



Hispanic Traditional Technology and Material Culture in the United States

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Introduction

The material culture addressed . . . shares one factor in common: it is the product of a people [of the groups] whose culture is, to a greater or lesser extent, a derivative of Spanish culture. The Spaniards who brought their culture – artifacts and mentifacts – with them to the New World came from a variety of social and regional backgrounds. They brought with them their technologies, aesthetics, skills, education, and value systems that are, to some degree or another, reflected in the material culture that makes up a significant part of the American landscape, particularly in the Southwest. Their culture allowed them to survive and prosper in this new and often hostile environment, and they have left (and their descendants continue to leave) an indelible stamp on the built environment which stands as a monument to their courage, persistence, and creativity. (Joe S. Graham 1989, xv)

Museums, private collections, sites, and archives across the United States have collections of Hispanic material culture. Despite this fact, the study of Hispanic-American material culture has recently emerged as a primary area of research in Hispanic studies (Graham 1975, 1978, 1989, 1991; Griffith 1983, 1988; Nestor 1978; Robinson 1979; Simmons and Turley 1975). The recent publication *Hispanic-American Material Culture: An Annotated Directory of Collections, Sites, Archives, and Festivals in the United States* by Joe S. Graham (1989) makes clear the significant Hispanic contributions to the material culture and technology of North America. Our objectives are to provide a selec-

tive survey of Hispanic material culture and traditional technologies, particularly those pertaining to agriculture and settlement, household and domestic artifacts, folk arts and crafts, ritual and medicinal practices, and community muralism. We will illustrate the broad variety of Hispanic traditions and technologies, and the impact of these traditions and technologies on the evolution and inventory of North American material culture. In so doing, we will explore this information in its respective cultural, historical, social, and macro- and micro-contexts.

Hispanic Influence in North America

The Southwestern United States has been the focus of innumerable investigations into the ethnographic and ethnohistorical dimensions of Native American, Spanish, Mexican and Anglo American interactions (Spicer 1962). The nature and character of these interactions have had a primary impact on the development of Southwestern culture. The product of these diverse influences may be most cogently discerned from the examination of Southwestern material culture. Where Hispanic material culture and society are concerned, this has been reproduced and mediated by way of indigenous, mestizo, Mexican, African, and Anglo influences. Examples of the diverse influences and modifications affecting the material inventory can be observed by way of such household items as *molcajetes*, *metates*, and *comales* of Native American origin, and *santos* and *retablos* of Hispanic, African and Iberian origin.

Initially, the primary vehicle underlying the conveyance or reproduction of Hispanic culture in the Southwest were such Spanish colonial institutions as the *presidio* or garrison and mission and church. The mission was perhaps the single most significant early

colonial institution contributing to the reproduction of Hispanic arts, customs, mores, values, and beliefs among indigenous peoples of the Southwest (Ahlborn 1975). The indoctrination of indigenous neophytes by Jesuit, Franciscan, Augustinian and other doctrines and religious orders, was the primary agent underlying the transformation of the preexisting indigenous cultural formation. The longevity of colonial era Hispanic traditions and technologies is in turn a partial reflection of the relative isolation characterizing Hispanic communities throughout the Southwest. Intense interactions with Mexican and American Indian societies throughout the southwestern states transformed peninsular traditions. Despite such intense interaction, Hispanics maintained traditional technologies and material culture well into the present era as a result of their social, economic, and political isolation. Such isolation was mediated by Hispanic settlement patterns, which in turn, were initiated by colonial era social processes. The result of these processes was the formation of villages, towns, *colonias*, and *barrios*. Specific patterns of settlement in turn engendered primary ideational and symbolic constructs that have come to define contemporary Hispanic communities throughout the Southwest.

The second most dominant influence bearing on the reproduction of Hispanic material culture is the oscillating frontier of continued contact between Southwest Hispanics and other *Latino* immigrant groups along the United States-Mexico border and the eastern seaboard of the United States. Any study of the impact of Hispanic—and thereby Spanish Colonial and indigenous— influences should impart a sense of the ongoing process of innovation, renewal, and revitalization that underlies the reproduction of Hispanic material culture along the borderlands and eastern seaboard. This process was initiated by the earliest Hispanic settlers, whose contacts and interactions with indigenous and Caribbean peoples, cultures, and environments required such innovation.

Hispanic Subregions of North America

In his discussion of Hispanic artistic influence in the United States, Ahlborn (1975, 41) equates artistic “styles” with “dialects” in a fashion that is equally relevant to studies concerned with the formation of regional variants of Hispanic material culture. Regarding Hispanic arts in the United States, Ahlborn (1975, 41) states that

In all Spanish colonies and in their distinct geographic and ethnic regions, the arts reflect a diversity of stylistic origins comparable to Spain. There is, however, an American accent or rather a series of related, regional dialects

in the transplanted artistic language of Spain. Each artistic dialect may be understood in terms of differing points of origin for its stylistic, conceptual and technical standards, and in terms of the local desire to maintain those standards.

The stylistic variants or “regional dialects” equated with Hispanic art, or in this case, material culture, coincide with distinctive Hispanic subgroups residing in various regions of North America. The intensity of cultural innovation, interaction and migration in the region of the United States-Mexico borderlands lends dominance to Mexico’s role in the introduction, maintenance and revitalization of Hispanic influences in North America. Caribbean and other Latin American nations similarly dominate the reproduction of Hispanic traditions in other areas of the United States. Whereas, *Mexican-Hispanic* traditions dominate the organization and reproduction of Hispanic culture and society in the American Southwest, Cuba, Puerto Rico, and other Caribbean nations similarly serve as cultural and demographic springboards to the American mainland (Mintz 1971, 17). The proximity of these latter Latin American nations to the eastern seaboard of the United States set the stage for the perpetuation and elaboration of Puerto Rican, Cuban and Haitian material culture, art and technology in North American contexts. Returning to Ahlborn’s (1975, 41) concept of “artistic dialects,” he notes that with regard to the United States,

In this country, roughly from 1725 to 1850, there were five historical regions of Spanish artistic expression. In Florida, the influence of Cuba on the fort and village of San Agustín was dominant until the British arrived in the 1760’s. In Texas, New Mexico, Arizona and upper California, Hispanic artistic differences derived from adjacent Mexican provinces, from varying sources of supplies, and from variations in local political chronology and in church and social history.

Interestingly, Ahlborn (1975, 41) notes that the varying sources of church and mission-based influences, be they Mexican or of other Latino origin, in turn impacted the nature of regional traditions. Ahlborn (1975, 41) notes that

Although Franciscans were charged, after the 1767 expulsion of the Jesuits, with the spiritual conquest and support of all of these southwestern regions, physical manifestations of the Order varied. Churches erected in

Texas and California by the Friars Minor from Zacatecas or Queretaro [Mexico] did not reflect the same origins and experiences as brothers sent out from the mother chapter-house in Mexico City. The architectural vocabulary varied from stylish baroque convolutions to traditional folk massings.

The principal culture areas alluded to by Ahlborn (1975) are those associated with the current states of Florida, New Mexico, Texas, California, and Arizona. In Florida, early Hispanic influences were reinforced by later *Cubano* immigration to the mainland in the twentieth century (Ahlborn 1975, 41), whereas specific regional variants of the Hispanic tradition were identified with the *Hispanos* of New Mexico (González 1967), the *Tejanos* of Texas (Weber 1982), the *Californios* of upper California (Pitt 1966), and such groups as the *Sonorenses* of southern Arizona (Sheridan 1986). The dominant regions of Hispanic influence in North America continue to correspond with those identified by Ahlborn (1975) as characterizing the period extending from the early eighteenth through mid-nineteenth centuries. Today, primary regional distinctions largely concern the emergence of the Puerto Rican and Cuban subareas of the eastern seaboard, and the less contiguous Central American enclave communities of Texas, southern California and other Pacific coastal regions of the United States.

Hispanic Settlement Patterns

In the process of colonizing the Americas, the Spanish attempted to mold the new environment to their needs and society. Thus they transplanted their culture, including architecture and town-planning, into the Americas with the advent of the seventeenth century (Bacalski-Martinez 1979). Evidence of this remains in “place names [especially] . . . those of avenues and boulevards, a distinctive architectural style and furnishings to match, commemorative fiestas, and a chain of missions” that still stand today (Bannon 1974, 232).

Town planning in North America and the Caribbean followed the Spanish tradition in its plaza-centered orientation. Specifically, official buildings, churches, and residential areas of the colonial period were organized around central plazas (Meir and Rivera 1972; Gibson 1973; McWilliams 1990). The layout of the town plaza followed the *zocalo*, or plaza, pattern of colonial Cuba, Puerto Rico and Mexico. Mexico City’s main plaza replicates the layout and design of Spanish or peninsular town planning. As in Mexico City, the church was typically located on the north side of the *plaza mayor*, whereas municipal buildings were located on the west

and south sides. Such patterns typified town planning in Cuba and other areas of the Spanish Americas. In towns throughout the Southwest, influential *rancheros* built their homes on alternate sides of the square facing the *plaza* or *placita* (Meir and Rivera 1972). In the northern frontier, these *placitas* were more than a central square. They were fortified central areas with houses built along contiguous exterior walls. These walls were without windows or doors, and served as defense barriers (Bunting et al. 1964; McWilliams 1990). In frontier Hispanic settlements, the wealthy lived in single family dwellings, called *plazuelas*, located some distance from the plaza.

Other settlement features included the aforementioned *presidio*, fort or garrison, and adjoining *ranchos*. The *presidio* was designed as a frontier outpost or garrison intended to protect Hispanic settlers against Indian and foreign incursions (Gibson 1973). In this respect, the *presidio* did not differ from Anglo-European and French “forts” or garrisons. The *presidio* was a defensive feature of the expanding frontier that encompassed a chain of over twenty *presidios* extending from San Agustín, Florida, to San Francisco, California (Bannon 1964). Because the *presidio* served as guardian of the frontier, it was often located close to the other dominant settlement type, the mission.

While the *presidio* was designed as a frontier outpost intended to protect Hispanic settlers against Indian and foreign incursions (Gibson 1973; Bannon 1974), the mission, a standard arrangement of the frontier was a very distinctive institution serving a dual purpose. Other than its specific religious function, the mission also served an economic function, and to some degree, functioned as a *presidio*. The mission and its padres proved to be the most significant institution for Spanish expansion on the frontier. The establishment of over forty-five major Hispanic towns and settlements in the Southwest can be directly attributed to missions. Normally located near *rancherías*, or villages, the missions gave the friars ready access to indigenous neophytes. Missions were provided with ample land for livestock and crops. Equipped with carpentry and blacksmith shops, weaving galleries, granaries, and the necessary equipment to carry out the functions of these shops, the missions were self-sufficient (Scholes and Adams 1952). Ultimately, the missionaries were agents of the white man’s culture. As such, they opened, tamed, and readied for incorporation, each new frontier for Spanish settlement (Bannon 1974).

Hispanic Subsistence Patterns

One of the most dominant Hispanic influences on the cultural patterns of the American Southwest and

more generally, North America, is concerned with the development of technologies and traditions of subsistence and settlement. The Hispanic tradition made its first mark on North American patterns of subsistence and settlement during early seventeenth century colonial-era occupations of the Rio Grande Valley of New Mexico, and the missions and *presidios* of San Agustín and Santa Catalina Isle, Florida. Much of this impact continues to be conveyed by way of present day survivals, and their attendant transformations, reflected in Pueblo Indian, *Hispano*, and Cuban American material culture and technology. However, unlike the ranching traditions that connect contemporary Southwestern Hispanics to their Spanish colonial roots, Hispanic Americans of Caribbean descent lack such direct linkages to colonial traditions in the mainland. The introduction of cash crop monoculture in the eighteenth century disrupted traditional Caribbean subsistence patterns and resulted in the transformation of Cuban and Puerto Rican political economies. This transformation severed traditional socio-cultural patterns and serves as an impetus to Cuban and Puerto Rican migration to the United States mainland.

Hispanic plaza-based settlement patterns, architectural traditions, Pueblo Indian *hornos* or ovens, as well as agricultural dispersals and adoptions (such as the introduction of the stock-raising economy and metal working traditions) may be traced directly to the Spanish colonial presence in North America (Bannon 1964). In turn, early Spanish agricultural pursuits were transformed by way of interactions with the Pueblo Indians of the Rio Grande Valley whose ancient agricultural lifeway was integrated and adopted into the overall *Hispano* way of life (Dozier 1970). The *rancho* is the embodiment of these interactions, and clearly expresses Hispanic traditions. A number of first hand accounts of Hispanic life in the *ranchos* have been published in recent years (Cabeza de Baca 1954; Pitt 1966; Myres 1969; Jordan and Cook 1977).

Ranchos typically consisted of several flat- or hipped-roof adobe buildings. Routine household tasks: cooking, washing, candle and soap making, and weaving were performed. The nearby garden provided basic food staples. Meat, tallow for soap and candles, and hide for leather goods came from the corrals as did wool which was later spun into fabric, blankets, and *colchas*. Other household items such as furniture, *santos* for the home altars and utensils were also produced locally or at nearby missions (Scholes and Adams 1952; Meir and Rivera 1972). Intimately related to the establishment of the earliest missions, the *rancho* was the economic base for the growth of frontier towns and settlements. Ultimately, the *rancho*, with its architecture, crafts, and associated agricultural and stock raising technologies, is

largely responsible for the production and reproduction of Hispanic material culture included in the discussion that follows.

The Hispanic Architectural Tradition

Perhaps the most conspicuous, and thereby, most extensively documented, aspect of Hispanic influence on the Southwest is the Hispanic architectural tradition (Adams 1974; Baer 1958; Boyd 1958; Bunting et al. 1964; Graham 1978; Graham 1988b; Kubler 1940; Lehmer 1939; Newcomb 1937; Robinson 1976, 1979; von Wuthenau 1935). Much of the documentation on this subject reflects a focus on missions and the contributions of the church padres to the larger Southwestern architectural milieu. This aspect of Hispanic tradition has been tempered by preexisting indigenous architectural traditions (Graham 1988b, 1991). In such areas as California, Arizona, and Texas where the indigenous architectural tradition was less formally developed than that of the Rio Grande Pueblos, the Spanish colonial mission provided the initial archetype for the architectural tradition that would follow. Hispanic, or more specifically, Spanish and Mexican-era architectural traditions provided the initial pattern after which early Californian and Texan styles developed. These influences can still be observed in public buildings and private estates across North America.

The use of Moorish design and style, and Mexican baroque techniques of architectural embellishment, define the earliest frontier traditions (Kubler 1940). The popularity and longevity of this style in the United States has witnessed periods of revitalization extending into the present. Spanish revival architecture dominates both Hispanic and non-Hispanic architectural traditions of such towns as Santa Fe, New Mexico, Tucson, Arizona, and Santa Barbara, California. The use of "mission" (Spanish) roof tiles, glazed ceramic wall and mosaic tiles of colonial Mexican design, Moorish-styled arcades, hand-hewn *vigas* or roof beams, beehive *hornos* or ovens, white-washed facades, wrought-iron gates and windows, tiled patios and courtyards, decorative architectural murals, and massive adobe-core construction, are all elements that have influenced architectural styles in and beyond the Hispanic community.

Ultimately, the inhabitants of the Southwest lay claim to two distinct architectural traditions. The first tradition centered on the *jacal*, while the second featured flat- or hipped-roof adobe dwellings. Regional considerations, environment, and the availability of raw materials, dictated which of the two architectural traditions dominated. However, evidence of an earlier architectural tradition, the *fuerte*, fort, or log cabin style has been

identified in New Mexico by Weaver (1965). The Spanish *fuerte* or log cabin was reminiscent of the Anglo American and French fort architectural traditions. According to Weaver (1965), additional features of Hispanic architecture in New Mexico include roofing elements or wood moldings such as the *arcon*, and such subterranean storage features as the log-lined *soterrano*.

El Jacal

The *jacal* is a "a brush and mud dwelling" (Newton 1964, 11). Although there is debate whether the *jacal* is of pre-Columbian as opposed to Spanish ancestry (Graham 1978; 1988b), the *jacal* was a typical dwelling throughout the more temperate regions of Mexico and Central America. The typical *jacal* had walls

. . . of poles set upright and tied together horizontally with slender poles or stalks, either singly or in bundles. Whatever is available is employed, bamboo being commonly used. In some localities the trunks of vines or branches of saplings are used. Roofs are of thatch, the material varying from grasses or palms to the long, sharp-pointed leaves of the maguay. In districts where vegetation is less dense, even in the hot country, walls are of mud mixed with chopped straw and daubed on against a framework of vertical poles, and with horizontal bands of branches reinforcing . . . The more pretentious houses have walls of rubble and adobe, with the front fastidiously coated with gleaming white stucco . . . Stanford (1947, 253-54)

Jacales were built of materials that were readily available at little to no cost. Typically, these structures were rectangular, no larger than thirty feet by ten or twelve feet (depending on the availability of building materials). The steeply pitched thatched roof also dictated the size of the structure. The pitched roof was necessary to insure that the thatching would shed water during heavy rains.

Jacal walls were between five and six feet high. Again, available materials dictated the architectural design. Sticks, adobe mud, pebbles, large stones, mesquite chips, tules, and rubble were among the materials most commonly used. These items set the requirements for the distance between the horizontal lathing. The outside walls were usually plastered, but the inside walls were almost always plastered with a mud and lime mixture and whitewashed. The white-wash prevented the mud plaster from eroding away (Graham 1978; 1988b).

The *jacal's* steeply pitched thatched roof consisted of grass tied in bundles, palmetto leaves, animal skins, tule rushes, and yucca leaves, arranged in such a way as to waterproof the roof. The pitched roof insured that the thatching would shed water in heavy rains. In New Mexico, a variation of *jacal* construction substitutes upright poles and flat mud roofs for thatch. Jacal floors were dirt floors. In order to provide a more tightly packed floor, ashes were often mixed with dirt. A more elaborate procedure mixed fine straw or grass with *adobe* or mud. This mixture was then smoothed by hand until it resembled cement.

The form of the *jacal* remained constant over time. Architectural changes came with the introduction of new building materials. The framework of poles was replaced in the twentieth century by hand-hewn lumber while the thatched roofs were replaced by wooden shingles, and subsequently by corrugated tin. These changes also allowed the pitch of the roofs to be modified or flattened (Graham 1978; 1988b). According to Graham (1978; 1988b), the *jacal* was the forerunner of the next architectural tradition, the "one-room-added upon house." In this newer housing design the *ramada* was replaced by the front porch, the kitchen was attached to the house, but the most significant change was the shift from a single to a multiple room structure.

El Adobe

The second architectural tradition was the flat- or hipped-roof adobe structure. Again, available materials and environmental conditions dictated choice of design. Typically, the adobe structures were single-room houses of about fifteen feet by twenty feet. These structures normally had front and back doors and windows on either or both ends of the structure. More affluent households had more sophisticated floor plans. However, the most common structural modification to the single-room house was an "L"-shaped floor plan (González 1973). This modification also reflected the growth of the extended family. In addition, hollow-wall wood construction has replaced traditional solid-core adobe walls. According to González (1973), a contemporary manifestation of this adaptation is the addition of trailer homes in the family lot.

Adobe homes had a roof structure that consisted of *vigas*, or hand-hewn wooden roof beams and supports arranged parallel one to the other at two foot intervals. Smaller materials, usually mesquite twigs were arranged in a herring-bone pattern on top of the *vigas*. Four to eight inches of adobe mortar topped the mesquite-stick framework. This combination of materials formed a well-insulated water-proof roof. As with jacales, adobe structures were plastered inside and out

In many areas of the United States and Latin America, the evolution of Hispanic material culture adopted elements and features of the preexisting indigenous tradition. In this reconstruction of a dwelling at San José y San Miguel de Aguayo, San Antonio, Texas a *molcajete* or mortar and *metate* or grinding slab are prominent features of the material culture. (Photo by Rubén G. Mendoza, © 1990.)

and had hard-packed dirt floors (Graham 1978; 1988b). In South Texas masonry houses were made of handcarved sandstone or hand-cut caliche blocks known as *sillares*. Caliche is a readily available raw material in South Texas. Again, availability of materials in the region dictated design and materials used. The homes of wealthier residents were plastered with *chipichil*, or mortar mixed from pea gravel, sand, and lime (Graham 1978). The inside walls were white-washed and a two-foot high wainscoting added to the base of walls to protect the whitewash. This was especially true of kitchen and storeroom areas (Jaramillo 1974). It is important to remember that adobe homes were also miniature fortresses. As a consequence, two to three foot thick walls were built around central patios, and barred windows and massive wooden doors were used to protect the inhabitants. In addition, most *adobes* had ample interior storerooms and *soterraños* in which to stockpile provisions. When necessary, livestock were brought inside the patio compound for protection (Meir and Rivera 1972).

Rejas, or wrought-iron bars, were another architectural feature of wealthy homes. *Rejas* were crafted for windows and doors by local blacksmiths. This tradition is still very much in evidence, especially in South Texas. However, welders, not blacksmiths are the artisans of today. As in the past, *rejas* continue to have functional as well as decorative purposes. In essence, it can be

said that *rejas* serve as a link to ancestral architectural traditions, while at the same time providing a measure of security for our homes.

La Morada

The *morada*, or meeting house, retains a number of the distinctive attributes introduced by the Spaniards in the early half of the seventeenth Century. Many of the features alluded to above can be identified among the ruins or within the ancient and modern villages of Hispanic New Mexico (Weigle et al. 1983). The *Penitentes*, a *Hispano* and fundamentalist catholic brotherhood of New Mexico, constructed their *moradas* from *adobes*, wooden *vigas*, Spanish tiles, and walls covered with adobe or caliche mud plaster or stucco. The *moradas* of the *Penitentes*, not unlike the more traditional house structures, were essentially flat-roofed adobe structures fronting *plazas*, *patios* or courtyards, and streets. And not unlike most such adobe-core structures, windows and doors were limited features within the context of any house or community structure. The desire to preserve the thermal integrity of such structures was a limiting factor conditioning the number of windows and doors built into any house or building. The limiting of such features also clearly related to the desire to maintain privacy and secrecy. Defensive considerations were also clearly a factor in

earlier periods of Hispanic settlement. Because of the nature of adobe-core construction and erosion, adobe footings were also often employed in such construction so as to slow salt erosion of the adobe or caliche walls. Additional features incorporated into the architecture of the *morada* included the use of bell towers or belfrys, *altares*, *adoratorios*, and *nichos* (or niched-shrines), freestanding wooden crosses or “field crosses” (Griffith 1988, 79), religious murals, *santos*, *retablos*, and *descansos*, or Holy Week processional crosses intended to signify the “stations of the cross” or other resting places (Ahlborn 1975, 52). In all likelihood, the contemporary Southwestern Hispanic tradition of planting crosses along roads, and in particular at crossroads, and in places where accidents have claimed the lives of loved ones, is a tradition that can be directly related to the more ancient tradition of erecting *descansos*.

Household or Domestic Technologies

Household or domestic technologies are perhaps the least studied aspect of the Hispanic equation in the Southwest. Despite this oversight, domestic technology and its material culture is perhaps the most socially significant, and eclectic dimension of Hispanic material culture. Studies of the contextual relationships, cultural dynamics, and symbolic significance of any of a number of elements of the cultural domain identified with the *hogar* (hearth or home) is most revealing. Our definition of the domestic landscape of the Hispanic household incorporates a number of activity areas or domains, and their respective cultural inventories or technologies. As noted in the foregoing sections concerned with colonial-era mission architecture and settlement, various features of the mission settlement pattern and architectural tradition were translated into the reproduction of such features in the domestic sector.

The Domestic Landscape

A number of distinctive and traditional Hispanic features or activity areas may be identified with the domestic landscape or household of such groups as the *Hispanos* of early twentieth century New Mexico. These domestic activity areas or domains in addition to the main house structure include (a) the *cocina*, indoor or outdoor kitchen, or other food-processing areas, (b) the *altar* or home altar, shrine, or field cross, (c) the *patio*, walled or fenced courtyard, or other open-air activity area, (d) the *jardin* or house garden, (e) the *ramada*, arbor, shed, or other activity or storage area consisting of a wooden framework of branches set atop poles so as to provide a shaded work area, and

lastly, (f) the *corral* or stock-raising pens or other fenced areas adjacent the immediate household activity area.

To the foregoing list of activity areas, identified with the broader Hispanic traditional pattern, may be added colonial-era mission and *presidio* features and formal activity areas. Additional features introduced into North America with the earliest of mission influences, and adopted within the domestic context of the Hispanic household, include (a) *fuentes* (garden fountains) or *pozos* (water wells), (b) *molinos* or milling areas for grains as well as other *talleres* or workshop areas, (c) the *lavadero* or “washing place” for clothing or the tanning of hides, and (d) the *portico*, *balcon largo* or veranda of the more affluent Hispanic homes within which craft items were produced and leisure time spent.

Household Material Culture

The domestic domain of the Hispanic household alone is broadly representative of the various folk-level crafts and formal features of the total inventory of Hispanic material culture and technology. The total inventory of Hispanic material culture represented within the household context is divisible into the specific materials and workmanship represented by the item in question. The material inventory and crafts associated with early Hispanic households included ceramics (*ceramica*), basketry (*cesteria*), metalwork (*metalisteria*), woodwork (*carpinteria*), cabinet and furniture-making (*ebanisteria*), sculpture and carving (*entalladura*), waxwork and candlemaking (*cereria*), hide processing and tanning (*teneria*), paintings (*pintura*), and spinning and weaving (*tejido*), among other essential crafts.

The production of the richly colored and decorated *majolica* or *mayolica* glazed pottery wares and *talavera* tiles associated with origins in colonial-era Puebla, Mexico, were but one of the many Spanish colonial imports brought into Southwestern missions and homes. The use of the *talavera* tile to decorate arcades, facades, fountains, *nichos* or personal shrines, brickwork, and the like, continues to be a hallmark of Hispanic traditions and influences on the broader Southwestern lifestyle. *Mayolica* or *majolica*-like glazed ceramic wares were one of the more distinctive features of the domestic context. In many Spanish colonial and Mexican era settlements of North America, *mayolica* served as a substitute for imported and expensive wares such as fine china (Plowden 1958).

Ebanisteria—cabinet or furniture-making—is but one of the many Hispanic woodcraft traditions that is currently experiencing a renaissance in North American furniture craft. The highly distinctive and provincial character of contemporary *Hispano* cabinetwork and furniture-making exhibits a clear link to early Spanish colonial and

mission influences (Austin 1933; Williams 1941; Vedder 1977; Taylor and Bokides 1983; Taylor 1987). Such furniture is often cut from cedar or cottonwood planks with metal and wooden tools, and the rough-hewn appearance of the otherwise delicately carved planks is retained. Primary colors are often used in today's productions of chairs, tables, benches, cupboards, trunks or chests, closets, and shelves (Taylor 1983). The elaborately carved and painted, mortised and tenoned, provincial furniture of such areas as *Hispano* New Mexico has clearly had a major impact on design styles in Hispanic and non-Hispanic communities throughout the southwestern states and much of North America.

While *cereria* (candlemaking) and *teneria* (hide processing) are largely lost arts primarily associated with the mission era, individuals within Hispanic communities across the southwestern states continue to practice and maintain elements of these respective traditions. Today, as in the past, candles and candlecraft are a major investment within the more traditional Hispanic Catholic households (Graham 1975). However, today, unlike the past, the craft of candlemaking or waxwork is largely relegated to the commercial sector. The purchase of *velas* or votive candles is largely facilitated by the inexpensive and ready availability of commercial or church-made candles. At shrines throughout Hispanic communities in North America, one is likely to count an abundance of commercially-produced votive candles bearing depictions of the Virgen de Guadalupe, the Santo Niño de Atocha, or any number of other Catholic saints or devotional images. During the colonial era in missions throughout Alta California, as in all other regions that underwent Spanish colonization, candlecraft or *cereria* was a major activity which entailed a specialized inventory of tools, techniques, and a specific *taller* or workshop area devoted to the craft of waxworking. At California state historical parks such as that associated with the restored mission of *La Purísima Concepción* near present-day Lompoc, California, one may view the original rooms and tools devoted to such crafts as *cereria*, *teneria*, *tejido*, *ebanisteria*, and so forth. Such collections of early Spanish colonial material culture and craftworks make clear the connections between that early tradition and that which defines other more contemporary *Hispano* and Hispanic arts, crafts, and technologies.

Another craft was sculpting stone food-processing vessels directly derived from, or inspired by, indigenous Mexican and Southwestern Pueblo Indian traditions. Such indigenous items as the *molcajete* and *tejolote* (a mortar and pestle, respectively), *metate* and *mano* (a grinding slab and handstone, respectively), *comales* (ceramic tortilla griddles) and the like, exhibit the greatest degree of stylistic and cultural accommo-

modation and transformation associated with Hispanic material culture in North America. More specifically, the *molcajete* is a thick-walled black basalt mortar or vessel supported atop three short stout legs. The length of the *tejolote* varies with the diameter of the *molcajete*. Although the *molcajete* has been in the Mexican kitchen for well over 3,500 years, it continues to be one of the most efficient grinding implements for processing small amounts of spices, and as such, is an indispensable kitchen utensil. The *metate*, a sloping rectangular slab of basalt stone supported on three stout legs, has been in use in Mexican, and other indigenous households, for well over 6,000 years. It has been used predominantly for grinding maize or corn, *chiles*, and other foodstuffs. In some circles, the *metate* has been referred to as the "*liquadora Azteca*," or "*Aztec blender*." Whereas a number of these items in their Mexican contexts are produced from basalt stone or fired clay, these were often modified to accommodate newly introduced technologies and materials. *Comales*, or ceramic griddles, were later replaced by cast iron, and then electric griddles, while at the same time continuing to serve specific utilitarian functions such as those associated with *tortilla*-making.

If looked at in terms of social and cultural dynamics, *tortilla*-making involves a discreet complex of tools, materials, traditions, and rituals as old as the *tortilla* itself. The production of *tortillas* in the indigenous household was centered on the hearth area of the household or domestic circle. Within early Hispanic Southwestern contexts, many aspects of the older indigenous tradition were maintained, along with the material cultural inventory. Such survivals from the indigenous tradition were often maintained as a key cultural diagnostic despite the availability of introduced technologies that could have easily replaced the cultural repertoire in question. Today, in some indigenous communities of the Southwest, metal or steel drums have replaced the ceramic *comales* of the ancient tradition. *Masa harina*, or packaged corn tortilla mix, has replaced *nixtamal* (nixtamal). *Nixtamal*, corn partially cooked in lime water, required hand grinding in a *metate*, and thus the replacement of *nixtamal* with *masa harina* eliminated the need for the *metate*. Today, the *metate* often serves little more than a nostalgic or decorative function. Although some traditional food-processing tools are declining in use, others, like the *molcajete*, continue to enjoy wide popularity in the Southwest.

Household Religious Artifacts

While religious or ritual reliquary, such as *retablos*, *santos*, and *altares*, are a major aspect of the formal domain centered on institutionalized religion, they are

also an integral aspect of the informal or domestic sector of the Hispanic community (Boyd 1946, 1953; Steele 1974). Religious paraphernalia has in large part become a primary conveyance for domestic ritual and revitalization movements emanating from within the Hispanic community. While we identify the production of such items as falling within the realm of traditional technologies, elements of this category cross-cut Hispanic traditional and contemporary material culture, technology, as well as social and cultural domains. For our purposes, this aspect of traditional material culture will be subsumed under the category of social technologies and material culture. The interactive and socially dynamic role played by spiritual and ritual icons and paraphernalia will be explored accordingly.

In the New World the Catholic Church provides cultural unity and continuity between its Spanish history and the contemporary Hispanic community. Church ceremonies and *fiestas* (secular or religious celebrations) date to the earliest arrival of the Spaniard in the Southwest (Broun-Ronsdorf 1941). Though instituted as devotional, church activities constituted the bulk of the social life for some isolated settlements of the Southwest. Weddings, christenings, wakes and patron-saint festivities were occasions for friends and relatives to socialize (Meir and Rivera 1972). One aspect of Hispanic religious influence that has remained largely intact involved the tradition identified with the *matachín* ritual complex.

Elements of *matachín* veneration of saints go back for many centuries. They are seen in Cervantes' exemplary novel, *La gitanilla*, published in 1613. The early Spanish explorers and settlers, following leaders like Francisco Vázquez de Coronado and Juan de Oñate, brought this custom with them to the New World. Evidence of this custom is to be found in some of the villages of modern Spain and Mexico as well as New Mexico. (Bacalski-Martínez 1979, 21)

The *matachín* is a mock battle dance with many and varied features. The Spanish *matachines* are ritual folk dances which feature mock battles between individuals dressed to represent Moors in opposition to the Spaniards. By contrast, the Spanish-Indian *matachín* ritual expresses the people's devotion to the respective patron saint worshiped within the community sponsoring the event. Originally introduced to celebrate the birth of Christ, this ritual is a mixture of Spanish and Indian culture. The music however, is definitely non-native, and derives from traditional Spanish martial music (Espinoza 1985). The choreography, costumes,

and rituals reflect a melding of indigenous and Spanish traditions.

Matachín, a term of Arabic origin, means "maskers." The origin of the word lends credence to the foreign origin of this tradition (Jaramillo 1974). *Matachín* dancers continue traditional rituals throughout the Southwest. There are clear regional variations in the *matachines* dance ritual. Regional differences are reflected in the characters portrayed in the dances. These characters include the *abuelo*, *toro*, *la malinche*, and others. In addition, regional differences are expressed via the dance paraphernalia, including objects carried by the dancers, such as the *palma* (palm), *flecha* (arrow), or *pluma* (feather). In South Texas, Cantú (1991) has noted that the *matachín* costume exemplifies not only the resilience of the tradition, but the transformation the ritual has undergone as well. The *naguilla*, an embroidered skirt worn by dancers, incorporates glass beads, sequins, silk ribbons, colorful handkerchiefs, bells, and at times, flattened bottle caps as decorative items. *Guaraches*, or sandals, have been replaced by boots or tennis shoes (Cantú 1991).

While many of the artistic objects found in Hispanic America can be traced to Spain and other countries, this is not so for the religious tradition of the *santero* (Boyd 1946; Wallrich 1951). The *santo*, an often "primitive" wooden sculpture depicting a saint, is unique to New World culture. *Santeros*, artisans specializing in carved *bultos*, or wooden figures of saints, produced extraordinary work given the limited and crude tools available (Boyd 1946; McWilliams 1990). Apparently, missionaries commissioned native craftsmen to reproduce images of Christ, the Virgin, and the saints with which to adorn the missions. According to Warren (1987, 28), *santeros* ". . . combined personal vision, wood carving skills, and a style characterized by economy of form and abstracted idealism." So lifelike were many of these images that it was not uncommon for some icons to be adored as though they were the material embodiments of the saints themselves. At such missions as that of San Xavier del Bac near Tucson, Arizona, Papago Indians continue to clothe the images of the saints, *santos* and *bultos*, in brightly colored clothing. Tradition has it that the people dress the *santos* as they believe these patron saints would appear in heaven or by way of holy apparitions. This tradition gave the saints a Southwestern colonial style that distinguished them from their European counterparts (Warren 1987). Borne of necessity, the appearance of mass-produced religious artifacts—and the decline of the church's influence over the population—heralded the demise of the *santero* art form. Nevertheless, the *santero's* craftsmanship can still be found in rural churches throughout the Southwest (Meir and Rivera 1972). Fur-

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The frontier mission of San Xavier del Bac, Tucson, Arizona, constructed in the latter part of the eighteenth century, exemplifies the melding of Iberian, Moorish, and Native American features into a style known as Mexican baroque. (Photo by Rubén G. Mendoza, © 1990.)

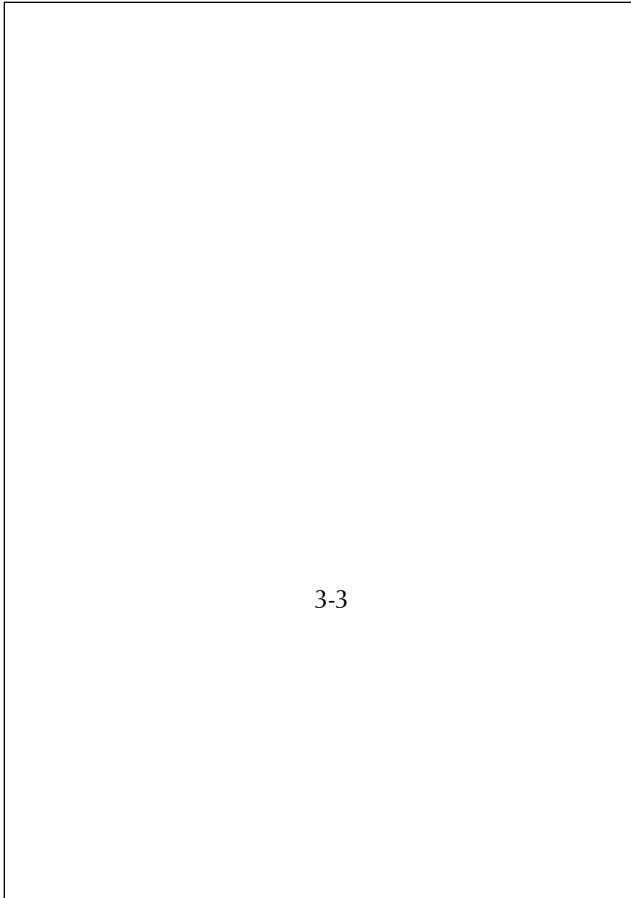
thermore, the *santero* tradition is still represented in contemporary Chicano art. The contemporary works of Manuel Hernández Trujillo (Bacalski-Martínez 1979) reflect the blending of Spanish and Mexican Indian folk elements in a Chicano folk art form.

Retablos—religious paintings on tin or wood—can be traced to early Christian reliquary boxes and to twelfth and thirteenth century Spanish altars (Giffords 1974, 1991). Mexican and Southwestern *retablos* were not meant to be decorative items, instead they were designed for household religious devotion. The respective religious images of the *retablos* were painted on wooden tablets, and pieces of tin or leather, for the purpose of private devotion (Walker, Ely, and Hall 1944; Giffords 1974, 1991). In recent years, *retablos* have become a target of private collectors intent on commercializing or preserving the images in question.

In early California, some twenty-one saints, in addition to images of the *Virgen de Guadalupe*, the *Santo Niño de Atocha*, *San Martín de Porras*, and others,

served as the primary subject-matter of devotional imagery. Neuerburg (1989, 1) indicates that “images of the saints of the Roman Catholic church, whether two-dimensional or three, served a double function in the California missions as visual aids and as objects of devotion.” This dual function continues to characterize the use of *retablos* and other devotional imagery in the Hispanic community.

Both *bultos* and *retablos* represent folk- or home-crafted reproductions of devotional items that were either beyond the economic needs of the devotee, or were items not readily available in the marketplace. Because many Hispanic households could not afford such religious images or reliquary, Hispanic artists reproduced religious items that had originally been imported. Because *retablos* constituted a major aspect of popular religious iconography, they were once readily available to *campesinos*, or laborers, as well as to the members of the upper class. *Santos* and *retablos* were produced because not everyone could afford imported originals, or the imports were not readily



3-3

This facade, from the mission of San José y San Miguel de Aguayo, San Antonio, Texas, is exemplary in its use of sculpted stone *santos*. (Photo by Rubén G. Mendoza, © 1990.)

available. Regardless of the social classes involved, the demand for *retablos* led to the development of a distinct artistic tradition very different from that of the European originals (Dickey 1949).

Several factors facilitated the proliferation of *retablos* painted on tin. First, canvas and wooden objects were highly susceptible to the elements. Such objects of art and devotion had short life-spans, and therefore other materials were sought. Second, tin was readily available in Mexico since before the arrival of the Spaniards. Because tinsplate production in Mexico is relatively recent, questions remain whether the tinsplate used was of English or Mexican extraction. Yet, the major production zones for *retablo* craftsmanship are found proximal to sources of raw tin (Giffords 1974, 1991).

A close corollary to *santos* and *retablos* is the home altar. As with *santos* and *retablos* home altars served as household substitutes for church and mission altars. In the absence of a church people constructed their own home altars. Every home had an altar, *nicho*,

gruta, or field cross for private worship (Griffith 1988, 79). Itinerant priests employed home altars to perform baptisms, marriages, confirmations, and occasionally the Holy Mass. Some altars were more elaborate than others. The elaboration of the home altar depended on the patron saint of the respective community, and how many other favorite saints were invoked. In addition, the special needs of the supplicant, be they related to rain, health, or wealth, dictated the numbers of images, *retablos*, or *bultos* displayed upon the home altar or within a *nicho*. Images of saints, flowers, rosaries, candles, *milagros*, and other items, are common articles of faith used with home altars. *Altares* can be found in many contemporary Hispanic homes of the Southwest (Turner 1982, 1983). The chapter by Morales in this volume discusses the use, construction, and associated technologies of home altars among Puerto Rican and Cuban Americans.

Alabados are religious prayers and hymns that continue to be used to commemorate the lives of saints. *Alabados* serve to celebrate religious feasts (which include Easter, Christmas, and other holy days). These hymns and ballads are versions of those printed in Spain in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Many of the hymns have been handwritten in *cuadernos*, or song books, and passed down from generation to generation. Most of these hymns can be traced directly to the Iberian Peninsula and the colonial period (Bacalski-Martínez 1979; Espinoza 1985). Sung in a characteristically unique tone, *alabados* “. . . provided an adequate means for expressing . . . religious sentiments and kept the mysteries of Christ’s birth, passion, death, and resurrection ever before the people in simple, yet lovely, imagery” (Bacalski-Martínez 1979, 28). Of the *alabados* used in *penitente* devotion, none are contemporary. The hymns used are composed in the traditional octosyllabic quatrains of the sixteenth century (Espinoza 1985). Shorter, more modern, versions of the *alabados* have emerged, and occasionally, new verses have been added to the originals. In addition to celebrating the passion of Christ, the most common theme of the more popular *alabados* concerns the Holy Family. Many of the ballads commemorate the life of the Christ Child and the virgin mother Mary, or *La Guadalupana*. Representations, altars, prayers and hymns pertaining to the Holy Family, and a whole host of other saints, complement the existence of a broad Hispanic folk-medicine complex.

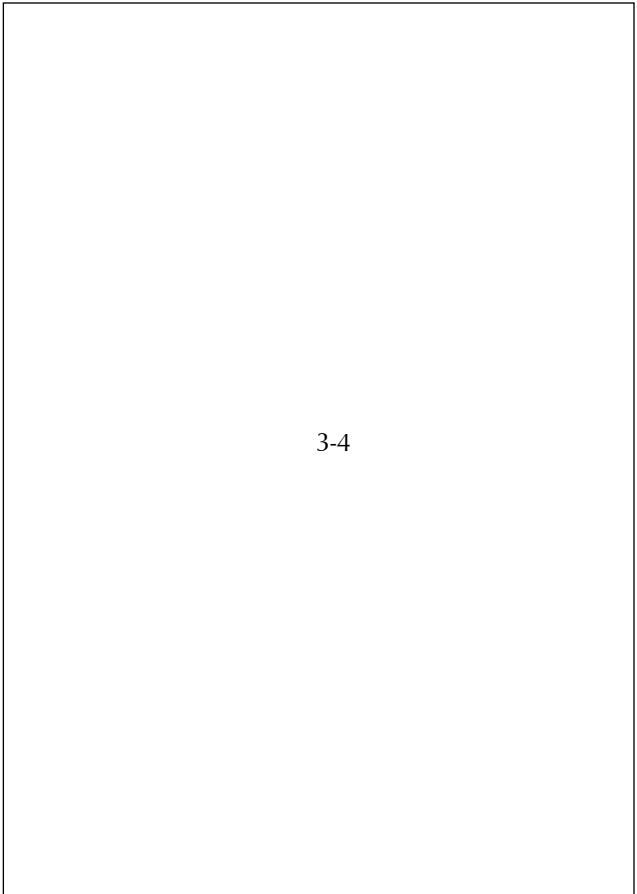
Ethnomedicinal Technologies

Just as the church influenced the production of *altares*, *bultos*, *alabados*, *retablos*, and other folk material

culture, the church has had a permanent impact on Hispanic cultural beliefs pertaining to health, illness and medicine. This folk complex of religious beliefs in turn makes extensive use of a church-based religious iconography and material culture. Ethnomedicine or folk medicine, as embodied in Mexican American *curanderismo*, Cuban American *santería*, and Puerto Rican *espiritismo* provides different examples of the incorporation and modification of indigenous, African, and Spanish religious forms and customs. The preexisting indigenous pantheon and the multiplicity of Catholic saints facilitated the transformation of these traditions. Like the Catholic saints, who were specialists in curing specific diseases or patrons of specific communities, non-Christian deities were also guardians and healers (Ortiz de Montellano 1990). In turn, native medicinal practices were incorporated into the folk repertoire disguised with a gloss of Christianity. In the process of incorporation, the hallucinogen *peyotl* became “Mary’s rose” and the remedy “*atlinan*” became “St. Mary’s herb” (Ortiz de Montellano 1990, 203). Catholic prayers and hymns were interspersed with African and indigenous incantations. The process of syncretism also took the form of reverse acculturation as Spanish settlers incorporated native drugs into their pharmacopoeia of “academic” medicines (Ortiz de Montellano 1990). The dynamics of this syncretism include a rediscovery and revitalization of indigenous, African, European, and other contemporary cultural elements (Kay 1977), which include the use of home altars, *santos*, *velas* or candles, religious relics, *rosarios* or rosaries, crosses, and beads. A predominant theme linking the three different systems of Hispanic faith healing, *curanderismo*, *santería*, and *espiritismo*, is the belief in supernatural intervention in health, illness, and healing. The outcome of the transculturation process is different as a result of differing historical conditions and experiences. Ultimately, folk medicine is another example of the intense attachment North American Hispanics have with their indigenous roots and Hispanic heritage.

Santería

Santería, which literally means saint-worship, developed in Cuba about 300 years ago as a result of very unique historical, religious, racial and social conditions (Alonso and Jeffrey 1988). However, this complex was known as *Regla Lucumi* or *Regla Ocha*—the term *santería* did not gain widespread use until 40 or 50 years ago (Sandoval 1979). *Santería* is a result of the process of transculturation, a syncretism based on real or perceived similarities between Spanish Catholic saints and Yoruba African gods (González-Wippler 1975; Sandoval 1979). This magico-religious complex has sur-



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The “Rose Window” from the mission of San José y San Miguel de Aguayo, San Antonio, Texas, is covered with an ornate *reredo*. (Photo by Rubén G. Mendoza, © 1990.)

vived acculturation and serves as a vital and dynamic religious, mental health care, and support system to a large cross-section of the Cuban American population (Alonso and Jeffrey 1988; Sandoval 1979). As a support system, *santería* “facilitated the survival of customs, music, languages, legends, traditions and a generalized world view” (Sandoval 1979, 142), a function it continues to fulfill in the Cuban American community.

The African and European roots of this tradition include (a) *Oricha* worship of Yoruba origin, and (b) the cult of the saints, characteristic of European Catholicism. These two traditions were amalgamated into an Afro-Cuban religious system. As such, *santería* is a rich and complex system of beliefs that involves composite saints whose identities are based on African gods and Catholic saints. For example, *Babalu-Aye*, the Yoruba god of epidemics, is combined with Saint Lazarus, patron saint of the sick and infirm (Alonso and Jeffrey 1988, 1188). In essence, *santería* is an eclectic religious system with a wide variety of beliefs and practices that

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Mission compounds were often encircled by high walls or other defensive perimeters, such as this one of the mission at San José y San Miguel de Aguayo in San Antonio, Texas. (Photo by Rubén G. Mendoza, © 1990.)

include, *embruamiento* or the casting of spells and the use of amulets, talismans, charms and medicinal herbs for spiritual and physical ailments. Rituals follow a continuum from simple rites such as the lighting of candles to complex ceremonial rituals performed by *santeros* or spiritual mediums. The social organization of *santería* includes a *santero*, priest or medicine man, and the *fiesta santera*, a gathering of the faithful. Group gatherings occur weekly or whenever members feel there is a need. Religious rituals make use of prayer books, rosaries, encantations, chants, drums, fruit, and the occasional sacrifice of pigs, chickens, and goats.

Born of necessity because of the lack of medical services, Cubans of the colonial era relied on both African healers, their respective pharmacopoeias (Sandoval 1979), and Catholic priests for counseling and prayer. Contemporary practitioners of *santería* utilize modern medicine, but rely on the *santero's* intervention or propitiation for additional insurance. For non-Western medical maladies, where treatment is of a magico-religious nature, the *santero* is the professional of choice (Martínez and Wetli 1982). *Santería* functions as a support system that offers its participants culturally relevant symbols that engender the healing process (Martínez and Wetli 1982). The result of the Afro-European fusion of *santería* is the worship of a god/saint in a highly heterogeneous and flexible religious environment (Sandoval 1979). Associated with the Cuban working class, *santería* provides believers with a rationalization for their ambivalent feelings and loss of

social control (Sandoval 1979). Because of its inherent heterogeneity, *santería* incorporates both benevolent and malevolent aspects (Martínez and Wetli 1982).

Espiritismo

As with Cuban *santería*, *espiritismo* is highly flexible and informal in structure and practice. According to Perez y Mena (1977), Puerto Rican spiritualism in the United States is a syncretism of *santería* and spiritualism that has developed into a form of folk-psychiatry. Intensified syncretism has made it difficult to distinguish between *santería* and *espiritismo*, especially as this pertains to the uses of religious material culture within the Puerto Rican community. *Espiritismo* advocates direct communication with God through intermediaries, such as the saints. This encourages the use of home altars, *santos*, and other religious relics in the Puerto Rican household. Accordingly, *consultas* or consultations require the use of a spiritual intermediary or medium who relies on an inventory of indigenous and Afro-European religious artifacts. Among Puerto Rican spiritualists, anointing the supplicant with oil, and the invocation of prayers is intended to cure bodily ailments as well as to protect against "malicious airs" (Cook 1971). Spiritualists may refer clients to a medical doctor, or prescribe herbal remedies and prayers. Often such remedies are used in combination for optimal effects (Fisch 1968). Ultimately, the practice of *espiritismo*

3-6

In the Southwest, the melding of Spanish, Hispanic and Native American architectural styles has produced a unique hybrid architectural tradition exemplified in this case by DiGrazia's Chapel in Tucson, Arizona. (Photo by Rubén G. Mendoza, © 1989.)

provides its participants an accepted mechanism for coping with personal conflicts and problems while at the same time linking Caribbean traditions with contemporary social needs.

Curanderismo

As with espiritismo and santería, *curanderismo* provides alternative modes for confronting cultural and other structural changes affecting the Mexican American community. Curanderismo, or faith healing, is prevalent among segments of the Mexican American population. As with other cultural transformations previously described, curanderismo emerged as an adaptive technique that met community needs. Lack of medical services in the Southwest fostered the emergence of individuals knowledgeable in folk medical practices (Chávez y Gallegos 1990). However, some practitioners differentiate between curanderos and *medicos*. The difference between these two types of practitioners concerns the use of incantations instead of prayers by

curanderos, and the strong reliance on the invocation of saints by the *medicos* (Chávez y Gallegos 1990).

The flexibility and informal structure curanderismo affords makes it difficult to standardize, categorize, and generalize the many different representations of this particular form of Hispanic ethnomedicine. Again syncretism underlies the formation of this system of belief and practice. Evidence of syncretism can be seen in a common malady, *susto*, often encountered by curanderos or folk healers. Among believers, *susto* is thought to be a consequence of fright, as well as a belief in soul loss (Rubel et al. 1984). Treatment for *susto* relies on magico/religious rituals that include *limpias* or cleansings. *Limpias* make use of a variety of ritual items, which may include *habitos* or religious garments, *mandas* or offerings, rosaries, crosses, candles, eggs, and herbs of both indigenous and European origin. Rue and rosemary may substitute for such traditional herbs as *yauhtli* or "African day flower," also known as *pericón*, and *izatauhyatl* or wormwood (Ortiz de Montelano 1990), herbal remedies originally used by

pre-Columbian peoples of central Mexico. Hispanics continue to believe in and treat *susto*, but acknowledge that fright rather than loss of soul is the etiology of the disease (Ortiz de Montellano 1990). *Limpías* are also used to treat *mal aire* or bad air. In cases of *mal aire* both Catholic and indigenous deities such as lightning and wind are invoked.

Mal de ojo, or the evil eye, represents a case of syncretism with European roots. As in other instances of transculturation, the perceived compatibility of both native and European belief systems facilitated the adoption of the evil eye by indigenous populations (Madsen 1967). Treatment for *mal de ojo* relies on cleansings which make use of the previously mentioned crosses, prayers, and other paraphernalia (Rubel 1960; Madsen 1967; Kay 1977).

Obviously, equally essential to all forms of *curanderismo*, *espiritismo*, and *santería*, is the extensive use of herbs, roots, flowers, plants, and religious artifacts. The ethnomedicinal complex demands that knowledgeable herbalists recognize over 500 different plants known for their medicinal/magical properties. As a

result of the demand for folk remedies, *botanicas*, *yerberias*, or herb shops, have become a prominent feature of Hispanic communities throughout the United States. *Botanicas* stock herbs, votive candles, amulets, statues of Roman Catholic saints, prayer books, and other ritualistic paraphernalia associated with the ethnomedicinal complex. In sum, *curanderismo*, *santería*, and *espiritismo* arose out of a need, or as an adaptive mechanism for resolving cultural conflicts and structural limitations prevalent among working class Hispanics. With the process of transculturation, native etiological explanations for disease may have disappeared, whereas the character of the illness and the cure remain the same (Ortiz de Montellano 1990, 205).

Hispanic Agriculture, Mining and Stock Raising

Ranching, farming, and mining were the primary Spanish- and Mexican-era economic formations introduced into the (colonial and nineteenth century) fron-

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Of the agricultural technologies, the introduction of the *carreta* or wooden cart had a profound impact on the frontier mission economy. (Photo by Rubén G. Mendoza, © 1990.)

tiers of North America. Those features of agricultural technology most pertinent to early Hispanic subsistence introduced by Spanish and *mestizo* colonists and Mexican settlers included irrigation works centered on the use of aqueducts and dams, the harnessing of water power or animal traction for the processing or milling of grains, the introduction of oxen-driven plows (*arado*) and carts (*carretas*), the crafts of wrought-iron and those of the blacksmith, hide and tallow processing, and the ginning of fibers such as cotton. Combined with the intensive and extensive agricultural techniques developed by Puebloan and other Native American groups, the stage was set for both the expansion of (a) the mission programs into eighteenth century California, and (b) the growth and extended settlement of Spanish and later Mexican towns and villages.

Los Mineros

During the course of the early colonial era, Spanish mining techniques, originally introduced in 1548 with

the opening of the silver mines of Zacatecas, and subsequently Guanajuato and Pachuca, resulted in the colonization of Sonora, and eventually the region of *Arissona* or Arizona after 1736 (Officer 1981, 24). The discovery of *bolas de plata* ("round chunks" of silver) and *planchas de plata* (slabs of silver) near *Arissona* provided an initial incentive to colonization in what would eventually become the Arizona Territory (Officer 1981, 25). The missions and *presidios* that served to support the early mining colonies of the Sonoran frontier in turn resulted in the introduction of ranching and agricultural technologies into North America.

During the California gold rush of the 1840s and 50's, it was Mexican (particularly Sonoran) and Chilean miners that introduced Mexican, and reintroduced Spanish, mining techniques and technologies into the California and Arizona gold and silver fields, according to Officer (1981, 9-10)

Mexican and Chilean miners made important contributions to the technology of gold mining in California

Mexican miners maintained an active social life while perpetuating Hispanic traditions and culture in such difficult conditions as those of Metcalf, Arizona, in circa 1908. In this historic photograph, the wedding party and its musicians pose atop the backdirt of a nearby mine, and do so in their finest attire. (Photo by Rubén G. Mendoza, © 1987.)

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In this 1913 photograph, the Sociedad Morelos attends to the task of burying one of their dead miners in Clifton's Mexican cemetery. (Photo by Rubén G. Mendoza, © 1987.)

during the 1850s, and . . . added such words as *placer*, *patio*, and *Chile mill* to the miners' lexicon. Sonorans introduced some of this technology . . . to Arizona between 1854 and 1870, when mining operations in the territory were quite small, and almost entirely related to gold and silver.

When the influx of Anglo American settlers eventually displaced Hispanic miners in Arizona, Sonorans and other Mexicans were quickly relegated to "more menial and hazardous jobs during the developing period of the copper mining industry" (Officer 1981, 10). In the Clifton-Morenci mining district of southeastern Arizona, retired Mexican American miners recall their treatment by mine operators as being likened to that of draft animals—"fuiamos las mulas de las minas" (cf. Mendoza 1987c). This supports observations by Officer (1981, 10) who notes that "the Mexicans were indispensable for the hard, dangerous underground work and, without their contribution, it is difficult to imagine that mining could have so quickly risen to its position of prominence in the Arizona economy." This pattern was repeated throughout those areas of North America where Mexicans and other Hispanics established or otherwise pioneered the development of the mining industry. Despite their respective contributions well into the twentieth century, Mexican and other Hispanic miners were the victims of a discriminatory wage system that resulted in wage disparities between them

and Anglo miners of up to 62% per day (or \$2.50 per day for the Mexican as compared to \$6.50 per day for the Anglo) (Mendoza 1987c, 2). The social, economic, and political costs and consequences of differential wage scaling have been clearly documented for such areas as the Clifton-Morenci mining district (Ciuccio 1975). Despite the hardships and hazards of mining under conditions such as those characterizing life in early Clifton and Morenci, Mexican and other Hispanic miners remained firmly rooted in their culture, language and tradition. The appearance and growth of Hispanic social clubs and mutual aid societies or *mutualistas* clearly played a role in the perpetuation and reproduction of Hispanic traditions throughout North America.

Ranchos y Rodeos

Aspects of traditional agricultural technologies pertaining to stock-raising or ranching economies are specifically related to the *vaquero* (cowboy) or *charro* tradition. The ranching technologies and traditions introduced by the Spanish *vaquero*, Mexican *charro*, or Argentinian *gaucho*, clearly and directly underlie the development of the ranching and rodeo traditions attributed to the famous American cowboy (Campa 1973, 1979). In fact, the *charreada* or rodeo tradition brings together all the major elements of Hispanic ranching and stock raising practices and material culture—including, such technologies as those pertaining to workmanship associated with leather, metalwork (Simmons and Turley 1975, 1980; Probert 1976), silverwork (Johnson 1944; Boylan 1974), braided and woven textiles or *tejido* (Nestor 1978, 1979), woodcraft (Barker 1930; Jones 1932; Briggs 1980), *artesanías* or folkcraft, hat- and boot-making, and religious ritual.

Rodeo, or literally "round-up," was an adaptive ranching technique for controlling livestock in the wide open spaces of the Southwest. The rodeo entailed the use of *vaqueros*, or cowboys, to create a human circle around stock animals. Control of the animals was achieved by making the human corral progressively smaller. This process was utilized to herd livestock into manageable groups for the purposes of identification of the different cattle "brands," as well as to brand or mark unbranded livestock (Gibson 1973). Branding cattle is a concept and procedure the Spanish acquired from the Moors and brought to America. Today's American branding laws and brand registration systems are directly derived from the Spanish-Mexican tradition (Hoskins 1972; McWilliams 1990).

The *vaquero's* trade tools included saddles, chaps, saddle blankets, lariats, reins, bridles, spurs, branding irons, and a whole host of "rodeo" arena games, all of

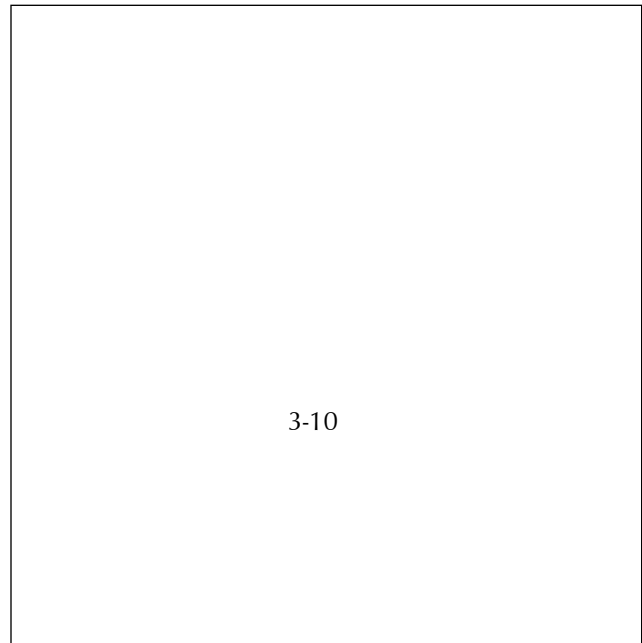
which were of Spanish or Mexican origin dating back to the colonial period (Woodward 1953; Ahlborn 1983; McWilliams 1990; Graham 1991). In fact, according to Campa (1973, 20), if you take away his *chaparreras* (chaps), his *reata* (lariat), *sombrero* (hat), *remuda* (relay of horses), and *rodeo*, the American hero, the cowboy, vanishes. It is the Hispanic influence that transformed the midwestern farmer into the cowboy of American folklore. Even the signature piece of every cowboy, the “ten gallon hat,” comes from a mistranslation of a Spanish phrase “*su sombrero galoneado*,” is a Spanish song phrase referring to a festooned *sombrero* (McWilliams 1990). Similarly, leather and iron art forms were needed for the ranching industry, and can be traced to the early mission period (Jasper and Turner 1991). Most of these items survive today, however, they are mass-produced rather than hand-crafted in the traditional fashion. A primary “tool” of the vaquero was and continues to be the cowboy boot. Such footwear was adopted to the tasks required of the vaquero. The boot’s high heels prevented the vaquero’s foot from slipping through the stirrup, and the pointed toe of the boot made it easy to guide the foot into the stirrup (Graham 1991).

Traditional Folk Arts and Crafts

Of the aspects of material culture discussed thus far, traditional Hispanic folk arts and crafts exhibit the greatest longevity and popular and commercial appeal (Boyd 1974; Wroth 1977). From the working of silver to tin, wood to metal, and leather to paper and other fibers, Hispanic folk crafts play perhaps the greatest role in the reproduction of Hispanic material culture in North America. Given the diversity of folk arts and crafts, and the discussion of a number of these crafts in other contexts, above, our remaining review considers only the crafts of *colchas* or quilts, and *piñata*-making, and closes with a consideration of the art and message of Hispanic mural-making in the United States.

Colchas de Pegaduras

Quilts or *colchas* (James 1963) were an aspect of the material culture that the Spanish brought to the New World. Historically, quilting was a traditional activity of Hispanic women of the Southwest largely out of necessity, since these items could not be found in retail stores. Quilting required that women make do with whatever materials were available, including remnants of material from discarded shirts, dresses, flour sacks, and other items (Cantú and Zapata Vela 1991). The use of remnants added sentimental value to the functional value inherent in *colchas*. Patchwork quilts, or *colchas de*



3-10

The *charros* or Mexican cowboys of today are heirs to a tradition extending to the earliest period of Spanish colonization in the Americas. (Photo by Rubén G. Mendoza, © 1988.)

pegaduras, crafted from cast-off materials are not as common in the Hispanic community today as they were in the past. However, today quilting is enjoying a renaissance, not out of necessity, but out of nostalgia.

Modern materials are readily available and do not require the intensive planning and labor that characterized ancestral quilts. For Hispanic women of yesteryear, quilting was both functional and social. Quilts provided warmth and comfort for the family, and their production served as a forum for social gatherings by and for women. Yet, the task was laborious. Crafting a quilt started with collecting scrap materials or remnants for the *colchas de pegaduras*. Wool collected during shearing season, goes through several preparatory steps before carding. First, the wool is set in the sun for several days in order to loosen oil and grease adhered to the wool. Second, the wool is washed with soap. The third step, the *bariada*, entailed beating the wool with a stick so as to loosen unwanted materials. Fourth, came the *descamenada*, a tearing process whereby the wool was separated and cleaned. Children often participated in the *bariada* and *descamenada* procedures. These preparatory steps in quilt-crafting were slow and tedious. Wool prepared in this manner was also spun (pulled and rolled) into long threads for weaving blankets, scarves, and other woven items. Once the wool was thoroughly cleansed, the final step in the wool preparation process involved carding the wool into car-

3-11

Ornate saddles, saddle blankets and *sombreros* are a mainstay of the Mexican cowboy or *charro*. (Photo by Rubén G. Mendoza, © 1990.)

dados, or uniform strips of fluffed wool (Cantú and Zapata Vela 1991). The wool prepared in this manner was used as a stuffing for the inside of the quilt.

Quilt covers can be prepared before or after the wool is processed. The choice usually depends on individual preferences or on the type of quilt cover to be used. Patchwork covers usually require much more time and preparation. Once the wool and quilt cover is ready, the cover is attached to the quilting frame. The crafting of the quilting frame is normally a male contribution to the process. The actual stitching of the quilt is where the social aspect of quilting begins. Family and friends gather and become involved in the social, but productive, process of quilting. The end product, a thing of beauty, is on its way to becoming a family heirloom.

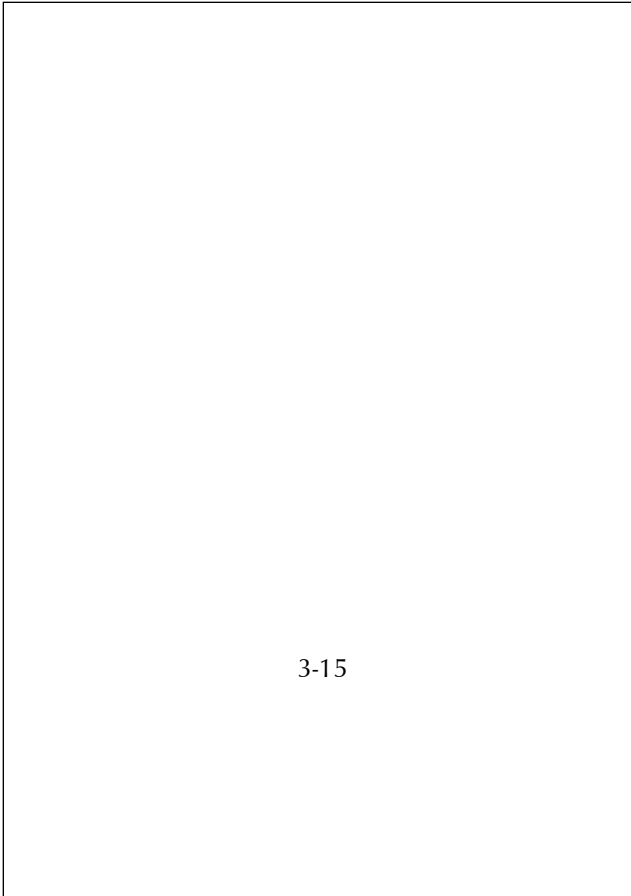
La Piñata

The *piñata* has become an integral part of celebrations within the Hispanic community (Griffith 1983). Celebrations, such as *Fiestas Patrias*, *quinceñeras*, birthdays, bap-

tisms, and weddings, all serve as focal events during which *piñatas* are featured (Melville 1978; Griffith 1983, 1988; González 1991). While there is no definitive explanation for the origins of the *piñata*, its widespread use throughout Mexico and the American Southwest is well recognized. The Augustinian church of Acolman, Mexico, lays claim to the origins of the tradition of *piñata*-making. According to one tradition, related by an informant to one of us while on a visit to Acolman, Mexico (Mendoza 1990), the friars of the church of Acolman employed the *piñata* as a symbol of the battle between good and evil. Accordingly, the blindfold (worn by the child put to the task of breaking the *piñata*) symbolized faith (blind faith, no less). The *piñata* itself represented any number of animals, creatures, or demons associated with biblical accounts of the evil satan, his demonic appearance, or his devilish representatives. The object of this spiritual game was for the faithful to seek out and destroy satan, for by doing so, the object of faith would bring forth earthly rewards—in this case represented by the respective contents of the *piñata*. Today, the *piñata* serves an integral role in Christmas-time folk religious celebrations known as *posadas* (Toor 1947; MacGregor-Villareal 1980). Traditionally, the *piñata* was made of a *jarro*, or an earthenware pot or jar, covered with brightly colored *papier-mâché* and shaped into a variety of forms. The *piñata* was filled with candy for the celebrations. Today many *piñateros* prefer to use *carrizo* (river cane) for the *armazón*, or framework. *Carrizo*, or river cane, is less expensive, lighter, and a safer material. The use of *carrizo* eliminates the danger of ceramic fragments injuring children during the breaking of the *piñata* (González 1991). The form of *piñatas* today is limited only by the imagination of the consumer (Griffith 1983). In an exhibit at the Festival of American Folklife held at the Smithsonian Institution, Don Cipriano, a *piñata*-maker from Laredo, Texas, made a *piñata* in the image of former President Reagan (González 1991). Everything from wedding cakes to Ninja Turtles can be seen dangling from a rope ready for celebration. Ultimately, contemporary *piñatas* are distinct from their colonial-era counterparts largely by virtue of the contemporary materials, construction methods, and dominant icons and images portrayed. And while the original religious message may now be lost or veiled, *piñatas* are clearly a major focus of Hispanic, and particularly Mexican American, folk Catholicism, *fiestas* and ceremonialism.

Hispanic Community Murals and Social Technology

Emblazoned across the walls of buildings in *barrios*, *colonias*, and ghettos alike, the street mural—or



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In Hispanic communities throughout the United States, the Mexican *piñata* serves as a focal event and game for children. (Photo by Rubén G. Mendoza, © 1989.)

“streetscape”—is one of the premier cultural texts of Hispanic communities throughout the United States (Cockcroft et al. 1977; González 1982; Barnett 1984; Mendoza 1987a, 1987b). While “community murals” (Barnett 1984), “streetscapes” (Mendoza 1987a, 1987b), or other Hispanic wall paintings are more appropriately couched within the realm of public arts (Kahn 1975), their existence within Mexican or Chicano, Cuban American, and Puerto Rican American or *Puertorriqueño* communities (Cockcroft et al. 1977), and the diversity of Hispanic social, political, and religious themes involved (Garcia 1978) provide one other point of departure for our review of Hispanic material culture and technology.

People’s Art and History

Alan W. Barnett (1984, 464) defines community murals as both “people’s art” and as an “appropriate technology.” By “appropriate technology,” Barnett (1984) is referring to the prime objectives of contemporary mural-making—that is, social protest and cultural

identity. As an “appropriate technology,” then, murals represent a community’s “efforts to humanize ordinary production by meeting the social and cultural needs of workers and users . . . In short, the mural’s represent an effort shared with other forms of appropriate technology to make production democratic and humane” (Barnett 1984, 464, 466). In turn, it can be argued that community murals represent both a community’s cultural “text” and context. Whether the result of ecclesiastical doctrines promoted in sixteenth century Spanish America, or the social protest works of twentieth century Chicanos or *Puertorriqueños*, Hispanic muralism is a social barometer of the culture, society, and polity of each respective generation. As a community technology of the *barrio* and inner-city ghetto, its ubiquity in North America’s Hispanic communities is unmistakable.

In addition to the many cultural and religious themes depicted in the context of Hispanic muralism, a diverse array of elements of historic and modern material culture are prominently represented. Whether represented by images of colonial mission architecture, historic clothing styles, or cultural, religious, and social icons, Hispanic muralism is clearly a barometer of a community’s identification with its history, traditions, and contemporary culture heroes. The history of Hispanic muralism may be traced to the earliest periods of Spanish settlement in the Americas (Smith 1968, 169, 174-75). The earliest colonial images produced generally represented the doctrines of both church and state, as well as the religious and political iconography of the times. In New Spain, specifically the areas of Puebla and Cuernavaca, Mexico, the earliest colonial murals date from the mid to late sixteenth century (e.g. circa A.D. 1585 for Huejotzingo, Puebla, Mexico; Smith 1968, 169). The influence of American Indian craftsmen, builders, painters and sculptors on the repertoire of colonial period imagery is clearly evident in the iconography, sculpture, painting, and architecture of the New World, particularly as it pertains to New Spain (Reyes-Valerio 1978). The syncretic melding of Spanish or Iberian and American Indian or Native American iconographic styles, spiritual and social themes, and artistic techniques is evident in all areas of the Americas affected by the Spanish colonial program (West and Augelli 1966; Reyes-Valerio 1978; Monterrosa Prado 1979).

Much of the colonial tradition of muralism was borne of the institutional agenda targeting the religious conversion and enculturation of the American Indian. The use of painted murals, icons and images was a means by which to transcend the social, cultural, and linguistic barriers inherent in Spanish and American Indian interactions. By the advent of the Spanish conquest and initial colonization of New Spain,

Mesoamerica was heir to an ancient fifteen-hundred year old tradition of public muralism. The use of murals and brightly painted icons in the churches and missions of much of colonial America was readily transferred into North America with the earliest sixteenth century campaigns of colonization and missionization. The didactic functions of church and mission murals was effective from the outset, and the spread and proliferation of religious icons, artistic styles, and Spanish traditions readily facilitated the reproduction of Spanish art, religion, and society (Neuerburg 1989a, 1989b).

The Contemporary Mural Movement

The birth of the contemporary mural movement in Hispanic communities throughout the United States has more direct antecedents in the works of such Mexican muralists as Diego Rivera, David Alfaro Siqueiros, and José Clemente Orozco, all of whom produced highly publicized murals, or public art commissions, in the United States during the 1920s and 30s. While no clear continuity connects the works of the aforementioned Mexican muralists with the contributions of the contemporary mural movement, the New Deal murals of the 1930s clearly serve to bridge the isolated contributions of the Mexican masters with the general popularity of contemporary public murals in Hispanic and African American communities throughout the United States.

The birth of the contemporary "streetscape" or community mural tradition clearly coincides with the emergence of Hispanic and African American social protest movements of the 1960s and 70s. Urban poverty, ethnic and racial discrimination, a growing Latino immigrant population, and the disproportionate representation of Hispanics and other minorities in the Vietnam War, was at the heart of the growing discontent felt by Hispanics in the late 1960s. Social protest, activism, and a striving for cultural "roots" and identity became a hallmark of Hispanic political and educational reform efforts of the 1970s. As a result of these trends, Hispanics and African Americans from communities throughout the United States promoted the beginnings of the contemporary mural movement as a means of generating pride at the community level, while at the same time employing these same murals as a form of social protest. In one such mural painted on New York's Lower East Side in 1975, and entitled "Women Hold Up Half the Sky"

The claim of the title is driven home by a huge image of the Statue of Liberty pushing up out of the schoolyard. Her arm is alive

with scenes of women's labor, care and struggle. From her eye a woman peers out between bars, and the statue's crown has become a chain whose links are marked Poverty, Prison, Last Hired First Fired, Prostitution, and Racism. Liberty's torch lights up the sky from which women of all colors appear, breaking their chains, taking one another's hands and waving back at us, as one holds out a book inscribed with the names of Harriet Tubman, Rosa Luxemburg, Rosa Parks, Lolita Lebrón, Joan Little, and Ramona Para. Barnett (1984, 219)

Ultimately, Chicano, *Puertorriqueño*, and *Cubano* communities across the United States developed and shared in the formation of the Hispanic tradition of mural-making and "streetscape" social protest art. Many of today's most accomplished Hispanic muralists, such as José and Malaquias Montoya, Judy Baca, Ray Patlan, Herron and Gronk, Carlos Almaraz, Alfredo Hernández, Antonio Pazos, Salvador Torrez, and Martin Moreno trace their earliest community mural contributions to the late 1960s and mid-1970s (Barnett 1984; Miller 1990). These artists, many of whom have produced both community and commercial works, continue to focus on social protest, ethnic and cultural pride, and spiritual and heroic themes.

In the *Puertorriqueño* and *Cubano* communities of New York City, including the Lower East Side, Spanish Harlem, and Washington and Morningside Heights, community murals promote the history and pride of all *Latinos* while simultaneously serving as a chronicle of resistance in the continuing struggle to overcome poverty, oppression, substandard housing practices, and other social inequities (Barnett 1984, 214-20). Titles such as "*Plaza Caribe*" (1974), "*The Allende Mural*" (1973), "*¡Liberación!*" (1974), "*Museo del Barrio*" (1974), "*Espíritu Latino*" (1978), "*Puerto Rican Heritage*" (1975), "*Puerto Rico Libre*" (1975), and "*Work, Education, and Struggle: Seeds for Progressive Change*" (1975), reflect the prevailing mural themes of the mid to late 1970s. *Puertorriqueño* and Cuban American mural "masters" of the 1970's, including Alfredo Hernández, Mario Galán, and Eddie Aliseo (Barnett 1984), emphasized racial pride, *Afro-Indio* or *Latino* music, Hispanic and *Latino* historical traditions, politics, and culture in their respective works. In the "*Puerto Rican Heritage*" mural of the "*Loisaida*" section of New York's Lower East Side,

The mural rises with vignettes of the Tainos, the native people, the Spanish conquest, and nineteenth- and twentieth-century leaders.

There are also a *piraquero* (snowcone seller) and his cart and Roberto Clemente, the Puerto-ricano Pittsburgh Pirates star who had been killed in 1973 during a flight to bring aid to earthquake victims in Nicaragua. All are capped with a rainbow. Barnett (1984, 219)

Given the titles, themes, and politics that dominate *Puertorriqueño* community murals, sentiments of Puerto Rican nationalism and independence are evident in the artistic community. However, no clear community consensus exists with regard to such issues, and divisions clearly exist between Puerto Rican neighborhoods supporting statehood versus those that argue for Puerto Rican independence. Despite the clear political intent of such an art form, *Puertorriqueño* murals clearly depict a broad variety of elements pertaining to Puerto Rican material culture, iconography, and social traditions.

The material culture depicted in Hispanic murals of the eastern seaboard spans the gamut of Puerto Rican, Cuban, and Caribbean cultural, social, economic and religious artifacts. The Hispanic “image bank” of the murals in question includes the colorful Puerto Rican *piraquero* snowcone carts of New York, Caribbean and other *Latino* musical instruments, the ritual paraphernalia of *santería*, *espiritismo*, and *curanderismo*, and the colorful clothing, elaborate *fiestas*, architecture and peoples of the Caribbean, and by extension, the *Latino* enclave communities of the eastern seaboard of the United States.

In such cities as Chicago, Los Angeles, El Paso, Tucson, Santa Fe, Denver, and San Diego, Hispanic murals are clearly dominated by Mexican, Chicano, and other *Latino* traditions. In the city of Los Angeles, over 1000 Chicano and other *Latino* murals may be documented at any one time (Barnett 1984). The transient political, social, and economic messages emblazoned across Chicano *barrio* walls are the ephemeral texts of the contemporary Chicano underclass and youth counterculture. “Streetscape” themes in such contexts include depictions of a broad and eclectic range of Hispanic–Mexican Indian, *mestizo*, and Spanish–sociocultural and political themes. Given the rich and diverse origins of the Mexican American tradition, Chicano “streetscape” imagery is divisible into four dominant artistic dialects based in large part on ethnic and cultural texts, themes, and other distinctions. The prevailing dialects or cultural texts center on (a) Native American or Mexican Indian culture, iconography, and roots, (b) Spanish, Iberian, or other elements of the Hispanic tradition, especially as these pertain to the conquest and colonization of the Americas, (c) agrarian, folk, *mestizo* and *raza* or people’s culture, politics, art and aspirations,

and lastly, (d) the countercultural texts of the Chicano youth subculture. Taken together, the artistic dialects and cultural texts incorporated into the painted surfaces of the community mural serve to document the historical experience of Hispanic Americans within an informal or ephemeral cultural and political context. Whether images of armor-clad Spanish *conquistadores*, Aztec, Maya, Taino, or Caribe peoples and their monumental temples and villages, or Mexican American culture heroes and Chicano “Low Rider” vehicles, community murals in *barrios* throughout North America serve to underscore the rich cultural legacy of the Hispanic community.

Continuity and Compromise: Conclusions

As illustrated throughout this essay, the fusion of Spanish colonial conventions or stylistic dialects with indigenous, Mexican, African, Latino, and ultimately, Anglo American elements has resulted in the cultural reproduction of a much broader and more eclectic Hispanic American tradition. Though not all aspects of Spanish colonial tradition are reflected in contemporary Hispanic developmental patterns, the very names of major North American towns, elements of the material culture, food repertoire, fine arts, religion, and language make evident the tremendous impact of Spain and her culture on the peoples of Latin America and the United States. In the final analysis, the question, then, centers on what dimensions of continuity and compromise have contributed to the perpetuation, elaboration, and transformation of Hispanic material culture?

While continuity, or tradition, may easily be conceived of as representing a form of cultural stasis, clearly, where material culture is concerned, the concept of cultural stasis should not be confused with social stasis. While the artifact—or element of the material culture—may itself remain physically or stylistically immutable, the social and cultural dynamics defining the objects’ value to society is ever changing as long as the artifact or assemblage continues to maintain some utilitarian or symbolic value. Whereas quilt-making was once borne of necessity, today, quilt makers have transformed the craft into an eclectic ethnic art form that links them to the past, and perpetuates important values into the future. As such, quilting transcends utilitarian functions. In the same way, while the material aspects of contemporary *santería* may suggest a static socio-religious pattern, a closer examination of this Cuban American tradition clearly indicates that the psychodynamics are an immediate reflex of an everchanging social landscape.

The culturally and socially significant dimensions of continuity, or tradition and survival, and compromise, or assimilation, acculturation, and transformation are here thought to serve significant complementary roles in the description of Hispanic material culture. Consequently, where Hispanic material culture is concerned, the notions of tradition and continuity are not in and of themselves intended to impart the idea that these elements are socially, culturally, or physically immutable. Nevertheless, the underlying symbolic value of such features as "streetscape" muralism, home altars, the *charro's* outfit, and *piñatas*, undeniably continue to impart a sense of ethnic identity, and cultural pride and continuity within Hispanic communities throughout the United States.

Ultimately, the original colonial agenda was to incorporate and integrate native populations into the overall cultural pattern represented by the Spanish empire. Today, syncretic or conjoined traditions derived from Spanish colonial, Mexican, Native American, and African religious beliefs, practices, and cultural features testify to the success of the Spanish colonial agenda as well as to the dynamics of continuity and compromise.



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