The Spanish Worldview
What elements of a society’s worldview might lead to a desire to create an empire?

The year is 1492. Columbus sets out from Spain to sail the ocean blue. This was a great turning point in the history of Spain. What was happening in Spain at that time? What factors led King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella to decide to support Columbus’s venture?
The Arab – Muslim Empire Circa 750 C.E.
The Spanish Reconquista

- The *Reconquista* (a Spanish word for ‘reconquest’) was a period of 750 years in which several Christian kingdoms slowly expanded themselves over the Iberian peninsula at the expense of the Muslim Moorish states.

- The Christian rulers widely proclaimed that they were reconquering Christian territory lost to Muslim invaders from previous centuries.
The Marriage of Ferdinand and Isabella

- Ferdinand II was the king of Aragon.
- Isabella was the queen of Castile.
- Their marriage in 1469 led to the union of these two regions of the Iberian peninsula under a single crown in 1479.
- These Catholic monarchs thus began a war in 1482 to conquer Grenada, the last area of the Iberian peninsula under Muslim rule.
• Grenada was captured on January 2, 1492, after 10 years of fighting.
• From the Pyrenees in the north to the Rock of Gibraltar in the south, Spain was now a Christian land.
• Once the Reconquista was complete, Muslims and Jews were given the choice of converting to Catholicism or being exiled.
Definition: Inquisition

An inquisition is an official religious tribunal established by the Roman Catholic Church to discover and suppress heresy and to punish heretics.
The Spanish Inquisition

• The Spanish Inquisition was first established in 1478 by Ferdinand and Isabella and became a state-run system of courts where Church officials put believers of other religious ideas other than Catholicism on trial.

• The procedures would start with Edicts of Grace, where people were invited to step forward to confess heresy freely and to denounce others.
• Denunciations were followed by detentions.

• A defense counsel was assigned to the defendant, a member of the tribunal itself, whose role was to advise the defendant and to encourage him or her to speak the truth.

• The percentage of cases where torture was used, which was a means of getting confessions, varied.
• Sentences varied from fines to execution.
• The Inquisition was extremely active between 1480 and 1530 and it is estimated that 2,000 were executed in this time period, and tens of thousands fled Spain, of which most were Jewish.
• These expulsions of Jews and Muslims had serious negative effects on Spain, because Spanish Jews and Muslims were a large part of the educated middle class, thus hurting Spain’s economic growth.
Tomás de Torquemada was appointed Inquisitor General in 1483 and his name had become synonymous with the excesses of the Inquisition.

During his 15 year reign as Grand Inquisitor, the Inquisition grew from a single tribunal in Seville to a network of two dozen ‘Holy Offices’.
Types of Torture

• The methods of torture most used by the Inquisition were *garrucha*, *toca* and the *potro*.

• The *garrucha*, also known as the strappado, consisted of suspending the criminal from the ceiling by a pulley with weights tied to the ankles, with a series of lifts and drops, during which arms and legs suffered violent pulls and were sometimes dislocated.

• The *toca*, also called *tortura del agua*, consisted of putting a cloth into the mouth of the victim and forcing them to ingest water spilled from a jar so that they had impression of drowning.

• The *potro*, the rack, was the instrument of torture used most frequently.
Take Home Points

• The Reconquista was a period of reconquest of Spanish territory by Christian monarchs.

• Grenada, the last area of the Iberian peninsula under Muslim control, fell under the control of Ferdinand II and Isabella in 1492.

• The spoils of this war helped to finance the first voyage of Christopher Columbus.
• In 1478, Ferdinand II and Isabella also established an Inquisition to assert their political dominance and destroy any religious opposition to their monarchy.
• The period from 1480 – 1530 in Spanish history is marked as one of great intolerance of religious diversity and tremendous persecution of Spanish Jews and Muslims through the means of torture and expulsion.