



**LOSS, LONELINESS AND  
LIBERATION: JUAN PABLO VISCARDO  
Y GUZMÁN AND THE FORMATION OF  
AMERICAN IDENTITY IN EXILE (1768-  
1798)**

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"Exile is a tomb in which you can receive mail"  
Germaine, Madame de Staël

Debates over the Jesuit exiles' significance for the Spanish American independence movement have continued for decades. It is true that they confined themselves mainly to academic topics that indirectly validated American claims to nationhood through their studies of geography, botany, theology, anthropology, history, and linguistics (Gandía 77; Navarro 45-46; Furlong 146). At the same time, the psychological experience of exile produced a new and distinct American consciousness among these academic and literary-minded Jesuits, including such famous authors as Francisco Javier Clavijero, Francisco Javier Alegre, Andrés Cavo, and Rafael Landívar. It should be quite clear that the intellectual trajectory of the Spanish American independence movements began with the exiled Jesuits. No one, however, not even the leaders of the paranoid Mexican Inquisition in 1810, has been able to prove direct operational collaboration between them and the next generation of creole patriot leaders. In fact, only three out of the entire Italian-based community of 2,154 exiled Jesuits even raised their voices on behalf of an actual project of political emancipation: the Chilean priest Juan José Godoy and the Peruvian novices José Anselmo and Juan Pablo Viscardo y Guzmán (Klaiber 107). It fell to the younger and less-patient Viscardo to take his Jesuit elders' arguments and convert them into a call for action. In fact, it was the psychologically-traumatic experience of forced exile, coupled with the strain of working as a double-agent and informant, that led Viscardo to conflate his marginalized personal circumstances, the insult to his religious order, and his identity as an aggrieved American. In this way, Viscardo's losses and loneliness led to ideals of national liberation.

Viscardo's ideas are given their clearest form in the famous *Carta a los Españoles Americanos*, a formidable tract in which he made a clear and decisive argument on behalf of Spanish American independence. The document itself reveals its origins in the troubled mind of an exile. Viscardo's famous manifesto is marked by political attitudes, word choice, and a psychological outlook derived from a lonely extended residence outside his homeland. It is not coincidental that at the time Viscardo wrote this influential document he was living undercover in London, where William Pitt's government was rapidly expanding the British secret service

by recruiting spies and double agents (Sparrow 280; Porter 29; Durey 727). To that end, the British government provided Viscardo with a secret identity and a reliable pension in exchange for his written assessments of South American affairs. There, in the British capital in 1798, Viscardo's ideological torch passed to Francisco Miranda, the great Precursor of Spanish American independence, who adopted the *Carta* as his personal manifesto and favourite propaganda tool. From that time onward, Miranda's London house became the headquarters of the Spanish American independence movement. Over the next two decades, a never ending stream of Spanish Americans passed through its doors and absorbed the Viscardo-Miranda message. Without a doubt, Viscardo was the precursor to the Precursor. Their shared goal for the emancipation of Spanish America was a political project that took shape in the minds of exiles. They were lonely, resentful, unhealthy men marooned in a foreign land who wanted to seek revenge against a tyrannical empire that denied them the right of return.

If it is true, as one famous study of nationalism asserts, that the first self-conscious groups of people who set out to create nation-states were "marginalized, vernacular-based coalitions of the educated" (Anderson 78), and that the "intelligentsia appears to be a necessary condition of all nationalist movements and theories" (Smith 87), then the historical significance of the large community of Spanish American Jesuit exiles who lived in Europe during the late eighteenth century quickly becomes apparent. Forced to leave their homelands, their families and their reliable incomes, these highly-educated, socially-conscious adult men eventually settled in the Italian states where they began to write about all aspects of their remembered life back in America. One recent historian has described the Jesuits' work as "writing from the margins," which raises the thorny question of where, exactly, one should locate their centre: Europe? America? The cosmopolitan pages of international discourse? (del Valle). With a mission not only to regain their own lost social status, but also to correct the serious misperceptions of the American *patrias* [fatherlands] that they encountered in European books and conversations, the Jesuit exiles' work has been identified as the "pre-national regionalist phase" of Spanish American independence. In fact, their entire intellectual project is marked by a distinct psychological condition rooted in an exile's nostalgia and pride (Batllori, *Cultura hispano-italiana* 578). Although the vast majority of Jesuits in exile produced work that was not overtly political in nature, the underlying themes of their historical, literary, religious, and linguistic studies suggested that America not only deserved, but in fact was quite ready to assume an equal place in the larger family of nations. It was a global vision, not unlike their original spiritual world view as regular Christian clergy in the universal Kingdom of God. The psychological and cultural experience of exile, however, had forced the ex-Jesuits to confront earthly political issues and thus they arrived at a new, secular, Enlightenment-inspired universalism.

As an educated, cohesive, and distinct American community living abroad in Italy, the exiled Jesuits suffered an extended, forced residence far away from their homelands with little to do but write and talk among themselves of their shared past. Exile was a fundamentally different experience than other types of separateness that Jesuits chose for themselves as part of their vocation. For example, they voluntarily enclosed themselves in a community of brothers which remained permeable and connected to their host communities; occasionally, individuals would be sent into exile for some perceived transgression, but that was an individual punishment in which suffering was linked to penance, not an existential threat to the entire corporate community (Luengo). Surrounded by a foreign culture, scrimping by on meager pensions and prohibited from returning to America by a hostile Spanish government, the exile experience profoundly affected the Spanish American Jesuits' psyche and the type of work they produced. As a group, they exhibited an almost pathological desire not to be forgotten, a sentiment which is common among literary-minded exiles. To document their existence, they wrote biographies of important American Jesuits, and institutional histories of their religious order and its great mission in the New World. The obsessive need to document their lives is characteristic of the exile's psychological validation of an original identity while surrounded by a different culture (Tabori 27). Exiles also tend to link themselves and their sad fate with that of the entire nation (Shain 173-174). The personal becomes the political. The Jesuits' efforts to record their memories for posterity is linked to exiles' obsession with language in general. It should not be surprising, therefore, to find that the American Jesuits compulsively wrote grammars, dictionaries and histories after they settled in Italy. In exile, one's language becomes a source of livelihood. The connection between foreign residence, language and the intellectual creation of nationalism becomes all the more apparent if we accept the view that "language more than land and history provides the essential form of belonging" (Ignatieff 7). The Jesuit exiles wrote in order to maintain a psychological connection with their homelands and with their own history and culture. In this way, the exiled Jesuits became the precursors to the independence generation. Their community represented the arrival of an intellectually-mature, politically-aware and self-consciously American voice into European cultural life.

Juan Pablo Viscardo y Guzmán was born on 26 June 1748 to a proud and prominent family in the ancient village of Pampacolca near Arequipa in Peru (Alvarado 56; Gutiérrez Escudero 323-327). His grandfather had been an assistant to the *corregidor* [Crown Indian agent] and his lineage also included Inca *kurakas* [local leaders, often noble]. The family had a long tradition of religious vocation. His uncle was a well-known priest, two sisters Bernardina and Narcisa became nuns of the black veil, and Viscardo and his brother José Anselmo entered the Jesuit order as novices. The brothers relocated to Cuzco for further education and found themselves particularly drawn to the study of Inca history and the Quechua language.

They were enrolled at the Colegio de San Bernardo del Cuzco which had a curriculum that stressed Americanist themes and lauded the accomplishments of native-born sons like Garcilaso de la Vega. The intellectual climate there was similar to the Carolinian colleges founded in the later 18<sup>th</sup> century and the restive environment of the University of Chuquisaca that produced a generation of independence-minded leaders (Thibaud; Marzal and Bacigalupo). Indeed, the Jesuits in Peru had a long history of engagement with local and indigenous issues (Durston; Albo; Rovegno). It was supposed to be an easy life —straightforward, studious, and comfortably settled among familiar surroundings in Peru. Then, with little warning, just before Viscardo could take his final vows, King Charles III issued the infamous decree in 1767 that expelled all Jesuits from his overseas colonies. With the stroke of the royal quill, Viscardo's theological preparation was cut short and he was flung across the Atlantic Ocean to a foreign land. All at once, and through no fault of his own, Viscardo lost his home, his fortune, his career and his uncomplicated sense of identity. The trauma of exile weighed heavily on his mind and not only contributed to his eventual psychological deterioration but also created the emotional conditions for his bitter re-evaluation of Spanish colonial domination.

After an arduous five-month journey over land and sea, Juan Pablo and José Anselmo Viscardo y Guzmán arrived in Cádiz in 1768 and made their way to Italy where they congregated with other exiled Jesuits, shared precious news from America, and dreamed of the day when they could return home. As exiles often must, the Viscardos lived on a shoestring, ferociously resenting their poverty and blaming the Spanish Crown for their dire financial straits. In fact, the Peruvian brothers found themselves in a worse situation than most of the American Jesuits. As novices, they were entitled only to a nominal pension of 18 pesos, 12 reales per year, a sum which was far below the amount necessary to survive (Brading 7). As a twenty-year-old foreigner with little practical training and no personal connections, Viscardo had few employment opportunities in Italy. For the rest of his life, Viscardo tried to reclaim his part of a family inheritance but the Crown consistently denied him permission to return to Peru; his protracted legal battle with the Spanish authorities dragged on for over sixteen years with few tangible results which only intensified Viscardo's hatred of the Spanish Crown (Viscardo and Viscardo 7 December 1773). Eventually, his sense of being personally harmed by Spanish policies transferred to the political realm and led him to argue that imperial policies were designed to oppress all Americans. Viscardo's letters and petitions exhibit a psychological condition common among exiles, namely a pathological obsession with their stricken financial circumstances that has been described as "money hypochondria" (Grinberg and Grinberg 94). In all his correspondence, Viscardo frequently mentioned his extreme poverty, worried about how he would feed and clothe himself, and became unshakeably bitter about the quality of his life in expensive Europe (Viscardo 15 March 1784).

Unlike older Jesuits who eventually settled into a life of research and contemplation, the young Viscardo brothers became angrier and more restless as time passed. With little to do but talk and read and travel, they had been exposed to Enlightenment ideas, read persuasive arguments on behalf of free trade and self-government, and came to identify their personal hardships with the oppression of creole Americas in general. As exiles, their status was complicated. On the one hand, they were poor, jobless, anonymous, foreign youths adrift in Italy; on the other hand, they were also the bearers of rare, first-hand knowledge of Peru at a time when knowledge was becoming a form of currency. In other words, the psychological hubris that comes with being a political exile meant that Viscardo increasingly saw himself as special person who had information that would make him valuable to European leaders and would help them defeat their common enemy, Spain. This psychological condition of exile is sometimes called "the aggrandizement of distance," an outsized sense of importance which grows out of isolation and the desire to remain relevant to people back at home (Ross 96). It also contributed to a slow but observable deterioration in his mental stability.

On 23 September 1781, Juan Pablo Viscardo took a fateful step and sent the first of four long letters to British consul John Udny at Leghorn. He offered a native's assessment of recent events in Peru (Viscardo 23 September 1781). Viscardo relayed information about the Tupac Amaru revolt, claiming that its goal was "to free the Indians from the slavery of the Spaniards and to restore the empire of their ancestors." Without waiting for a reply, the impatient Viscardo wrote to Udny one week later, this time sending a daring proposal that the British government should aid Tupac Amaru's rebellion from a base in the Río de la Plata (Viscardo 30 September 1781). Capitalizing on his status as a native of Peru, Viscardo cannily offered himself as the most effective informant for a British plan to support Spanish American emancipation. There could be no doubt about Peru's great unhappiness, Viscardo wrote to Udny, and it was certain that similar rumblings could be detected throughout Spanish America. Viscardo stressed that his interpretations were accurate because, despite his long absence from Peru, he had not lost touch with those he described as "my native people." He knew from personal experience that creoles had long harboured a secret resentment against the Spaniards who had denied them public office, prevented their free commerce and had kept all wealth and honors to themselves. Indeed, he assured Udny, American races and social classes shared "in this antipathy for the European Spaniards." In fact, three centuries of shared life in America had "almost converted [them] into the same people." As proof, Viscardo presented a long and detailed assessment of Tupac Amaru's support among various regions and classes. He concluded that the Peruvian people had already proven their valor and desires; all that was needed was an external friend to support them with arms and officials, and independence would easily be won (Viscardo 30 September 1781). Reading through his detailed letters today, it is not hard

to imagine that they represented a way for Viscardo to place himself back in Peru, psychologically participating in current events first by retelling them and then by using his unique European vantage point to intervene on his countrymen's behalf. By 1781, he had been away from his homeland for almost fifteen years. His information was second-hand at best, yet in his correspondence, reports and political tracts, he consistently uses the pronoun "we" when talking about Peruvian or American affairs and opinions.

Viscardo knew exactly the words and images he needed to use to capture the British government's attention. He stressed Spanish America's wealth and its potential for trade with the English Caribbean. In exchange for a small military and material commitment, Viscardo (authorizing himself to speak on behalf of all Peruvians) offered Great Britain access to fabulous wealth and trade in the form of silver, gold, wool, vanilla, and quinine. The advantages of the plan were endless. England could open a window of trade opportunity for itself and inflict damage on its imperial rival Spain. Europeans had long been jealous of Spain's monopoly of America's mineral resources and now a perfect opportunity arose to gain access by upholding the continent's Lockean civil rights. It was an astute and well-crafted offer.

These four letters are remarkable not only for their political content, but also for the hints they give into Viscardo's exile psychology. He wrote confidently and made outrageous requests as if they were normal but he was also a stateless exile who had no choice but to supplicate himself before a stranger who held far greater power than he did. Viscardo took care to emphasize his special qualifications based on an inherent American identity. He asserted that he alone could "speak with all the knowledge of those places, having been born and raised there until the age of twenty, and never having lost sight of the country of my origin... and the true nature of Peru" (30 September 1781). As a native Peruvian, Viscardo felt important and empowered by engaging in these secret negotiations and ended his petition to the British government with the promise that he would be "useful for this mission." Viscardo's choice of language also betrayed the extreme perspective of a man suspended in exile. He repeatedly used words and phrases that clearly indicate his agitated emotional state: implore, tyrannical, disastrous, no doubts, disgust, preoccupation, immense, intense, extensive, insulted, my careful researches etc. From his perch in Italy, he had gained an exile's unmoored, angry, globalized perspective. He wished to travel to England to press his case and asked Udny to procure the necessary documents for him and his brother. Viscardo was ready to leave his marginal existence in Italy for England immediately with the goal of doing useful work on behalf of the emancipation project (Viscardo 30 September 1781).

As early as 1781, therefore, Juan Pablo Viscardo broke away from the mainstream Jesuit exile community and actively began to seek foreign support for a military expedition against Spanish authority in America. He identified England as the most natural ally for such a project because of its

ongoing geographical and political disputes with Spain, the two countries' historical antipathy and the strong British presence in the Caribbean. Viscardo was not wrong in his assessment of the international balance of power. Consul Udny immediately recognized this opportunity and forwarded Viscardo's communications to the Foreign Office, requesting his superiors to give him instructions in response to this "letter from a Peruvian of good character, should it be judged proper [sic] to give him any answer or encouragement" (Udny 6 October 1781). Ironically, Viscardo's status as a Peruvian exile in Italy, a young man in possession of rare first-hand information about complicated events in faraway lands, gave him a greater personal status and authority than he would have had if he had remained at home. He was just an inexperienced thirty-three-year-old who had managed to capture the imaginations of Britain's foreign policymakers. Indeed, the hubris of political exile sometimes overshadows its hardships.

Many British statesmen were interested in staging some sort of an assault on Spanish authority in America. Sir Horace Mann, the British Minister in Florence, became convinced of the Viscardo brothers' usefulness and described his meeting with them in an eight-page letter dated 15 June 1782. He noted that they were "exasperated in common with all Peruvians against the Spanish Government and wish very much to see a Revolution happen in that Country." He further noted that they came from a prestigious creole family and had been blocked from collecting their inheritance "and this personal motive, with that of the common Cause, has incensed them so much that they offer to serve the Court of England." Viscardo apparently outlined the defensive weaknesses of the coastline, emphasized the discontent among the entire populace and proposed an expedition of four ships of the line and two frigates as sufficient to seize the prize of Lima from Spain. Mann uncritically accepted this claim and recommended Viscardo's plans to Foreign Secretary State Charles James Fox with the following words:

By different letter, which I have seen, from their correspondents in many parts of South America, such as Lima, Quito etc. ... it appears that the spirit of opposition to the Spanish Government rages more than ever throughout all South America.. and the Spanish creoles are as much tired of the Spanish yoke as the Indians. (Mann 15 June 1782)

The Minister agreed that the Viscardo brothers should be allowed to proceed to England as quickly and secretly as possible in order that they may advise British ministers of true Peruvian conditions. He also supported their stated desire to return to "Lima to prepare the minds of the people for a powerful relief to their distresses in case the plan should be adopted." Amazingly, although he was young and virtually unknown, Viscardo's rapid acceptance into the upper echelons of the British government indicates both the growing demand for accurate local

information among European decision-makers, and the British government's early interest in Spanish American independence. It also proves that the exile condition can lead, as Vladimir Nabokov once wrote, both to gloom and to glory (214). Viscardo's emotional state would bounce between euphoric highs and despondent lows throughout the thirty years he lived in exile and the psychological strain eventually contributed to his poor mental health and early death.

The Viscardo brothers convinced Mann that there was not a moment to lose in this delicate crisis and so he sent them immediately to England, telling Fox that

the expence of their journey, which I believe will not exceed fifty or sixty pounds, will, I hope, appear a trifle in comparison with the object, if it should be approved of, and in that case will be compensated by gaining time. But at all events I humbly hope that the King will be graciously pleased to pardon the presumption and attribute it to my zeal for His Majesty's service. (Mann 22 June 1782)

Mann anticipated that they would arrive in early August. Juan Pablo would use the pseudonym Paolo Rossi and his brother Anselmo would take the name Antonio Valesi in order to throw off Spanish suspicions (Mann 30 June 1781). The brothers took a circuitous route through Germany and France, finally arriving in London sometime in early September 1782 (Belaunde 93). They took lodgings at 74 Wardour Street in Soho, a seedy area populated by drifters and foreigners and immediately contacted their government handlers (Batllori, *Abate Viscardo* 53). The secrecy and subterfuge certainly heightened the excitement and the brothers' sense of importance but it also contributed to Viscardo's slow decline into paranoia and psychological instability. Sociological studies of the psychology of informants confirms that the condition does lead to both "paranoia and an exaggerated sense of importance" and that such dual identities are "both the source of pathologies and source of well-being" (Greer 515; Wexler 470). Viscardo had assumed another identity, secret agent Paolo Rossi, which further divided his already-fragile sense of reality. Over time, he became convinced that Spanish agents were following him and feared going out in public during daylight hours in case he would be recognized. Neither exile nor espionage is for the weak of heart and mind.

The new Secretary of State Lord Grantham met with the two Peruvians and found them to be "very intelligent and well-intention'd persons." Regarding the Viscardos' proposal for an expedition to free Peru, Grantham hinted that he shared their enthusiasm for the project (17 September 1782). On 27 October 1782, Viscardo sent another detailed treatise to Lord Sydney, describing the region's existing military outposts along the coast, recommending the best landing points and suggesting that Peru could best be accessed through a primary assault on Chile. He was optimistic, energized, frenzied —clearly anxious to share his particular

knowledge with men who had the power to help him return to Peru. As compensation for the useful knowledge that the Viscardo brothers provided, the Foreign Office paid them a small salary from June 1782 to March 1784 which allowed them to have a reliable income for the first time in years. Nevertheless, the frequent turnover in governmental personnel and the reticence of those in office to authorize the Peruvian expedition meant that much of their lobbying was in vain. The informants continued to receive just enough of a positive response to keep their hopes alive but never quite achieved a firm commitment for the expedition or set a departure date. A year later, the frustrated brothers sent a pitiful request to the British King:

Anselmo and Juan Pablo Viscardo y Guzmán, Peruvian Spaniards, who have the greatest confidence in their homeland and have no other recourse to procure [their return] but to throw themselves at the feet of His Excellency imploring His sensibility of spirit and His humanity... in consideration of the anguish of the two supplicants. (Viscardo 3 September 1783)

When such permission did not arrive, the pair left England and returned to Italy in disgust.

The Viscardo brothers were desperately poor and homesick more than fifteen years in exile. Viscardo finally swallowed his pride and started to petition the Spanish government for permission to return home to Peru. He humbly offered to assist in the "execution of two projects, very useful to the Monarchy," which he said he would only explain to them in detail after he left Italy. Viscardo tried to argue that he had never been more than a novice in the Jesuit order and therefore claimed that his departure with the others had been merely voluntary (Viscardo, *Colección documental* 35). As an unhappy exile, Viscardo's main goal seems to have been to get himself back home. At various points in his life, he switched allegiance to whichever government seemed most likely to facilitate his passage. Over time the perpetual state of impotence took a psychological toll on him. Nevertheless, the Spanish Crown had resolved never to allow any Jesuit to return to America for any reason, not even in a private capacity, so it should not be a surprise that the petition of a known traitor like Viscardo was summarily rejected.

Within a few months of his return to Italy, the wandering Peruvian was already circling back toward his erstwhile British patrons in an attempt to restart the emancipation project. In July 1784, he wrote to Evan Nepean, offering his updated analysis of the Andean rebellion. After surveying the news and reports from his overseas perspective, Viscardo correctly understood that the movement ultimately failed because the creoles simply did not trust indigenous people and the Inca leadership itself was deeply divided (Brading 9). Slowly but surely, the longer Viscardo remained in exile, the more the distinctions between his own personal status and those

of all creole Americans began to blur. He had already started to speak openly of his personal efforts "to liberate our Patria, and reestablish our rights. (Valesi and Rossi 265). Viscardo also started to speak grandiosely of his service to humanity and saw enemies around every corner. "Please advise us," he whispered nervously to his British protectors, "of the best methods to elude the Spanish [secret service], without exposing ourselves as being suspicious risks." He was playing a dangerous game, no doubt there, but his fears were disproportionate to the actual physical danger he faced. Psychologists recognize this as the sort of persecution anxiety common to political exiles (Grinberg and Grinberg 2). He could have drawn some solace from the Bible since its fundamental axis of belief characterizes all of humankind as exiles from Eden. Yet it is clear that throughout the time Viscardo lived in Italy, he became more secular-minded, lonelier, more withdrawn and more obsessed with bringing an end to Spanish colonialism. Juan Pablo's financial difficulties only intensified in 1785 when his beloved collaborator and brother José Anselmo died. After that date, Viscardo's isolation and loneliness became chronic and his paranoia grew with each passing year. The liberation of America was the only thing left to give meaning to his life.

Exiles are like bits of cork tossed about on the rough waves of international politics. Their situation is always uncertain and their fates depend on the circumstances of their host countries. For Viscardo, the coming of the French Revolution and its European reverberations meant that he had suddenly become a valuable property again. Despite an absence of almost six years, Viscardo was still well-known in London and the political climate of the 1790s had become more conducive to his cause. Conservative Prime Minister William Pitt and other important British political figures, including War Secretary William Windham, considered the ex-Jesuits to be valuable allies for their still-shadowy Spanish American emancipation project. One agent wrote:

Rome in 1779 was "the only spot where satisfactory information could be collected relative to the Spanish Provinces of *Peru* and *Mexico* as all the *Jesuits* from these provinces were resident there... I am ready to procure three ex-Jesuits of great talents to embark with such an expedition. (Hippisley 23 August 1794)

In early 1790, Venezuelan Francisco Miranda met with Pitt and assured him that Jesuits enjoyed tremendous influence among creoles in America and that it would be advisable to use them as intermediaries and publicists for any British venture. It can be no coincidence that in May 1790, Foreign Office Secretary the Duke of Leeds asked British agents in Italy to fan out and locate the pseudonymous Paolo Rossi and persuade him to return to England for more talks (Brading 10; Belaunde 103).

The subsequent correspondence is revealing. In one sense, Viscardo had finally achieved some financial stability when he accepted a position as

the Secretary to the Marqués de Silva in Naples; on another more basic level, he clung to his Peruvian identity and hoped for a hero's return. When a man called Sandersberg, acting as agent of the Undersecretary of the Foreign Office James Bland Burges, located Viscardo in Leghorn in late 1790, the Peruvian apparently reacted with some hostility. Viscardo was interested but also understandably suspicious, given the wasted efforts he had made in England six years earlier. When Sandersberg offered him a salary of £200 per year, Viscardo summarily rejected it and then went on to demand (and receive) £400 paid in regular installments instead. As Viscardo later explained to Bland Burges, the original offer was just not commensurate with his value to the British enterprise. Sandersberg remembered their exchange in slightly less generous terms. He considered Viscardo to have a "bilious" temperament and found him to be an eccentric and unpleasant man (Viscardo 20 November 1790; Hampe 80).

Indeed, by the 1790s, Viscardo was in poor health and showing the strains of serious mental illness brought on by decades of a difficult life in exile. Since his brother's death, he had spent most of his time alone, reading, writing, and thinking. He had correspondents but few close friends and he did not trust anyone with knowledge of the fury and conspiracies locked away in his heart. Yet when he arrived in London, he was genial enough to bring Bland Burges some bottles of his favorite Italian wine and always managed polite correspondence with the man he called his protector. Nevertheless, Viscardo was travelling under his assumed identity, Paolo Rossi, and constantly worried that he might be discovered. British Government officials in London and Italy had all taken great care not to use Viscardo's real name, always referring him as Rossi, "the gentleman" or "the Person," in their exchanges. As Viscardo was about to set out on his second secret journey to London in May 1792, Ambassador Lord Hervey urged that he "must be cautious in his letters to this country, and to avoid signing his *real name* or dating his letters from his *present abode*, as being found out might lead to further discoveries" (3 April 1791). A cumulative effect of all these precautions was that the Peruvian exile's paranoia intensified and he overestimated the actual physical danger in which his intellectual work was placing him. Shortly after arriving in London, he suffered a panic attack when he nearly ran into close friends of his former employer the Marqués de Silva two times near his Soho guesthouse and thought perhaps that meant he was being followed (Viscardo 3 April 1791). It was likely just a coincidence. Nevertheless, Viscardo shuttered himself indoors and for the rest of his life rarely went out until nightfall. He even took to writing his correspondence and documents in French with the hopes that it would confound Spanish spies unfamiliar with the language. As one historian of espionage notes, "all types of spies carried with them the burden of a controversy associated with a trade considered shameful" (Navarro Bonilla 298).

Around that time, Viscardo finished his composition of the single most important document for the entire Spanish American emancipation project,

his *Carta a los Españoles Americanos*. Historians have called Viscardo's *Carta* "Spanish America's Act of Independence" (Carlos Pereyra qtd in Burrus 168) and compared it to Thomas Jefferson's *Summary View of the Rights of British Americans* (Alvarado 128-129). Others have suggested parallels to the work of Thomas Paine because both authors concentrated their analysis on creole grievances against a colonial metropolis (Fiering vii). The letter itself is a document of tremendous power, obviously written by one passionately devoted to the idea of independence and one who felt personally wronged by Spanish authority. Although Viscardo had been working on it for a long time, the manuscript draft presented to the Foreign Office was dated London 15 September 1791 and was clearly the product of a grand, exilic vision. There was nothing subtle or humble or measured in his words. In fact, Viscardo assigned himself a place in the long historical lineage of banished freedom-lovers by opening his tract with an epigraph from Virgil's *Aeneid* that read: *Vincet amor Patriae* [El amor a la patria vencerá/ Love of the fatherland will vanquish].

Viscardo addressed his open letter both to his fellow Americans and to the stream of history as all literary exiles since the days of Ovid have done. For him, American greatness for him was an undisputed and objective fact of human progress:

Friends and countrymen:

Our near approach to the fourth century, since the establishment of our ancestors in the New World, is an occurrence too remarkable, not to seriously interest our attention. The discovery of so great a portion of the earth is, and ever will be, to mankind, the most memorable event in their annals. (Letter to Spanish Americans 95)

As justification for their actions, the Spanish Americans were responsible only to themselves and future generations. It was an appeal to posterity and parenthood. Americans must determine their own fate so that their children would know their parents' heroism. Indeed, psychologists who study exile note a tremendous preoccupation with parenthood among their subjects. Political exiles, it seems, try to recreate a paternal order in their new environments and often view themselves as progenitors and heralds of a new order (Grinberg and Grinberg 95).

From its opening shot, Viscardo's letter revealed its author's affinity for intellectual trends current in Europe: an emphasis on sober reflection and scientific observations as the proper basis for action, the people right to choose their own government and the necessity for that government in turn to respond to the people's desires. Present too, were the ideas that one intrinsically belonged to a particular land and the obsession with one's place in history. Viscardo's slow-burning resentment, born of exile, had dovetailed with Enlightenment ideals and given new power to his national identity. As Americans, he thought, they had the right and the responsibility to choose their government and change it as their needs

required.

The new world is our country; its history is ours; and it is in the latter that our duty and our interest oblige us to examine our present situation with its causes, in order to determine us, after mature deliberation, to espouse with courage the part dictated by the most indispensable of duties towards ourselves and our successors. (97)

Spain had broken its pact, abnegated its responsibilities and become a tyrannical oppressor which mean that Spanish America was free to choose a new path. Viscardo could have been describing himself and exonerating himself for turning against the Crown. At least one modern author has suggested Viscardo's letter betrays "the affectations of the Ulysses syndrome," presumably meaning a journey in which an outcast hero undergoes several years of wandering trials before returning to a hero's welcome in his homeland (Hachim Lara 60). One should also note that Ulysses/Odysseus is an ambiguous, conflicted character who was viewed as a hero by the Greeks and a traitor by the Romans.

The *Carta* has been described as an unstable document that makes two not-entirely-consistent sets of arguments (Brading, introduction to Viscardo, *Carta* 37). On the one hand, Viscardo argues for creole superiority and leadership in American patrias; on the other hand, he grounds his appeals in the doctrine of universal rights of all humankind. His own fragile identity and dual loyalties thus leaked into his ideological platform as well. Viscardo makes a clear historical case for Spanish American independence. By examining three centuries of "causes and effects" in "our history," Viscardo revealed a truth so plain "that one might abridge it into these four words - *ingratitude, injustice, slavery and desolation*" (97-98). Significantly, these are exactly the same words Viscardo used in personal letters to describe his own lonely life in exile. His built the historical case on precedent, logic, natural rights and origins, and the conquerors' accomplishments. Throughout his extended argument Viscardo stressed that separate national identities had always opposed American and Spanish interests. Viscardo saw this quite clearly and argued:

The interests of our country being no other than our own, their good or bad administration recoils necessarily upon ourselves; and it is evident that to us alone belongs the right of exercising it; that we alone can fill its functions with advantage to our country and to ourselves. (102)

Americans must take charge of their own affairs. It was both their right and their responsibility. Miranda and the next generation of creole leaders followed his lead and seized upon this particular point which drew heavily upon both the arguments of John Locke and the unwritten ancient Spanish constitution.

For Viscardo, de facto independence had existed in America since the colonies' earliest days. As soon as the conquistadores put down roots,

settled and began families, America had been its own political entity. His own family had been resident there for generations. It was an evident and deeply-personal truth. In fact, natural attachment to one's land of birth was considered to be an essential component for modern identity by the late eighteenth century. It seemed obvious that the best government therefore would be comprised of local authorities. Quite clearly, Viscardo's chronic homesickness and nostalgia for Peru intensified and personalized his understanding of that abstract political theory. Viscardo thought his forefathers had already earned independence by their actions. He wrote:

Our ancestors, in removing themselves to an immense distance from their native country, and in renouncing the support that belonged to them, as well as the protection which could no longer succour them in regions as distant as unknown; our ancestors in this state of natural independence, ventured to procure themselves a new subsistence, by the most excessive fatigues, with the greatest dangers and at their own expense. The great success which crowned the efforts of the conquerors of America, gave them a right ... to appropriate to themselves the fruit of their valour and their labours. (98)

It was simply sentimental affection and loyalty to the Spanish Crown born of habit and inertia that led the Americans "to make generous homage of their immense acquisitions" to their previous country. Viscardo pointed out to Americans that their ancestors had won the land and rightfully expected proportionate gratitude and recompense for their efforts, yet received nothing but betrayal. Americans had been faithful to Spain and therefore ignored their own interests for too long:

Led by a blind enthusiasm, we have not considered that so much eagerness for a country to which we are strangers, to which we owe nothing, on which we do not depend, and of whom we expect nothing, becomes the worst treason to that which we were born, and which furnished nourishment to us and to our children (99).

Viscardo urged Americans to assert their historical rights to independence, rights they already essentially possessed, and urged them to reclaim their own country and self-respect.

Viscardo's historical arguments also went a long way toward establishing a pantheon of Spanish American heroes and anti-heroes, an essential component of national identity and one upon which Francisco de Miranda and the next generation elaborated significantly. For their heroes, Viscardo invited Spanish Americans "[t]o consult our annals for three centuries" where they would find "the great Columbus" and the other conquerors whom Spain betrayed when it broke the contracts which "gave to it the empire of the new world." Other heroes included: the brilliant and authentic Inca Garcilaso de la Vega, "the young and innocent Inca Tupac Amaru" and the proud race "who were born in this country of Indian

mothers and Spanish fathers." Equally important for the emerging national pantheon were Viscardo's anti-heroes: "Viceroy Don Francis de Toledo, that ferocious hypocrite, [who] put to death the sole heir of the empire of Peru" and "the bloodsuckers employed by the Government" (105). Viscardo, in his *Carta*, appealed to incipient nationalism by drawing upon Americans' shared history and identifying their common enemies. Through his writing, these images passed on to the next generation.

The second section of Viscardo's *Carta* treated the legal and political case for Spanish American independence. He already indicated that Spain had abrogated its treaties with Columbus and the conquerors thereby forfeiting its rights to the New World; he also argued that Spain's Christianizing mission had long since ended thereby nullifying that claim to domination as well (106). Similarly, Viscardo thought the Spanish Court overstepped its traditional role and usurped the power of the Cortes "which represented the different classes of the nation, and were to be the depositories and guardians of the rights of the people." With John Locke's *Second Treatise on Government* as his inspiration, Viscardo reached back into the political history of Aragon to find an article in the ancient constitution which decreed that

if the King violated the rights and privileges of the people, the people had a right to disown him for their sovereign, and to elect another in his place, even of the *Pagan* religion. (109-110)

Here is the direct progenitor of the constitutional argument the Spanish American *cabildos* used to seize their autonomy in 1808 when Napoleon invaded the Iberian Peninsula and installed his brother on the Spanish throne.

Viscardo took great pains to identify the existence of a legal precedent for American independence. This was a constant refrain for future independence leaders throughout the continent as well. Legality and order mattered to them. Condemning the broken contracts and false crimes with which the Spaniards had charged Tupac Amaru and others, Viscardo pointed out the need for constitutions and the rule of law to restrain the "arbitrary power to which our kings have always aspired" (109). He cited with approval Montesquieu's discussion of Paraguay in *De l'esprit des lois* that "it will be always glorious to government by rendering them more happy" (112n). Here was a hint of Spanish Americans' future attraction to British utilitarianism. An optimistic belief that laws could affect social progress and direct human behaviour was already apparent in Viscardo's *Carta*. The idea captivated the next generation of independence leaders, especially those in London with links to Jeremy Bentham, seized upon constitutional codes as an essential building block for their new countries.

Though a remarkably modern and sophisticated argument for Spanish American independence based on historical, legal-political and opportunistic claims, Viscardo's message in the *Carta* was completely

enmeshed with the author's own personal resentments. In several places, Viscardo melodramatically berated the Spanish Crown for its treatment of the American Jesuits who had been cast upon a strange country and renounced as subjects:

The Court of Spain ... by an unheard-of refinement of cruelty, and with that unrelenting rage which the fear alone of sacrificing innocents inspires in tyrants, the Court has reserved to itself the right of unceasingly persecuting and oppressing them: death has already delivered the most part of these exiles from the calamities which have accompanied them to the tomb; the others drag on a miserable existence, and furnish new proof of that cruelty of character which had been such an approach to the Spanish nation. (107)

Furthermore, Viscardo bristled at the reduced circumstances of the Jesuits in exile. He resented that the 3000 surviving Jesuits had "for the whole of their subsistence only a pension of two *paolis* per day, a pittance which is scarcely sufficient to maintain a servant" (Brading footnote in Viscardo Letter 111n). While trodding on such personal and emotionally-charged ground, Viscardo sent an excellent warning to other corporate elements in Spanish American society; if the Spanish government could expel the Jesuits

whom to that moment public opinion had no reason to suspect of any crime, [who] have been stript by the Government of all their rights, without any accusation, without even the forms of justice, and in the most arbitrary manner... there is no individual who instead of the protection which is his due, may not have a like oppression to fear. (113)

This was perhaps the most compelling and frightening argument of all.

Viscardo's *Carta a los españoles americanos* was a brilliant, well-argued and impassioned case for Spanish American independence. It incorporated Enlightenment political philosophy, legal precedent, an appeal to History and historical circumstance, and above all declared the people's right to determine their own fate. He addressed his audience as "Brothers and Countrymen", spoke to them as an insider, and used that privileged position as a validation of his authority. Viscardo told Americans they had a mission and a brilliant future awaited them, if they had the courage to seize the rights which were theirs.

...what an agreeable spectacle will the fertile shores of America present, covered with men from all nations exchanging the productions of their country against ours! How many from among them, flying oppression and misery, will come to enrich us by their industry and their knowledge, and to repair our exhausted population! Thus would America reconcile the extremities of the earth; and her inhabitants, united by a common interest, would form one GREAT FAMILY OF BROTHERS. (123-124)

Viscardo's *Carta*, written in London in the early 1790s, influenced the entire generation of Spanish American independence leaders. Its vision, its imagery, its arguments and its intensely-personal projection all bear the hallmarks of a political exile's psychological reaction to his experiences.

Viscardo did not publish the open letter during his lifetime. He remained in London, growing ever more disillusioned and frustrated with the Pitt ministry's inaction. He continued to write proposals and summaries for the British government, always in French and always advocating full independence for Spanish America (Viscardo Personal Archive, and Simmons, *passim*). The most interesting and suggestive of these is a 1797 letter in which Viscardo relayed information about South American affairs which he obtained from a young man recently arrived from Chile. Viscardo reported that the colonists were uniformly outraged at Spanish excesses and ready to rebel. Citing the Chilean's copy of *El Mercurio Peruano*, he warned that "all the details of the French Revolution are known in Peru" and had stirred up a great deal of interest in the cause of liberty. The opinion of this unidentified passenger, "who by his culture and his sentiments renders the honourable testimony of his compatriots," was that America was ready to declare its immediate independence (Viscardo, *Colección* 181-182). Some have suggested that Viscardo's young friend was none other than Bernardo Riquelme O'Higgins, future Liberator of Chile who indeed had come to England aboard the *Santiago* in 1795 to complete his education (Cayo Córdova 165). Without a doubt, London was the midwife of Spanish America independence; it was there that the major participants straddling three generations met and worked together, discussed their experiences and plans and became more aware of their American identity.

Strangely enough, there is no evidence that Viscardo and Francisco de Miranda ever met, although both were involved with Pitt and shared obvious interests. A frustrated Miranda left England for France on 20 March 1792 and did not return until 11 January 1798. Viscardo died in London on the tenth of February —bitter, cold, sick and convinced that the Foreign Office was planning to have him assassinated (Grisanti 143-144). Viscardo's bedside vigil was attended only by his last friend, United States Ambassador Rufus King, who shared his dream of an independent Spanish America and to whom the Peruvian entrusted his precious documents and small savings. Although Viscardo had left explicit instructions not to share the material with Miranda, King's political ambitions and inability to read any foreign languages overrode his scruples and he handed over the papers quite enthusiastically within a matter of days (King 559-560). Miranda realized the significance of this cache and lost no time joining Viscardo's efforts to his own. As early as July 1799, Miranda sent a copy of the *Carta* to Cuban conspirator Pedro José Caro, his agent in Trinidad, telling him to use it with prudence to rally support especially among British merchants there; by September he had sent Caro at least four other copies (Caro 31 May 1800). On 14 November 1799 Miranda passed the same text to U. S. Secretary of the Treasury Alexander Hamilton, describing the *Carta* as a

document of "great importance for the future of my country" (384-385). Viscardo's open letter to Spanish Americans became Francisco de Miranda's mission statement.

Like Viscardo, the Venezuelan exile Miranda had enough experience with the non-committal semi-support of Pitt's government and had determined to wage the war for independence on his own. He had lived in London long enough to realize the power of public opinion and the utility of an all-out propaganda campaign. To prepare the ground for Spanish American emancipation and to put pressure on the British government, Miranda needed to get his message out and to spread it as far and as fast as possible; the most obvious way to do this was a cheap printed edition of the *Carta*. With funds from King to support its publication, Viscardo's *Lettre aux espagnols américains* (1799) first appeared in London bearing a false imprint of Philadelphia to disguise this unauthorized act. A Spanish edition quickly followed in 1801, which Miranda successfully diffused throughout Spanish America. Spanish officials sent repeated warnings to their overseas agents to watch the ports and seize any copy that might turn up in the colonies (Cevallos 13 May 1804). Miranda took copies along on his disastrous 1806 expedition to Coro, which he presented to Venezuela's local governments in Venezuela. To further propagate the Viscardo-Miranda line, he ordered the *Carta* to be read daily in all churches and town meetings, and even had a copy placed in the central plaza of Coro along with other patriotic symbols: a flag, a coat-of-arms, and a portrait of Miranda himself (Grisanti 119). The letter first appeared in English as a documentary appendix to William Burke's *Additional Reasons for our Immediately Emancipating Spanish America* (London, 1808) and again in William Walton's *Present State of the Spanish Colonies* (London, 1810). The influential Whig journal *Edinburgh Review* carried Miranda's and James Mill's review of Viscardo's *Carta* in 1809 and Miranda's acting press secretary José María Antepara included extracts in *South American Emancipation* (London, 1810). Miranda viewed Viscardo's open letter to Spanish Americans as his official line and the best way to rally support for his cause both in Spanish America and in Britain.

Viscardo's *Carta* diffused rapidly throughout the Spanish American colonies. Condemned by the Mexican Inquisition as "subversive to public order and tranquillity" in September 1810, the *Carta* made the rounds of dissatisfied creole society ("Nos los Inquisidores..."). In 1812, a group calling itself "los Guadalupes" sent a copy to Mexican rebel leader José María Morelos (Guadalupes to Morelos 17 October 1818). Its full text also appeared in the 2 November 1810 edition of Bogotá's *Adición al Aviso Público*. Buenos Aires patriot leader Mariano Moreno had his own handwritten copy in Buenos Aires before 1809 and one belonging to professor of civil law Dr. Pedro Antonio de Somellera eventually turned up in Bartolomé Mitre's archive. There are at least two other extant manuscript versions of Viscardo's *Carta*, one Chilean and one Peruvian; both seem to be taken from Miranda's 1801 London edition and indicate the successful

spread of his propaganda campaign throughout the hemisphere. Furthermore, this emphasis on the printed word as an impetus for revolution indicated both the idealism of the Independence leaders, and their main constituency among the educated upper classes rather than the Indians or mestizos.

The *Carta a los Españoles Americanos*, written by the Peruvian Jesuit exile Juan Pablo Viscardo y Guzmán and popularized by the cosmopolitan Venezuelan exile Francisco de Miranda signalled the arrival of a focused and self-conscious Spanish American collective identity that gave rise to a shared hemispheric cause. It was the crucial link between the work of the scholarly but passive older Jesuits, whose Americanism grew out of their exile experience, and military campaigns of the succeeding generation who took up arms to liberate their countries from colonial authority. Through the efforts of Francisco de Miranda and his propaganda clearinghouse in London, the continental arguments for independence gained a measure of uniformity because Viscardo's *Carta* was a shared and widely-available manifesto. The Viscardo-Miranda line argued against Spanish authority in constitutionalist terms based on natural rights and a limited executive authority; both men had lived in England for extended periods and had developed a great respect for its functioning constitutional monarchy and rule of law. The succeeding generation embraced this argument, declared Spanish authority as illegitimate and proceeded to set up juntas to govern America for American interests. Both men had also lived most of their adult lives as political exiles from the Spanish Empire, forced to rely on others for financial support, looking over their shoulders for secret agents, and nurturing a deep personal resentment against the system that had distorted the peaceful course of their lives. Juan Pablo Viscardo y Guzmán's open letter to Spanish Americans is a document of olympian significance for Spanish American independence; it represents the passing of the torch from an angry aging, nostalgic exile to his spirited hemispheric creole patriot brothers. Ironically, a text that emerged from the deep and bitter resentments of an exile turned out to be a powerful psychological weapon against the very same system that had flung him out so mercilessly. Viscardo, in the end, got his revenge.

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