

URBAN VIEW PAINTING IN SPANISH COLONIAL LATIN AMERICA: MECHANISMS OF CONTROL IN A NASCENT SURVEILLANCE SOCIETY

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Spanish colonial Latin American landscape painting is notable for its concentration on the urban view, to the near exclusion of any other subject. The ubiquity of the urban view suggests that it was a resonant subject that served multiple private, civic, and political functions. One important function of these city views was to assert the power and authority of a small minority of ruling elites within a highly unstable society. The urban views thus served as a mechanism of social control, which functioned by instantiating the imperial gaze, and by indexing larger ideologies of surveillance, ultimately assisting in the implementation of a prototypical surveillance society. This nascent surveillance society was implemented through a variety of mechanisms, including rituals, legislation, record-keeping, and the deployment of art forms as visual propaganda, which together foreshadowed the supervisory techniques used by governments and corporations in modern surveillance society. This analysis will examine how five urban view paintings, depicting cities from New Spain to Peru, painted between the seventeenth and nineteenth centuries, contributed to the implementation of a prototypical surveillance society in Spanish colonial Latin America.

Initial scholarship on the intended meanings and functions of Spanish colonial urban views in the Americas has interpreted them as predominantly celebratory images. Richard Kagan describes urban views as serving to valorize municipal history, secular autonomy, Creole identity and emerging nationalism; as expressions of local patriotism and civic pride; and as ideal representations emphasizing peace and prosperity.¹ While certainly plausible, and no doubt operant, these utopic explanations do not acknowledge the highly contested nature of colonial Latin American society. That society was plagued by frequent revolts, a highly unstable class structure, and uncertain control by the minority elite. Governance by the crown was complicated by the logistical challenges of ruling the colonies from afar. These potentially entropic conditions required the employment of a host of techniques of

control, including the use of military force to suppress insurrections, the Inquisition, and the adept manipulation of symbols.

In a more recent examination of the social function of Spanish colonial urban view paintings, Michael Schreffler has focused on their deployment as representational symbols that asserted the power of the viceregal Spanish crown in the Americas. Schreffler aligns urban views with royal portraits, history painting, and other forms of visual culture that have been interpreted as royal propaganda, such as the royal coat of arms, the royal signature, and the Royal Palace.² Schreffler describes this symbolic deployment as "governance by representation," and explains that, far from being passive symbols, these objects and images actively functioned in the exercise of political power.³

This analysis extends our understanding of the active political function of urban views by describing specific mechanisms through which they exercised political power. This study is concerned, in particular, with that exercise of political power which involves the assertion of social control to enforce stability and harmony across a heterogeneous and unstable populace. Among the multivalent functions of urban view paintings was the ability to serve as a mechanism of social control by reminding the population of its visibility to the authoritarian, colonial or imperial gaze. Compositionally, this was achieved through: the consistent depiction of a multitude of figures across the entire range of social classes, which facilitated the interpellation or self-projection of the viewer into the scene; and the employment of a lofty aerial viewpoint and linear perspective, which indicated the dominance and far-reaching extent of Spanish imperial authority. This study will also examine the sites of display and social access to these works in order to demonstrate their accessibility across class boundaries, which was critical for their ability to exercise political power. More specifically, these paintings would have been seen by the population in religious, domestic or administrative settings, and the depiction of the entire range of social classes would have assisted all viewers in the process of interpellating or injecting themselves within the depicted field of control.

Urban views functioned together with a host of other disciplinary mechanisms, all of which emphasized visibility. The viewer's awareness of his or her own visibility, which could have been subliminal or supraliminal,

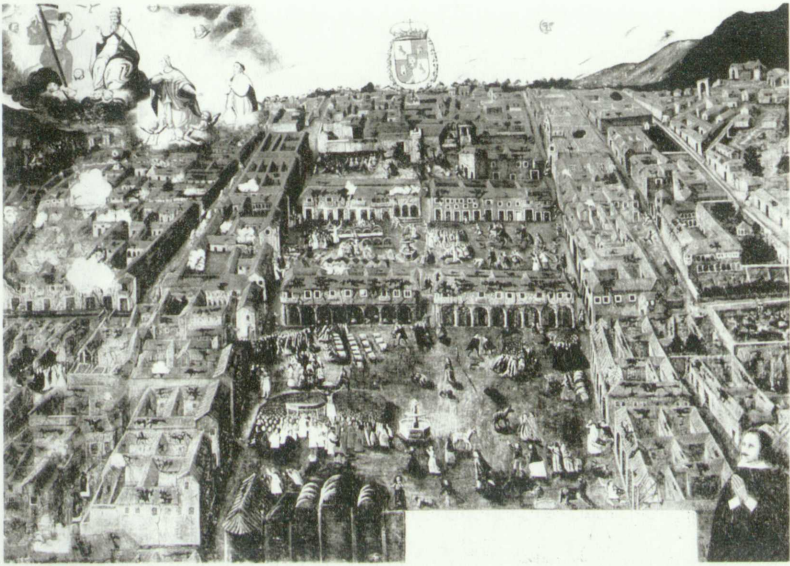


FIGURE 1. Anon. *Ex Voto. Cuzco after the earthquake of 1650* (c. 1650-60), Oil on Canvas, Cathedral of Cuzco, Peru. Image Courtesy of Richard Kagan.

achieved the conditions of panopticism and its resultant self-regulation identified by the French philosopher Michel Foucault as the primary mechanisms of power in the disciplinary society and its analog, modern surveillance society. Pivotal to the function of panopticism is the presence of a gaze field, which these paintings directly portray by assuming the lofty point of view of an omnipotent observer whose attentions cannot be escaped.

INTRODUCING THE URBAN VIEWS

This analysis focuses on five, oil on canvas paintings of the urban centers of Spanish colonial Latin American cities, all executed between the mid-seventeenth and mid-to-late-eighteenth centuries. All five paintings depict central plazas or parks in cities throughout the Spanish colonial Americas, in areas ranging from present-day Mexico to Peru. Despite the geographical and temporal extent of their production across two continents and over the course of nearly two centuries, these five paintings demonstrate a surprising unity in both subject matter and method of depiction, suggesting a corresponding unity of social function. These paintings all employ a bird's-eye or aerial perspective, in which the viewpoint is located in the sky, at a

point high overhead that would have been unattainable by contemporary viewers. These urban views are also distinguished by an obsessive, almost photographic, level of detail, depicting hundreds of individual structures and figures.

Cuzco after the earthquake of 1650 (ca. 1650-60) depicts the disastrous earthquake of March 31, 1650, which destroyed much of the city (Figure 1). The painting depicts the central square and surrounding city and shows much of the population in prayer, including nuns, Spanish and Creole men and women, and a group of Indians being instructed by friars. The painting was commissioned by the Spaniard Alonso de Monroy y Cortés after he experienced a miraculous cure that he attributed to a statue of the Virgin. Monroy ordered that the painting be placed on public display in Cusco Cathedral, where it remains.⁴

Plaza Mayor de Lima Cabeza de los Reinos de el Peru, Año de 1680 (1680) depicts the *plaza mayor* of Lima (Plate 1). In *Urban Images of the Hispanic World 1493-1793*, Richard Kagan posits that this view was painted as a souvenir.⁵ The painting is distinct for its unusual aerial viewpoint and for the number and variety of anonymous figures depicted. These figures run the gamut of Spanish colonial social strata, encompassing elites, Indian food vendors, black water carriers, and possibly even the viceroy in the foreground.

Cristóbal de Villalpando's famous *View of the Zócalo of Mexico City* (1695) was commissioned by viceroy Gaspar de la Cerda, 8th Count of Galve, to bring back with him to Spain (Plate 2). The painting is noteworthy in that it graphically depicts the aftermath of the corn riot of 1692, evident in the destroyed viceregal palace on the far side of the Zócalo, Mexico City's main plaza. Even though de la Cerda's own policies were said to be responsible for the riots, Villalpando depicts the extensive damage in the process of repair. While the view is largely accurate, Villalpando exaggerates the representation of two of the viceroy's building projects: the portal of the palace under reconstruction and the new market, or *Parián*.⁶ The painting focuses on the public space and its intense economic and social activity. Over 1200 figures populate the painting, and the viceroy may be present in the procession at the lower left.⁷

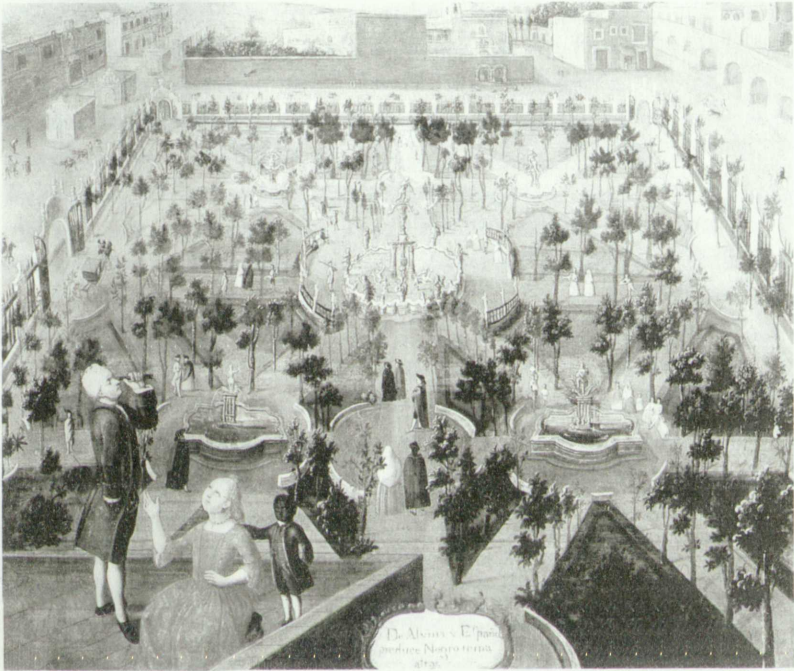


FIGURE 2. Anon. *De Alyina y Espanol, produce Negro torna atras*, (ca. 1775), oil on copper, 18 x 21 $\frac{3}{4}$ in. Banco Nacional de México, Mexico City. Image courtesy of Colección Banco Nacional de México.

Although not pictured here, Juan de Arellano's extraordinary *Celebridad de Nochebuena en México* (1720) also depicts the Zócalo, but from a sightline at right angles to Villalpando's view. Arellano shows the Cathedral head on, and as he painted this scene thirty-five years after Villalpando, the rebuilding of the palace on the right has been completed. Most notably, this view depicts a night scene, something almost completely unknown to European city views at this time. Depicting the Zócalo on Christmas night, Arellano shows the plaza aglow with candles and lanterns and the painting thus serves as a prototype for the now ubiquitous photographic night cityscape. The painting is quite large, measuring approximately eight feet in height by ten feet in length. Like Villalpando, Arellano depicts a multiplicity of figures, although Arellano's scene assumes an even higher viewpoint. This little known painting first appeared at a Sotheby's auction in 1993 and its history is unknown.⁸

The fifth and final painting, *De Alvina y Español, produce Negro torna atrás* (ca. 1775), is a fascinating composite of a caste painting and an urban view (Figure 2). Caste paintings, or *pinturas de castas*, were intended to visually reinforce class structure. Looking down upon a roof overlooking the *Alameda*, the painting depicts a Spanish man standing next to his albino spouse and their *torna atrás*, or “throw-back,” black child. This instance of the *pinturas de castas* was intended to caution that even a seemingly white woman could produce a black child. The man observes the strollers in the park with a spyglass.

SPANISH COLONIAL URBAN VIEW PAINTING

In the sixteenth century, European urban view artists favored the aerial view because it was conducive to the production of detailed topographic renderings. These early urban views most often employed the method of linear perspective developed by the Renaissance architect and theoretician Leon Battista Alberti, as it permitted the depiction of a scene from an arbitrary viewpoint. This use of a quasi-scientific technique conveyed a sense of accuracy and verisimilitude.⁹ Additionally, the use of linear perspective directly corresponded to the Renaissance concept of the “ideal city,” which prescribed a rational urban layout to serve the higher moral objective of producing social transparency, in contrast to the unordered, seemingly random structure of the medieval city. The rational ordering of the city layout was similarly embodied in the Spanish Crown’s prescription of the flatiron grid for all colonial cities and certainly is an element of the iconology at work in the urban view paintings.

In Europe, city views transitioned away from the use of oblique, aerial perspective to more map-like depictions by the middle of the sixteenth century, in part reflecting an increased emphasis on topographical accuracy.¹⁰ Curiously, in Spanish colonial Latin America, the oblique, aerial urban view persisted much longer. Kagan argues that the continued application of the aerial urban view within the Spanish colonies was part of a practice of “moralized geography” aimed at fostering community pride. Examining the complex ways in which urban maps and views functioned to convey social and political ideologies, Kagan identifies two main typologies of urban views: those that emphasized the “*urbs*,” or physical infrastructure of the city, and those that emphasized the “*civitas*” or social structure of the community. The communicentric “*civitas*” views were created primarily for

a local audience and focused, not on the city as a whole, but on important spaces within a particular community, such as central plazas or signature buildings, that helped to construct community identity.¹¹ Kagan notes that while this "moralized geography" largely disappeared from European city views in the sixteenth century, it persisted in representations produced in the Spanish colonies, where it was particularly entrenched.¹²

One reason for the persistence of the aerial, "*civitas*" view in the Spanish colonies was its usefulness as both a symbolic and practical reminder of royal authority. The aerial point of view has historically symbolized the Olympian view, the view of God and the King, which implies omniscience and domination. The aerial view became symbolic of elite dominance, serving to both reassure oppressors and intimidate the oppressed, should they have access to the image. Even today, the aerial view reinforces class distinction, wealth, and privilege.

In part because it visually evoked the far-reaching expanse of the Spanish Empire, the aerial view symbolized political authority in Habsburg Spain and Philip II assembled a large collection of panoramic views of cities under Spain's dominion.¹³ Yet, the aerial urban view also transcended symbolic associations and served as a much more practical reminder of Spanish imperial authority. As the city provided an infrastructure useful for strategically imposing Spanish laws, institutions, customs, and religion, the Spanish crown understood the city as the mediating space between European civilization and indigenous culture.¹⁴ From 1632 onward, the Spanish crown considered both city maps and urban views to be state secrets and prohibited their publication as engravings.¹⁵ For this reason, paintings, rather than engravings, provide the best extant examples of urban views that functioned as mechanisms of surveillance and control.

THE NEED FOR SOCIAL CONTROL IN SPANISH COLONIAL AMERICA

An unstable class hierarchy and the blurring of social boundaries was a pervasive concern in both New Spain and Spain, and the Spanish colonial Latin American context in which these urban views were painted was wrought with anxiety over loss of social control.¹⁶ Because this anxiety was not restricted to fear of outright revolt but was also concerned with the fluidity of class boundaries within colonial society, it contributed to the development of the *pinturas de castas*, which delineated class structure

and which are more or less contemporaneous with the urban views.¹⁷ These paintings enumerated, named, and hierarchically ordered the offspring of inter-ethnic and inter-racial marriage, as elites feared the highly heterogeneous populace and strove to create a more rigid and prescriptive social order.¹⁸

As the sixteenth century unfolded, social organization quickly progressed from a colonizer/colonized relationship between Spanish and Indian to one in which a feudal elite consisting of transient peninsulars, Creoles, and an indigenous aristocracy struggled to maintain political and economic dominance over a much larger underclass of poor Spanish, *Mestizos*, Indians, Africans, and the assorted *castas*. This transition from a formal colonial model to the more complex realities of Spanish colonial society is typified by the division of the population of Mexico City into *gente decente* and *plebes*.¹⁹ The impoverished *plebes* comprised an estimated eighty-five percent of the city's population.²⁰ Race and class uprisings comprised a constant threat, with fears of the plebeians uniting to overturn Spanish rule, a nightmare that was realized in Mexico City in 1624 and 1692.²¹ In 1624, thousands of plebe rioters stormed the viceregal palace and nearly murdered the viceroy, with the Creole militia proving unreliable for his defense.²² The corn riot of 1692 realized the elites' long-standing fears of an Indian and plebe alliance and revolt, and ended in the conviction of Indians, *Mestizos*, *Castizos*, *Mulattos*, and Spaniards.²³ These revolts resulted in the segregation of Mexico City into the Spanish *traza* zone and the Indian community of San Juan Tenochtitlan.²⁴

Further to the south, in the mid-sixteenth century, the Indian population in Cuzco was estimated to be four times greater than that of the Spanish.²⁵ Spaniards in Peru were not only fearful of native attack but were also threatened by violence from civil wars initiated by descendants of the *conquistadores*. Shortly after the Inca conquest in Peru, civil war broke out in 1537 between followers of Pizarro and his partner, Diego de Almagro. Less than ten years later, another civil war erupted over the conquistadors' right to enslave the Indians. Contemporaneous with this Spanish civil unrest, the *Manco Inca*, the indigenous ruler of the Inca appointed by the Spanish, led a series of revolts between 1535 and 1544. Between 1780 and 1782, the Túpac Amaru revolt in Peru claimed the lives of an estimated 10,000 Spanish and elite Creoles, with an estimated 40,000 total non-Indian deaths out of

the 100,000 killed.²⁶ The plight of African slaves was dire throughout the colonies, and black slave revolts occurred in Mexico City in 1537 and the 1540's, and again in 1608 and 1612.²⁷ The Pueblo Revolt in New Mexico in 1680 resulted in the death of 21 of 32 Franciscan missionaries and 380 colonists.²⁸ After the Bourbon reforms began in earnest in 1760, popular uprisings occurred in 1766-67 in response to the tobacco supply monopoly, the formation of the militia, and the expulsion of the Jesuits.²⁹

The litany of major revolts and riots that occurred between the time of the conquest and the end of the colonial era illustrates that the fears of Spanish elites were well-founded. In this environment of frequent social disruption and indistinct class boundaries, elites sought to employ all the means at their disposal to assert dominance and enforce social control. In the search for new methods of control, the elites of the Spanish colonial Americas created prototypical strategies for enforcing social discipline through self-regulation. These strategies matured in the nineteenth century and have achieved even greater importance in the contemporary world in the form of the modern surveillance society.

PANOPTICISM, THE IMPERIAL GAZE, AND SURVEILLANCE SOCIETY

Michel Foucault's late twentieth-century writings on control through surveillance, or panopticism, are of particular relevance for understanding how colonial urban views functioned as mechanisms for instilling social control through self-regulation. Foucault describes how discipline can be exercised through "hierarchical observation," wherein the very act of seeing can induce the effect of power while simultaneously making those who are coerced clearly visible.³⁰ Foucault identifies the military camp as the prototypical example of an "observatory," arguing that its "traditional square plan" was refined until the "network of gazes that supervised one another was laid down," producing a space in which "all power would be exercised solely through exact observation; each gaze would form a part of the overall functioning of power."³¹ It was for precisely this reason that Spanish royal directives prescribed the flatiron grid as the basic form for the new colonial city, as the grid provided an organizing structure that was easily permeated by an unimpeded authoritarian gaze.

Foucault goes on to discuss Bentham's panopticon, clarifying the way in which the gaze is capable of "induc[ing] in the inmate a state of consciousness

and permanent visibility that assures the automatic functioning of power." Foucault further describes the panopticon as a machine that de-individualizes power; a machine that "any individual... can operate."³²

From his particular discussion of the panopticon, Foucault develops his generalized concept of "panopticism", which he defines as a disciplinary social state in which individuals modify their behavior in the belief that they are being observed, even if they do not know who is watching them.³³ This hypothetical surveillance results in self-regulation.³⁴ In other words, panopticism creates a form of power derived from the consciousness of permanent visibility, allowing domination to be achieved without the use of direct force or restraint.³⁵

Because the gaze is the essential mechanism of panopticism, E. Ann Kaplan's concept of the imperial gaze is particularly instructive for understanding the function of urban view painting in colonial Latin America. Drawing upon the work of Laura Mulvey, Kaplan, in *Looking for the Other: Feminism, Film, and the Imperial Gaze*, proposes a post-colonial theory of the gaze, arguing that the imperial gaze asserts a fundamental position of power as the oppressors define both how the oppressed are to be seen and how they are to see themselves.³⁶ From the perspective of the oppressed, the imperial gaze trivializes and infantilizes in order to assert its own authority and dominance.³⁷ The net effect of an imperial gaze that generated a state of panopticism would be a potent agent of social control.

Foucault's ideas about surveillance have been extended beyond panopticism to inform the concept of the modern "surveillance state," which is achieved through government's surveillance of large numbers of citizens and visitors. Thomas Allmer has established a broad typology that identifies two perspectives on surveillance societies: "panoptic" and "non-panoptic." The panoptic view maintains that Foucault's panopticism is useful for studying surveillance; that surveillance should be defined in a negative way and is connected to coercion, repression, discipline, power, and domination; and that power is centralized in society. Conversely, the non-panoptic view considers Foucault's theory of panopticism useless for studying surveillance society and proposes that surveillance be defined in a neutral way, using a broad definition that accounts for both the constraining and enabling effects of surveillance, while also acknowledging that surveillance is plural and technical.³⁸ Synthesizing the non-panoptic perspective, Jean Baudrillard,

in his text *Forget Foucault*, stresses the end of panoptic society in the era of simulation and simulacra.³⁹ While convincing, this argument is very much rooted in the condition of postmodernity and does not account for the fact that a panoptic, surveillance society has historically been an integral aspect of modernity—a point which David Lyon argues in *The Electronic Eye: The Rise of Surveillance Society*. Lyon traces the historical development of the surveillance society, attributing the expansion of surveillance in the nineteenth century to the growth of military organization, the nation-state, and capitalism, arguing that “surveillance is an essential feature of modernity.”⁴⁰

SPANISH COLONIAL SOCIETY AS A SURVEILLANCE SOCIETY

If we accept Lyon's assertion that the surveillance society and modernity are inextricable, then defining the onset of modernity becomes germane. According to the world systems model, contemporary global capitalism is the result of “a period expanding from the late fifteenth century to the current stage of globalization. ...a long process of colonization of the planet, which was at the same time the process in which modernity and ... modern Reason were constructed.”⁴¹ In *Local Histories*, Walter Mignolo explains his preference for such a model:

The modern world systems model... has the sixteenth century as a crucial date of its constitution, while all the other possibilities... have the eighteenth century and Enlightenment as the chronological frontier of modernity. ... The Enlightenment comes second in my own experience of colonial histories. The second phase of modernity, the Enlightenment and the Industrial Revolution, was derivative in the history of Latin America...⁴²

From this perspective on the historical development of global capitalism and modernity, it is entirely plausible that prototypes for the modern surveillance society should be found far earlier than the nineteenth century, and not in Europe, but rather in Spanish colonial Latin America.

If Spanish colonial society was a prototypical surveillance society, urban view painting certainly would not have functioned in isolation, and multiple mechanisms of power and methods of surveillance would have been

wielded simultaneously. Due to the instability of Spanish colonial society, viceregal authorities deployed an array of symbolic activities in support of "the colonial practice of... reifying authority and social hierarchy..."⁴³ These symbolic activities included celebrations and processions enacted upon the arrival of a new viceroy, as well as the *vista de ojos*—a ritual viewing of public works by the viceroy, who exerted a commanding gaze in service to the king.⁴⁴ The inscription of the body through *castas* paintings would have functioned as another method of surveillance, and the *castas* themselves were explicitly surveilled. Regulations imposed in the sixteenth century included the enforcement of a curfew during hours of darkness when the subaltern population could not be effectively monitored. This body of legislation deliberately sought to reduce the subaltern population to "the status of minors living under the watchful eyes of Spanish guardians."⁴⁵ On the religious front, the Inquisition functioned as another powerful agent of panopticism, dictating mutual observation by all members of society, even among family members. These overtly optical forms of monitoring the populace were complimented by what Lyon describes as informational, or in its early forms, textual, surveillance. The obsessive record-keeping of the viceregal administration is an example of such textual surveillance in Spanish colonial society.

The mechanisms of control in modern surveillance society are compatible with our understanding of how social control was often achieved in colonial Latin America. Surveillance society's efficacy in generating self-regulation was evident in the relative lack of overt military force used in the colonies. Post-conquest, the Spanish colonial Americas lacked a large standing army to maintain order, and local militias, whose effectiveness was often found lacking, provided the only military security. Most colonial cities did not possess fortifications, such as perimeter walls, as social control was maintained symbolically and indirectly. Panopticism would therefore have presented a valuable tool in the viceregal context, as it provided a mechanism of control that was not predicated on the use of force.

COLONIAL URBAN VIEWS IN SUPPORT OF A SURVEILLANCE SOCIETY

In order to understand how colonial urban view paintings functioned to assert dominance, instill self-regulatory impulses through the mechanisms of panopticism, and thus implement a surveillance society, it is necessary to explore both their construction and viewing experience. First, these urban

views literally depict the field of the imperial gaze discussed by E. Ann Kaplan, as is evident in each of the five paintings examined in this study. Because the aerial point of view is not actually attainable by the individual, it becomes a metaphor for the collective viewpoint of dominance. More specifically, as used in the urban view painting, the aerial point of view becomes an encyclopedic view that represents the collective gaze of the dominant elite, whose gaze field permeates the most important civic spaces, specific zones of influence, and the city as a whole. In the complex gaze field of the urban view, a hierarchy of observers and gazes mirrors the complex stratification of colonial society. While Michael Schreffler focuses solely on symbolic manifestations of the crown in his text *The Art of Allegiance: Visual Culture and Imperial Power in Baroque New Spain*, authority did not stem solely from the crown, but rather cascaded down a hierarchy comprised of the Crown at the top, followed by the viceroy, the Church, peninsulars, Creoles, *casta*, and blacks. The urban views portray a complex, interrelated succession of gaze fields, underscoring the relevance of a panoptical system in Spanish colonial Latin America.

The aerial vantage point used in the colonial urban views furthered the aim of depicting an authoritarian gaze field. The development of linear perspective in the Renaissance permitted the construction of views of a scene from any viewpoint, including those not actually attainable by the artist. By employing this impossible aerial viewpoint, the colonial urban views inherited the motivations and consequences of Renaissance linear perspective, which equated rational spatial order with social order and transparency. In *Perspective as Symbolic Form*, Erwin Panofsky describes the relationship between constructed and perceptual space in a way that illuminates the ability to instill social order by imposing spatial order:

Exact perspectival construction is a systematic abstraction from this psychophysiological space. For it is not only the effect of perspectival construction, but indeed its intended purpose, to realize in the representation of space precisely that homogeneity and boundlessness foreign to the direct experience of that space.⁴⁶

Panofsky later describes this operation of "systematic abstraction" with the concise phrase, "objectification of the subjective."⁴⁷ By objectifying—

rationality ordering—the subjective experience of social space, perspective serves as a powerful force to both smooth and indefinitely extend the field of the gaze in the service of panopticism. Panofsky further argues that this process “is [also] true, of course, for the entirely analogous operation of the camera.”⁴⁸ Panofsky’s assertion makes clear that the camera in contemporary surveillance society operates in a manner akin to linear perspective painting in the prototypical surveillance society, extending the gaze field beyond the confines of the depicted space to enforce social order.

Spanish colonial Latin American urban views are also distinguished by an overwhelming multiplicity of human figures, sometimes numbering in the hundreds, and usually representing all of the classes and *castas* present in colonial society. In contrast to depictions of religious processions, such as those of the Corpus Christi celebrations, which portray a gallery of identifiable portraits, the urban views overflow with minute anonymous figures.⁴⁹ The implication is that that everyone in society is subject to the scrutiny of the imperial gaze.

The depiction of a plethora of figures also facilitates interpellation, transmitting the dominant social and political ideology to the individual by symbolically placing the anonymous individual viewer within the field of the gaze. In *Practices of Looking: An Introduction to Visual Culture*, Maria Sturken and Lisa Cartwright expand upon Louis Althusser’s concept of interpellation. Their discussion makes clear that the process of interpellation is integral to the function of the urban view:

Interpellation is a process of interruption through which an individual viewer comes to recognize himself or herself as among the class or group of subjects for whom the image’s message is intended. Interpellation ...is about situating the viewer in a field of meaning production (organized around looking practice) that involves recognition of oneself as a member of that world of meaning. This is what we mean when we describe the gaze as a field rather than an individual’s act of looking.⁵⁰

Because interpellation is about identification, it becomes clear why urban view paintings depict a range of classes and *castas*; Seeing an image of someone like oneself, within a familiar context, facilitates the individual viewer's self-identification with the intended meaning.

HOW THE INDIVIDUAL URBAN VIEW PAINTINGS FUNCTION

In considering *Cuzco after the earthquake of 1650*, Kagan argues that the image functions as a, "spiritual message about the protective powers inherent in Christianity" (Figure 1).⁵¹ Kagan's reading makes clear that one must also consider the perceived benevolent and protective aspects of surveillance. A surveillance society need not be considered threatening or intimidating; indeed, participants in modern surveillance society often regard surveillance as contributing positively to the quality of life, providing safety and security.⁵²

Cuzco after the earthquake could indeed be read as depicting a divine gaze field. The trinity is present in the upper left, with the Virgin and the bishop interceding on behalf of the city. The town and its people are located within a field of view that is authoritarian and omniscient in its all-encompassing expanse. The scene projects a powerful message about the consequences of both compliance and non-compliance with church dogma. The earthquake of 1650 was believed to be punishment for Cuzco's sins, while its remediation was attributed to the population's penitence and the power of God and the Church. One of the only urban views whose original site of display is known, the work's public exhibition in the cathedral greatly enhanced its ability to interpellate the faithful within its message. In this early example of an urban view, panopticism is employed more in service to the Church than to the Crown or secular elites.

Plaza Mayor de Lima Cabeza de los Reinos de el Peru, Año de 1680 features the lofty aerial viewpoint common to most Spanish colonial urban views (Figure 2). While Kagan posits that the viewpoint could have been attained by standing atop a building, this seems unlikely, as the perspective lines drawn from the cornices of the buildings flanking the plaza intersect the painting's vertical edges at too low a point, indicating a higher aerial viewpoint. The depiction of a city's *plaza mayor* in this and the other urban views invoked political power, adding to the work's significance and symbolism. The plaza

was the site of authority, the symbolic resting place of the city's *policía*.⁵³ Lima was the capital of the viceroyalty of Peru, and the plaza was the site of both the cathedral and the royal palace—the symbolic domiciles of the divine and earthly rulers. The over 200 figures in this painting represent members of every imaginable class and casta, all of whom could have readily interpellated themselves into the gaze field. If the work was a souvenir, then its primary function may not have been to interpellate the subaltern, but rather to simply reassure the elite owner of his dominance while indulging in the visual pleasure of exercising the imperial gaze. Yet, even if the work resided in an elite residence on the Iberian Peninsula, it would have served as a subliminal reminder to subordinate peninsular visitors of the owner's power and of their own constant visibility within that society.

Cristóbal de Villalpando's *View of the Zócalo of Mexico City* also features an aerial perspective (Figure 3). While Kagan again argues that this viewpoint would have been attainable from the roof of a house adjacent to the plaza, the viewpoint actually appears to be much higher, at least at the level of the cathedral bell tower, whose height would not have been equaled by any other structure.⁵⁴ This picture, like the painting of *Cuzco after the Earthquake*, depicts damaged architecture and may be read as didactically reflecting both the results of compliance (social order) and non-compliance (structural damage). Here Villalpando also conveys the futility of resistance, suggesting that no matter the revolt, the damage to the palace will simply be repaired and order restored.⁵⁵ Again, the painting is notable for the multiplicity of figures depicted. Providing explicit evidence of interethnic exchange, numerous Indians are shown in the Zócalo, their canoes clustered along the canal.⁵⁶ Commissioned a year before the viceroy's departure, the painting may have served a public function, or again, it may have operated as a private reminder of dominance, indulging its owner's visual pleasure in the exercise of the imperial gaze.

Although not pictured here, Juan de Arellano's *Celebridad de Nochebuena en México* is another remarkable image which would have reminded viewers that the imperial gaze functions even in the night. In Arellano's scene, everyone basks in the glow of the imperial gaze, encouraging conformance on this most holy of nights. The painting now resides in Mexico City, and one wonders if it was ever on public display, due to its very large size. Public or private, the joyous occasion depicted would have made a powerful case

for identification and interpellation within the depicted scene and gaze structure. Like most of the urban views, the emotional message is festive and celebratory, emphasizing the tranquil benefits of the self-regulation that the extreme surveillance of the painting elicits.

De Alvina y Español, produce Negro torna atrás is significant in that it fuses the *castas* painting and urban view types to produce a hybrid painting that provides a convincing example of the presence of a nascent surveillance society in colonial Latin America (Figure 4). The painting depicts a specific act of surveillance, as the dominant figure of the *Español* observes the *Alameda* below him with a spyglass, literally embodying the elite, white, male subject deploying the imperial gaze. Ilona Katzew argues that the painting presents the "Spanish male as controller of his family and environs," explaining that, "the erect standing male is not only portrayed in a position of mastery over female and child, but through his gaze, as possessor of the city itself."⁵⁷ Like the formally ordered park landscape that it depicts, the painting symbolizes a highly ordered society in which all classes, even in leisure, are locked within the gaze structure.

MODES OF INTERPELLATION

While these paintings could have only intermittently reminded the subaltern of their being surveilled, panopticism is in no way dependent upon continuous surveillance. Rather, it relies only on an awareness of the possibility of being observed at any given moment. However, for these paintings to have produced the condition of panopticism, they must have been at least intermittently visible to members of diverse social strata, and their site and mode of display therefore become important in assessing their efficacy.

While *Cuzco after the earthquake of 1650* has been publicly displayed since it was painted, some of these pictures were commissioned for private viewing in elite homes, where they would have functioned as mechanisms for enjoying visual pleasure through the dominant gaze. Kaplan explains that the imperial gaze functions in a manner consistent with the male gaze, as it assumes the same centrality of the viewing male subject.⁵⁸ Even urban views commissioned by ruling elites for private homes nonetheless would have been accessible to a broader audience by virtue of their placement in salons, formal dining and reception rooms.⁵⁹ In this quasi-public context

of domestic or administrative settings reserved for the elite, urban view paintings certainly would have influenced the top strata of society, reminding the viceroy of the gaze of the king, a visiting peninsular of the scrutiny of the viceroy, a Creole guest of the gaze of the peninsular, and on down the hierarchy, perhaps including indigenous elites as well.

Yet, how could these images have functioned to interpellate the more subaltern classes? Two distinct groups are of interest here: the under-classes, which consisted of blacks, plebian Indians, *castas*, and poor Spaniards, and the class of indigenous elites. First, members of the under-classes would have been frequently exposed to urban view paintings in the elite households in which many worked. In Spanish colonial Mexico City, for example, about 8,000 of the estimated total population of 20,000 blacks were employed in elite households.⁶⁰ This means that nearly one out of two blacks was likely exposed to the contents of an elite household, which would have included urban view paintings. By the seventeenth century, a growing number of Indians moved into the central city, where they, too, worked for elite patrons as personal servants, cooks, or laborers.⁶¹ Both of these contexts would have exposed privileged members of the subaltern population to even the most private urban views, thus facilitating their interpellation into the field of the imperial gaze. The presence of these powerful images in elite homes amplified the imperial gaze field and, one might even imagine that they functioned as a prototypical remote viewing apparatus that anticipated the surveillance camera. In other words, these images would have constantly reminded the laborers who worked in an elite household that their every move was subject to scrutiny by their masters.

The control of the class of indigenous elites would have been equally important for insuring social stability in Spanish colonial Latin America. Some of the most disruptive revolts, such as the Túpac Amaru revolt and the Pueblo Revolt, were fomented by *Caciques* and were among the most costly in terms of the loss of Hispanic lives. The extent of indigenous and Hispanic elite socialization is therefore of significant interest. In *Of Things of the Indies*, James Lockhart analyzes cultural interaction among the Nahuatl of Central Mexico and proposes a three-stage process in the evolution of post-conquest Nahuatl society, noting that this process would have equally applied to Maya, Quechua and other Spanish colonial Latin American societies.⁶² Lockhart describes the three stages as being characterized by progressively

greater degrees of interethnic contact, with substantial Spanish-indigenous contact occurring during stage three—which coincides with the time period during which the urban views were painted.⁶³

According to Lockhart, broad interethnic interaction first began to develop during stage two, between the mid-sixteenth and mid-seventeenth centuries. This is partially due to the fact that when the Spaniards arrived in the Americas in the sixteenth century, they found a society remarkably like their own, clearly divided into two hereditary classes of nobles and commoners.⁶⁴ This congruency in social structures helps to explain the rapid socialization that occurred between indigenous and Hispanic elite populations from that stage onward. In the sixteenth century, intermarriage between peninsular noble men and indigenous noble women was not uncommon.⁶⁵ The *Caciques* were invariably recognized as nobles and, by the middle to late colonial period, these heirs of pre-conquest nobility dominated town government, intermarried in quasi-dynastic matches, increasingly intermarried with the Spanish, and carried on enterprises very similar to those of the Spanish, selling their products into the Spanish economy.⁶⁶ After about 1700, noble Indians became increasingly fluent in Spanish.⁶⁷ In light of this evidence of broad interethnic interaction, one can conclude that the indigenous nobility would have had access to the homes of the Spanish elite, wherein they too could have been interpellated within the imperial gaze depicted in the urban views. Schreffler extends this further to argue that people of many ethnic and social groups even had access to certain rooms in the Royal Palace and that Indians would have visited the palace to appear before the Viceroy.⁶⁸ Given the prevalence of these historical accounts, it becomes clear that access to and awareness of the urban views, among both the under-classes and indigenous elites, was not only possible, but was probably commonplace.

CONCLUSION

Spanish colonial Latin America was a laboratory for the development of numerous facets of modernity. Highly organized agricultural plantation methods anticipated the Industrial Revolution. Spain's global trade empire can be understood as the precursor of multinational corporations and globalization, and was responsible for the birth of capitalism itself. Consistent with this process of forging modernity, the Spanish developed techniques for maintaining social organization and control in a contested and unstable colonial urban environment. The less physically coercive of these techniques

anticipated the mechanisms of control that continue to operate in modern surveillance society. Together with obsessive record keeping, regulations governing the visibility of the under-classes, the prescription of the flatiron grid for cities, the *vista de ojos*, and the phenomena of the *casta* paintings, the aerial urban view supported the institution of a prototypical surveillance society. This surveillance society continues to operate in the present, in a form that the viceroys and peninsulars of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries could hardly have imagined, but with levels of efficiency and effectiveness they surely would have admired and envied.

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NOTES:

¹ Richard L. Kagan, *Urban Images of the Hispanic World 1493-1793*. (Hew Haven & London: Yale University Press, 2000), 131, 148.

² Michael Schreffler, *The Art of Allegiance: Visual Culture and Imperial Power in Baroque New Spain*. (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2007), 3.

³ Ibid., 129-130.

⁴ Kagan, *Urban Images*, 179-181.

⁵ Ibid., 173-175.

⁶ Ibid., 160-161.

⁷ Kagan, *Urban Images*, 161; Schreffler, *Art of Allegiance*, 32.

⁸ María Teresa Suárez Molina, "Los mercados de la ciudad de México y sus pinturas," *Caminos y mercados de México*. Janet Long Towell and Amalia Attolini Lecón eds. 435-457 (Mexico: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 2009), 446.

⁹ Kagan, *Urban Images*, 69.

¹⁰ Ibid., 24.

¹¹ Ibid., 109.

¹² Ibid., 205.

¹³ Schreffler, *Art of Allegiance*, 25-26.

¹⁴ Ibid., 26.

¹⁵ Ibid., 74.

¹⁶ Ibid., 21.

¹⁷ Ilona Katzew, "Casta Painting: Identity and Social Stratification in Colonial Mexico," *New World Orders: Casta Painting and Colonial Latin America*. ed. Ilona Katzew 8-29. (New York: Americas Society Art Gallery, 1996), 8.

¹⁸ Ibid., 13.

¹⁹ R. Douglas Cope, *The Limits of Racial Domination: Plebian Society in Colonial Mexico City, 1660-172* (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1994), 22.

²⁰ Ibid., 49.

²¹ Ibid., 25.

²² Ibid., 26.

²³ Ibid., 157. *Mestizo* refers to a person of mixed Indigenous and Spanish descent, *Castizo* to a person of mixed Spanish and Mestizo descent, and *Mulatto* to a person of mixed Spanish/European and Black descent.

²⁴ Ibid., 10

²⁵ Kagan, *Urban Images*, 177.

²⁶ Nicholas A. Robins, *Genocide and Millennialism in Upper Peru: The Great Rebellion Of 1780-178*. (Westport CT: Praeger, 2002), 70.

²⁷ Cope, *Limits of Racial Domination*, 17-18.

²⁸ Katzew, "Casta Painting," 26.

²⁹ Susan Deans-Smith, "Bourbon Reforms," *Encyclopedia of Mexico*. ed. Michael S. Werner 152-157 (Chicago: Fitzrow Dearborn, 1997), 156.

³⁰ Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (New York: Random House, 1995), 171-179.

³¹ Ibid., 171.

³² Ibid., 202.

³³ Ibid., 216.

³⁴ Marita Sturken and Lisa Cartwright. *Practices of Looking: An Introduction to Visual Culture* (New York & Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 107-108.

³⁵ Thomas Allmer, *Towards a Critical Theory of Surveillance in Informational Capitalism* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2012), 22.

³⁶ Hawthorn Jeremy, "Theories of the Gaze," *Literary Theory and Criticism*. ed. Patricia Waugh, 508-518. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 514,

³⁷ Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin, eds. *The Post-colonial Studies Reader* (London: Routledge, 1995), 187

³⁸ Allmer, *Critical Theory of Surveillance*, 23-24.

³⁹ Ibid., 27.

⁴⁰ David Lyon, *The Electronic Eye: The Rise of Surveillance Society* (Mineapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1994), 3.

⁴¹ Walter Mignolo, *Local Histories/Global Designs: Coloniality, Subaltern Knowledges, and Border Thinking* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 200, 13

⁴² Ibid. 19.

⁴³ Ray Hernandez-Duran, "The Academy of San Carlos and Mexican Art History: Politics, History, and Art in Nineteenth-Century Mexico," unpublished manuscript, 644.

⁴⁴ Schreffler, *Art of Allegiance*, 26-27.

⁴⁵ Cope, *Limits of Racial Domination*, 18.

- ⁴⁶ Erwin Pannofsky, *Perspective as Symbolic Form* (New York: Zone Books, 1991), 30-31.
- ⁴⁷ Ibid. 66.
- ⁴⁸ Ibid. 31.
- ⁴⁹ Luis Eduardo Wuffarden, "'Look without Envy' Emulation, Differences, and Local Glorification in Peruvian Viceregal Painting," *Paintings of the Kingdoms, Shared Identities: Territories of the Spanish Monarchy, 16th-18th Centuries, Volume III: The Kingdoms and Paintings*, ed. Juana Gutiérrez Haces, 643-692. (Mexico: Fomento Cultural Banamex, 2008), 670.
- ⁵⁰ Sturken, *Practices of Looking*, 103.
- ⁵¹ Kagan, *Urban Images*, 179-181.
- ⁵² Lyon, *Electronic Eye*, 3.
- ⁵³ Kagan, *Urban Images*, 173.
- ⁵⁴ Ibid., 160-161.
- ⁵⁵ Schreffler agrees, asserting that the painting illustrates the resilience of the viceroy. Schreffler, 35.
- ⁵⁶ Suárez Molina, "Los mercados," 446.
- ⁵⁷ Katzew, "Casta Painting," 23-24.
- ⁵⁸ E. Ann Kaplan, *Looking for the Other: Feminism, Film, and the Imperial Gaze* (New York: Routledge, 1997), 78.
- ⁵⁹ Schreffler, *Art of Allegiance*, 131.
- ⁶⁰ Cope, *Limits of Racial Domination*, 14.
- ⁶¹ Ibid., 20.
- ⁶² James Lockhart, *Of Things of the Indies: Essays Old and New in Early Latin American History* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999), 204-206.
- ⁶³ James Lockhart, *The Nahuas After the Conquest: A Social and Cultural History of the Indians of Central Mexico Sixteenth Through Eighteenth Centuries*. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1992), 430-431.
- ⁶⁴ Ibid., 94.
- ⁶⁵ James Lockhart, *Nahuas and Spaniards: Postconquest Central Mexican History and Philology* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1991), 34.
- ⁶⁶ Ibid., 38.
- ⁶⁷ Ibid., 40.
- ⁶⁸ Schreffler, *Art of Allegiance*, 154.