Creole Listening, Good Governance, and *Tortillas* in *Alboroto y Motín de México*

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CREOLE LISTENING, GOOD GOVERNANCE, AND *TORTILLAS*[1] IN *ALBOROTO Y MOTÍN DE MÉXICO*

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ABSTRACT:

This article demonstrates that the correlations between colonial theory on how urban politics and recent theories of space and listening become apparent when Creole listening functions as practice and tool of inquiry into the context of exemplary colonial governance and social disruption. Notions of indigenous subjectivity, characterized by histories of dehumanization and self-determination came with the changes of the aural relations of the baroque city. Written by a writer who claimed eyewitness authority (like colonial chroniclers) the textual authority established in *Alboroto y motín* depends most of all on Sigüenza's listening. He collected vocal sounds. The letter is a historical example of the importance of listening in the deployment of colonial power and the illustration of its disruptions. Sigüenza's discontent with the transformation of the normative aurality of the urban space brought by the economy manifests in the spatial frames around his listening. I argue that these represent a longing for the orderly relationship between the law, urban center, and authority, implemented by the ordered city, legal discourse, and the town crier. The representation of this longing speaks to the continuous articulation of the voices that did not embody such a relationship to dehumanization. Among them, Sigüenza's critique of the indigenous women's aural defiance through the acts of appropriation of corn, their labor, and the tortilla business, in the face of viceregal corruption and profit and the subordination of the Indian bakers of the *traza* (the space reserved for Spanish occupation) stands out.

Keywords: Creole listening; sound studies; space studies; town crier; spatial frames; aural relations; food crisis; screams; capital; division of labor; viceroy; subject formation; tortillas; Indian bakers; lettered city; ordered city; hoarding; indigenous subjectivity; self-determination.

[1] Sigüenza equates *tortillas* with bread (110).

In the letter *Alboroto y motín de México del 8 de Junio de 1692* (translated as *Riot in Mexico City, June 8, 1692*), Creole polymath Carlos de Sigüenza y Góngora wrote to his friend in Madrid, Admiral Andrés Pez (1653–1710), to communicate the events leading to the incidents that took place on that day.[2] On the fateful day, Mexico City witnessed the burning of government buildings and looting of shops on the Plaza Mayor by Indians, castes, and marginal Spaniards. These events represented their discontent with the administrative actions undertaken by the contemporary viceroy, Gaspar de Sandoval Silva y Mendoza, the Count de Galve (1688–96). Sigüenza describes in detail how the viceroy's government prior to the riot countered the ill effects of foreign invasions, a solar eclipse, and flooding as well as the food shortage caused by a combination of excessive rainfall, pest infestation, and the high price of grain.[3] At first sight what stands out in the missive is an account of government exemplarity. Upon closer inspection, it is the tension between the viceregal politics of Sigüenza's representation and the murmurs, complaints, and screams of the Indians and women. *Alboroto y motín* is as much about their vocal emissions as about "how" Sigüenza inscribed them in his writing. When the Spanish sovereignty necessitated reformulation owing to the collapse of the segregating structures brought about by land appropriation and the economy (Nemser 115–18), Sigüenza's listening was a reminder of the inevitable social transformation of colonial power and the ordered city by the end of the seventeenth century.

Sigüenza's determination to protect the viceroy's reputation[4] formed part of what literary critics, such as Anna More, have recently identified as one of his main objectives: the production of historical knowledge about New Spain through the process of "collection" (23).[5] Sigüenza accumulated facts, writings, and local objects depicting the region's history. This initiative was essential for generating political power (More 15).[6] How does the richness of the voices that his listening inscribed in writing within his depiction of Mexico City contribute to this end? Existing research has not thoroughly investigated the implications of this textual attempt to consolidate viceregal authority.[7] While Sigüenza placed himself as an

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[2] Pez's career was furthered by viceregal influence. This represented potential publishing assistance for Sigüenza (Escamilla González 194–95).

[3] See Cañeque's chapter 6 and introduction on viceregal missions.

[4] Sigüenza's letter displays the belief that the powers of government were treated as personal. See Cañeque (8–9, 11).

[5] See also Adorno (31–54) and Rabasa (267).

[6] He wanted to separate himself from "commoner" others whom his patriotic discourse "denigrated . . . as ignorant of their own glorious past" (More 15).

[7] Silva Prada highlights the different types of sonorous emissions produced by the 1692 rioters and how the elite understood them as barbaric (412). For Rabasa, "the use of language" (260), as in the case of the rumor, communicated resistance. Leonor Taiano has expanded the literature on the "*grito*" (chapter 4). In addition to the sound of local voices, the visuality of race (Rabasa), its "infrastructures" (Nemser), and the politics of Creole identity (Moraña; More) have recently become important objects of textual analysis in the literature on the letter.

eyewitness of the events (Sigüenza 96), this analysis departs from the preferred perspective of colonial writers to highlight how the letter goes beyond collecting historical facts and voices by posing the problem of listening. Listening plays a role in the production of meaning about marginal urban voices. It enables the analysis of power and shifts in power, concerning the weakening of laws; the redistribution of who is heard in the urban center; and who and what becomes part of the written accounts of history by the end of the seventeenth century. Attention to listening reveals how urban space was truly lived and heard by its inhabitants.

This essay begins by analyzing Sigüenza's account of the exemplarity of Viceroy Galve's governance, as a sample of colonial discourse in which listening operates as a tool of power. Listening is part of orderly aural relations (Cañeque 220) through good governance and subjection (the process of becoming a subject) and Creole politics through partisan representation. By highlighting the transit and aural encounters depicting the Indian women and authority in the urban center prior to the riot, this analysis reveals the disruption of normative ways of hearing, enforced by the *Recopilación de leyes de los reynos de las Indias* (*Compilation of the Laws of the Indies*). It is normally the law (decrees and religious teachings) that radiates from the center outwards. This view complements other perspectives of analysis of the letter, focused on the women's transits as a leading factor for the revolt; archival research that depicts the rioters as a marginal interethnic masculine crowd, united in noise, confusion, resentment, and Indian inebriation caused by *pulque* (a fermented drink made from the juice of a maguey or agave plant);[8] and the description of the Indian women encouraging their husbands to rebel.[9] The moments of disruption direct attention to Sigüenza's discontent with the transformation of the normative aurality of the urban space brought by the economy. It manifests in the spatial frames around his listening. These represent a longing for the orderly relationship between the law, urban center, and authority, implemented by the ordered city and legal discourse. The representation of this longing speaks to the continuous articulation of the voices that did not embody such a relationship to dehumanization. This also manifests in Sigüenza's critique of the indigenous women's defiance through the acts of appropriation of corn, their labor, and the *tortilla* business, in the face of viceregal corruption and profit. Their performance brings to attention the subordination of the Indian bakers of the *traza* (the space reserved for Spanish occupation).

Within the textual representation of Galve's exemplarity, the spatial frames informing Sigüenza's listening inscribed alternative histories of the urban center in the letter. These are symbolic of the tension between the initial order of land-appropriation and the way the space reserved for Spanish governance was lived and heard in 1692. The application of sound studies to the analysis of this colonial context is instructive on the subject, especially when one factors in Ángel Rama's reflection on language: one must consider the informal speech employed by the

[8] Consumption supported Indian women's work as public vendors of the intoxicant (Silva Prada 483–86). See also More (158–201). On colonial Peru, see Morales.

[9] See Cope (chapter 7).

common people —the "unlettered throng" (32) with whom Sigüenza shared the urban center— that found its way into writing when an angry lettered man protested its "clumsiness" (31). In dialogue with listening as a "practice" that "articulates" hearing to knowledge power (Sterne 24) and as a "tool" of inquiry into relations of power (Ochoa Gautier 9), Rama's commentary becomes a sign of social change. Critical focus on listening reveals the operations of daily life on social space at the level of the "lived." This points to the inhabitants' transformative experience of the ideal "conceived" space of the urban planners (Lefebvre 38-39). The correlations between colonial theory on urban politics and recent theories of space and listening become apparent when Creole listening functions as practice and tool of inquiry into the context of exemplary colonial governance and social disruption. Notions of indigenous subjectivity, characterized by histories of dehumanization and self-determination came with the changes of the aural relations of the baroque city.

Listening as a tool of colonial power

An important event leading to the incidents of June 8 is the tumultuous assembling of the Indian women at the grain warehouse on June 7 to buy corn. Because of its shortage, they crowded upon the officials who were selling and prevented them from being able to measure out the corn and collect money for payment. The officials' pushes and shouts were not enough to control them; some women insisted that they serve them before the others and took corn from other women in between their legs. One official became angered and grabbed a whip and struck an Indian woman on the head and back and distributed blows to other Indian women nearby. While the transactions underwent a crisis, it set in motion the unusual circulation of the Indian women in the city:

> Si eran desentonadas las voces que hasta allí habían dado, no sé qué diga que fueron las que, al ver golpeada a la compañera, levantaron todas . . . olvidándose del maíz porque clamaban antes con tanto ahínco, tomaron a cuestas a la azotada y . . . atravesaron toda la plaza, entraron por el cementerio de la catedral y de allí volvieron a las casas arzobispales a quejarse al señor arzobispo de que no solo no les daban maíz por su dinero y para su sustento sino que a golpes habían hecho malparir aquella mujer.
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> Por no alborotar o no contristar a este piadoso príncipe con esta queja, las despidieron algunos de su familia con palabras suaves. Instaban ellas y, a repulsas de éstos, se encaminó toda la chusma, que pasaba de más de doscientas indias, al Palacio Real. Llenáronse con ellas los corredores, pero no pasaron a los salones de su excelencia como querían, porque la guardia alta . . . se lo estorbó. Volviéronse de aquí . . . a las casas arzobispales y . . . fue tal su instancia y griteria que consiguieron supiese su señoría ilustrísima lo que les había pasado . . . juntamente, recaudó al corregidor de la ciudad, o a quien estuviese en la alhóndiga, para que mirasen aquellas indias con compasión. Debía de ser más que esto lo que querían, pues se volvieron en mucho mayor tropa que antes al Palacio Real, donde . . . la guardia baja de la infantería con voces y amenazas las echó de allí. (Sigüenza 118–19)

The Indian women's moving to-and-fro to find the authority willing to hear their grievances highlights the urban center. They crossed the *plaza* and stopped at the colonial structures of administrative and religious power that transformed Tenochtitlán into Mexico City. The centralized-city edict that Ferdinand had given Spanish explorers in 1513 had enabled Cortés's land-appropriation (Rama 3–4). This demonstrates the Crown's demands for cities to be orderly and laid out with a distribution of lots that matched the social hierarchy. A hierarchy circulating outwards from the church sites and main square, or central *plaza*, in the vicinity of the Viceregal Palace and Town Council was built.[10] Originally, Cortés proposed an "area of some thirteen blocks in each direction," designed for "white occupation" (Gibson 370). The region surrounding this *traza* was designed for indigenous neighbourhoods presided over by parishes (372). Built in accordance with a preconceived pattern which drew on Roman and Greek urban planning (Mundigo and Crouch 248), the city was synonymous with the order and reason necessary for good governance.[11] By 1692, this orderly configuration of two republics and their boundaries had blurred, as Indian labor was essential to the functioning of Mexican society. The Spanish part of the city was the site of mixed classes which made the four-hour riot a revolt of Indians (artisans), *mestizos*, poor whites, and vendors of the *Baratillo*, a vast open market on the Plaza Mayor. It was no longer the site where normative hearing took place through the aural relations implemented by the town crier and the relationship between the Indians and colonial authority. The archbishop's gentle words in response to the news the Indian women communicated to him attest to the latter relationship but call attention to the viceroy's absence from his post, as the listener of the Indian complaints and provider of justice.

The possession of new territories and the control over the native populations were some of the main missions which the monarchy entrusted to the viceroys at the time of their appointment (*Recopilación*, Book III, Title III, Law II). To meet these ends, the king implemented listening as a practice. He articulated the act of listening as a component of good governance. In 1563, the *Recopilación* enforced that the viceroys "be informed of the excesses and bad treatment that have been done, or are being done to the Indians incorporated into our Royal Crown, . . . and likewise to all the other natives of those Kingdoms. . . inquiring how what has been ordered has been and is being observed" (Book VI, Title X, Law III).[12] In addition to conversion, archbishops were to follow the practice as well (Book VI, Title X, Law I). To become informed was indispensable to the formation of ideal subjects of

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[10] See the *Recopilación* (Book IV, Title VII, Law I, VIII).

[11] In America, the conquerors reproduced classical city models, rather than those of the Spanish cities from which they migrated (Rama 2, 11). The 1513 decree was similar in detail to the Roman designs of Vitruvius; one of the architects of Mexico City was known to possess a copy of a book by Vitruvius that was reprinted in 1550 (Stanislawski 101–05). Colonial cities manifested the classical geometrical forms prescribed by Leon Battista Alberti, a Renaissance architect and theorist (Rama 1–15). As a result of humanists' translations, these principles began to be used in buildings (Merrim, *Spectacular* 61–62).

[12] Author's own translation.

authority. As "governor," the viceroy stood in place of the king in the New World and was to take any necessary steps to ensure the administration of justice (Cañeque 18). This objective demanded communication, that is, the relations between the viceroy and the Indians within the framework of what the verb "to inform" signified at this historical juncture.[13] It involved the oral account that a witness produced for purposes of truth ("*relación*") and justice (Covarrubias). Hearing the Indians' complaints was essential to produce knowledge to secure their welfare and the good of conscience of the king. Within this context, Antonio de Mendoza, the first viceroy of New Spain (1535–1550), established hearing as a custom that became the norm with the Indian Court by the end of the sixteenth century. As historian Alejandro Cañeque puts it, "the viceroy should deal with the bulk of Indian complaints, hearing them" (220). To hear others and become informed was vital to the functioning of the ordered and lettered city, to its concentration of power, and the equation of governance with knowledge and justice. The laws articulated hearing within knowledge and power.

When we place the Indian women's urban trajectory in this legal context, the link between the social transformation and the weakening of the rigidity of the law becomes apparent and problematic. By 1692, the law and the normative ideal subjectivities it demanded were no longer viable. Due to the viceroy's absence from his palace,[14] he failed to engage in the process of becoming informed when the Indian women arrived to establish the aural relations which were constitutive of their colonial subjectivities. Although they wanted to position themselves as objects of protection, it was no longer available to them. Only Sigüenza considered the viceroy as an agent of protection. This explains the series of exemplary aural relations that precede the women's trajectory in the letter to Pez. His depiction of the viceroy as a good listener and his considerate attention to the many proposals to avoid Mexico City from flooding is a clear example of his listening ability, "A todos ellos dio su excelencia gratos oídos, y siendo su deseo dar gusto a todos" (104). He also underlines how the viceroy agreed to cancel celebrations upon hearing the rumor that flooding was the result of divine punishment for the recent festivities: "a la primera sílaba que de esta voz le llegó al oído . . . mandó este discreto y prudente príncipe cesasen las fiestas y se despejase la plaza, y así se hizo, tan atento como a todo esto ha estado siempre al gusto del pueblo y a la complacencia de todos" (102–103). Likewise, the archbishop's concern for the welfare of the Indian women (119) and the population in general shows his abiding by Law III (104). As seen, Sigüenza wrote his account of the exemplarity of Galve's administration with these sixteenth-century legal discourses in mind. They articulated listening as integral to the formation of ideal subjects of colonial governance.

However, the priorities of Viceroy Galve did not focus on the urban Indians but laid elsewhere. This contributed to the circulation of a deviant image of authority,

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[13] Cope mentions the lack of communication as the trigger of social discontent leading to the riot (135). His analysis does not trace it to Law III.

[14] Because of Law III, it was customary for the women to expect the viceroy to hear their grievances.

completely different from the one Sigüenza produced early on in his report. Sigüenza highlighted the viceroy's defense of the northern frontier against indigenous uprisings and his clearing of the southern sea of pirates and commercial activity from European competitors in both the Caribbean and Pacific. The viceroy also supported the occupation of further territories for the purpose of religious conversion and relieved the population from grain shortage (96–100). Conversely, contemporary informants to the king communicated to him Galve's actual priorities in "Document Number 5."[15] Galve's charges included corruption, injustice, undue taxes, tyranny, speculation, hoarding, and exploitation. The list constituted a "catalogue of abuses" (Cope 133), instructive of how Mexico City was truly administered. The government officials are hearing only their own interests and position themselves as non-ideal subjects of authority. The list depicts the bodily life of the biopolitical designs of Galve's administration. He neither secured well-being, nor justice. The need to correct the information that Pez had probably heard of the riot as a resident of the court in Madrid shows the politics of Sigüenza's representation of exemplary listening and how listening was perceived as a tool of inquiry into viceregal relations of power.

Disruption of normative aurality

What also emerges from the paradoxical account of listening as a tool of subjection and partisan representation, is the Indian women's objective and how they communicated it. At the archbishop's place, they sought to hold authority accountable for the precarious position in which they had been placed as the objects of corn shortage and violence. In contrast to the smoothing words the archbishop's attendants used to dismiss them, Sigüenza utilizes "*griteria*" to define their successful attempt at being heard. As shouts, *griteria* suggests a state of confusion but also a strong voice (*voz recia*, *firme*), as described by Covarrubias. If we follow historian Douglas Cope's commentary, "the plaza's daily activities seemed to mock or even subvert these pretensions [i.e., the imposition of Hispanic urban design and order over ethnic diversity and space]" (9), it comes as no surprise how their *griteria* represented a disruption of the aurality that ideally defined the urban center.

What Cope describes here illustrates the important contrast between the space of planners and the space of experience, as defined by Henri Lefebvre. The first one refers to the already-mentioned centralized-city edicts of 1513, supported by Law III. The second highlights space as it was lived in by the inhabitants of the city. By demanding the archbishop's attention with their strong voices, the Indian women established a new type of aural encounter through which they disrupted the normative instructions of Law III. They claimed to be doing what the viceroy was not, becoming "informed." At the granary, they acquired first-hand information of the elements that made viceregal administration a non-support system of the Indians' well-being. The Indian women inverted the purpose of the aural relations in

[15] See Leonard, Cope, and Arnaud.

place, producing an alternative scene of hearing. Their voices competed, in terms of volume, content, and location with that of the normative masculine subjects who publicly proclaimed the law, originally enforced by the *Recopilación* in the ordered city. Their informed status translated to their embodiment of the law and its communication. From its symbolic place, they articulated public listening to how the urban center was being lived by the Indians.

As "ciudad metropolitana" (the city from which other communities were derived, according to Covarrubias), Mexico City was assigned the greatest number of municipal officers (*Recopilación*, Book IV, Title VII, Law II). Among the many officials listed in Law II, was the town crier, or *pregonero mayor*. He read legal instructions from the main square, the site around which power was concentrated (Book IX, Title XXXXVI, Law IIII). He had the privilege to diffuse loud and public communication that contributed to the formation of obedient subjects and the well-being of the population. For instance, the compilation of laws on Indian service in the *Recopilación* (1594, 1595, 1597, 1618, 1627) mandated that the Spanish authorities, including the viceroys, employ the town crier to proclaim its concern about Indians receiving fair compensation for travel expenses and labor extraction (Law III, Book VI, Title XV). In 1692 Mexico City, the town crier made public the ban lifted by Galve on the summer wheat (*trigo blanquillo*), whose abundance decreased the value of the other varieties of wheat and represented a problem for those who had an interest in the matter and followed the reports written against it. Sigüenza explains, "la inocencia de este trigo . . . mandó pregonar su excelencia" (114). The passages demonstrate how the town crier's voice projected onto social space the normative distribution of the heard, as it was originally established by the law through the metropolitan city order. Sigüenza's words allude to the propagation of the law from the plaza and government buildings outwards. This transit equates the enunciation of the law and its instructions with location and a specific subjects' voice and volume. Furthermore, it associates the urban center with what is clearly perceived and understood as intelligible sovereign authority.

From this perspective, it can be argued that the Indian women's *griteria* did not only share the site of the proclamation of the law with the town crier, but also voiced strength and intelligibility. The message about their precarious situation was loud and clear to the archbishop, to the extent that he gave the officials of the granary instructions on how to modify their treatment toward the women. The officials were expected to show compassion which translates to the way justice was to be lived and experienced in the city through economic relations and transactions. By making themselves understood, the Indian women's voices subverted the normative scene of hearing established by the law and performed by the town crier. The episode demonstrates that the law was not the only object of public perception at and from the urban center. It was one of the many enunciations produced by voices other than those of authority at the site of power. In fact, statements of bad administration began to circulate outwards, out of the normative aural relations between authority and the Indians, originally implemented by Law III of the *Recopilación*. In this sense, the episode illustrates an exception, a "variant" (Lefebvre 31) of the area reserved for Spanish power since Cortés's occupation. As their voices filled the space from which the law was exclusively proclaimed, their *griteria* brought people together in relations of intelligibility. The process illustrates how listening functions as a tool of inquiry into the morphing of the ordered city into the site of short-lived aural inclusion, diversity, and recognition represented by the baroque city.

Nowhere is this shifting in aural power more evident than within the church the following day. Unlike Sigüenza, who matched the viceroy's administration with exemplarity, the Indian women partook in the opposite. If his dishonesty was, until April 7, kept "secret" —as "rumor" (Covarrubias),— it became public information that crystallized into insults on the next day. As the viceroy entered the church on June 8 "se levantó un murmullo no muy confuso entre las mujeres (pues lo oyeron los gentileshombres y pajes que le asistían) . . . en que feamente le execraban. [El murmullo le] "maldecía, atribuyendo a sus omisiones y mal gobierno la falta de maíz y la carestía de pan" (120). Sigüenza wonders, "¿cómo pudo su excelencia dejar de oírlo?" (120). What emerged was the disruption of perception. The church attendees accounted for the precarity of the women's vocal emissions, one of which related to Galve's actions. Their voices competed with that of the preacher, another masculine figure in charge of propagating teachings from the urban center outwards. They equally filled the space with social commentary, subverting the hierarchical and masculine organization of aural space, enforced by the edicts of Cortés and Charles V, set in motion by Law III, and persistently invoked by Sigüenza's listening.

Creole listening and its spatial frames

The description of how a group of Indian women at the Plaza Mayor found themselves in darkness during the morning that featured the greatest sun eclipse ever experienced reveals the underlying logic of Sigüenza's listening. It illustrates what determined the way he heard, "al mismo instante que faltó la luz, cayéndose las aves que iban volando, aullando los perros, gritando las mujeres y los muchachos, desamparando las indias sus puestos en que vendían en la plaza fruta, verdura y otras menudencias por entrarse a toda carrera en la Catedral . . . se causó de todo tan repentina confusión . . . que causaba grima" (108). What calls attention here is the Indian women and the economic subtext of urban transformation. The Indian women's provisioning of the *traza* with produce illustrates the division of labor and how labor incorporated the circulation of Indians into a space originally designed for Spanish occupation. Since the 1530s, Indians, castes, and Spaniards were given commercial permits to either rent or own a space (in the case of the Indians) within the *plaza* to provide the Spanish population with goods (Olvera 31).

Siguenza's representation highlights how Mexico City was no longer the site of congregation and segregation. The need to abstract creole subjectivity from strategies of differentiation attests to it. Among these, the rendering of the Indian women visible in the plaza but inaudible and in company of howling animals stands out. The process becomes more apparent through the contrast Sigüenza establishes between his own symbolic membership in the lettered city and that of the Indians, "Yo, en este ínterim, en extremo alegre y dándole a Dios gracias repetidas por haberme concedido ver lo que sucede en un determinado lugar tan de tarde en tarde y de que hay en los libros tan pocas observaciones, que estuve con mi cuadrante y anteojo de larga vista contemplando al sol" (108). By placing this scientific account of the event after the sound of terror associated with the Indians, Sigüenza articulates hearing as a component of a discourse of knowledge-power and dehumanization by which he separates himself from the Indian women. More states that "racialized" statements in the letter contributed to the articulation of Creole politics (161), to which I add the spatial frames around his perception.

These are embedded in the social hierarchy of land appropriation and division, implemented by the ordered and lettered city. Sigüenza's longing for such an order is apparent in the way he criticizes the economy of the *plaza* which influenced what and how he heard. The division of labor and the city's profiting from renting the space to Indians and Spanish merchants as well contributed to its radical transformation. The center did not symbolize the central *plaza* of a metropolitan city. Instead, it was the site where Indians engaged in commerce by day and slept by night, events that equated it with that of small town and "*zahúrda*" (Sigüenza 125) —the site where pigs are kept (Covarrubias). Sigüenza's discontent is two-fold. The center no longer reflected the aural ideals of the lettered/civilized city, nor the ordered city. His scientific lecture on the eclipse and his depiction of Mexico City's Plaza as the sign of economic disorder and bad planning, or "mal fundada aldea," point to the problem (125). The representation of the incoherent Indian women running for shelter to the cathedral during the eclipse makes his unconscious desire for their eradication from the urban center apparent.

It can be argued that in the post-riot context Sigüenza's wish came true. Viceroy Galve was concerned with the inconveniences emerging from the Indian dwellings in the *traza*. Upon the viceregal request following the insurrection, the Real Acuerdo —an official committee comprising the viceroy and officers of the Audiencia de Mexico (the highest royal court of appeal)— was charged with restoring social order. A solution to this was to reimplement the spatial orientation of Indian life passed by Charles V's 1538 decree on congregation (O'Gorman 5, 1). The Committee supported the order deployed by Law XIX (*Recopilación*, Book VI, Title I), stipulating that "for the Indians to live according to Christianity and police, they must be made to live together and in an orderly manner, and in this way, their prelates will know them and better attend to their well-being and conversion."[16] It was envisioned that reconcentrating indigenous populations would restore the urban space's initial organization of Indian life through tributes, lifestyle, and priests' knowledge and power (O'Gorman 3–4).[17] The viceroy aligned the application of this juridical discourse with Sigüenza's separation plan, inspired by Cortés (6–8) and the ideas of the seven parish priests he had assigned to assess the problem of the Indians inhabiting the *traza* (10–11). They were perceived as "idle, vagabond, useless people . . . ready to commit crimes, trusting in the impunity that the very

[16] Author's own translation.
[17] All translations of O'Gorman are the author's own.

ignorance of their dwellings and baseness assure them" (4). This representation reflects the administrative concerns regarding transgressions of Law XIX and how the colonial space truly existed before June 8. The Committee's recommendation was as follows:

> so, it seems that Your Excellency is being served . . . if the law were carried out exactly as written, which will be very convenient, and in the service of Our Lord as well as the good and safety of this city; and so that it may be put into effect sooner, it should be announced publicly "*pregone públicamente*" . . . that none of the Indians of the neighbourhoods of this city, or another foreigner, live or inhabit within Mexico, in houses, plots, or other parts. (O'Gorman 4)

This statement makes apparent the force of the discourse on occupation, as well as the afterlives of Law II in the baroque city. If the Indians were the objects of a paradox —visible at the market and supposedly "invisible" (Nemser 116) in the *traza*, where they originally did not belong— they were also made to appear as inaudible in the center, as objects of urgent regulation and eradication. Their status was a matter to be decided by the authorities and disseminated by public officers of the ordered city from its urban center.[18]

Before the riot, however, the desire for their erasure had already manifested in the devaluation of the voices that originally did not belong in the urban center, nor the *traza*. Sigüenza exhibits his spatial frameworks centered around fully active Creole listening when he comments on how the Indians, who, after the sermon preached by Franciscan father Antonio de Escaray on April 7, continued firmly in complaining about the viceroy's corruption, as it was publicly spoken about by Escaray (115): "Los que más instaban en estas quejas eran los indios, gente la más ingrata, desconocida, quejumbrosa e inquieta que Dios crió, la más favorecida con privilegios y a su cuyo abrigo se arroja a iniquidades y sinrazones, y las consigue" (115). Since then, the viceroy's policies were perceived as instances of "corruption" (Paz 566, 571) and "for his own advantage [rather] than that of the general public." Sigüenza clarifies:

> No hubo más causa que haberse predicado aquel día en la Iglesia Catedral y en presencia del señor virrey y de todos los tribunales no lo que se debía para consolar al pueblo en la carestía sino lo que se dictó por la imprudencia para irritarlo. Correspondió el auditorio ínfimo a lo que el predicador decía con bendiciones y con aplausos y con desentonado murmullo; y desde entonces, teniendo por evidencias sus antecedentes malicias, se hablaba ya con desvergüenza aun en partes públicas. (115)

[18] In implementing segregation, intelligibility also depended on the translation. The Real Acuerdo stipulated that the proclamation of Law XIX should also be circulated in Nahuatl: "the said limits and terms of the city and Spanish population are established in the language of the Indians at public sites so that . . . no one claims ignorance" (O'Gorman 9). Under the condition that native languages would provide the state with the means to reimplement the initial order of the colonial space, Nahuatl was permitted to be utilized in the production of the ideal ordered city.

In response to this sermon that informed and exhorted the audience on the topic of ethical unrest, Sigüenza illustrates how he handled the unwelcome aural tension that inhered within the urban center. If the voices of the Indians and the preacher united in making public how personal well-being and economic interest were Galve's most relevant missions, Sigüenza disempowered them. His use of the words *imprudencia* and *desvergüenza*, or lack of respect (Covarrubias), indicates disobedience. The king decreed that viceroys had to be obeyed and respected even when they exceeded their own power.[19] Along the same lines, Sigüenza also deprived them of full recognition and humanity. Antonio Robles, who comments on the same sermon, identified the preacher as "Fr. Antonio de Escaray, del orden de San Francisco" (281). Sigüenza omitted this information. As for the Indians, they are made to sound as worthless and having no positive human qualities. The passage disassociates the act of expressing legitimate grievance from the formation of subjects of protection and authority, as enforced by legal discourse and the king.

Sigüenza's listening inscribed in writing his longing for the ordered city whose orderly space influenced what and how he heard. The spatial frames around his listening are implicated in the tension that the economy brought to the urban center. Voices other than those of authority propagated information instead of the law (legal and religious teachings) from such a place. The silver lining of the situation is the historical outcome. When we reflect on the Indian voices through the aural and linguistic perspective that Rama identified in the urban space of Mexico City, it comes as no surprise how these other voices found their way into Sigüenza's writing. By representing what his spatial frames classified as deviant, an alternative account of history began to inhabit historical space. This inadvertently circulates the voices and subjectivities that contradicted Sigüenza's exemplary version of Galve's governance. They proved to be informed of how to articulate listening as an essential piece of power and knowledge.

How could they be perishing as they kept shouting?

Based on the prosperity the Indians experienced with the increased demand for *tortillas*, Sigüenza classified the Indians' complaints as unreasonable. Economic fluctuations and natural disasters massively increased their demand. Indian women began to provide a vast portion of the urban population of the *traza*, including Spaniards, servants, Black people, and castes, with *tortillas* when the shortage of wheat and high prices threatened the population's well-being. Indian women gathered at the granary where the officials noticed that the same women kept coming every day to buy corn. Considering the great amount, they assumed that the women sought to create a "shortage" in the public granary (Sigüenza 117–18). On the contrary, they engaged in a daily possession ritual: using *tortillas* —the sign of the ownership of the native's staple food and their conditions of labor— they inserted themselves into the relations of production and profit. Sigüenza ironically

[19] See Solórzano in *Política Indiana* (Book V, Chapter XIII, Numbers 2-5).

alludes to this, questioning, "¿cómo podían perecer, como decían a gritos, cuando de lo que granjeaban con ellas, no sólo les sobraba para ir guardando?" (116). The Indian women provided their husbands with extra money to spend on *pulque*. They had never experienced a better year in Mexico City than the present one. Only the Indian women knew how to make *tortillas* and "a montones en la plaza y a bandadas por las calles, las andaban vendiendo continuamente" (116).

While Sigüenza's representation of the Indian women as flocks of birds reiterates how he persists in disassociating the urban Indians from humanity and voice, the passage gestures to the dramatic re-writing of the histories of profit. It is instructive of the women's responses to the unequal distribution of resources and gains, in which the viceroy had put them and the Indians in general. Therefore, their *tortilla* business must be examined in comparison with that of their counterparts in production relations: the viceroy and the Indian bakers. If absolute control over the means of subsistence and the conditions of production brings the viceroy's activity into view, subordination brings the Indian bakers to attention. In their recent analyses of how Sigüenza placed Indian women at the center of the social disorder leading up to the June 8 insurrection, Taiano recognizes the audacity of the Indian women in ruling the inebriated crowd (141) and More refers to their economic performance and asserts that they were "hoarding to drive up the price of tortillas" (187). I argue that their determination to connect themselves to the resources and relations of production is equal to Sigüenza's discursive domination over the writing of history and Galve's accumulation of resources. It contrasts with the Indian bakers' lack of control over their future. This comparison exposes the shifting positions of the indigenous people in the context of representation and their continuously evolving histories of self-determination and perception to which the analysis turns.

The Indian women's selling *tortillas* countered the process by which Galve stripped people of their resources, in what could be described as another cycle of colonial-state practices. Sigüenza's translation of Indian women's commentary on dispossession, from their native language into Spanish, illustrates the point: "¡Ea, señores!, se decían las indias en su lengua unas a otras, —¡vamos con alegría a esta guerra y como quiera Dios que se acaben en ella los españoles, no importa que muramos sin confesión! ¿No es nuestra esta tierra? Pues, ¿qué quieren en ella los españoles?" (123). The passage demonstrates anti-colonial resistance, as José Rabasa and Natalia Silva Prada have noted. Indian women disassociated themselves from Christian subjection by redeploying ideologies to fulfil indigenous sovereignty. Yet, their words also indicate a more specific cultural process, depicting a critical move in self-determination through a clear perception of the women's drive to possess the land: the women saw the land as the sum of the means of subsistence, the possession of which would facilitate attachment to the relations of production and control of their labor.[20]

[20] This exemplifies Marx's "resistance of the producer," i.e., the capitalists learned that resistance prevented capital from occurring in the colonies (931).

By the end of the Habsburg monarchy, this effort would not only reinforce Indian women's visibility in the places where they were already seen but also make them a part where Indians previously had none. Like the women at church who gained control over the flow of information that fed history and the Indian women who reclaimed the land, the indigenous women's attachment to making and selling *tortillas* demonstrates how they no longer saw themselves in urban spaces. Their performance did not match what Sigüenza's listening inscribed in writing: flocks of birds, inaudible vendors of produce, murmurers, and carriers of rumors. They detached themselves from oppressive relationships that dispossessed them of land, resources, and labor. Thus, changing histories of how they were perceived in public and how they perceived themselves go hand-in-hand with the transformation of seventeenth-century urban space, indigenous identity, production, profit, and sovereignty. Certainly, the Indian women took control over resources and labor, which contemporary Indians, such as those who cleaned the aqueducts for insufficient pay or the Indian bakers of the *traza*, had almost completely lost.

Oppressive conditions limited the Indian bakers' labor, gains, and freedom. It was common for them to live in the bakeries, and the workforce usually consisted of bound laborers, with social relations defined by debt peonage, from which it was difficult for them to escape (Cope 98-102). Realistically, Indian bakers would not hope for better wages, but a better employer from whom "to receive a loan of cash greater than what they already owed to their old employer" (100). According to the owners, it was difficult to recruit Indians differently; similar to enslaved people, the peon could only ameliorate exploitation but could not make it disappear (101). Indian bakers depended on the bakery owners. They were, thus, extremely protective of their *traza*-dwelling status, to the extent of "imprisonment" (100). This situation was pointed out by the ecclesiastic authority, from whom Galve requested support to have the Indians leave the Spanish *traza* after June 8. In doing so, the religious fathers aligned themselves with the segregation policies of Law XIX and deviated to maintain the well-being of the *traza* community and economy.

The demand for Indian laborers prevented Law XIX from being fully re-enforced. The request would continue to identify the Indians with domestic service, their incorporation into the Spanish *traza*, and the economic relations of exploitation that shaped and required this integration. As laborers, the Indians were allowed to live in a place where they officially did not belong as their service was essential to Spanish life. Their labor as bakers or their skills as "bricklayers, shoemakers, hat makers, tailors, carpenters, and button makers" (Cope 90–91) contributed to the relations of production constituting the Spanish social space. The dependence on uninterrupted circulation led some to resist the segregationist policies of Law XIX. Some Spanish men, women, and their servants defended and protected the Indians from authority by hiding them in their houses or becoming their godparents (O'Gorman 13–14). Through kinship or monetary transactions, the Indians acquired the means to transplant themselves and inhabit the *traza*.

If the Indians' disorderly circulation in the *traza*, alongside their drinking and socialization with castes and marginal Spaniards, contributed to the riot, as Sigüenza asserts, it was their labor as domestic servants and bakers that modified the recirculation of Law XIX. In a society in which linguistic and dwelling boundaries had shifted, the law began to have limited applications. As one of the seven priests explained, "I declare that the Indian bakers or those sentenced to personal service or deposited under the authority of justice will be excluded from the effects of the law" (O'Gorman 9). The main impediment to Law XIX (16, 33) was that the Indians had well-defined places in the relationship between production and the city's economy. This emphasizes the "contradiction between sovereignty and economy" (Nemser 118). The severity of the strict implementation of the policy for the Spanish population who resided in the *traza*, without which they remained vulnerable to transgression, exemplifies the conflict's economic character and the law's evolving character. The priest's commentary informs how Law XIX cut and divided, alongside being responsive to the disrupted order. Although the ecclesiastic authorities' representation depicted Indian labor as instrumental in limiting the law's reach, the question of representation remained the main problem. Good government was implicated in speaking for the Indians by those in positions of power and the response to the social shift to which the law was always subject.

Important questions regarding indigenous subjectivity and its grid of intelligibility were derived from Creoles' listening to the aforementioned situation. By inadvertently comparing the Indian women and men involved in *tortilla* and bread production, Sigüenza describes how the indigenous women were not made intelligible through relations of oppression, nor by the notions of sovereignty intersected by the economy. Neither political nor religious authorities decided how the Indian women would relate to the means of subsistence, conditions of labor, and gains. Consequently, the Indian women uprooted themselves from exploitation by assuming control over the conditions of production. As the owners of corn and their labor, they employed these to their benefit, an initiative that paralleled their desire for sovereignty.

Indian women's actions disrupted the social relations of subordination and exploitation mediated by material conditions and commodities, such as corn and labor. As opposed to the Indian bakers, who sometimes complained about oppressive labor conditions and hiring methods before the court but failed to overcome exploitation (Cope 99), the conditions of production remained the property of the Indian women. Their relentless demand for the means of subsistence at the public granary, which allowed them to produce and sell *tortillas* to grow their wealth, resisted the capitalist domain in which grain was confined: individual accumulation. The Indian women took the very resources with which Galve exploited and oppressed most of the population. He was charged with hoarding by dispossessing the far-off grain providers of their corn.[21] Conversely, the ecclesiastic authority proposed that the Indian bakers should continue to support the dominant relations of production. This was reinforced by the economic challenges to which the law of segregation had to respond. Thus, though the Indian bakers became a point of discussion in the debates surrounding segregation, they were trapped by dispossession.

[21] The abundant free corn available immediately after the riot attests to the viceroy's corruption (Sigüenza 133).

Land appropriation and segregation had originally dispossessed their ancestors of territory and resources, followed by their labor. The religious authorities and bakery owners spoke for them and decided how they would continue to relate to the conditions of production.

Conclusion

Written by a writer who claimed eyewitness authority, the textual authority established in *Alboroto y motín* depends most of all on Sigüenza's listening. As this discussion demonstrates, the letter is a historical example of the importance of listening in the deployment of colonial power. Early on within the processes of land-appropriation, legal discourse articulated listening to the formation of subjects of authority, such as the viceroy and the Indians —his objects of protection. As a practice, listening was symbolic of the normative aural relations of the ordered city wherein the law was proclaimed from the center outwards, by the town crier or ecclesiastics. The division of labor and the food crisis subverted who and what began to be heard from the urban center. The more Sigüenza's listening inscribed Indian voices in the text, the devaluation of their voices became the contrast against which exemplarity could take shape. This speaks to the spatial frames around his listening: how they determined what and how he heard and yet, how listening becomes a tool of inquiry into what other histories circulate within the text. Histories of the women in transit, from one building to another, selling produce at the central plaza, murmuring at church, buying corn at the granary and making and selling *tortillas* demonstrate how the ordered city was accurately inhabited. As depicted by Sigüenza's representation, these histories are embedded in listening. Listening is engrained within a context whose analysis reveals that the evolving notions of seventeenth-century authority and Indian subjectivities are closely related to the way they truly inhabited the baroque city and the changing history of their relations to resources and relations of production.

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