embraced cultural diversity in exchange for political subjection and formal integration into the empire. This dynamic translated to the New World, and informed the settlers’ perception of the environment, its food, and its people. After all, cultural diversity was already ingrained within the Spanish Peninsulars themselves. Rather than understanding these settlers as belonging to a homogenous group, it is crucial to understand that they themselves were carriers of cultural diversity.

Whereas for convention’s sake the conquerors and settlers of Peru are termed “Spaniards,” “Spain” was not in their time a permanent reality. Instead, “Spain” was a series of distinctive regions with peculiar geographies in central and eastern Iberia. Emigrants from this region arrived to the New World, all with their individual social organizations, histories, even personalities and languages, and they left their homes after only first glimpses of unification of Catholic Spain. Hence, what Iberian immigrants found in the Americas, in terms of dietary diversity and cultural difference, was not altogether alien to them. One also needs a reminder that the Spaniards of the fifteenth century engaged in things other than “war, booty, and the oppression of non Christians,” and that very few were fully professional soldiers. In the invasion of Peru, many of these Spaniards were artisans, merchants, accountants, or notaries. This knowledge offers a picture of colonization that frames relationships with newfound crops in a more nuanced manner than the static binary of distaste for New World food and relentless attachment to Old World food can suggest.

Anatomical perceptions, based largely on the popular theory of humours, also informed Spanish views on the comestibles they encountered. To many, Indian and European bodies — mutable and porous according to common belief — were critically open to the influences of food, giving ingestion and digestion a central place within the new society. This mutable nature also meant that categories of race and identity were often unclear, and arguably just as mutable. Therefore, it was natural that, from the Spanish invasion in the 1530s to the 1600s, there were already mature multiethnic centres where consumption of particular foods and drinks gave room to altogether new dynamics and rules of interethnic sharing, sociability, and also

Natives and settlers alike were active creators and partakers of multiethnic endeavours, including food ingestion
ethnic differentiation and separation.\textsuperscript{18} This was the case in abounding \textit{mercados de plaza}, \textit{chicherías}, \textit{tambos} (wayside inns), and other vibrant public spaces. Rigidity, from the outset, was not a main feature of daily colonial life because all of its members, natives and settlers alike, were active creators and partakers of multiethnic endeavours, including food ingestion. This was a challenge to both religious and secular authorities’ imposition of strict separation of spheres of sociability and ethnic mixing, an imposition that has informed scholarship of colonial Latin America at large.\textsuperscript{19}

\textbf{Colonial Separation: “republika de españoles” and “republika de indios”}

\textit{R}egardless of the realities of daily life, it is accurate to point out that authorities relentlessly upheld the division of imperial subjects into two republics — “republika de españoles” (republic of Spaniards) and “republika de indios” (republic of Indians) — each with separate residential settlements, customs, legal status, and political administration.\textsuperscript{20} In the attempted establishment of these dynamics, authorities displayed what colonial historian Susan Ramírez terms an “ethnocentric myopia,” out of tune with the difficulties inherent to the colonial enterprise, fed by delusions of upholding a structure within the greatest social experiment of the early modern world — the American colonies.\textsuperscript{21}

Naturally, this attempt at absolute separation projected itself onto spheres of food consumption. Settlers, according to ideas of the body, needed the typical foodstuffs of their Iberian diet, initially absent in the New World: fresh meat from Old World animals, raisins, sugar, honey, almonds, wheat flour and, of course, grape wine.\textsuperscript{22} The insistence on availability of Iberian edibles was present from the moment of arrival, and persevered into the seventeenth century. In Lima and Cuzco, there were assumptions and expectations about orbits of food and drink ingestion, even production. Colonial authorities counted on these expectations to create and perpetuate social labels of race and hierarchies, and yearned for these structures to govern daily life and commerce in multiethnic Andean cities.\textsuperscript{23} As part of this effort, \textit{pulperías} (dry-goods stores) emerged to dispense Hispanic food and drinks in a way similar to Spain, offering bread, wine, oils, and other eminently Mediterranean consumables.\textsuperscript{24} Nevertheless, even the \textit{pulpería} could not stand to the more complex realities of social and economic activities of the growing plebeian sectors in Lima and Cuzco.\textsuperscript{25}

Colonial authorities, including religious ones, were acutely aware of the power of food in dynamics of socialization and solidarity. They also detested any form of fraternization between groups, such as between Native Andeans and Afro-Peruvians and “worse still, between those groups and the less privileged members of Hispanic society — poor Spaniards and mestizos.”\textsuperscript{26} Fraternization among these groups represented, to the authorities, a degradation of imposed class divisions and ethnic boundaries.\textsuperscript{27} Such scenarios were best exemplified in public spaces where self-regulating dynamics of interaction and commerce took place — for instance, the market. A letter from a Jesuit missionary in Lima to Rome in 1603 asked what was to be
done about the sale of their produce at the market square. According to the Jesuit author, the market square was the most common venue for the sale of produce and lack of alternative spaces meant they were unable to profit from their harvests otherwise. A peremptory response arrived from Rome, urging the Jesuit author from Lima to find another way to sell the produce, “because the one now used does not seem decent to us (emphasis added).” In this response, there is an observation that the market was an indecent environment according to Jesuit religious authorities, a space from which it was unfit for members of a religious order to profit. Generally, there was also something socially, racially, and gender transgressive in market interactions that paints the market as a sphere suspended from authoritative expectations, religious and secular. The market even challenged official structures through mere multiethnic transactions of products, including comestibles.

The market possessed a persevering autonomy also found in pulperías and chicherías. These places, in both Lima and Cuzco, sometimes threatened public order because, in their autonomy, they could become favourable spaces for “clandestine meetings and potential conflict.” Additionally, there was constant official struggle to keep the owners of these establishments from offering Hispanic staples. The commercialization of varied products within a given establishment caused the intermingling of castes, and their patterns of consumption could be altered in the process. This was unfavourable to the strict ideals of separate republics and spheres of socialization.

Ultimately, however, New World experimentation and deliberate cultural borrowing denied the success of the colonial government’s divisions. This multiethnic experimentation also disagreed with European naturalists who denied New World crops, like maize, of a good reputation. It also contradicted narratives such as that of Buenaventura de Salinas y Córdova, a Peruvian Franciscan vicar who was only too ready to exalt the success of Spanish colonialism through his alleged abundance of wheat and wine in Lima, while confining chicha and guarapo (sugar cane alcohol) to indigenous peoples, zambo (offspring of a black parent and an indigenous parent), and mestizo consumption. Nevertheless, despite initial caution and suspicion, Spaniards and Creoles in the Andes drank more than wine, and ate more than wheat bread. Similarly, indigenous peoples, mestizos, and zambo developed a taste for more than chicha, guarapo, and maize.

Old World Cravings and New World Substitutions

The conquistadors, naturally, held anxiety and fear of living in an altogether new environment. The notion of living in unfamiliar surroundings, among unfamiliar peoples, and the belief that this might alter the traditions as well as the very body of the Spaniard was a real sentiment in the initial stages of colonization. Nevertheless, the first Spaniards to arrive carried with themselves a fair degree of flexibility and pragmatism in the face of this new environment. They were, from early on, “irrevocably committed to the new situation, devising [their] own solutions.
on the spot, beginning to build up [their] own traditions and techniques even if these were originally but variants of European models. This attitude also accompanied the inescapable necessities associated with exploration and conquest of the unfamiliar new world.

The mestizo chronicler Garcilaso de la Vega narrated that in the year 1547, when there was still an absence of wheat bread in Cuzco — but wheat was already available in the viceroyalty — Garcilaso’s parents offered shelter to the city’s Dominican bishop, Juan Solano, and his fourteen or fifteen Spanish companions, who escaped from the battle of Huarina. Garcilaso’s mother, an Inca noblewoman, fed maize bread to the group, and they were so starved that they also took handfuls of raw maize kernels, some of which they fed to their horses, and some of which they ate as if they were “candied almonds.” Starvation and extreme circumstances allowed little room for pickiness, and maize could at times indeed become candied almonds to starved bodies.

The state of being in an altogether new environment, previously unexplored, meant that necessity pushed conquerors and settlers into the consumption of aliments alien to them. Despite hope that “the men who are born [in Europe] and who begin to occupy those regions, whether their parents are Spanish or of different nations, do not in obedience to the heavens degenerate to the point of adopting the customs of the Indians,” the reality of the situation left them little choice but to risk degeneration through nutrition. Nicolás de Ribera, one of the thirteen conquistadors who accompanied Francisco Pizarro in the conquest of the Inca Empire, recounted the predicaments encountered in search for food provisions. Given the extreme lack of food, and the equally extreme necessity, the group wandered through mangroves and swamps eight or nine days until they discovered a rancho where they found some maize, and they eventually reached other towns where they spent many days searching for rations for the company and their horses. For these conquistadors in their quest, food did not equate maintenance or violation of culture, and it did not equate the future degeneration of their Spanish bodies. On the contrary, any comestible — whether back in the Peninsula it would have been deemed a comestible at all — equated provisions and, therefore, survival. The encounter with equatorial swamps and the vertiginous nature of the Andes left little space for choosy Spanish palates. To this, it must be added that indigenous help and conditional protection was oftentimes the only venue for survival. Without this help, Spaniards felt overwhelmed by the landscape, the suffering, and the possibility of attack and robbery at the hands of unknown indigenous groups.

Although indigenous consumption of native comestibles was contemptible in European eyes, Spanish consumption of these same products was a matter of necessity. This environment, which proved many times hostile to foreign presence, also presented a difficulty when it came to reproducing European cuisine after the initial wave of conquest. Eating maize was an emergency measure at best, as had been the case earlier for Nicolás de Ribera, and the production of European meat, fruits, vegetables, and grains became important elements
of the economy and the maintenance of cultural and religious observances as settlements were established. However, need, want, and the inability to entirely reproduce the European alimentary landscape in the New World compelled colonizers to make do with American substitutions. It was this process of necessity that first introduced Spanish newcomers to American flavours, and although initially reluctant, they would come to develop a taste and identity around these products.

Nutritional hardship was a common feature of the colonial enterprise. Not only in the Peruvian Andes, but also in the rest of the New World, exploration begged for accommodation of many comestibles that the colonizers found culturally unpalatable and nutritionally lacking. However, some comestibles rose in prominence through time and became popular among the colonial population despite initial abhorrence. Such was the case for maize and other New World starches. Although settlers had initially held suspicion for these starches, it was impossible for most of them to avoid them altogether. Chroniclers described increase in consumption of local maize-derived foods and drinks such as atole, pinole, as well as other delicacies like “scalded plantains, butter of the cacao, puddings made of Indian maize, with a bit of fowl or fresh pork in them seasoned with much red biting chili.” This increasing regard for maize and other New World foods extended itself to the Spanish peninsula by the sixteenth century, though authorities did not always find them tasteful or nutritious enough for European digestion. English herbalist John Gerard authored the Herbal Compendium in 1597, and included a less-than-flattering entry on maize, declaring the following:

Corn nourishes much less than wheat, barley, or oats. Bread made from corn is as hard and dry as a biscuit..., causes violent indigestion, offers little or no nutrition to the body, is digested slowly, and constipates the stomach. We still lack certain proof and experience regarding the virtues of this grain, even though the barbaric Indians, who don’t know any better and are limited to the “virtue of necessity,” believe that it is a good food. We can easily assess that it nourishes little, that it is hard, and that it is digested poorly, a food more suitable for pigs than for men.

According to Gerard, neither in taste, texture, nor nutrition could maize compete with its European grain equivalents, seemingly only fit for animals, and doing more harm than good to anyone who consumed it. This was discordant with popular reception in Europe which was the mirror contrast of its adoption in the Americas.

Maize was not the only food to enjoy increased presence in Europe. Maize and potato were the most expansively accepted, but already in the sixteenth century, other items such as tomatoes, peppers, cacao, squash, peanuts, and vanilla had also been tasted and accepted in Europe to varying degrees and for different reasons. With regards to potato, authorities perceived it in a somewhat better, but still contemptible, light. The comments of Diderot’s Encyclopedia on poor farmers’ labour included a mention of the value of their crops:
The fruit of his labors consists of barley, oats, buckwheat, potatoes, maize, and other low-priced products. Such is the food he obtains, such is the food on which he raises his children. These foodstuffs scarcely keep men alive while they ruin them physically, and they cause many to die in childhood (emphasis added).

Whereas reception of New World foodstuffs varied, and authorities oftentimes frowned upon their adoption, the regular populace was more focused on their virtues, and when local Spaniards took interest in an indigenous product, the interest translated to Europe. In many cases, however, adoption of these foodstuffs had rather practical reasons, and did not always reflect on taste. Introduction of New World crops to Europe meant that — mostly poor — Europeans could now benefit from maize and potato because these were crops with higher productivity, which favoured the substitutions of millet and sorghum, which had formerly been more traditional crops.

By nature, the settlers who arrived in the New World expressed yearning and need for their Old World environments and foodstuffs, being unfamiliar with the new. Even when the new became familiar to them, this yearning and sense of necessity lingered during early stages of colonization. Due to these sentiments, settlers attempted to “Europeanize” their new landscape, which included introduction of European flora and fauna. Garcilaso de la Vega narrated an episode of one such attempt at Europeanization. He told of a noble lady from Trujillo in Spain, named María de Escobar, who was allegedly the first individual to bring wheat to the viceroyalty. Garcilaso added that in gratitude for “the act of benefaction this valiant woman did for Peru, and for the services of her conquistador husband [Sir Diego de Chaves], they received a share of Indians.”

The yearning for wheat, an Old World staple, placed its availability in the New World in high regards. Availability of wheat meant proximity with the familiar, a translation of traditional alimentary culture to the new environment, and the maintenance of a higher status within the colonial sphere through connection to Europe. Whenever direct availability of a particular product was impossible, Spanish settlers took it upon themselves to attempt reproduction of European products in the viceroyalty, as was the initial case for wine. In Cuzco, Garcilaso de la Vega wrote about how

Need, want, and the inability to entirely reproduce the European alimentary landscape in the New World compelled colonizers to make do with American substitutions.
an inquisitive Spaniard made a resin paste out of grapes from Spain, and weak little stems grew from surviving grape seeds in the paste. This Spaniard took delicate care of the paste for three or four years, until the stems became strong enough to be planted and to give grapes, although the wine produced from it was not exactly like Spain’s. In any case, the Spanish wish to have products from their ancestral land transplanted to the Americas was so intense that “no work or hazard has been so great to keep them from fulfilling their desires.” Although Garcilaso knew of this episode through word of mouth, from an apparently reliable source, it remains safe to assert that the yearning for the Old World bounties was a reality, based on the amount of products that eventually traveled over or were reproduced in the region. This speaks to a sentiment of migration that was to be expected, much in the way that is expected today. This very sentiment, however, was one necessary for the process of transculturation that eventually gave birth to the Peruvian Creole.

In any case, what predominated in the New World was the palate and experience of the common people, and they displayed more openness to the new products than could initially meet the eye. For instance, Garcilaso de la Vega chronicled how the Spaniards in Cuzco experimented with maize for medicinal purposes, and claimed that this was “partly because of advice the Indians have given them… and partly because the Spaniards themselves have philosophized about this based on observation.” In this manner, in tune with the epoch’s scientific spirit of empiricism, they found that maize, beside its nutritional value, also relieved kidney conditions, urine retention, bladder and intestinal pains, and other ailments, none of which indigenous peoples were said to suffer thanks to a beverage derived from this grain plant. In its entry about maize, Diderot’s Encyclopedia commended the plant’s medicinal benefits, as it remarked that “Mexican doctors take medicinal tea with the Indian corn for their patients, and this idea is not at all bad, because this grain has much in common with barley.” Although in the Encyclopedia benefits are commended because the grain had apparent commonalities with barley, in the New World, the only point of reference was indigenous peoples’ use of it. This sufficed for the Spaniards, who began to exploit its curative properties as well, according to Garcilaso de la Vega. It is essential to note that his narrative must be taken with a grain of salt, since his historical enterprise sought to exalt the worth and greatness of the Andean colony and its peoples. Nonetheless, the role of maize throughout the centuries, in both Europe and the Americas, has been well-documented to attest to its gradual ascension as a well-regarded, inexpensive, and nutritious staple for the general population.

The initial perceptions that linked maintenance of the European body to exclusive food choices, and the initial idea that consumption of certain foods determined an individual’s complexion, did not hold ground to curiosity in the presence of New World comestibles. The fear that careless food selections could easily “turn proud, bearded Spaniards into timid, beardless Indians” became fickle in time. Garcilaso de la Vega once more served to inform that there were very inquisitive Spaniards (he does not
specify where in the viceroyalty) who experimented with plants. According to him, they grafted the branches from Spanish trees on to native trees in order to obtain “two, three, four kinds of wonderful fruits in a year.” Of course, there may be a hint of exaggeration, and the veracity of this account cannot be confirmed, but in it there is evidence of a form of transculturation through agricultural testing that had little regard for theories and expectations of the body and food consumption.

**Andean Ingredients, Creole Palates, and Public Spaces**

Soon enough, in addition to the eventual availability of the trinity of Hispanic staples — wheat, meat, and wine — Lima’s residents also became fond of native vegetables and Andean fruits to the degree that they began to grow them in their own valleys and house gardens alongside European produce. Although Spanish bodies initially differed from indigenous bodies due to their diets, the differences were transient, and a translation of Amerindian foodstuff to the colonial table attests to a gradual divorce from traditional Spanish diets, and the emergence of a Creole cuisine.

In the streets of Lima and Cuzco, in public establishments, indigenous women fed the populace distinctly Andean dishes and other dishes with European elements, such as “thick stews (locros) of corn or llama meat seasoned with ají [chili pepper]; trout and boiled or toasted beans (especially on Catholic fast days); cooked potatoes and jerked llama and mutton seasoned with Andean pepper.” The willingness to experiment in the fields, to receive indigenous cooking within homes, and the popularity of transcultured Andean foods — and general curiosity to try characteristically Andean ones — attests to what Leo Garofalo describes as a “multi-ethnic plebeian solidarity” that showed gradually decreasing concern for “Spanishness” and Spanish patterns of nutrition, and instead began to claim Creole identity, and of a particular kind, too: a Peruvian Creole identity.

Eating and drinking, then, were essential markers and makers of identity from the early decades of colonization due to the presence of both Old and New World items. In this milieu, certain diets were thought to create the anatomical differences that made Europeans and Amerindians distinct from one another, and indeed, initial Spanish thirst for grape wine speaks for a yearning to exercise Spanishness. This gave wine, for instance, a particularly Spanish association, while other foods were closely linked with other cultural identities exclusively, such as indigenous,
as was the case for *cuy* [guinea pig] in the Andes.\(^6^9\) *Cuy* managed to remain a predominantly Amerindian specialty food, prepared for sacrifices, religious festivals, and special feasts.\(^7^0\) In this manner, there is a display of subtle and layered engagement with food and drink in the viceroyalty. Certain foods were associated exclusively with one social group and not another, like wine and wheat in the early days of the viceroyalty. However, long-term exposure to these varieties of edibles and drinks alongside each other somewhat blurred and morphed lines of self, producing new ones. The environments and experiences that were initially unfamiliar, carrying no reminders of the traditional, soon evolved into new dynamics. These dynamics produced, through interplays of food, cuisine, and alcohol consumption, an identity gradually apart from Spanishness, but also not possibly fully indigenous, yet completely new in colour and inventiveness.

Nowhere was the casting of identities better exemplified than through the consumption of New World goods in public spaces. In the Viceroyalty of Peru, in theory and official belief, Spanish and indigenous bodies were different because of their diets, but there was awareness that “bodies could be altered just as easily as could diets,” at least in a figural sense.\(^7^1\) Taverns and spaces of different kinds, including colonial *tambos* (wayside inns), *chicherías*, *pulperías*, and market squares supplied Lima and Cuzco’s citizens with a variety of drinks and food. Due to this ability to provide a wide variety of goods, they proved fit establishments for this figural alteration of the body through ingestion and digestion. It was in these public spaces that Spanish plebeians, servants of all ethnic extractions, and other members of colonial society gathered and mingled.\(^7^2\) The public spaces, and the local populace’s demands for their goods, sculpted the emerging identities in the viceroyalty.

These were spaces where multiethnic sharing and socialization — even social resistance — could take place, which made them causes of concern for colonial authorities, chroniclers, and certain elite members of society. Andean nobleman Felipe Guaman Poma de Ayala expressed alarm for the interactions that took place within these environments, as he claimed that they bred detrimental influences upon different members of colonial society.\(^7^3\) Guaman Poma de Ayala projected a greater official anxiety that these autonomous spaces engendered and displayed “uncontrollable appetite and exchange for goods and bodies, rather than the dissemination of moral values and salvation.”\(^7^4\) This concern was aggravated when it came to interactions within the walls of these establishments, such as taverns. Some of this concern originated in official necessity to maintain official structures when it came to caste identities, cultures, and
social separations. Anxiety surrounding public establishments, too, came from a pre-existing concern for the influences the different castes had upon one another. For instance, at the dawn of the seventeenth century, Viceroy Juan de Mendoza y Luna expressed a general belief that mestizos and mulattoes were a pernicious influence on the indigenous peoples because of the “dastardly customs [indigenous peoples] learn in their company,” so that communication and communal living among these groups was prohibited.75 On the surface, there was a worry for the well-being of the colony. In a paternalistic fashion, colonial authorities deemed it necessary to keep these groups apart, each inhabiting their own spaces and socializing in their own exclusive establishments.76 However, this emphasis on division is suggestive of a Spanish fear over these groups cooperating to rebel against their common malady — Spanish officials. However, it mattered little how much emphasis colonial authorities placed on social and racial separation. Ultimately, there was vibrant participation of different social and racial groups in public life, along with exchange and exposure to different cultural concepts and organizations. Migration of indigenous groups and other cultural groups to and from cities fueled exchanges and exposure, which nourished cultural trades and social cohesion in urban centres like Lima and Cuzco, making new independent identities in the process.77

Cultural historian Wolfgang Schivelbusch asserts that to visit a pub is to visit another realm, ungoverned by the rules of the outside world.78 The same can be said of the markets, taverns, and other public spaces popular in the Viceroyalty of Peru. For instance, in Lima and Cuzco’s markets, gateras (street sellers) and other types of sellers and establishment owners created an independent space of socialization around food and beverages, where individuals could enjoy “the flurry of activity and parade of edible delights,” and even in some cases engage in illicit activities and transactions.79 It was this type of multiethnic plebeian environment that formed identities with characteristically colonial shades. These worlds, resistant to the grip of the official government, gave room for cultural creativity and became points of reference for individual and collective identities based on the kind of reciprocity the outside officials frowned upon.80

The variety of foods obtainable in these establishments demonstrates the kind of culinary reciprocity commonly present. Guaman Poma de Ayala offered a description of what Spanish as well as indigenous peoples consumed in these settings, with specific reference to the tambo (wayside inn). He described owners selling Spaniards edibles such as maize, potatoes, aji (chili pepper), cocoba (a dish prepared with white freeze-dried potato), chochoca (half-boiled and sundried maize), quinoa, chiche (small fried fish), stews, and chicha.81 The constant references to tambos speak to their popularity, indicating that Spaniards, indigenous peoples, and other members of society presented demand for the edibles offered in these spaces. Selling of a variety of maize dishes and drinks reveal that Spaniards had taste and demand for them, and they also had much taste and demand for New World spices.

Owners of these establishments
Edible Identities

did not always burden themselves with preparation and selling of different foods according to ethnic bubbles, the way authorities expected. Owners offered European, Amerindian, and African foodstuffs and recipes side by side, and these items quickly became a part of a shared taste, despite their original prestige or associations. The realities of colonial life transformed public spaces into sites of exchange between men and women of different ethnic and social standing. Despite contradicting royal and municipal laws, plebeians, artisans, merchants, and servants of various ethnicities met and fraternized in these spaces. It is difficult to establish whether these multiethnic social interactions overstepped the boundaries of these spaces to any significant degree. Yet, they bred identities distanced from the official Spanish colonial project. Eventually, in the viceroyalty, “Indian ethnic chiefs (kurakas) dressed and lived as Spaniards, toasted with wine in Dutch goblets, and married non-Indians,” while Spaniards and Creoles had a gut for maize, drank chicha, conjured with coca, and lived alongside peoples of different ethnic origins.

Toasting with Chicha and “True Wine”

Alcohol consumption in the viceroyalty of Peru was another decisive marker of identities in the Andean world. After all, “definitions attach to the drink even before it reaches the lips,” and several definitions and meanings emerged around alcohol consumption from the onset of colonial Lima and Cuzco. This was especially the case for chicha, although it was also the case for guarapo and grape wine after colonial introduction. During the first half of the seventeenth century, Jesuit scholar Bernabé Cobo provided knowledge of chicha, guarapo, and other prominent alcohols in the region. He listed some of the ingredients that went into them, such as quinoa seeds, oca roots, and berries of the molle tree, but asserted that indigenous peoples had no previous knowledge of what he calls “true wine” made from grapes. Prior to the arrival of Spanish colonizers, indigenous peoples from a variety of regions had already possessed ancestral gusto for chicha and other fermented beverages made from their natural resources, and they used it for festivities, sacrifices, and religious occasions.

What is remarkable, however, is that even after the introduction and presence of “true wine,” Spaniards and Creoles developed great fondness for chicha so that it managed to flourish as a form of sustenance after the 1550s, a little over twenty years after the initial Spanish invasion of the region. Chicha in the colony provided refreshment, nutrition, and most importantly, strengthened collective selfhood through communal drinking in public spaces, despite official social structures and divisions. Spaniards and Creoles soon developed their own local varieties of chicha — such as the chicha de siete semillas (seven seeds chicha), a colonial invention involving Old World ingredients — though never abandoning chicha’s traditional ingredients, thus further consolidating local identities. Due to chicha’s booming popularity, colonial authorities frowned on its consumption and sought its prohibition and regulation, as well as other local beverages ingrained with Incan associations.
The Incas had been consuming *chicha* and other beverages made from maize and other sources for centuries, and made it an essential element in ritual, social, and political exchanges. However, during the colonial period, *chicha* and other indigenous beverages earned negative reputations when associated with indigenous consumption and drunkenness, a product of a long tradition of Catholic condemnation of drunkenness and lack of self-control. Father Bernabé Cobo claimed the Amerindians were "so addicted to these chichas that drinking is the height of their glory, and they do not consider it a disgrace to get drunk." For the Incas, *chicha* had formed part and even upheld their social, economic, and political structure. For colonial authorities, *chicha* was a destroyer of these same structures. Under colonial rule, officials considered *chicha* consumption to be linked to idleness, and also associated to idolatrous practices in religion. Francisco de Toledo, Viceroy of Peru during the late sixteenth century, acted upon this constructed colonial stereotype, prohibiting sales in Lima, and relentlessly closing *chicha*-selling businesses, although these businesses resurfaced time and again due to popular demand.

If definitions attached to the drink before it reached the lips, authorities were much more keenly aware of what happened when the drink finally trespassed the boundaries of the lips. For them, the perceived drunkenness hindered the progress of the conquest, and interfered with control of indigenous labour and life. But in quotidian comings and goings, the production and ingestion of maize beer gave currency to Andean mentalities within the viceroyalty's dynamics, and most importantly, it fostered non-Spanish customs, memories, and group union. For authorities, *chicha*-drinking jeopardized the social order officially established. As a result, they were quick to create an "idleness-drunkenness-idolatry complex" to demonize the ingestion of maize beer, a notion so solid that it resurfaced in a twentieth century campaign to link maize beer consumption to imbecility and violence.

In truth, *chicha* consumption gave room for a kind of inter-ethnic socialization that the authorities were unable to police, and the popularity of the drink did not wane despite demonizing campaigns. Franciscan Friar Buenaventura de Salinas y Córdova authored one of the most detailed *memorias* of the Andean world, and he did not neglect to include figures on alcohol production per year. According to his narrative, in Lima and its surrounding areas alone, unspecified consumers had ingested 200,000 large jugs of wine, while indigenous peoples, *mestizos*, blacks, *zambos*, and *mulattoes* had consumed 100,000 jugs of *chicha* and *guarapo*. Although there is no reason to completely rely on Salina y Córdova's numbers to obtain a picture of alcohol consumption in Lima and the Andean world, it is possible to detect a narrative within these figures. He neglected to identify the consumers of wine, but he did specify what sectors of the population consumed *chicha* and *guarapo*. This breakdown of consumers could lead to the erroneous conclusion that Spaniards and Creoles consumed wine, while the rest of the population consumed the other, bastardized, alcoholic beverages — they were, after all, not *true wine*. 
This idealistic division of consumption denied the influence of other ethnicities on Spaniards and Creoles, exalting the alleged successes of colonization. Yet, the realities of daily life in Lima demonstrate that its inhabitants drank something more than wine, and emphasize the degree of cultural influence that was often glossed over but ultimately shaped Creole culture and thought.100

The changes chicha experienced after conquest and settlement of the Andean world also reinforced the discrepancy between Buenaventura’s numbers and reality. In its simplest form, chicha was a “wine-like liquor, and can be distilled into a fiery spirit,” but Spaniards were quick to make their own contributions to the concoction.101 Significant changes to the drink included the addition of Old World cereals, like oats, barley, and wheat, and the addition of cane sugar — itself a product introduced after the conquest — to increase alcohol levels and sweetness.102 Although these contributions also included the decline in native variations of maize, chicha remained chicha, sold in the popular chicherías, and could never become wine.

Chicha retained its native Andean meanings, while also absorbing the new ingredients that agreed with the Creole palate, which in itself, placed in the New World, became a palate with a gusto for mixture, blends, and multiethnic flavours. Overall, the flow of alcohol in a society can create tension within a social structure, but can also fashion agencies capable of creating identities, and channeling the kinds of societal power capable of firing social change, as chicha exemplifies.103 In its production, consumption, and the environment for said consumption, the workings of this identity construction, power, and social change are in place. In spite of theoretical separation of castes in the sixteenth and seventeenth century, colonized individuals and Spanish plebeians all frequented chicherías, and partook of the production and distillation process of the drink.104

Other interesting dynamics are uncovered about chicha consumption when the body is emphasized as a visceral and historical body. Schivelbusch contributes some grounds for thought when he contends the following:

A person who consumes and incorporates things becomes their master. But on the other hand, he thereby delivers himself up to them, in a sense succumbs to them. For things have lives of their own. The plants and animals a person eats (aside from cannibalism) continue to have an effect within him, indeed work either with or against him, depending on whether they are well or ill disposed toward him.105

This relates to the interactions with nourishment in the New World. The effect the plants and animals had on the settlers was one of identity formation. In a way, the settlers did succumb to that which they consumed. This was the particular case for chicha, so embedded with native Andean ritualistic meanings, yet almost immediately appealing to Spaniards and their Creole offspring. It delivered them viscerally to a sphere away from Spain, where a new composite nature emerged through transculturation and taste. On the other hand, indigenous Andeans, even when grape wine became widely available and inexpensive, did not develop a particular taste for it,
Race, as well as culture and identity were, from the outset, a “question of digestion,” and humans experienced these concepts through the body and food consumption and they remained content with their ancient beverage made from maize. Indigenous Andeans retained their taste for chicha and successfully installed it in Lima without removal of its ethnic significance while Spaniards and Creoles rapidly embraced the drink even in the presence of wine. Although Spaniards did avoid openly producing and selling chicha, they nevertheless consumed it, and in consumption there is digestion of meanings. Not only does this grant a degree of agency to the “conquered” but speaks to a degree of openness in colonial plebeian culture that is often overlooked in favour of the rigid narrative of conqueror versus conquered.

Overall, colonial life developed around the reality that wine never remained in a purely Spanish world, and chicha and guarapo were multiethnically shared as well. Various groups succumbed themselves to the drinks, but also in the process, contributed additions that impressed their identity onto them. For one, various versions of chicha and guarapo emerged, and wine also varied in qualities and strengths to cater to differing palates. Like individuals in colonial Peru, alcoholic beverages carried fluctuating cultural and political significance.

From the onset of the colonial enterprise, food choice contained daily performances of self-identification. This was the case in situations when necessity compelled colonizers to settle for native foodstuffs upon their arrival, and it remained the case after the establishment of the viceroyalty, when colonial tastes created demand and engaged with new edible fusions in public spaces. The New World allowed room for flexibility already existent within the colonial body. The New Wold was too vast, with a dynamic too peculiar to agree with the unrealistic rigidity the colonial authorities intended to impose. The Americas were not simply a space where European cultural systems were transplanted. Race, as well as culture and identity were, from the outset, a “question of digestion,” and humans experienced these concepts through the body and food consumption. Through daily alimentary choices, as well as social interactions, the república de indios and the república de españoles became in actuality inadequate divisions, “so mixed are these nations that one can hardly speak of one by itself.” Food and the colonial palate, in short, fuelled the formation of Andean and Creole identities.
Endnotes


2 Please note that the article mentions specific dates whenever available. However, colonial food history can be elusive at times, and dates when groups start or stop consuming certain goods are difficult to trace with consistent levels of specificity.

3 It is critical to mention that African groups were also responsible for numerous and essential contributions to the emerging Peruvian diet. The greatness and permanence of their contributions, and their interactions with Spanish and native groups, are beyond the scope of this present research, and will be the subject of future studies.


7 *Chicha* is the name given to a variety of Andean beverages derived from maize. Here, *chicha* will refer to fermented varieties of the drink.

8 Rebecca Earle, “‘If You Eat Their Food…’: Diets and Bodies in Early Colonial Spanish America,” *The American Historical Review* 115 (2010): 690, 713.

9 Historian Karen Graubart discusses practices of identity in daily life during the colonial period, and asserts that the category of Creole is a product of acculturation, and not a marker of birthplace. See Karen Graubart, “Creolization of the New World: Local Forms of Identification in Urban Colonial Peru, 1560–1940,” *Hispanic American Historical Review* 89, no. 3 (2009): 490.

10 Bauer and Mazzotti, *Creole Subjects in the Colonial Americas*, 40.


14 Ibid.

15 This theory largely informed the Spaniards’ perceptions of foreign bodies and their own. This aspect of European classical medicine, and its transference to the New World, deserves its own study. Some initial readings on the subject include Hippocrates and Galen’s foundational texts on humouralism. Particularly enlightening is Aelius Galenus, On the Elements According to Hippocrates, ed. Phillip de Lacy (Boston: Walter de Gruyter Inc., 1996); George M. Foster, “Relationships Between Spanish and Spanish-American Folk Medicine,” The Journal of American Folklore 66 (1953): 201-217.

16 Earle, “If You Eat Their Food…,” 713.

17 Earle, The Body of the Conquistador, 6.


19 For some remarkable examples, refer to Brading, The First America; Serge Grunzinski and Berta Ares Queija, Entre dos mundos: Fronteras culturales y agentes mediadores (Sevilla: Escuela de Estudios Hispano-Americanos, Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 1997).

20 Refer to discussions of the two republics in Don Juan de Matienzo, Gobierno del Perú: Obra escrita en el siglo XVI (Buenos Aires: Compañía Sud-Americana de Billetes de Banco, 1910), particularly chapters XXIV and XXV; Bauer and Mazzotti, Creole Subjects in the Colonial Americas, 22; Garofalo, “The Ethno-Economy of Food, Drink, and Stimulants,” 46.


26 Garofalo, “The Ethno-Economy of Food, Drink, and Stimulants,” 141.

27 Ibid.


29 “Búsquese otro modo de vender las cosas que en el memorial se apuntan, porque el que ahí se usa no nos parece decente,” Fernandez, Monumenta Peruana, vol. VIII, 132.
Although gender relations within colonial spheres is a subject apart from the present study, scholarship for those seeking introduction to women's cultural and economic contributions, as well as gender relations among castes include Karen Graubart, *With Our Labor and Sweat: Indigenous Women and the Formation of Colonial Society in Peru, 1550-1700* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2007); Tamara J. Walker, “‘Blanconas Sucias’ and ‘Putas Putonas’: White Women, Cross Caste Conflict and the Power of Words in Late-Colonial Lima, Peru,” *Gender and History* 27 (2015): 131-150.

*Chicherías* are establishments for the selling of *chicha*. *Pulperías, chicherías*, and other public spaces are discussed later in the article.


Contreras, “Food Exchanges Between the Old and New Worlds,” 150.

Although there is much to say about *guarapo*, a drink derived from sugar cane, production and consumption was closely associated with African groups, a subject beyond the scope of this article. For some mention and introduction to the drink, refer to a 1603 or 1604 letter by Jesuit priest Diego Torres, found in Quintín Aldea Vaquero, ed., *El indio peruano y la defensa de sus derechos* (1596-1630) (Lima: Pontífica Universidad Católica del Perú, 1993), 452; Buenaventura de Salinas y Córdova, *Memorial de las historias del nuevo mundo Perú: Méritos y excelencias de la ciudad de los reyes, Lima* (Lima: Gerónimo de Contreras, 1630), from Biblioteca Digital Hispánica, *Biblioteca Nacional de España*, 244–245, accessed May 16, 2016, http://bdh.bne.es/bnesearch/detalle/bdh0000092550. Buenaventura de Salinas y Córdova also spent much of chapter V providing other information of this nature.

Earle, “If You Eat Their Food…,” 688.


Ibid., 42.


Contreras, “Food Exchanges Between the Old and New Worlds,” 152.

Earle, “If You Eat Their Food…,” 704.


Cited in Contreras, “Food Exchanges Between the Old and New Worlds,” 151.
On European reception of New World foodstuff, there seems to be mixed commentaries. Some scholarship asserts positive receptions, while others assert the opposite. Some conversations on this include Arturo Warman, *Corn & Capitalism: How a Botanical Bastard Grew to Global Dominance*, trans. Nancy L. Westrate (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003); Redcliffe Salaman, *The History and Social Influence of the Potato* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985); Contreras, “Food Exchanges Between the Old and New Worlds,” 144, 150–153. Contreras outlined the agricultural advantages that a crop like maize had for the European poor, justifying the emergence of maize dishes in the continent such as porridges, polenta, mamaliga, puchas, gachas, and farinetes.


Although it is beyond the breadth of the present discussion, there is also a significant religious aspect related to the yearning, presence, and eventual abundance of wheat and wine in Colonial Peru, since these were essential items in Catholic rites. Some notable discussions of this aspect are found in Earle, *The Body of the Conquistador*, particularly in chapters 3 and 4, and in Prudence M. Rice, “Wine and Brandy Production in Colonial Peru: A Historical and Archaeological Investigation,” *The Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 27 (1997): 455–479.

Analytical works on this subject include Warman, *Corn & Capitalism*; Jeffrey Pilcher, *Food in World History* (New York: Routledge, 2006), especially the introduction, and his chapter, “Columbian Exchange.”

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Earle, “If You Eat Their Food…” 690.


Ibid.

Ricardo Beltrán y Rózpide and Angel Altolaguirre y Duvale, eds., *Colección de las memorias o relaciones que escribieron los virreyes del Perú acerca del estado en que dejaban las cosas generales del reino* (Madrid: Imprenta del Asilo de Huérfanos del S.C. de Jesús, 1921–1930), 168.


Garofalo, “The Ethno-Economy of Food, Drink, and Stimulants,” 73.


Cited in Contreras, “Food Exchanges Between the Old and New Worlds,” 156.


Hayashida, “Ancient Beer and Modern Brewers,” 162.

Cobo, History of the Inca Empire, 28.


Ibid., 26.

Morales, Reading Inebriation in Early Colonial Peru, 56–57. In these pages, Morales also mentions repeated decrees for the closing of taverns in 1572 and again 1595, showing the popularity of the establishments and how the “system had gone renegade.”

Ibid., 42.

Ibid., 56.


Buena Ventura de Salinas y Córdova, Memorial de las historias del nuevo mundo Perú, 125.


The Encyclopedia of Diderot and D’Alembert: A Translation Project, s.v., “maize.”


Bowser and Jennings, Drink, Power, and Society in the Andes, 2.


Schivelbusch, Tastes of Paradise, 168.

“Los indios, aunque ya por este tiempo vale barato el vino, lo apetecen poco, porque se contentan con su antiguo brebaje hecho de zara y agua,” Garcilaso de la Vega, Comentarios Reales, 745.

Garofalo, “The Ethno-Economy of Food, Drink, and Stimulants,” 118

Ibid., 125.


Ibid., 74.

Schivelbusch, Tastes of Paradise, 13.


Earle, “If You Eat Their Food,” 697; Heidi Scott highlights the idea of humans as “seres corpóreos,” an essential notion to keep in mind in studies of food consumption and history, Scott, “Más allá del texto,” 25.

“Tan mezcladas estas naciones que dificultosamente se puede hablar de la una sola,” words from Juan de Mendoza y Luna, Viceroy of Peru 1607-1615, Beltrán y Rózpide and Angel Altolaguirre y Duvale, Colección de las memorias o relaciones, 156.
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