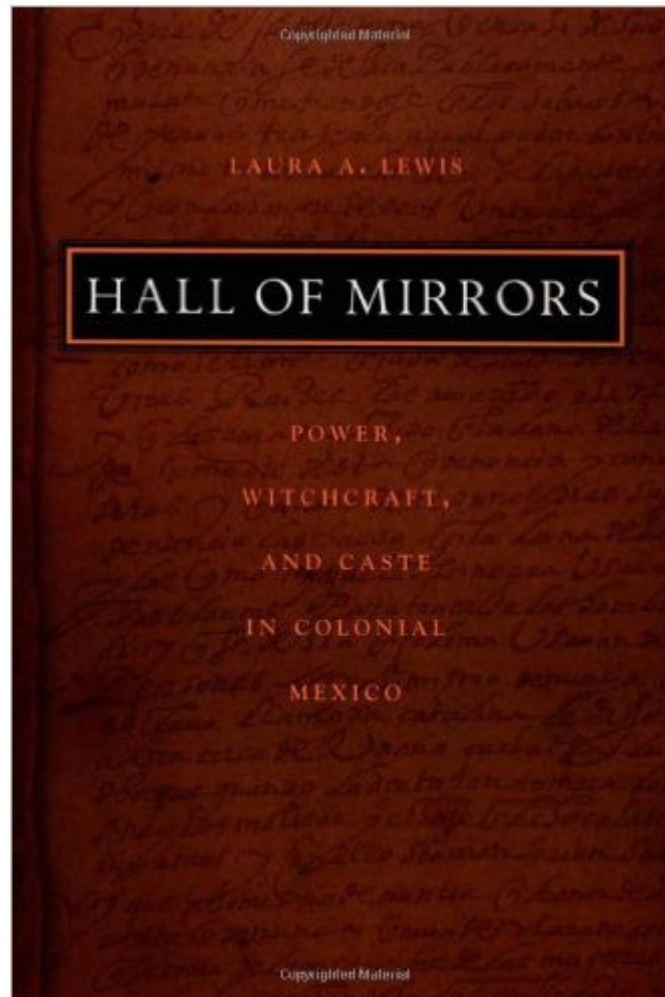


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Hall Of Mirrors: Power, Witchcraft, And Caste In Colonial Mexico (Latin America Otherwise)



Synopsis

Through an examination of caste in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Mexico, *Hall of Mirrors* explores the construction of hierarchy and difference in a Spanish colonial setting. Laura A. Lewis describes how the meanings attached to the categories of Spanish, Indian, black, mulatto, and mestizo were generated within that setting, as she shows how the cultural politics of caste produced a system of fluid and relational designations that simultaneously facilitated and undermined Spanish governance. Using judicial records from a variety of colonial courts, Lewis highlights the ethnographic details of legal proceedings as she demonstrates how Indians, in particular, came to be the masters of witchcraft, a domain of power that drew on gendered and hegemonic caste distinctions to complicate the colonial hierarchy. She also reveals the ways in which blacks, mulattoes, and mestizos mediated between Spaniards and Indians, alternatively reinforcing Spanish authority and challenging it through alliances with Indians. Bringing to life colonial subjects as they testified about their experiences, *Hall of Mirrors* discloses a series of contradictions that complicate easy distinctions between subalterns and elites, resistance and power.

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