

LATIN AMERICAN CULTURE – Early Modern Period

Overview When the Europeans arrived, cultural productions reflected the clash of civilizations in ways were sometimes triumphant, but more frequently terribly conflicted, tragic, and driven by a desire to do everything possible to expunge the record of the greatness of the indigenous civilizations and to replace them with a demonic Other. Perhaps what is most fascinating about the centuries after the arrival of Columbus, is how the local indigenous artists simply fused their culture with the new one, with gloriously spectacular results

VERBAL ARTS

Literature

Letters: After the arrival of the Europeans, letters became an important form of communication, not just to inform the authorities and funding sources in Europe of conditions and needs, but to also frame a narrative that described the culture, religious rituals, architecture, food, clothing, and other important anthropological information. Needless to say, they were described from the vantage point of the writers, whose purpose was often to support a specific ideological or political agenda. So, the narratives were not at all neutral. After he returned to Spain after his first voyage, Cristobal Colon (Christopher Columbus) described the voyage, encounters with the indigenous peoples, and the culture. His goal was to obtain funding for future voyages. This letter, printed in Latin, became extremely influential. In Mexico, Hernan Cortes wrote elaborate and fascinating descriptions of Tenochtitlan and the Valley of Mexico, with their floating gardens, markets, and daily life. His letters were sent to Carlos V, with the goal of continued financial support. Bartolome de las Casas wrote to defend the rights of the Amerindians and to describe the inhumane abuses. In South America, El Inca Garcilaso de la Vega chronicled the history of Peru, including the civil wars between the Spanish conquistadores of Peru.

Poetry: The Catholic Church was very wary of literature, worried about the possibility of subversion and destabilization. They held an Inquisition mindset, imported from Europe and shaped by the centuries of conflict to wrest control of the Iberian peninsula from the non-Christians. For centuries, the Moors, who were largely Muslim, had dominated the political sphere, and Sephardic Jews had dominated proto-banking. As a result, the Church and colonial government worked together to censor literature and carefully review anything that was imported or published locally. Not surprisingly, this chokehold on creative expression had a dampening effect on literary production, and only stylistically conservative work tended to be published. Thus, the accomplishments of Sor Juana Ines de la Cruz are all the more remarkable, especially given that her sonnets, long poem, and philosophical epistolary essay, all chafe at the bonds / limitations of women.

Philosophical Essays: Some of the letters and treatises that were written during the Colonial period would best be described as philosophical treatises, particularly since they address the ethical treatment of Africans and Amerindians, the rights (or lack of rights) of women, the nature of reality.

Drama: Dramatic productions tended to fall into two different categories: first, the narrative performative enactments of the Church and in folkloric dance, both of which usually revolved around religion and represent a fusion of European, African, and indigenous cultures; and formal drama following European genres which were often written and performed in honor of the colonial governor or viceroy's events.

Novel: In Spain, the picaresque novel, *Lazarillo de Tormes*, broke new ground as the first extended narrative / novel. In Mexico, satires were considered particularly dangerous, and so when Jose Joaquin Fernandez de Lizardi wrote *El Periquillo Sarmiento* (The Mangy Parrot) as a critique of the newly independent Mexico, it was not embraced with open arms. In fact, the publication was delayed, due to

controversy. It was, in many ways, a direct response to the hyper-idealistic revolutionary essays. This work straddles Colonial and the nineteenth century works from the newly independent nations.

Discussion:

What was the function of diaries and autobiographical writings immediately after the Europeans began invading Latin America? What were some of the topics that were covered, and what did they reveal about the author's mindsets or rhetorical goals?

Readings

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Language

Spanish: Spanish is the language of the Conquistadores, and thus became the "lingua franca" of all of Latin America. That said, there are wide variations regional usage. Colombia became the enforcer of a standard Spanish, and maintained its continuity and consistency. Perhaps the most pronounced regional variations occur in Argentina and also in the Caribbean, where a kind of "creole" can be found. In Argentina and Uruguay, the "castellano rioplatense" is spoken. It utilizes elements of archaic Spanish ("voseo") and its intonation bears a resemblance to Neopolitan Italian, from which a number of the inhabitants immigrated.

Portuguese: Because of the relative isolation of Portugal from its colony, and the fairly independent administration, the language was able to morph into a very distinctive dialect which has pronunciation patterns quite different from Portugal, or of African colonies' Portuguese, for that matter. Brazilian Portuguese has been an important literary language as Brazil produced a great number of poets, novelists, essayists, and philosophers.

French: French is spoken in the former French colonies, particularly in Haiti. French has been influenced by African languages, as well as voodoo culture, resulting in a Creole dialect that can be quite difficult for outsiders to understand.

English: English was the language of colonies settled by English pirates, adventurers, and plantation owners. English is the original language of Belize, Virgin Islands, and other islands. It is closer to British English than American English.

Dutch: Spoken in former Dutch colonies, which include Aruba, Sint Maartens, and Suriname, Dutch continues to be an important conduit for government, economic assistance, tourism, and resource development (offshore oil and gas development, for example).

German: Spoken in Argentina, Paraguay, Chile, Mexico, Brazil and in other countries where mining engineers and Mennonite settlers decided to live and contribute to society. In some cases, due to being cut off from Germany itself and becoming peripheral isolates, the German spoken by the cut-off groups can be quite archaic.

Discussion

There are subgroups in Latin America that fiercely preserve their special languages, and the languages within their languages (idiolects). For example, the Mennonites in Mexico, Ecuador, Peru, and Paraguay speak an archaic German that helps them communicate as a group. Explain how language groups may have a unifying impact on a group.

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Script

Spanish script for official archives: Archives were maintained by the Catholic Church and also the Viceroyalties of the Spanish Crown. They tended to be handwritten by scribes on parchment documents, or entered into official leather-bound books kept at each parish's main church.

Early Printing Press: The first printing press in the New World was set up in Mexico City in 1539. It was a revolutionary technology, and permission had to be granted by Spanish king Carlos V and the archbishop of Mexico City. The house of the first printing press is called "Casa de la Primera Imprenta de America), and in its first years, at least 35 books were produced by Juan Pablos, from 1540 and 1560. The documents that were printed were related to viceregal and Church-related topics, which included a brief catechism to distribute to parishioners.

Discussion

When reading is universal, but writing the domain of a privileged few the actual printed word possesses a great deal more authority, to the point that it can take on the weight of a sacred text or a royal edict. Thus, in the years before the printing press, documents were written by scribes and kept under lock and key. The printing press changed all that. It made information more easily obtainable and encouraged literacy. It also encouraged people to act on their dreams. For example, the tales of the explorers' exploits in "The New World" motivated many to make the arduous journey to try their luck. Discuss the different impacts of the printing press on and within Latin America.

Reading

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Mythology

The Guaraní of Brazil, Argentina, Paraguay

Myths The Guaranis lived in the humid marsh and lowlands of Paraguay, Argentina, and Brazil. Their myths and beliefs are passed down in an oral tradition. The Guarani creator god is known as Tupa, and is associated with the sun and with thunder. His wife, Arasy, is associated with the moon. Together, they had seven “monster children” (seven is a sacred number for the Tupi Guarani). The seventh was Kurupi, also known as Pombero. He is a shape-shifter who can enter locked doors during the siesta and impregnate women.

Iguazu Falls The enormous Iguazu Falls (from “Igua” or water, and “su” meaning “large”) were created from when the underground serpent god, M’Boi, was thwarted in his desire to take the beautiful betrothed virgin he saw. M’Boi was enraged and split the earth, causing an enormous waterfall. In the meantime, he turned Naipi, the beautiful girl into a rock, and Taruba, her beloved, into a palm tree. They were destined to be separated forever, but able to see each other, across the falls.

Discussion Question

It can be argued that rapid industrialization and technological change create great social instability and the only way to combat it or harness it for the good is to have in place a series of myths that reinforce the notion of individual agency and the possibility of self-actualization. In other words, people have to believe that they can plunge into the fast-moving stream of rapid change and use that force to create wealth, security, and freedom for themselves and their families. Describe just how the twentieth century myths encourage such activities, and how even the dystopian myths can be harnessed to control rapid social, economic, and technological change for the good.

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Folklore

Folklore-Christian Blends: During the Conquest, places of worship were burned, priests tortured and killed, sacred text burned, and all the values that had been held sacred were gutted. The goal of the Spaniards was to expunge the indigenous belief system from collective memories of the people and to replace it with Catholicism. That did not work; instead an assimilation process occurred by means of narrative blending. Catholic saints were connected to existing Maya, Aztec, Inca, and African deities, and the stories enacted in Pre-Hispanic dance and ritual were incorporated into the rites and rituals of the Catholic Church.

Virgin Mary Apparitions: During the brutal process of conquering and controlling the indigenous peoples and imposing the Catholic Church, a strange phenomenon began to occur. Stories of mysterious appearances of a female entity, who manifested pure love, forgiveness, and redemption, started crop up throughout the conquered lands, many times in the depths of despair, sickness, and loss. The indigenous

people held to these stories for comfort and as an assurance that there was a loving deity who would bless them in their dark times. For the Mexicans, it was the Virgin of Guadalupe. For the Paraguayans, it was the Virgin of Caacupe. Stories spread as well that if one prayed to her and showed devotion (walking to the church on their knees, for example), she would bless and heal family members. These beliefs are in force to this day.

Miracle Sightings: Stories of miracles began to abound during colonial times. Stories of patron saints performing miracles, especially when all hope was lost, started as early as the 16th century. Corresponding to the sightings and stories of miracles were the development of pendants in the shape of hands, legs, hearts, or other part of the body meant to be healed. The charms were produced and then left at the feet of the statues of the patron saints. The charms are called “Milagros” (miracles), and they corresponded to a story of a miraculous events.

Treasure Tales: Partially to appease the Spanish and partly to motivate them to move on down the road to another village, a number of stories of treasure were invented and shared with the treasure-hunting Spanish adventurers. Several became very well known because they resulted in long, expensive wild goose chases. The most famous was the “Seven Cities of Cibola” which originated in New Spain (Mexico) and claimed that there were seven cities made of gold, far to the north. The Spanish explorer, Francisco Vazquez de Coronado traveled through Oklahoma, Kansas, and New Mexico, but found nothing. Another such story claimed that the town of Quivira (somewhere in what is now Oklahoma or Kansas) also was built of gold. It was not. It was built of thatched huts. But, at least the tale got the gold-hungry Spanish hounds of war away from those in New Spain (Mexico) who felt they had experience quite enough of the Spanish enthusiasm for gold.

African Folklore Assimilation: The African slaves brought with them folklore and religious beliefs as well as music, food, and attitudes about life. The methods of transmitting belief among the African diaspora varied from region to region. The oral narratives were rich in characters that were direct transfers from West Africa. For example, there were a number of trickster characters. The most well-known was Anansi, the Spider, always quick-witted and able to survive. Other tricksters included the hare and the tortoise. Another such being is the shape-shifting “Papa Bois,” who can appear as a deer or a strong old man with leaves in his beard. He is the guardian and protector of the forest and people who respect nature.

Discussion Question

Explain how oral narratives can serve as cautionary tales and codes of conduct for a society. If ghost tales are primarily cautionary tales, and also examples of what might happen if one transgresses the norms, how might they change over time, as rulers, laws, and political systems come into power?

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VISUAL ARTS

Painting

Indochristian Art

Arts of the Mission Schools: When the Spanish and Portuguese established missions in Latin America, their objective was to convert the Amerindians. At the same time, they needed to construct missions, churches, chapels, and other buildings. In using the converted Amerindians, a great fusion of indigenous and European traditions occurred. The Catholic priests brought in architects and artists from Europe, but they could not complete their work without the help of the local artisans. Indochristian art often incorporates the techniques of carving, sculpting, and uses the bright colors of the indigenous art.

Cuzco School: Cuzco, which was built on the foundations of a great Incan religious center, became known as the first center of European-influenced painting in the Americas. The Quechua artists, under that tutelage of European artists, became masters of the Andean Baroque, and developed their own ornate decorative styles. In addition, the artists included uniquely Andean elements, such as documenting the meeting of Atahualpa and Francisco Pizarro. Artists included Guaman Poma de Ayala, Jose Manso de Velasco, and Vicente Alban.

Casta Paintings: In eighteenth-century New Spain, artists often painted portraits that included placed the subjects within racial categories (castas). The titles of the paintings would record the racial category as well as the names; for example, the Peruvian casta painting entitled *Mestizo, Mestiza, Mestizo* which depicted a married couple and their child. Casta paintings were popular until the Nineteenth Century, when legal racial categories were abolished.

Botanical Drawings: Because so many of the Europeans arriving in the New World wished to chronicle their discoveries, there was a surge in still lifes and sketches that carefully depicted the fauna and flora. Many discoveries were made by such artists. Perhaps the most dramatic was that of John Lloyd Stephens, who, while drawing sketches of the flora, fauna, and landscape, discovered that the small hills were really vegetation-covered Maya ruins. Other examples include still lifes of fruits, painted by an Ecuadorian artist.

Art of Scientific Inquiry: In addition to still life paintings and sketches of flora and fauna, painters such as the Dutch-born Brazilian painter, Albert Eckhout painted detailed ethnographic representations of Brazil's inhabitants, still lifes of flora and fauna, and depictions of indigenous (Tupi) dance traditions. Painted in the tradition of Flemish realism, Eckhout's paintings provide valuable records of social life, flora, fauna, and ethnography in colonial Brazil. Frans Post was another painter who chronicled life in Dutch Brazil. Post was well-known for his sweeping landscapes.

Artisan and decorative painting: In a fusion of Spanish and indigenous traditions, designs were developed for painting on ceramics, tiles, furniture, and pottery, all for use in everyday life. One of the most celebrated examples is that of Talavera, which feature whimsical patterns, bright colors, and a distinctive thick glaze. Talavera pottery is a kind of maiolica pottery which was imported by the Spanish in the 16th century where it flourished in Talavera, Puebla (often referred to as Talavera Poblana to differentiate it from Talavera, Spain).

Baroque in Cathedrals: As mines were developed, and wealth acquired from the vast stores of gold and silver, funds were available to construct elaborate churches and cathedrals throughout Mexico. In addition to containing sculptures, the often included frescoed ceilings and walls. Excellent examples can be found in Puebla, Mexico, with its vaulting with frescos, and in Guanajuato, Mexico, all of which are characterized by pronounced chiaroscuro.

Ultrabaroque (or Churrigueresque). Examples of the highly ornate painting can be found in the Retablo de los Reyes (Metropolitan Cathedral, Mexico City).

Discussion Question

When the Spanish established their system of government, while they continued supporting the growth of the Catholic Church, they wanted to build a solid foundation of European-style art. To that end, they encouraged artists from Spain to travel to the New World and guide public works projects, as well as the construction of churches and schools. There were not enough artists, though, and it was necessary to

recruit indigenous or mestizo artists and artisans. As a result, a new style emerged, which was a fusion. Describe the form and function of early Colonial painting.

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Sculpture

Baroque sculpture: Often carved of wood, then gilded with a layer of gold, or covered in plaster and then painted. They were often dressed in rich costumes. The subjects tended to be religious (Virgin Mary, Jesus, saints and the apostles). There were also elaborately carved crucifixes and altarpieces, often quite ornate, as in the case of the complex and detailed ultrabaroque Churrigueresque style, which features ornate decorative detailing.

Antonio Francisco Lisboa (1730 – 1814) (Brazil) created painted wood sculptures as well as stone statues of the twelve apostles.

Bernardo de Legarda (1700 – 1773) sculpted the Virgin of the Apocalypse (1734) of wood. It is the most outstanding example of the “Quito School” which is characterized by color, motion, and intricate carved details.

Retablos, which resemble triptychs, often contained tiny figurines depicting religious scenes such as the Nativity and the Ascension. They represent a blending of folk art and religious monuments.

Rococo sculpture: Life-sized carved sculptures of the Virgin Mary were painted with bright pastel colors then dressed in elaborate costumes, and installed in a church where they served as reminders of religious teachings and devotion.

Discussion Question

When construction began on churches, cathedrals, and government buildings, one primary goal was to create a monument that would transmit many messages, both of religious and political importance. How

did religious sculpture communicate Christian history and values? How the large sculptures also communicate the wealth, power, and influence of Europe? Please provide at least four examples that explain how sculpture communicated history, values, and collective aspirations?

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Architecture

Impact of Catholicism: The Catholic Church, with its roots in Roman and medieval Europe iconography, had already developed an ecclesiastical architecture that was designed to instruct and to awe a largely illiterate population. So, it, too, functioned as a kind of machine to construct knowledge by means of a kind of enforced pattern of behavior or ritual. However, as opposed to the Latin American PreHispanic approach to architecture, the Catholic Church focused on the places of worship and the supporting buildings, but was not at all concerned about the city as a whole. Thus, European cities were often chaotic, squalid, and labyrinthine, with a dramatic, ethereal cathedral rising up from the fetid maw of the city. When the conquistadors arrived in Latin America, they tore down what they viewed as the equivalent of their cathedrals, and then replaced them with their own cathedrals. The rest of the city was left to its own devices, which quickly replicated the European counterparts, but many Latin American cities were, thanks to mining riches, newer, cleaner, and more architecturally advanced than European cities. It is useful to keep in mind as well, that the monarchies of Spain and Portugal also needed to establish their power, sway, and legitimacy in the “New World,” and they, too, had a need to construct architectural monuments that communicated their message. They did not necessarily coordinate their efforts with the Church, resulting in a more random city design than in the case of the Olmecs, Maya, Aztecs, and Inca. The attempts of thought control were equally intense; but one can argue that the architecture of the twisting, narrow alleyways (callejones) introduced a mindset of secrecy, duplicity, and espionage, on the one hand, and protected, creative, and divergent thinking on the other.

Baroque Cathedral: The original cathedrals in Latin America were constructed over the most important active religious sites, much in the way that Henry VIII razed the Catholic monasteries and used the stones to construct his own Anglican Church religious buildings. They were constructed in the style of European cathedrals, with gothic and Romanesque elements. The largest were constructed over Aztec and Inca cities, mainly in Quito and Mexico City.

Baroque Governor's Palace: While the Catholic Church worked to replace what they viewed as satanic rituals with their own religion, the kings and queens of Spain and Portugal were eager to lay claim on the gold, silver, and other riches of the territories they claimed as their own. The architecture was designed to

put the stamp of European culture. So, in each main city, the Europeans constructed a center plaza and usually at one end, or at least nearby, a “Palacio del Gobierno” which incorporated Spanish and Portuguese architectural elements, including Romanesque arches, rows of columns, windows to individual offices, and a clear message that these were the offices that housed the power to influence day-to-day life. Important examples are in Quito, Rio de Janeiro, Cartagena (Colombia), Guanajuato (Mexico), Guadalajara (Mexico), Antigua (Guatemala), and more.

Missions: Missions were simple chapels surrounded by workshops and sleeping quarters for the priests and hundreds of converted indigenous peoples who were kept separate from possible bad influences. The missions were often established in outposts, rather than in the large city centers, and were a mechanism for expanding the reach and influence of the Europeans. They were established by different Catholic orders of priests: mainly Jesuit, Benedictine, and Dominican. The Jesuits were very active in Brazil, Argentina, Uruguay and Paraguay, where they set up “reductions”. Very little remains of the missions, which were built in the 1600s. They typically have a central chapel, a belltower, and numerous outbuildings. The indigenous peoples were taught trades such as masonry and carving, and in doing so, they developed a unique “mestizo” style of decorative work characterized by ornate, “churrigueresque” patterns, gilt overlay, and flowing robes.

Churrigueresco: Extremely ornate, with expressive and intricate styling, the “churrigueresque” style began in Spain in the 17th century, with the Catalan sculptor, Jose Benito de Chrriguera (1665-1735). It achieved full flowering in Latin America where the indigenous craftsmen and artisans in the missions developed a Mestizo style that was florid, ornate, and detailed, while it also incorporated the colors and stylings of earlier, Pre-Hispanic art. As such, the Churrigueresque of Latin America is, at some level, deeply subversive, because it does not take much to see the echoes of the writhing plumed serpent, Kulkulcan (Maya) or the ornate costumes and masks of Quetzalcoatl. In South America, hints of the decapitator gods and the condors are evident in the altarpieces and also in the colors and movements in the wooden statues carved to mimic the robes and the hair of the Madonna. Important examples of churrigueresque art are in the Metropolitan Cathedral of Mexico City, in the main cathedrals of Potosi, Bolivia; Arequipa (Cusco, Peru); Santo Domingo Cathedral, La Paz (Bolivia), Catedral El Carmen (San Luis Potosi, Mexico); San Francisco de Acatepec (Mexico); Cusco, Peru.

Andean Baroque: The Andean Baroque is an artistic movement that appeared in the Viceroyalty of Peru. It was used in both secular and religious buildings in the 17th and 18th centuries, and is characterized by ornate carvings, sculptures and elaborate paintings that narrate history (Biblical or mythological). The purpose is to communicate to the people that the established European church and government was a strictly hierarchical society, and that the power emanated from the top. Excellent examples are in Cusco, Cajamarca, and Lima.

Discussion Question

When the Europeans arrived in Latin America, some of the first building projects were designed to convey the message that the twin powers of Europe – the Catholic Church and the Spanish monarchy – were too rich and powerful to be resisted, and in fact, they should be regarded in awe. Select five or six examples of buildings in the colonial era that communicated that message and describe the architectural and design elements which reinforced the message.

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PERFORMING ARTS

Dance

Jarabe Tapatío (Mexican Hat Dance): Perhaps the most famous Mexican folkloric dance, the Jarabe Tapatío is danced to music performed by mariachis. Like many folkloric dances, the dancers enact courtship and contains elements that made it controversial in its early years in the late 19th century. The man wears the traditional charro outfit, while the woman wears a heavily embroidered blouse and a voluminous and also heavily decorated skirt, which she moves with wide, rhythmic sweeping motions.

Son Jarocho (Veracruz, Mexico): “Jarocho” refers to the culture and people of the Veracruz coastal área of southeastern Mexico. The “son” (meaning “sound”) is the music, and in this case, it is known for its energetic, intense, complex rhythms. Perhaps the best known *son jarocho* is “La Bamba” and also “Cascabel” (rattlesnake). <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xCBhicHcFvY>

Danza de los Viejitos: (Dance of the Old Men) is a traditional dance in the state of Michoacan, Mexico. It harkens back to Prehispanic times, and it is related to rituals to honor “old man” God and its execution is very humorous as the dancers enact the parts of the elderly people and in doing so, ironize their own helplessness. The performance involves a kind of tap dance, with rhythms that relate to conquest.

La Danza de los Quetzales (Mexico) : The dancers wear enormous headdresses of feathers, and they carry hand-held rattles. The music includes drums and flute. The meaning of the dance has to do with encantations and transformation.

La Danza Huehues (Mexico): Also known as Danza de los Viejitos: This is a humorous dance that uses the more serious religious dances as a point of departure. The main dancer is the “Diablo” or devil, who is a picaresque trickster figure. There is also the “Huehuentzi” (the oldest”) who wears a beard and a mask. The men wear black pants with a vest or jacket, masks, boots, tie, handkerchief, gloves.

La Danza de los Chinelos (masks / disguises): Originating in the state of Morelos, the Danza de los Chinelos is characterized by elaborate sequined, feathered, and fringed headdresses and brightly colored wooden masks. The costumes are very striking for their highly sequined and embroidered costumes and headdresses that feature appliques (similar to Molas from Panama). The dance is typically performed during Carnaval.

Arrieros (Mexico): A tribute to history in which dancers enact the drovers who guided mule trains with their merchandise and silver. The mule-drovers worked in central Mexico and followed the Camino Real from the highlands to the coast during the 16th through the middle of the 20th century. The dancers wear white shirts, white pants, and highly embroidered scarves, belts, and vests.

Jarana Yucateca (Yucatan Peninsula): Easily identified by its 6/8 meter, the Jarana Yucateca features dancers in traditional Yucatecan embroidered loose blouses (huipil) and long white (and also highly embroidered) skirts. The men wear white shirts, Panama hats, and white pants. The dance is colonial in origin and celebrates mestizo culture. The music, descending from colonial “sones,” is renowned for being vibrant, joyous, raucous, with brass instruments such as trumpets, trombones, and cymbals.

Las Vaquerias (Yucatan Peninsula, Mexico): A popular festival dance that dates back to the colonial era in cattle-raising áreas of the Yucatan. The dance is usually performed during the Patron Saint day parades in villages. In the festivals, women and men dress in typical Yucatecan embroidered dresses. The performances are punctuated by someone in the crowd who shouts “Bomba!” upon which the dancing stops, and one dancer must recite a verse to his partner.

Discussion Question

During Colonial times, dances were often performed in conjunction with important religious and political holidays. The first was always the time before Easter, the “Semana Santa.” Another took place before the official beginning of Lent, the Carnival. Other important days were on the feast days for each community’s patron saint, and also on the day for honoring the historical appearance of the Virgin Mary and of miracles. Compare and contrast the dances used in these different holidays and events.

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Music

Ranchera: Traditional Mexican music often performed by mariachis or nortehños, which often has a theme of love, patriotism, or nature. They have been influenced by polkas, the waltz, and also the bolero. They include the “grito mexicano” (Mexican shout).

Punta: Music from the Garifuna people of the Caribbean who arrived in Central America in the 1790s. Their music is a blend of Spanish and African rhythms and forms.

Corrido: A ballad, or narrative song. The themes are often about legends, the stories of criminals, doomed love, and revenge. A popular example is *La Cucaracha*.

Conjunto jarrocho: This is a kind of “son” (which is a mixture of Spanish and indigenous music).

Banda: Loud, polka-like music played by brass bands (tuba, trumpet, trombone) that derive from the military bands in the 1860s in Mexico, during the Second Mexican Empire. The origins are from Polish emigrants who settled in Sinaloa. For what it’s worth, they often seem very out of tune.

Mariachi: A characteristically Mexican musical form, the Mariachi emerged near Guadalajara (Coquila) and has influences from Spain, Portugal, and France. The mariachi ensemble consists of a guitar, violin, large bass guitar (guitarón), a vihuela (a small guitar-like instrument) and a trumpet. Mariachis perform at weddings, anniversaries, and events.

Nortehño: Popular music that is often found in northern Mexico and southern Texas, which includes accordion. The polka elements reflect the influence of German and Polish miners who arrived in the early 1800s.

Discussion Question

Music could be considered a kind of technology, a mechanism / sound machine that influences the human brain to move it into different emotions and states of consciousness. Pre-Hispanic music was used in conjunction with religious rituals, to the point that individuals entered into a trance-like state. The music associated with Carnival could also be considered a technology of consciousness as well. Describe how and why the music associated with Colonial festivals altered the attendees affect and states of consciousness.

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Theatre

Patron Saint Days: The Conquistadors established a church in every town, and it served as a point of control and cultural cohesiveness. In establishing Catholicism, the Europeans were able to subsume the indigenous religions, and also tacitly acknowledge the fact that the native beliefs never really died. Each community had a patron saint, which not only corresponded to a saint in the Catholic Church, but also often took on attributes of indigenous gods. Thus, the parades, dances, and performative enactments represented a profound fusion of European and indigenous belief systems. The celebrations take place once a year, and are typically a week long, and filled with parades, rituals, dances, and end with fireworks that include religious symbols.

Carnival / Semana Santa: The week before Easter became one of the most important festivals in Latin America, and represents a profound fusion between the European and indigenous traditions. In Europe, Mardi Gras and other festivals take place, with parades and performances that center around the idea of a sin-penance cycle. In Latin America, the tradition incorporates personae who resemble many of the ancient deities, namely sun gods, feathered serpents, and animal spirits (jaguars, snakes, condors).

Brazilian Carnival: In Brazil, Carnival is dominated by African influences, not only in dance and music, but also in rituals that incorporate symbolic acts derived from West African religious practice, which merged with Catholicism to become Santería. The core belief of the African religion is that there is divine energy in the world that takes expression through the worship of deities and through music, dance, and ritual. The dances, costumes, and expression of Brazilian Carnival are a performative enactment of that belief, and designed to instill procreative, regenerative energy in the participants.

Carnival in Oruro, Bolivia: Dance with the Devil. One of the most unique of the fusions of indigenous and Catholic beliefs, the performative rituals of colonial mining town of Oruro, Bolivia, include the famous dances with the devil, which dramatically enacts the conflict between good and evil, light and dark. The performances include extremely elaborate and colorful costumes. La Diablada (Dance of the Devils) emerged from the miners who revered and feared "El Tio" (god of the underworld) would punish them for sharing their devotion with the Virgin Mary. So, to honor and please El Tio, the miners decided to dress as Diablos (devils) and dance in the festival. The Diablo costumes feature horned masks, velvet capes, and costumes with sequins and gold embroidery. Their boots contain elaborate designs of snakes.

European-Influenced Formal Theatre:

Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz: The Mexican nun who wrote poetry and philosophical essays, also wrote three plays: *The Pawns of a House*, *Love Is More a Labyrinth*, and *Second Celestina*. They were performed in the 1680s in conjunction with celebrations for the viceroyalty. The plays are well-respected for their structure and form, which incorporate many of the tropes of European plays, including mistaken identity, love doomed by fate, and more.

Discussion Question

The formal theatre of the Europeans was often enacted for very different purposes than the popular folkloric theater and performance. The European theatre when performed in Latin America did two things. First, it reinforced cultural dominance and the authority of the crown and the viceroyalty. Second, with plays that enacted Biblical history, the church was able to teach the stories from the Bible, and at the same time, were able to teach moral lessons. How might some of the European traditional theatrical forms have been also coopted and subtly subverted? Please give at least two examples.

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Writing

Spanish script for official archives: Archives were maintained by the Catholic Church and also the Viceroyalties of the Spanish Crown. They tended to be handwritten by scribes on parchment documents, or entered into official leather-bound books kept at each parish's main church.

Early Printing Press: The first printing press in the New World was set up in Mexico City in 1539. It was a revolutionary technology, and permission had to be granted by Spanish king Carlos V and the archbishop of Mexico City. The house of the first printing press is called "Casa de la Primera Imprenta de America), and in its first years, at least 35 books were produced by Juan Pablos, from 1540 and 1560. The documents that were printed were related to viceregal and Church-related topics, which included a brief catechism to distribute to parishioners.

Discussion

When reading is universal but writing the domain of a privileged few the actual printed word possesses a great deal more authority, to the point that it can take on the weight of a sacred text or a royal edict. Thus, in the years before the printing press, documents were written by scribes and kept under lock and key. The printing press changed all that. It made information more easily obtainable and encouraged literacy. It also encouraged people to act on their dreams. For example, the tales of the explorers' exploits in "The New World" motivated many to make the arduous journey to try their luck. Discuss the different impacts of the printing press on and within Latin America.

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WORLDVIEW

Religion

The Catholic Church served as a powerful force to eradicate the belief systems of the indigenous peoples and their civilizations, and to replace them with that of the Roman Catholic Church, which was a powerful and rich political entity, which often ruled "hand in glove" with the Spanish and Portuguese

invaders. The conquest was brutal in many ways. Religious centers were razed to the ground and Catholic churches quickly built on top of them.

Spanish Priests: Early accounts by writers such as Father Bartolome de las Casas provide important descriptions of the religious practices as viewed through the eyes of a European. They were, without exception, shocking to the European, particularly the practice of human sacrifice and polytheism. Catholic priests, such as the Jesuits, established missions with the express purpose of imposing a new culture on the old one, and along the way, harness native labor and talent in the construction of Christian monuments, churches, schools, monasteries, and more.

Syncretic Catholicism: The Catholic religion, as practiced in Mesoamerica and South America, quickly absorbed and even appropriated the different gods and their functions, to the point that many saints and saint days were thinly veiled practices of indigenous religions.

Discussion Question

The Conquest was a two-pronged effort with government / military on one side, and religion on the other. The most coordinated attacks occurred in the large religious centers, including Tenochtitlan, Cuzco and Quito, where the Church was quick to build over the temples. But, they did not succeed in eradicating the religions. Please describe how the ancient religions persist.

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Philosophy

Rights of Conquered Amerindians: Amidst the tremendous carnage of the conquest, there were a few priests and writers who argued for the protection of the conquered peoples in his *A Short Account of the Destruction of the Indies*, and *The History of the Indies*. His writings were apologies for the rights of Amerindians, and he opposed slavery and abuse. His writings deal with questions of human dignity. Alfonso de la Vera Cruz also wrote to defend the human rights and dignity of the indigenous peoples.

Bartolome de las Casas (1484-1566): A Spanish priest, de las Casas maintained journals of his experiences in Mexico and wrote impassioned letters in defense of the indigenous peoples. His view of the indigenous peoples is that they were ignorant and barbaric, but somehow innocent. De las Casas's viewpoint, unfortunately, was very influential and incorporated in literature, where the indigenous person or "noble savage" became a stock figure of a wild human or outsider who was not yet corrupted.

Alonso de la Vera Cruz (1504-1584): His philosophical treatises revolved around the nature of logic and justice, emphasizing the ethical treatment of all people. Born in Spain, but emigrating to Mexico, Vera Cruz was a priest who founded a number of universities in central Mexico. He espoused the philosophy of Aristotle and Augustine.

Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz (1651-1695): A Mexican nun who spent her youth in an estate with access to her family's library, Sor Juana Ines de la Cruz was largely self-taught, with access to her grandfather's collection of European literature. She wrote important works of poetry, philosophy, and treatises. Her work includes her "Respuesta a Sor Filotea de la Cruz" which argues for the right of women to education. Her poetry reflects a philosophy of oppositions, in which the essence of something is known by juxtaposing it with its opposite.

Discussion Question

Liberty, equality, fraternity. Does that sound familiar? It should, except it's in English and not in French, where the French Revolution turned the world upside down. Simon Bolivar and Andres Bello were definitely two of the intellectual Pied Pipers who periodically recruited True Believers into their fold, where they would foment dissent and agitate for uprisings so that the countries could separate from the mothership. Describe how French revolutionary thought had an impact on Latin American philosophy and philosophers.

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Science

Chemistry and Physics: In conjunction with mining, the Seminary of Mining was established in Mexico in 1792. In addition to engineering, there were laboratories in which scientists conducted physics and chemistry experiments. Andres Manuel del Rio discovered the element vanadium at the end of the 18th century in Mexico.

Meteorology: Jose Antonio de Alzate y Ramirez, who studied in the Colegio de San Ildefonso in Mexico City, was a distinguished scientist in many fields during the 1700s. His observations about meteorological phenomena were ahead of his time in that they included mathematical modeling as well as observations about the conditions of various cloud formations. His focus was resolutely scientific, and he debunked a number of unscientific claims. For example, he proved that the psychedelic effects of the plant, pipilzintzintlis, were due to natural plant oils and chemicals, and not due to the devil.

Civil Engineering: Large earthworks were successfully implemented and came to be more advanced than in Europe. Examples include the mines of Guanajuato (Mexico) and Potosi (Bolivia). Guanajuato is honeycombed with tunnels that are so well built that they are in use today.

Metallurgy (for mining): Metallurgical processes for economically extracting gold, silver, and tin were developed in Mexico, Peru, Bolivia, and Ecuador. The processes that were developed using mercury, antimony, and sulfur were later adopted in other parts of the world, mainly North America and Africa.

Botanical experiments (Brazil): With its extensive plantation system in the northeast part of the country, Brazilian farmers and botanists developed new varieties of indigo, rice, sugar cane, and tobacco that had longer harvest periods, which meant a much higher yield. Due to the high demand by textile mills in Europe, Brazilian botanists developed indigo with many different shades of blue, violet, and purple.

Discussion / Questions

The scientific and technological breakthroughs after the Conquest had much to do with commercial relations with Europe, and the fundamentally mercantilist relationship between Spain, Portugal, and their colonies. Not surprisingly, the most dramatic step-changes in technology occurred in mining and also in agriculture, where plantations provided raw materials for the factories in Europe. In your opinion, which of the advances in technology had the greatest impact? Which ones may have been unethical from today's perspectives? Why?

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