

From La Telaraña to Downtown: The Appropriation of Colonial Trappings in the Latino/a Imagination

ROBERT ALEXANDER GONZALEZ
University of California, Berkeley

This paper explores the way the Latino/a community has used aesthetic and symbolic imagery to explore its urban self-identity, specifically, its use of the Meso-American Indian, which is tied to the groups adoption of the mythic homeland of Aztlan in the 1960s, and other forms of colonial “trappings.” To do this, I turn to “imagined” contexts where Latino/a’s have constructed temporary realities. I begin by briefly looking at *La Telaraña* (World Wide Web), a free space where autonomous exploration by any group occurs, to familiarize ourselves with present-day ethnic rhetoric as it relates to place-making. I then turn my attention to urban public rituals where another form of collective suspension of reality takes place, such as in the colonial-laden parades of Santa Fe, New Mexico and in Laredo, Texas. While the Internet will provide an opportu-

nity to view the construction of fictive public realms, such as electronic *mercados* and *zocalos*, the development of the George and Martha Washington Parade in Laredo will demonstrate a similar ethnic-coding take place in that city over time. I will conclude with a call for a more active discussion regarding the colonial or pre-colonial “trappings” that overwhelm the Latino/a’s building palette. Because the two “imagined” worlds that I present, the virtual and the ritual, suggest that a certain level of mock design has already taken place, I would like to bring to question whether they should be viewed as viable cues or cautionary omens.

Editor's note: The full text of this paper was unavailable at the time of publication.