

What Do Women Have to Do with It?^I

Race, Religion, and the Witch Hunts

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In this essay, I will explore the intersection of gender, race, and religion in relation to the concept of dehumanization. Dehumanization is possible when a group with power, symbolic and material, denies the full humanity of another group, based on a constellation – i.e., a particular set, or relation – of markers of difference. With regard to antisemitism, since the long 19th century, these markers of difference have been based on biology and sought “scientific” legitimacy. Even without explicitly referring to Jews as lesser or “non-human” or Aryans as “super-humans,” the Nazis – both through their words and deeds – dehumanized Jews, among other excluded groups. Most dehumanization is expressed by the exclusion of a particular group from a specific (political) community, or their subsidiary status within that community. Antisemitism and racism in general – be it cultural, biological or another expression thereof – is a form of dehumanization.

Markers of difference used to deny a group’s “humanity” have varied, and continue to vary, across time and space. For example, in Europe, and prior to the 15th century, these markers of difference were based on Christian theology; non-Christians were dehumanized and excluded from the Christian political community. While many of these markers of difference to identify people as Jews or Muslims were invisible, theological laws made them visible by, for example, requiring non-Christians to wear prescribed items of clothing (as in Canon 68 of the Fourth Lateran Council, 1215). A question of great importance is what logic legitimizes the selection of these markers of difference and how has this logic changed over time and space? How does the contemporary exclusion of Jews and Muslims from the European political community differ – in terms of its “logic” – from that of the 13th century?

It is my contention that there is a logic to this global and structural exclusion which is not accidental. This, of course, does not mean that there are no differences – global and temporal. Dehumanization is a matter of degrees, which indeed leads to many forms of exclusion, ranging from othering, lesser human, sub-human, non-human and so on. I also would argue that the same hierarchy is what creates, and justifies, the logic of supremacy, by defining a particular group as superior or “super-human.” In my previous research, I focused specifically on the entanglement of race and religion or, more specifically, Whiteness and Christianity, as distinct markers of supremacy/difference (Topolski 2018). In my research on race and religion, I focus specifically on how European Christianity, by way of colonialism, provides a blueprint for the exclusionary dehumanization that now serves as an epistemic and political foundation for much of the globe. This racialized Christian/non-Christian binary, which I investigate in relation to antisemitism and Islamophobia (past and present), complements and intersects with a vast body of critical scholarship on race, focusing on the racialized binary of the DuBoisian “colour line.”²

In this essay, I highlight one particular intersection with gender by means of the European witch hunts which occurred across Europe, from approximately 1450-1650 (Larner 1986; Barstow 1994; Federici 2004). Scholarship on the “witch hunts,” including much recent feminist scholarship inspired by Sylvia Federici’s *Caliban and the Witch* (2004), is flourishing and has exposed centuries of patriarchal violence, empowered by capitalism and colonialism. Likewise, intersectional research on race and gender has blossomed in recent years, across a range of disciplines, and has shown, beyond a doubt, the structural relationship between racism and sexism (Crenshaw 1991; Belkhir and Barnett 2001; Mccall 2008). In what follows, I will only briefly be able to explore this entanglement. I begin by presenting several race-religion constellations from the early modern period, in which the newly established European Christian States sought unity and global supremacy through expulsion and colonization. This is the same historical space and place – or stage – upon which women were burned as witches. In this way, I show how the early modern witch hunts in Europe played a central, if often forgotten, role in this project of forming Europe as White, Male and Christian.

16th Century: Unifying White Christian Europe through Expulsion and Colonization

In the 16th century, the Catholic Church responded violently to challenges to its power and authority. Internal to Europe, this led to the wars of religion and a theological schism within the Church. External to Europe, there was murder, colonization, and the enslavement of the peoples of Africa and the Americas. Both were perceived to be threats to Europe's epistemic and political supremacy, justified in terms of the superiority of Whiteness and Christianity. Europe, as an idea or project, constructed itself as White and Christian in this period by means of the exclusion and elimination of those defined as "Other" (Goldberg 2006; Boyarin 2009; Topolski 2020). This served to further justify their dehumanization and the violence that enabled Europe to become as powerful – politically and financially – as it did in this period (and which continues to benefit Europe today).

Let us begin by looking at what was happening within Europe's borders. In this early modern period, by way of the Inquisition, a partnership formed between theological and secular powers as the state expelled Jews, and later Muslims, from the Iberian Peninsula, including those that had previously converted to Christianity. Materially, this was a very significant financial benefit to the Church and Crown. Epistemically, during this period the term "race" first became used in relation to "pure-blooded" "true" Christians (*limpieze de sangre*), free of either Jewish or Muslim "impurity." This is an early modern example of how race and religion form a constellation. It is also worth noting that the Inquisition served to reinforce the Protestant myth of the Black Legend, in which Catholic Spain and Portugal were characterized as "Blackened" (and thus as savage, sexualized and/or uncivilized), due to the presence of Jews, Muslims and Africans – yet another example of the race-religion constellations. Partially due to the successful propaganda of the Black Legend, and the myth (which persists today) that the most violent persecution of women, by the way of witch hunts, happened in Southern Catholic Europe, much less is known about the racial, religious, and gendered projects of Northern Christian Protestant Europe, which will be explored in the following section.

In addition to the production of "pure-blooded" states in the Iberian Peninsula, northern Europe – by means of the religious wars – also formed religiously homogenous states. While scholars continue to debate the exact numbers, between the 16th and early 18th centuries, as many as

10 million Christians died in the European wars of religion (or “true religion” wars). These wars were materially motivated but epistemically and theologically justified in relation to who possessed the “true” religion and who, therefore, would be saved. *Vera religio* (“true religion”) has its theological roots in Augustine, who wrote *De vera religione* in 390 CE, in which he argues that only the truth of God can lead one to freedom. This theological position is politically instituted, via the power of the Church, in the “*extra ecclesiam nulla salus*” doctrine of the Fourth Lateran Council (1215) – which meant there is no salvation outside of the Christian community. The “religious wars” were about which “Christian” community was true – and thus to be saved – and were legitimized in terms of dehumanization, based on theological salvation. For the Catholic Church, many Protestants were to be damned, and vice versa. This also led to the first refugees, Protestant Huguenots who sought refuge from Catholic France in the Netherlands. In this way, an exclusionary binary was constructed between who is saved and who is damned, thereby defining who was to be valued as fully human (and who is lesser or non-human). The exclusionary binary logic, I contend, is the basis of all forms of racism and yet another example of the race-religion constellations.

This would eventually lead to a second schism within Western Christianity and the formation of the homogenous (in terms of religion and race) state in Europe, marked by the Peace of Westphalia. The “solution” to political and physical violence in Europe was first conceived of in Augsburg, in 1555 (*cuius regio, eius religio*; “whose realm, his religion”). The first form of the nation was thus defined, according to which form of Christianity one took to be true, and which was fundamentally linked to one’s soul and humanity. This political peace, which created sovereign states with distinct theological-political constellations, enabled many of the non-Catholic denominations of Christianity to be accepted, at least in theory, as forms of Christianity, which was judged the only true religion. This new paradigm of political communities was formally institutionalized at the Peace of Westphalia in 1648, which led to the structuring of new states in the form of nation-states. This is the foundation and blueprint for our current “secular” (neo)liberal democracies which, while masked, are also examples of race-religion constellations.

While Christian Europe found relative peace and unity through commerce and colonialism, the religious wars led to the expulsion and murder of hundreds of thousands of non-Christians in Europe, who were not in pos-

session of either acceptable forms of true religion – in other words, for non-Christian “peoples,” such as Jews or “Mohammedans.”³ The view that non-Christians were human beings to be considered as subjects in any sense “equal” to Christians was itself highly contested. Non-Christians were most often viewed as barbarians, “lesser beings,” or as “non-human.” The view propagated in Europe among theologians, whose political influence was still strong, was that non-Christian peoples had false “religions” making them inferior to Christians and possibly not-human. Moreover, as recent scholarship on conversions in medieval and early modern Europe demonstrates, even with conversion, non-Christians (as opposed to pagans, heathens, heretics, and so on) were never fully trusted and included in the Christian community (Tartakoff 2012; Yisraeli and Fox 2017).

This view of non-Christians also applied to those outside of Europe, with whom Europeans “interacted” within the context of colonialism, missionary work, or trade. One early link between “biological” phenotype, these “religious” categories, and colonialism was the Hamite justification for slavery. According to this theological story, Canaan’s descendants are cursed because their father, Ham, sees his inebriated father, Noah, naked.⁴ Their curse, which is to be the “lowest of slaves” (Genesis 9:25), was linked to the phenotype of darker skin as a sign of inferiority to the sons of Japheth (with whom Europeans identified). The “curse” of Ham, who was symbolically designated as the forefather of all Africans, was used to “justify” much of the barbarity of colonialism, especially to those who believed their mission (as Christians) was to “civilize” the continent.

While the focus of this brief essay is on Europe, it is essential to recognize how race-religion constellations traveled globally by means of the century-long partnership between White Christianity and colonization. Symbolically marked by the year 1492, this global entanglement is well documented in the 1552 Valladolid Debates (in Europe). The central concern of this theological debate, between Bartolomé de las Casas (1474-1566) and Juan Ginés de Sepúlveda (1494-1573), organized by the Church, is about the nature of the “beings” living beyond the border of the Christian world – are they animal, human, or something else? Do these “beings” have souls and can they be “saved,” or not and can they thus be enslaved and/or exterminated? This “debate” about people with “no religion” mirrors the debate within Europe about non-Christians who had a “false religion.” For de las Casas, “Indians” did have a soul and could be saved, whereas for Sepúlveda, they didn’t and, as such, could be both enslaved

and exterminated.⁵ One thing both scholars agreed upon was how Black Africans had seen the light of Christ but had rejected it – like Jews and Muslims – and had chosen rather to continue their courtship with the devil and, for this reason, could not be saved. The conclusion of the Valladolid debates regarding Africans also affected those perceived as Arab, or Semitic Muslims, and, specifically, Black Moors in the Iberian Peninsula.⁶ According to the logic of the times, Muslims in Europe, who were often phenotypically darker, had rejected Christianity, the “true” religion, serving to justify expulsion, colonization, and possibly, extermination.

En-Gendering the Race-Religion Constellation

Before considering how the witch hunts are entangled with race and religion, and because of the general silence regarding these events, some background might help. Given that the period defined as the height of the witch hunts in Europe (there were also witch hunts on other continents) ranges from 1450-1650, we cannot expect to have accurate historical records. Based on current research, we can be certain that at least 200,000 people were accused (80% of whom were women). Of those, we have at least 100,000 written documents attesting to their execution (85% of whom were women). We can thus conclude, regardless of the exact numbers, that this was a gendered genocide against primarily White European women, the vast majority of whom were identified by the Church to be Christians (at least, until they were possessed by the devil).

The race-religion constellations from the early modern period presented in the previous section demonstrate how the blueprint for peace and unity in Europe is based on the constructed epistemic superiority of White Christianity and its use to justify both political violence and ontological inferiority, expressed through colonization and racism. What wasn't explored was how this intersects with gender. To explain this, it is necessary to add herstory to history, which I will do by means of a brief analysis of the European witch hunts. The witch hunts demonstrate that Europe did not construct itself only as White and Christian, it also constructed itself as superior because of its masculinity, a superiority that both authorized and justified the dehumanization and subjugation of women. The gendered nature of the witch hunts is deeply entangled with Christianity which, in the early modern period, began to define itself

through Whiteness, specifically with notions of holiness and purity.⁷ Witches were – most often through their assumed sexual contact with the devil – seen as evil, an evil associated with impurity, sexuality and race that was the justification for their dehumanization. Race here refers to both groups who were non-Christians and/or non-Whites, racializations that of course intersect, as was the case with the Black Moor.⁸ With “witches,” who were most often identified as “fallen” Christians, it was their gender that supposedly made them “weaker” and thus more susceptible to the devil, a weakness that implicitly made their commitment to Christianity more precarious. For Jews and Muslims, they were already explicitly associated with the devil and thus impure and hyper-sexual.

An interesting example of this intersection is to be found in the crime of *maleficium* (magical practices). This crime was codified by the Church (via the Teutonic kingdoms) in the 8th century, in response to the presence of Muslims on Christian soil (e.g., Arab conquest). Many European slaves were tempted to convert as this offered them the prospect of freedom. This crime was introduced by the elite in Europe in response to the advance of the Saracens (Chejne 1983, 115-32). In 1487, this law attracted resurged interest from the elite and the Church due to the publication of the *Malleus Meleficarum* (Hammer of Witches), written by a Catholic clergy man, which endorsed the torture and murder of witches who were a threat to Christianity due to their practice as midwives, sexual relations with the devil, and lost souls. It was the second most sold book in Europe for over 200 years; the first, of course, being the Bible. A possible reason for this was that it was filled with sexualized pictures of almost naked women. Within years, “sorcery was once again declared a form of heresy and the highest crime against God, Nature and the State” (Monter 1976, 11-17 [as quoted in Federici 2004, 163]).

Another interesting fact for theologians is that while the numbers of accused were almost as high in Lutheran/Calvinist countries as they were in Catholic countries – the number of executed witches was significantly lower. This can be partially explained in terms of different legal/secular systems, although there is more evidence to suggest that this was due to the role of the devil in Catholic vs. Protestant theology. What is clear is that “the violent breakup of the unity of Christendom led not only to a creative religious ferment within both Protestantism and Catholicism but also to massive religious confusion, anxiety, and suspicion as well; not all of this

was focused against the other faith, part being defused through witch-hunting” (Barstow 1994, 60).

The connections between the persecution of non-Christians, in particular the Jews, and witches, also played itself out in relation to sexuality. Jewish synagogues were often called “Houses of Satan,” or brothels. Witches, according to the “myth,” gathered on the Sabbath to engage in sexual relations with the devil, which enabled him to possess their souls by means of orgiastic practices with wild beasts and evil demons. Another connection was that of menstrual blood – it was claimed that Jewish men bled and that Jewish women gave birth to 366 children per year, according to Peter the Venerable, 11th century.⁹ Prior to the 16th century, this blood was a curse but was not interpreted to be a sign of evil. When linked to witches it was taken to be the visible sign of an evil nature (perhaps due to relations with the devil). The Church’s fear of magic was not new – what was new was how, in the early modern period, it became gendered, racialized and violently persecuted and, in so doing, became a shared project of Church and Crown, helping to unify them. “All these stereotypes rendered both Jews and women as less than human, thereby justifying the inhuman treatment unleashed on them. But the witches, unlike the Jews, saw themselves as Christians, as insiders in the Christian realm. In order to prosecute for witchcraft, European society had to turn against its own” (63).¹⁰

A pivotal political change occurred in the 16th century, in terms of the centralization of power, the period of the religious wars, in that Black magic, which was associated with witches was seen as the work of the devil and thus a direct threat to Christianity. “Satan, the ruler of the underworld, was frequently portrayed as black and bestial in Christian art and literature” (Federici 2004, 163).¹¹ In the case of witches, it was common belief that the devil was the source of a witches’ powers, as “ordinary” women could not have any power – they were but passive vessels. Marriage thus served as a means to “protect” women from the temptation of the devil. This view is central to the *Malleus Mallificarum*, that states “all witchcraft comes from carnal lust, which is in women insatiable” (Mackay 2009, 135). Women needed men to control them, otherwise they were hyper-sexed and susceptible to the sexual appeal of the devil, which they could not resist as they were weak-willed in relation to men, who were deemed to be in control of their faculties, mental and physical. Strong, assertive, and independent women were thus clearly already possessed by the devil and the first to be burned in the witch hunts.

This demonic dehumanization led to material changes to the life of women across Europe. Federici claims that many women had more rights and social possibilities prior to the 17th century – at this time, the notions of sexuality were more and more limited, pre-marital sex was banned (138), women could no longer inherit property or be paid directly, and it was no longer socially acceptable to live alone. This made unmarried women or widows more susceptible to accusations of witchcraft – hence the trope of the old hag/spinster. While the devil discourse was more predominant in Catholic countries, the focus on controlling social reproduction seems to have been more common in Lutheran spaces – perhaps inspired by Luther’s now infamous claim that, “Whatever their weaknesses, women possess one virtue that cancels them all: they have a womb and can give birth” (King 2008, 115).

Many contemporary analyses of the witch hunts focus on the role of biological reproduction – a leitmotiv that has returned with a vengeance in the world today with the “Great Replacement Theory” inspired murderers (e.g., Christchurch, Pittsburg, the 2011 Norway attacks, Buffalo, and so on) (Topolski 2023). The scholarly view is that the Church was threatened by healers’ knowledge and “control” over biological reproduction at a time when bodies were necessary – both for the church and the secular/ economic powers (after the plague of 1347-1352, which killed more than one third of the European population). It’s the case that many women, often unmarried or widowed, were midwives – helping women both to give birth and to prevent pregnancies and serving as advisors on all matters regarding sexual and marital relations. “They cured male impotence and female infertility, performed abortions, provided contraceptives, and advised on nursing problems, thus affecting the birth rate, a power that the churches were determined to wrest from them” (Barnstow 1994, 113). Again, this leads to concrete material changes in the lives of women. Birth control and abortion in any form becomes a sin (and not a secular crime) in 1484 (Bull of Innocent VIII), which is also when witchcraft, now associated with Black magic, becomes a sin.

It is this concrete link that supports the hypothesis that the transformation of healers into witches – from heresy to witchcraft, with its gendered victims – is related to the control over biological reproduction (Yuval-Davis 1996). This control comes to a climax in the 16th and 17th centuries, at the height of the witch hunts, when the rate of infant mortality peaked due to poverty and malnutrition across Europe. Witches were, of course, the ideal

scapegoat (except in Spain/Portugal, where Jews/Muslims were still the primary scapegoats). What is clear is that the witch hunts resulted in the devaluation of women's labor – both productive and non-productive – as well as their general social status and liberty.¹² This shift from a theological crime (heresy) to witchcraft happened in (approx.) 1560, just after the treaty of Augsburg (*cuius regio, eius religio*), after which most trials occurred in the “secular” courts. The courts began to try crimes of witchcraft and perverse sexuality. What is ironic – given the importance of the notion of the soul for salvation and full personhood – is that White European women became, for the first time, legal persons as witches (i.e., they were first accorded independent legal status, in order to be prosecuted for witchcraft). According to Larner (1986), this was most apparent among the Calvinists who made women “adults,” holding them “responsible for their souls while, at the same time, blaming them for using their free will to choose to practice witchcraft” (Larner 1986, 77). Thus, in addition to *Summis Desiderantes*, Innocent VIII's 1484 Bull, there was the 1532 *Constitutio Criminalis Carolina*, inspired by the Inquisitorial courts, which legalized “the ‘conspiracy theory’ of witchcraft, in which sorcery was seen as treason, as an attempt to overthrow state and church” (61) as well as justifying torture and making witchcraft a crime punishable by death (as well as laws against miscegenation to prevent marriage with non-Christians in Europe and the New World).

It is thus precisely at the same time as Europe was unifying itself under the banner of Whiteness and Christianity – by means of expulsion, colonization and murder – that it also legally and theologically aligned itself with a form of toxic masculinity. While the witch hunts are but one manifestation of systemic gendered violence in Europe, “it was a concerted attempt to degrade them, demonize them, and destroy their social power” (Federici 2004, 186). The view of women propagated by the Church and then embraced and promoted by the state of women as weaker, impure, sexualized, and a potential threat to the political community echoes the view of Jews and Muslims at this time. Together, and intersectionally, this served to consolidate Europe as White, Male, and Christian. This masculine power likewise served Europe and its newly forming states with material wealth, biopolitical power, and epistemic hegemony. So, to return to the question we began with, what do women have to do with the race-religion constellation – the brief version of the answer is everything.

Notes

- 1 In the fall of 2016, a few months after I joined the philosophy department at Radboud University, I was asked to give a faculty lecture about my research on the race-religion constellation. Dr. Veronica Vasterling had worked at this faculty for over a quarter of a century, often being the only female academic staff member. In the lowlands, where any marginal philosophy, including feminist philosophy, was rare and often disparaged, Veronica was a beacon of hope and support for many younger female/marginalized philosophers. I had had the honor of meeting Veronica several times during my PhD as we both shared a love for the work of Hannah Arendt (who, while clearly not a feminist, was also often the only female philosopher included in the philosophical canon, albeit often as a token). I had always admired Veronica's work and insights and having her in the audience during my first public faculty lecture gave me the extra confidence I needed. After my lecture, I was peppered with questions, most of which were the usual suspects when giving a talk on religion and race in a country which sees itself as the paradigm of tolerance, secular, and post-racial. What I didn't expect, and for several years, didn't appreciate, was Veronica's question. While I am sure it was phrased much more eloquently, the gist of her question was – what do women have to do with the race-religion constellation? Why are you not thinking intersectionally? She then provided several examples connecting the foundational patriarchy of Christianity to arguments I had made in my lecture. Instead of scrupulously taking note of her insights, what I remember thinking at that time was, *Why do I have to engage with questions of gender? Isn't studying racism in Europe enough?* With only a handful of female scholars in the room, I wondered to myself, *Why do women have to be feminist scholars? Shouldn't Veronica save this question for our male colleagues?* Now, years later, I am beyond grateful. Thanks to Veronica's question, I have come to understand why I was bothered by this question and have worked through some of the intellectual trauma of being isolated as a female philosopher in the lowlands. This has also helped me to really appreciate her brilliant question and to develop an entire new research interest on witches and the witch hunts and how these relate to the race-religion constellation. While this research is still in an early phase, I wish to thank Veronica – who has always been both intellectually critical and personally caring – for always asking the questions others do not ask and for saying what needs to be said.
- 2 In 1903, W.E.B. Du Bois wrote, "The problem of the twentieth century is the problem of the color line – the relation of the darker to the lighter races of men in Asia and Africa, in America and the islands of the sea." (Du Bois 1994, 8)

- 3 Many distinct words were used to describe these non-Christian groups, such as peoples, tribes, groups, nations, etc. For example, in 1614, Edward Brerewood referred to Jews and Mohammedans as “species.”
- 4 This relied on a popular classification of the world’s peoples, based on which of Noah’s children they descended from. Japheth was associated with Aryanism (which included parts of Asia) and European civilization, as the name means “to expand” or “to enlarge” – an association used to justify missionary activities and colonialism. Shem, the second son, was the father of the Semites and settled in what would today be the Middle East. Ham, the third son, cursed to slavery without salvation, was associated with Africa (Ham means ‘hot’) (Goldenberg 2003; 2017).
- 5 To be clear, both theologians embrace racist discourses (in contemporary terms) – the difference is whether racism is biologically or naturally fixed or of a changeable nature, such as in the current debates on cultural racism.
- 6 While the Jews had been forced to flee Spain in the 15th century, leaving behind all their property, it was only in the 16th century that converted Muslims were likewise forced to do so.
- 7 Given that the period defined as the height of the witch hunts in Europe ranges from 1450-1650, we cannot expect to have accurate historical records. Based on current research, we can be certain that at least 200,000 people were accused (80% of whom were women). Of those, we have at least 100,000 written documents attesting to their execution – 85% women.
- 8 “The black Moor is portrayed as the opposed term to the Christian religious metaphor. Like the other Moors, he is cast in the dread role of infidel, invader and defiler of Christian altars. The Moor, ‘black as pitch’, was not only the opposed religion; his color was the opposite of ‘white’, the symbol of Christianity. It is important to note two important aspects of this relation, this symbolic structure. As the writer points out, the black Moor was not ‘denigrated (or feared as the case may be) because of his color, but because of his religion’. Also, the relation of the black Moor, symbolically, to the devil was a relation which sprang from a reality in which the Mohammedan was the dominant power” (Wynter 1977, 19).
- 9 This view of Europe’s “others” as a demographic threat continues today in the form of the “Great Replacement” theory (Bracke and Hernández Aguilar 2020).
- 10 A third entanglement between the earlier persecution of Jews and witches is related to money (or class/finances). Federici develops this link extensively, showing how in the 12th century, with the increased commercialization of life, both Jews and women were heavily attacked by the Church and lost many

rights (for example, owning or inheriting property), which also forced both groups to move more to cities for an income. This move also further enabled both groups to be under the control of local authorities. “This new system of social control, in which centralized governments were willing to persecute on sexual and religious matters fell heaviest on the lower class, those unable to use the law to protect themselves – too uneducated to learn to use its ways, or too poor to afford it. The women who suffered from these handicaps were particularly vulnerable when the state turned its attention to witchcraft” (Barstow 1994, 40).

- 11 Witches and Indians were ill fated in sharing a number of characteristics in the eyes of European men: both were thought to worship “demons” and to be cannibalistic and should therefore have a war of extermination fought against them, in the name of Christianity. Both were looked down upon, like children, yet were feared.
- 12 “Women could not have been totally devalued as workers and deprived of autonomy with respect to men without being subjected to an intense process of social degradation; and indeed, throughout the 16th and 17th centuries, women lost ground in every area of social life” (Federici 2004, 100).

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