Spanish-Colonial Revival and Mythology in Southern California

Introduction

Spanish-Colonial Revival played a major role in both regional space and culture. It was through Spanish-Colonial Revival, in the early twentieth century, that the iconic image of Southern California – of palm trees, red-tile roofs, sand, and surf – became hegemonic in the cultural landscape. French semiotician Roland Barthes argued that the social world supplies a “historical reality” to mythology. Indeed, Spanish-Colonial Revival is based on a “real” history of Spanish colonization. Thus Southern California provides a history for Spanish-Colonial Revival, and situates the myth in time and space. However, Barthes argues that, myth presents us with “a natural image of this reality.”¹ In the case of Spanish-Colonial Revival, the myth naturalizes Spanish colonialism. While there is a history of Spanish colonization in California, the myth creates a sanitized and timeless Hispanic California past, which becomes uncontested.

The naturalized image of Spanish-Colonial Revival is a commodity. The time-space of Spanish Colonial Revival mythology, as such, is whitewashed to make it palatable for mass production and consumption. It lies between a pseudo-reality and pseudo-fiction, as it contains just enough “history” to legitimize a marketing gimmick. However, the horrors of history are ignored. The fundamental problem with this process, is that fiction becomes inseparable from the fact and it becomes a part of the vernacular landscape. As architectural critic Ada Louise Huxtable noted of the “unreal America,” the line between the real and fake is often blurred. Rather, the real is more adequately called a “real-fake.” For example, she reminds us that

Colonial Williamsburg in Virginia, like the El Camino Real in California, were re-constructions. Despite this questionable authenticity, both are “real” in the sense that they've become accepted as part of the vernacular landscape by collective memory. \(^2\)

As Barthes noted of myth, they are powerful signifiers and political tools. Thus this naturalized relationship between Spanish-Colonial Revival and the vernacular landscape is significant. Denis Cosgrove described landscapes as “an ideological concept” and a:

... way in which certain classes of people have signified themselves and their world through their imagined relationship with nature, and through which they have underlined and communicated their own social role and that of others with respect to external natural.\(^3\)

The manufacture of a pseudo-fictional “Hispanic California” past allowed a white elite to legitimize the construction of place (both physical and imaginary) around ethnic, racial, and class differences. It elevated Spanish culture, by white-washing the history of ranchos, missions, haciendas, and presidios. Like their Anglo counterparts at Plymouth Rock, the Spanish became mythical beacons of civilization in the North American West.

In this fantasy, natives worked peacefully with missionaries to lay the foundations for American settlement. A second generation Californian, Charles W. Stoddard, writing of his memories in Northern California at the turn of the century likened his experience to walking “in the footprints of the padres.”\(^4\) This was the legacy, which they appropriated in the early twentieth century to legitimize their presence in the region. This was the romantic vision of California produced and consumed by white Americans. Idyllic Spanish colonial structures, gardens, and

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4 See: Charles Warren Stoddard, *In the Footprints of the Padres* (San Francisco: A.M. Robertson, 1911).
free land filled the dreams of these elites.

However, alongside the art, fiestas, and stories, also came fortified enclaves and the perpetuation of difference and inequality in the region. Although the re-colonization of California by white elites has a long history, by the 1920s, the process was complete. The Spanish-Colonial trend was in full force in both architecture and visual culture. For example, in November 1920, Douglas Fairbanks Sr.’s new picture *The Mark of Zorro* premiered at the Mission Theater. The old Victory Theater at that address had been demolished many months earlier and in its place was the new picture house. The setting was fitting. This new theater built in the Spanish-Colonial style, features “colored plaster and stone, with ornamental iron work, and an iron marquise.” An Aztec fountain with colored lights greets patrons as they entered the building. There’s a vaulted ceiling decorated with black, blue and gold. It was quite different from the old structure, as it seemed more ‘Californian’. The *Los Angeles Times* reviewing the new building had noted that the building “reflects the art of Spain” and appears to be inspired by the Spanish painter Velasquez. The article further goes on to remind us of California’s Spanish heritage, which was central to region’s mythical romance.

*Illustration 1: Mission Theater (from the Los Angeles Times September 19, 1920)*

This premiere for both the *Mark of Zorro* and the Mission theater was a brilliant bit of synergistic marketing by Douglas Fairbanks. Spanish-Colonial Revival as both an architecture

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and a popular trend exploded, not just in Southern California, but all over the country. A journalist working for the *New York Times* noted that it could now be found from, “Santa Barbara to Long Island.” As with all things popular, big money was to be made. City boosters, the tourist industry, architects, novelists, and filmmakers were all using this style, as it sold a romantic Arcadian image of Southern California. It was a different, relaxed, and leisure-based lifestyle compared to that of the bustling crowded cities found out East.

However, *Zorro* is a product and a persistent icon of Spanish-Colonial mythology. The film was based on a pulp serial by Johnston McCulley. McCulley himself had been drawn to Los Angeles by city boosterism and tourism. A native of Illinois who served in World War I, he had already written crime thrillers and invented several pulp action heroes before creating Zorro. After visiting California, he later set many of his adventures in the American Southwest, as he found the idyllic history of mission life, haciendas and ranchos a fantastic setting for his stories. However, it would be one serial set in mythic California that would make him famous. It appeared in 1919 under the title “The Curse of Capistrano.” Over 5 weeks, the pulp magazine *All Story Weekly* followed the exploits of a masked hero by the name of Zorro – the “Fox” in Spanish. Zorro, the alter ego of Don Diego Vega, was presented as the Robin Hood or the Scarlet Pimpernel of Southern California. He was the prototypical masked hero, living a foppish noble lifestyle by day and working as a secret avenger by night. As Zorro, Don Diego protected the friars and Indians of California’s missions against corrupt colonial military officials. Also in typical super hero fashion, he fought for and defended a young woman, Lolita, whose once noble family was threatened by the villainous Captain Ramón.

It is said that Douglas Fairbanks became enamored by the story of Zorro while on his

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honeymoon with Mary Pickford. Fairbanks read McCulley's stories and felt that Zorro would be a perfect character for him to play. It was a role which allowed him to make use of the athletic ability he had come to be known for. But, it also capitalized on the popularity of Spanish-Colonial Revival. Fairbanks and Pickford, as well as the rest of the Hollywood A-list at the time, were in love with the style and the myth of Hispanic California – of which the joint opening of Zorro and the Mission theater demonstrated. New sets were constantly being built (and rebuilt) for films set in this romanticized era. Studios, themselves, also built offices in the style. Even more important in the marketing of the genre, was its popularity amongst the movie stars themselves. Charlie Chaplin, Cecile B. DeMille, Rudolph Valentino, Buster Keaton, as well as Fairbanks and Pickford, all owned homes in this style.

Although never built, Fairbanks and Pickford had hired Santa Barbara architect George Washington Smith to design a Spanish-Colonial home for them. Later Douglas Fairbanks bought several hundred acres of land in San Diego County and called it Rancho Zorro. The ranch was to be a rustic getaway that evoked early California’s history, despite the need to manufacture a lake and his planting of many acres of orange groves. Mary Pickford, enchanted by the Spanish mythology, once remarked:

“I have felt that the Spanish influence in California is one of the great charms our state possesses, a precious heritage second only to our climate, and that it should be preserved in every possible way.”

Indeed, Douglas Fairbanks, Mary Pickford and the other elites were an integral component in establishing a regional vernacular. It was through the names they gave their properties and films

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that they created, which helped Spanish-Colonial Revival to dominate the landscape.

Movie stars, as well as architects, authors, and boosters who produced Spanish-Colonial Revival artifacts, also reveled in this imagined landscape. Like Pickford, they were true believers of Southern California's glorious Spanish-Colonial heritage. As such, they served as a regional noblesse oblige who sought to materialize fantasy in movies, buildings, novels, and even whole cities. Thus they were both producers and consumers. They reveled in the romantic myth of mission life, where Indians and missionaries worked side by side without conflict. Furthermore, they imagined themselves as carrying on the legacy of Spanish aristocratic families who lived in palatial haciendas bringing civilization to California. As such, this noblesse oblige were signifying themselves and their position in the region through the Spanish-Colonial Revival landscape. As such they were “communicating their own social role” and “that of others.”

However, the myopia of these elites blinded them to the region’s history of forced labor, frontier warfare, and displacement. Even more important is that it naturalized myth as heritage. This had long-term repercussions for the vernacular landscape. Specifically, it legitimized an organization of space that time after time was used against people of color. From Native Americans under the Spanish to Mexicans, Blacks and Asians under white Americans, Spanish-Colonial architecture fortified space against social “others.” Thus, the borrowing of Spanish-Colonial architecture and culture by white American settlers is a continuous twisting of a knife in the backs of those already marginalized and oppressed.

**Mythology, Hispano-phobia, and -philia**

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What the world supplies to myth is an historical reality, defined, even if this goes back quite a while, by the way in which men have produced or used it; and what myth gives in return is a natural image of this reality. –Roland Barthes in *Mythologies*

The example of Zorro, illustrates how Spanish-Colonial Revival was a trend that went beyond architectural boundaries. Through the boosterism of the early twentieth century, it was embedded in local culture in the form of community celebrations (fiestas), literature, film, and street names. This was a form of Hispanophilia promoted by the romantic mythology of Spanish-Colonial Revival. As journalist and booster, Charles Fletcher Lummis once exclaimed, “The romance of California is Spanish romance. Everybody knows that, who knows anything.”

While, the style created a unifying identity for the region, it also represents the way in which history is constantly reinterpreted by those in power. An early example of Spanish-Colonial Revival’s romanticized interpretation of Southern California’s past came from Helen Hunt Jackson’s novel *Ramona* (1884). Written to bring awareness to Indian rights, it was set in idealized versions of real locations in San Diego and Ventura Counties. This interchange between fiction and the region's geography was so intense that it spawned research by Ramona scholars validating Ramona sites. This romantic use of space was also used by D.W. Griffith in his 1910 cinematic version of *Ramona*. The film is recognized as the first to self-identify the location where it was shot. Starring Mary Pickford, and shot in Rancho Camulos, it was amongst a series of films shot on location throughout Southern California by Griffith in that year. In particular, Griffith shot the films in spaces with Spanish colonial structures. So in addition to Rancho Camulos, Missions San Gabriel and San Juan Capistrano were featured in his films.

Jackson and Griffith's use of space are examples of the way space and fiction worked together to create a particular understanding of Southern California. More than mere hyperbole and marketing, they were active agents in shaping the region. In particular, it was *Ramona* and its immense popularity that drew visitors to the region. In fact, there were those who sought to walk “in Ramona's footsteps” (just as others had sought to walk in those of the padres). Cultural geographer Dydia DeLyser argued that this tourism based on *Ramona* had a profound impact on the landscape of Southern California. Identifying *Ramona* as a myth itself, she argues that it inspired the multitude of landscapes in the region from real-estate, businesses (such as Ramona Roof Tiles), to filmic adaptations.

Indeed the story, in all its incarnations, had an effect on the built environment of the region. The *Ramona* myth, was a powerful part of Spanish-Colonial Revival. The establishment of “sites” to profit from visiting tourists, as well as Ramona-inspired settlements resulted in a built environment that was a material manifestation of the re-imagined past. This was central to the creation of physical “places” in Southern California, as well as the signification of those locations. Here, the material remains of Spanish colonialism are signifiers of a history and culture. However, as social time passes, new meanings become attached to these sites. In a sense, historical space becomes representational – that is full of symbolics meaning.

Helen Hunt Jackson and D.W. Griffith, as artists, created works that added a magical quality to sites in Southern California. No longer merely sites in space, they become landmarks. The use of Rancho Camulos in Griffith's *Ramona*, for example, reproduces the Spanish-Colonial Revival myth, and perpetuates a particular understanding of California's history. It is an active

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agent in establishing Rancho Camulos as a “place” for the story of unfold, and a place where tourists can visit.\textsuperscript{14} However, unlike artists who are interested in the specificity of place, boosters were interested in reproducing representations of space. That is, particular conceptions of place, which can be packaged and sold as travel packages, tourist traps, and postcards.

Thus despite Jackson's purpose for writing \textit{Ramona}, boosters appropriated the novel’s use of Spanish ranchos and missions to sell the region to tourists and potential property owners. The diversion from Hunt's focus on Indian rights, was in part due to the desire of boosters to cater a specific romance to the White Anglo-Saxon Protestant mainstream. While the 'noble savage' was a sympathetic figure that could be found in American popular culture, for WASP Americans they ultimately were not white. The presence of native Americans, as well as the other non-whites in Southern California, became a stigma attached to the region. Prior to the 1920s, the fear of wild natives, the Black Legend, and the reputation of Southern California as being “Mexican” territory were barriers against the region being recognized as a premiere tourist destination or place for white Americans people to settle. However, by the 1920s, boosters, using romantic names such as Pasadena, Arcadia, Montebello and even Ramona, reworked the cultural landscape, such that WASPs came to see the region as \textit{their} version of the Mediterranean.

This change in perception and the popularity of Jackson’s novel came at a time in which there was a shift from Hispanophobia to Hispanophilia. Hispanophobia, or fear of the Spanish, was a product of the Black Legend. The Black Legend was a myth propagated by Anglo scholars during the height of Spain’s colonial empire, and depicts Spaniards as a cruel and violent “race.” Despite Anglo-Americans’ own abuses in the New World, they complained of Spanish

\begin{footnote}{Ibid., 99-116.} \end{footnote}
depravity. This delineation of a civilized race versus a violent race provided cultural justification to British and American territorial struggle with Spain in the New World. By the early nineteenth century, this articulated itself in the rhetoric of Manifest Destiny. It was a claim that white Americans alone had right to the North American continent, by virtue of providence and moral superiority. Even after the conquest of the American West, former president of USC, Joseph P. Widney's *Race Life of the Aryan People* were arguing that westward expansion was inherently a racial quality of whites, as well as a “burden.”

However, at the end of the nineteenth century, American expansion reached the Pacific. The United States had also defeated Mexico (1848) and Spain (1898) in war. Attaining both military supremacy and territory fostered the shift from Hispanophobia to Hispanophilia by removing the threat of invasion. Yet this was more than just conquest and erasure. Rather, like classical empires, Americans appropriated the cultures of defeated peoples. Thus the westward expansion of empire had a profound impact on national identity and the historical imagination of Americans and Californians. There was shift in the way people thought about about geography and history. Nostalgia and regionalism emerged as “domestic tourism... became a nearly obligatory ritual of American citizenship.”

For Californians, this interest in the frontier manifested itself in a growing interest in Spanish culture, which was fueled by writers such as Helen Hunt Jackson and Charles Fletcher Lummis. Lummis famously reported to newspapers during his hike from Ohio to Los Angeles, describing the Southwest and its Hispanic culture. Like *Ramona*, Lummis's reports publicized

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15 The term  Black Legend  goes back to attacks by the English and other European powers against the Spanish. In addition to the conquest of the New World, it also applies to the Inquisition, and its status as a Catholic state.


and celebrated 'real' geographical locations.\textsuperscript{19} While Lummis became a significant force in the selling of Southern California, he was amongst many journalists who became interested in the history and “heritage” of various parts of the United States. Later Lummis co-founded the Southwest Museum, and served as the Los Angeles Central Library's head librarian collecting regional “history.”

As Delyser had noted of nationalism and tourism, there was an interest in frontier states in the whole country. The \textit{New York Times} also published travelogues highlighting the western most parts of the “empire.”\textsuperscript{20} Pulp serials, much like McCulley's Zorro, set in the American Southwest were not uncommon in other parts of the United States. However, this general national interest in the frontier and culture of the Southwest can be found in academic research as well.

In 1890, Frederick Jackson Turner’s “Frontier Thesis” had already noted the significance of the frontier in defining American national identity in the late nineteenth century.\textsuperscript{21} This thesis, which links culture with geography, had a profound impact on historical research dealing with American expansion and exceptionalism. It solidified the frontier as an area of investigation. By the early twentieth century, his student Herbert Eugene Bolton brought attention to the Spanish Borderlands as a way of de-centering the story of American expansion. Bolton's work brought attention to a previously under research “history” in North America using Spanish and Mexican archival documents.\textsuperscript{22} In particular, his work emphasized the contributions of the Spanish to the region.


\textsuperscript{20} Schulyer, \textit{Westward the Course of Empire}, SM4.


Furthermore, Bolton's work integrated regional non-Anglo history into the national
narrative of expansion and mythology. In particular, the historians coming from Bolton's Spanish
Borderlands school of thought came to celebrate icons such as Father Junípero Serra as
courageous civilizers. However, Serra became more than just a Spanish civilizer. Rather, Bolton
noted that “At the head of the missionary enterprise went Junípero Serra, a man remarkable
among all pioneers in American history.”\(^{23}\) Here Bolton incorporates the Spanish conquest with
American frontier history by calling Serra a “pioneer.”

Illustration 2: Father Junípero Serra at Mission San Juan Capistrano (picture taken by Albert S.
Fu)

The claiming of Father Serra is part of this shift away from Hispanophobia.
Correspondingly, it had an affect on popular understandings of racial and ethnic hierarchies. The
frontier, after all, is untamed. Correspondingly, there is always an \textit{other}, which is wild and
potentially dangerous. Thus the emergence of Hispanophilia forced a rethinking of the previous
racialized measure of civilization and savagery. No longer was the Spanish “race” the threat.
Rather, Spanish-Colonial Revival mythology through authors, scholars, as well as boosters
elevated the European Spanish colonizers to the bringers of \textit{white} civilization to the New World.
In this reconfiguration, Spaniards were no longer the villains of the Black Legend. In 1921
historian Charles E. Chapman wrote that, “the venerable Junípero comes out far better in the
light of the facts than have the heroes of other historic 'legends.'”\(^{24}\) Like Bolton, Chapman's

statement places Father Serra in a relative hierarchy of historic figures, and celebrates his tenacity in bringing civilization to California.

Thus, like the popular writings on the Southwest and Southern California, academics were also reinterpreting the region’s “heritage.” No longer were Spaniards a villainous race, but elevated to the status of “historic legends.” They became the people who civilized the noble savages of California and built beautiful adobes, missions and ranchos. It was this version of “history,” that white American settlers would white-wash and appropriate. And through this reinterpretation of race, white Americans were able to revel in the fictional paternalism of mission life as they positioned themselves as the dons of a carefully crafted Arcadia.

However, the frontier is based on both romance and conflict. Both utopia and the frontier draw on the distinction between civilization and savagery to work as a trope. Thus as if the role of the Spanish, in regional history was written, a new enemy needed to be written into the narrative. So once the Black Legend was reversed, Mexico and Mexicans became a new enemy. Mexico, for example, was blamed for allowing the glorious missions to fall into ruin. Charles E. Chapman wrote in 1921, the “great era of Spanish achievement ended” following the Mexican Revolution. He goes on to call the secularization of missions a “wreck” for natives as “Mission discipline along former lines was utterly gone.”

As historian William Deverell noted, there emerged a tangible dichotomy between the “Spanish past” and “Mexican present” that was played out in the development of the region. The so-called collapse of Spanish discipline following Mexican independence is a recurring criticism by white Americans in California. A journalist's tour of Ramona sites in San Diego noted that a

353. 25 Ibid., 455-469.
house of Father Gaspara “is no longer sightly. Its only inhabitants are some very poor and dirty Mexicans, and their stock of animals, while the empty rooms are dark, bare, and foul.”

26 Here, the glory of the Spanish past is directly juxtaposed against the horrors of the Mexican present. In fact, the journalist's remark hints at the devolution both in the physical characteristics of the site as well as its inhabitants.

This notion of devolution and fear of the “Mexican” is related to notions of racial purity and eugenics, which dominated American thought in the early twentieth century. For example, Joseph Widney argued that,

> The grandchildren of the Latin in the newer lands across the sea are no longer of pure blood. They are the offspring of the bondwoman, born, as some tuberculous child, with the germs of premature decay already in their veins.  

27 Miscegenation and racial impurity dominated White Anglo-Saxon Protestant fears of moral and social decay. But even worse, for many whites the thought of diluting their blood was seen as devolution, or a step down from the 'city upon a hill'.

The fear of miscegenation is ironic given the mixing of different histories to construct the Spanish-Colonial mythology. For example, the story of Zorro takes places in an amalgam of Spanish and Mexican California. The story uses the historical decline of the missions figure to situate his righteous activities as a protector of the mission friars and Indians. Yet McCulley also uses the early years of California's entrance into the Union, as the character of Zorro was influenced by stories of real bandits (or in some circles Mexican patriots) such as Tiburcio Vasquez and Joaquin Murrieta. Both were seen as Robin Hood figures fighting and stealing from

26 Glover, In Ramona's Footsteps, 18.
27 Widney, Race Life of Aryan Peoples, 345.
the Anglos who abused natives and Mexicans.28

However, despite the inspiration for McCulley’s Zorro, the character is literally white-washed. Vasquez and Murrieta are transformed into a pure blooded Spanish noble to satisfy Victorian-valued Anglo audiences. There is no question as to his racial and class affiliations, as class and blood is central to the legitimacy of Zorro’s actions. In both McCulley’s serial and Fairbanks’ film, Zorro is not revolting against the system. Rather he is a protector of the status quo, where Indians and missionaries lived and worked on mission lands, and those of noble blood owned wealthy haciendas. Zorro's protection of natives, for example, maintained the status quo of the mission system. Thus in both the serial and the film, Zorro's main plight is against corrupt military officials who sought to usurp the colonial system established by the Spanish Crown. In the course of fighting military officials, he was protecting landowners, such as missions and nobles, who had received land grants from the crown.

The conservatism in this narrative, however, was not lost to its original audience. A reviewer for the Los Angeles Times wrote, “Fairbanks has revived the theme of the Ku Klux Klan secret avenger in a new form in his picture.”29 Zorro, after all, emerged amidst a resurgence of Klan activities in the United States. Southern California was no exception, as members gained positions in local government and the police. Like chapters on the East Coast, the Klan in Southern California was anti-Semitic, immigrant, as well as racist. Accordingly, bigotry found many targets in the region thanks to the Mexican population, as well as in Jewish studio heads, and black and Asian workers.30 In Santa Barbara, an elite coastal city heralded for its Spanish-
Colonial architecture and fiestas there were public Klan rallies.\textsuperscript{31}

Thus Zorro, as a masked Klan “avenger,” finds parallels with the wider shaping of the cultural landscape. If Zorro is read as fighting against insurgent forces working against white Spaniards, Spanish-Colonial Revival can be read in a similar way. As a frontier architecture, and a colonial organization of space, hierarchy and boundaries are central. Thus the construction of Southern California as a “place” is deeply bound to this racialized discourse.

Yet beyond discourse, it was also apparent in social practice and ultimately the region's organization of space. For example, William Deverell called Los Angeles in these years “one of the most important arenas of eugenics in the nation.”\textsuperscript{32} The white-washing of Southern California's history and culture was part of a process, and a series of strategic and tactical moves against what a letter writer to the \textit{Los Angeles Times} called the, “...jazzy Mexican stuff forced upon our view at every turn in our otherwise beautiful city.”\textsuperscript{33}

As the 1920s progressed, the style reached what architectural historian David Gebhard called its Mediterranean phase.\textsuperscript{34} As opposed to the mission phase that preceded it, the style drew more on Mediterranean influences such as Italian and Moorish structures rather than actual Spanish structures in California. This meant more elaborate ceramic tiles, semi-circular colonnades, palm trees and Palladian-style gardens. Historian Kevin Starr described this process as Southern California being “Mediterraneanized.”\textsuperscript{35} While California-as-Italy and -Near East

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{32} Deverell, \textit{Whitewashed Adobe: The Rise of Los Angeles and the Remaking of Its Mexican Past}, 44.
\item \textsuperscript{33} Fact and Comment, VI.
\item \textsuperscript{34} David Gebhard, \textit{The Spanish Colonial Revival in Southern California} (1895-1930), \textit{The Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians} 26, no. 2 (1967).
\item \textsuperscript{35} Starr, \textit{Material Dreams: Southern California Through The 1920s}, 191-203.
\end{itemize}
were popular motifs found in cultural products as early as statehood, stucco, red-tile, and palm trees were ubiquitous by the 1920s. All the while, adobe brick, and unruly sage brush was slowly replaced.

What is significant here, despite the interest in Moorish and North African tiles, is the focus on “European” culture. This move can be seen in Zorro’s sequel Don Q. Also starring Douglas Fairbanks Sr., the movie follows the exploits of the original Zorro’s son in Spain, not California. Despite this move, Fairbanks was quoted saying that sequel will contain the same “Latin fire and dash” of the earlier film, while being set in “picturesque Spain.”36 Without questioning the location's move, Edwin Schallert of the Los Angeles Times noted that the “Spanish locale [is] artistic and colorful.”37 Indeed, the sequel's setting is much more elaborate and makes the first film's setting look rustic in comparison. Instead of taverns, missions, and the countryside, the sequel places the characters in the Spanish court. This parallels the Spanish-Colonial Revival trend. Just as the style shifted from Mission to Mediterranean, so did the masked avenger's exploits.

The Mediterraneanizing (or Europeanizing) of Southern California's culture demonstrates the long-term shift from Hispanophobia to Hispanophilia, and the way in which racial/ethnic categories are constantly renegotiated. This is particularly clear when it is examined on a national level. Congress, in the 1920s, passed two immigration acts which created quotas to restrict immigration from Southern and Eastern Europe. The first was the Emergency Quota Act of 1921, which cut annual immigration to 3% of foreign born persons living in the United States from a country of origin based on the 1910 census. This was superseded in 1924 by the more restrictive

36 Whitney Williams, Scenes from the Latest Fairbanks Film, Los Angeles Times, April 29, 1925, 17.
37 Edwin Schallert, Don Q' Great Popular Hit, Los Angeles Times, 1926, A9.
Johnson-Reed Act, which cut that down to 2% based on 1890 figures. Based on smaller population figures and percentages, this reduced Italy's quota from 42,057 to 3,845. Immigration from Spain was limited to 131 people following the Johnson-Reed Act.38 Thus Hispanophilia and the popularity of Spanish-Colonial Revival seems contradictory to nativist and anti-Southern European sentiments.

Part of this has to do the relativity of racial and ethnic categories in relation to demographics and geography. Despite the quota system, Southern and Eastern Europeans were “white” or becoming “white” in the early twentieth century. Joseph Widney's Race Life of Aryan Peoples, for example, discusses Aryan (or white) subcategories such as the “græco-latin” group. This meant that they were, by blood, historically and culturally similar enough to Anglos, as to be naturalized as citizens, a criteria for owning property. This by no means dismisses the xenophobia that dominated American society; however, experiences varied from place to place. The experience of these categories in Southern California, in large part had to do with regional demographics rather than national legislation. California saw immigration not from recent working class immigrants from Europe. Rather most “white” settlers were middle and upper class Americans. This allowed for a white-washing of ethnic differences on the frontier. This can be seen in the way the term Anglo is used in the Southwest. The term “Anglo” emerges in the Southwest in Mexican-American circles referring to white (regardless of ethnicity) English speakers.

For officially “nonwhite” peoples legal and social positions were more complicated. African-Americans were second class citizens with limited rights, while Mexican-Americans, who may or may not be able to pass as white, faced similar restrictions on civil and property...
rights depending on their “whiteness.” This, once again, had to do with issues of miscegenation and legal status of “Mexico Indians.” Despite some early ambiguity over their status, in 1929 the U.S. government officially concluded that “Mexico Indians” are amongst the non-white aliens that could not own land.\(^\text{39}\) As such, they joined other non-white aliens such as East and South Asians who could not become citizens and therefore not own property.