Introduction

*Spatial Practice and Place-Consciousness
in Chicano Urban Culture*

GEOGRAPHY MADE DESTINY:
THE STRUGGLE OVER SOCIAL SPACE

The consequences of geographic displacement loom large in Chicano histori-
cal memory, characterized, among other things, by the determining effects of
land loss, shifting and porous national borders, coerced and voluntary migra-
tions, and disparate impacts of urban development. The 1848 annexation of
former Mexican territory—as a result of the Mexican-American War—into
what is now the United States Southwest is the originary moment in the
general subordination of *mexicanos*-cum–Mexican Americans. Their resulting
second-order citizenship was compelled by a variety of legal and extralegal
social processes that contributed to the "racial formation" (Omi and Winant
1986) of American society in which they were situated. As one example, Carl
Gutiérrez-Jones (1995:1) has critically evaluated the foundational Chicano
experience of being interpellated as a criminal population by the institutional
and ideological apparatuses of Anglo-American culture, noting that it has "a
long and complex history that is intimately related to their [Chicanos] very
construction as a social group in the United States." In like fashion, the ex-
perience of being displaced in multiple ways from a perceived homeland has
been an essential element of Chicanos' social identity in this country. By ex-
tension, the centrality of such deterritorialization to Chicanos has guaranteed
its importance as a theme in their expressive practice—in both "high" and
"low" cultural forms—most commonly figured through imagery and rheto-
ric of "the lost land" (Chávez 1984).

While geography has indeed proven to be destiny for many Chicanos, its consequences have not been arbitrary caprices of fate. Rather, they have been purposefully effective as manifestations of the "spatial practice" of the new American rulers of the land. Since, as Henri Lefebvre explains, "in *spatial practice*, the reproduction of social relations is predominant," the consequences of deterritorialization for *mexicanos* in the newly annexed territories literally put them in their designated place within the emergent social space of Anglo-American capitalism (1991 : 50; original emphasis). In California, which is the geographic field of my study, the United States' victory in the Mexican-American War of 1846–1848 brought in its wake manifold mechanisms to dispossess the native Californio elites of their economic land base and political authority while simultaneously divesting the majority laboring class of their cultural lifeways and legacy. Throughout the late 1800s, local, state, and federal legislation; judicial duplicity; overt racist violence; and more surreptitious intercultural conflict combined to prepare the way for, and quell any resistance to, the new order of things. The conjunction of dominating social processes—public and private land loss, racial conflict, cultural denigration, legal and extralegal social control, economic disenfranchisement, and political disempowerment—structured the increasing subordination of both the elite Californios and the laboring *pobladores* (settlers), though not immediately at the same rate or in equal measure.

Historians of Chicano culture, as well as of California and the western United States more broadly, have noted the persistence into the present of the dominant social patterns produced in this moment of epochal transition from northern Mexico to American Southwest.[1] While this legacy is broadly evident throughout the region, this study focuses on the urban manifestation of these social patterns in California. Major attention is given to their enactment in Los Angeles, as it experienced continuous social-spatial transformations from El Pueblo de Nuestra Señora la Reina de Los Angeles de Porciúncula through its various "American" metamorphoses—from an early Anglo township to the world city of today. A detailed discussion of the city's historical morphology constitutes the first section of this study in Chapters 1 and 2. This singular attention to Los Angeles is called for, as the city is a paradigmatic site of urban Chicano social history (Camarillo 1979: 199; Acuña 1984). Since the early twentieth century, the original barrio neighborhoods of downtown and later East Los Angeles have been the most populous and, in many respects, exemplary spaces of urban Chicano settlement. As a result, they have also been the most studied of the many significant barrio communities in the United States.

There are, of course, variations of specific social-geographic circumstances in different California barrios. Nevertheless, their broad patterns of structural development, particularly in Southern California, have been homologous enough to use Los Angeles' history as a representative case of historical urban spatial formation for the region, if not the entire Southwest. For example, in his social history of Santa Barbara's Chicano community, Albert Camarillo (1979) comparatively discusses the barrios in Los Angeles, San Bernardino, and San Diego, noting their similarity in temporal and spatial evolution while describing particularized differences among them. Ricardo Romo's (1978) article, "The Urbanization of Southwestern Chicanos in the Early Twentieth Century," offers a broader scope, identifying the distinguishing characteristics of barrio settlements in San Antonio, Tucson, and Los Angeles. At the same time, he concludes that their overall development produced urban working-class enclaves with similar internal community structures and parallel standing within the larger urban fabric. Rodolfo Acuña's (1988) *Occupied America* and Mario Barrera's (1979) *Race and Class in the Southwest* similarly note the common grounding of Chicano urban experience, with particular emphasis on the placing effect of labor-market segmentation. In Los Angeles, then, the processes and consequences affecting the urban experience of Chicanos are noteworthy not because of their uniqueness among California barrios but for their early and extreme manifestations. Once the city's dominant growth coalition set the course of modern metropolitan expansion in the late 1800s, the exceptional success of the processes they set in motion assured that the more ignoble consequences of such expansion would be felt most swiftly and fully by the *mexicanos*, who, as workers, were essential to its construction and maintenance and who, as residents, were in the path of its ceaseless restructuring.

I wish, therefore, to reiterate a historical point of fact regarding the link between past and present Chicano social structuration, specifying it to Los Angeles. In this regard, Richard Griswold del Castillo notes that "[m]any basic societal and cultural tendencies of the present Chicano community have a direct relationship to the nineteenth-century history of the Sonora Town barrio" (1979:176). Several of the most conspicuous subordinating practices active in contemporary barrio life were already present in nascent form in the 1870s and were consolidated by the turn of the century. Three in particular have been historically instrumental in producing the external boundaries of Chicano social space in Los Angeles: (1) the physical regulation and constitution of space (via land-use decisions and the built environment); (2) the social control of space (via legal/juridical state apparatuses and police author-

ity); and (3) the ideological control of space (via the interpellation of citizen-subjects through educational and informational apparatuses). In a shorthand designation, I will refer to these dominating spatial practices as the *landscape effect*, the *law effect*, and the *media effect*.[2]

I am not claiming that this triad constitutes a singular ur-structure of *mexicano*-cum-Chicano social subordination within the United States. Another definitive category of *mexicanos'* subject formation was their generalized proletarianization by the turn of the century. I must also specify that the social forces and processes represented by the three designations are not self-contained or strictly bounded one from another. For example, there is a direct and often purposeful relation between legal discourse and landscape formation, as in the tremendous volume of *mexicano* land loss effected through "legal" procedures, or in the use and abuse of powers of eminent domain in the history of urban development. It is more difficult to directly prove the causal or instrumental functions of ideological mediations and interpellations. Nevertheless, there is no doubting the power of various (mis)informational media and educational or research apparatuses to influence policies and actions detrimental to the social status of subordinate groups. Representation is a material social force. Points of intersection and coalescence of effect among the three categories will be illustrated throughout *Barrio-Logos*. My emphasis on the identified triad is thus not intended to be exclusive or definitive. Rather, it suggests the recurring historical manifestations of the three elements, in shifting proportion and not always in simultaneous effect, as mechanisms for literally "placing" Chicanos in a material and symbolic geography of dominance drawn by the visible hand of urbanizing, mostly Anglo-controlled capital.

By the 1920s, the accelerated urbanization of Southern California ensured that these nascent characteristics of the modern barrios were all structurally present, different from the present barrios more in degree than in kind. Echoing Griswold del Castillo's geographic emphasis, Albert Camarillo's comparative analysis of early Chicano community formation in Southern California notes the explicit spatialization of relations between Mexicans and Anglos, describing what amounted to "a new reality for Mexican people. . . . That new reality was perhaps best reflected in what can be called the *barrioization* of the Mexican population—the formation of residentially and socially segregated Chicano barrios or neighborhoods" (1979:53; original emphasis). An extended discussion of barrioizing spatial practices is presented in Chapters 1 and 2. For now, however, it bears noting that barrioization—understood as a complex of dominating social processes originating *outside* of the barrios—

was not imposed without significant response by the *mexicanos* living within, and acting on behalf of, their developing residential milieus. The situating powers of the landscape, law, and media effects have been regularly, if not uniformly, contested or circumvented by Chicanos. Barrio residents have consciously and unconsciously enacted resistive tactics or defensive mechanisms to secure and preserve the integrity of their cultural place-identity within and against the often hostile space regulation of dominant urbanism. These related and antagonistic forces *together* define the dialectical production of barrio social space, which from the beginning was "shaped not only by external factors associated with the rapid pace of urbanization in southern California, but also by internal changes within the barrio population. The process was an ongoing dynamic one, especially in cities where the Mexican population was increasing rapidly" (Camarillo 1979:198).

Social commentators have long noted the importance of the barrio's internal "geographical identity." This identity, manifest in the unique conjunctural forms of its residents' cultural practices and consciousness, has been a vital mode of urban Chicano community survival against the pressures of a dominant social formation. Richard Griswold del Castillo has characterized this well-developed place-consciousness, present from the earliest period of the Los Angeles barrio, as follows: "whatever its implications for the socioeconomic fortunes of Mexican-Americans, the creation of the barrio was a positive accomplishment. The barrio gave a geographical identity, a feeling of being at home, to the dispossessed and poor. It was a place, a traditional place, that offered some security in the midst of the city's social and economic turmoil" (1979:150). And yet, the barrio was not then, nor is it now, a space of pure security and wholly positive cultural practices. Griswold del Castillo reminds us of this when he notes that even as the barrio represented "a place of familial warmth and brotherhood, it was also a place of poverty, crime, illness and despair. To this day, many Chicanos continue to feel ambivalent about the barrio. The *comunidad* is the basis of a dynamic cultural upwelling, but it also continues to be a place of exploitation and poverty" (ibid.:140). This qualification avoids shining a singularly idealizing light upon barrio culture that would render its expressive manifestations as always necessarily positive or politically contestative. Nevertheless, many of the cultural practices produced and exercised in the barrios have tended toward positive articulations of community consciousness, which contribute to a psychologically and materially sustaining sense of "home" location.

In the same manner and toward the same collective end as the users of those resistive spatial "operations" and "tactics" that Michel de Certeau speaks of in
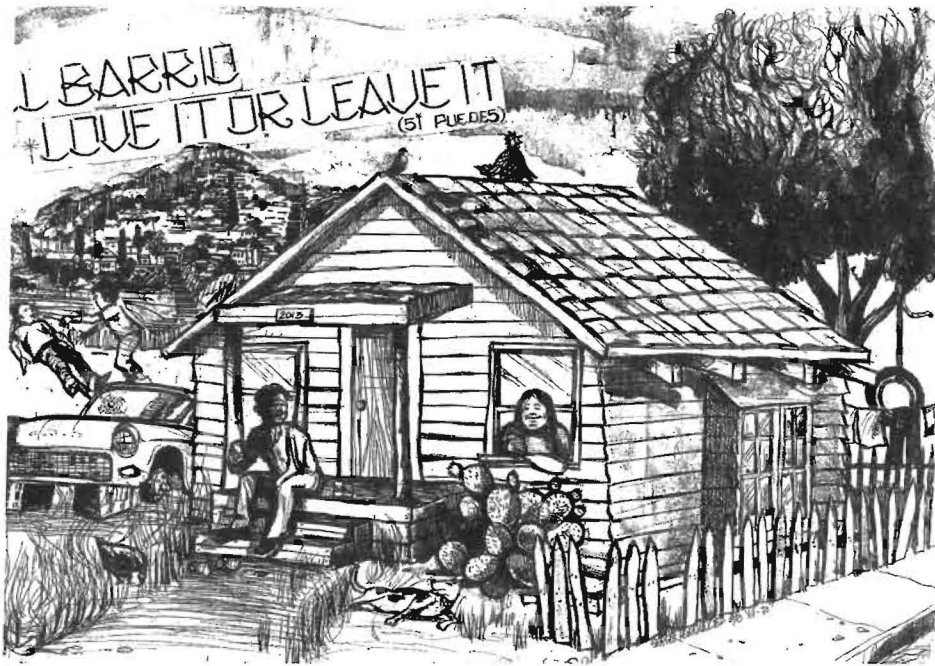
FIGURE 1.   "El Barrio, Love It or Leave It." Drawing by Sergio Hernández. Courtesy of the artist.

The Practice of Everyday Life, barrio residents have always practiced numerous ways of "establishing a kind of reliability within the situations imposed on ... [them], of making it possible to live in them by reintroducing into them the plural mobility of goals and desires" (1984:xxii). Manifesting alternative needs and interests from those of the dominant public sphere, the expressive practices of barrio social and cultural reproduction—from the mundane exercises of daily-round and leisure activities to the formal articulation of community defensive goals in organizational forums and discursive media—reveal multiple possibilities for re-creating and re-imagining dominant urban *space* as community-enabling *place*. Thus, they contribute to a cumulative "antidiscipline" that subverts the totalizing impulse of the dominant social space containing the barrios. Collectively, these community-sustaining practices constitute a tactical ethos (and aesthetic) of *barriology* ever engaged in counterpoint to external barrioization.

First coined in the late 1960s by the associated members of the *Con Safos*

magazine and artist collective in East Los Angeles, *barriology* was a playful but serious promotion of the cultural knowledge and practices particular to the barrio (Ybarra-Frausto 1978:98–100). The linguistic hybridization of the Spanish root term *barrio* with the Latin suffix *logos*, combining and juxtaposing Chicano popular associations of social space with elite connotations of academic disciplines, was itself a representative barriological practice.
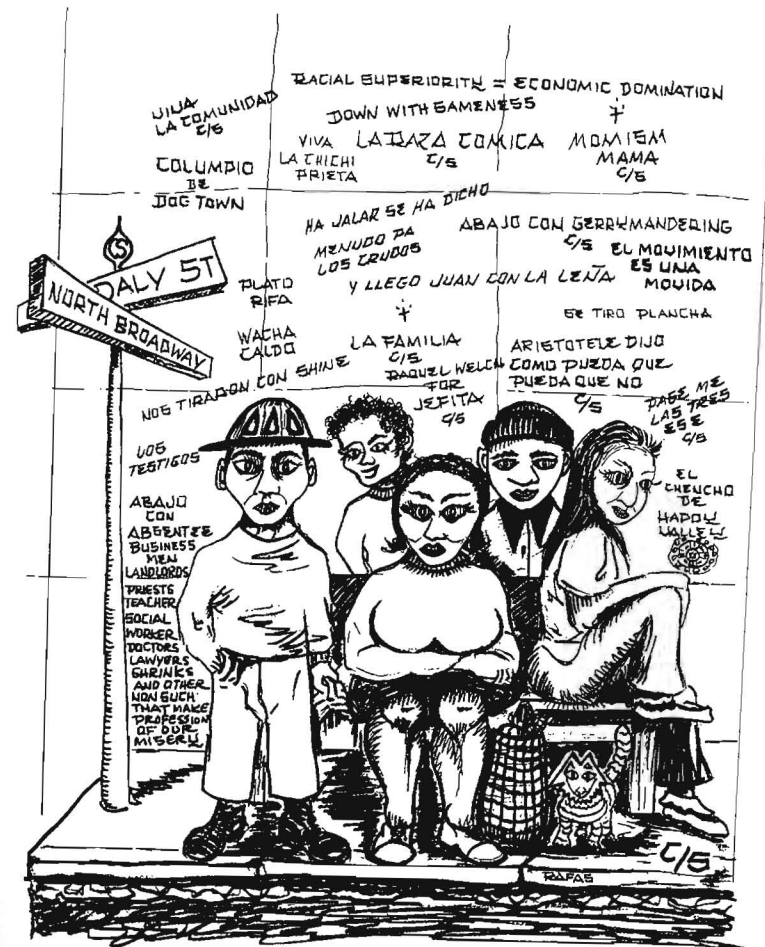

FIGURE 2.   The wall as barrio text. Illustration from *Con Safos* magazine by Ralph López-Urbina, a.k.a. Rafas. Courtesy of the artist.

In light of the institutional denigration of Chicano experience in education and the media, *Con Safos* was directly contesting the marginalization of barrio culture, as its editors made clear:

> The *Con Safos* title of the magazine is a symbol adopted from the *Con Safos* of "Caló." Chicano walls in every barrio of the great Southwest, with their graffiti dress of Cholo print, are protected by this symbol of *Con Safos* (C/S) [see Fig. 2]. . . .
>
> Thus, *Con Safos* symbolizes for the magazine the rejection of the "American identity," and the beginning of a Chicano literary genre, a definition of Chicano identity, and an assertion of the moral and aesthetic values of the barrio experience. (Quoted in Ybarra-Frausto 1978:99)

A recurring feature of their published magazine was the "barriology exam" (see Fig. 3), which tested readers' knowledge of barrio traditions and culture, with the highest scores earning a "Ph.D. in Barriology."

As I reassert it here, barriology evokes a whole range of knowledge and practices that form the historical, geographical, and social being-in-consciousness of urban Chicano experience. By retroactively applying a concept and term from the 1960s to practices first manifest in the 1860s, I wish to reiterate my main proposition, albeit in reverse: to broadly identify a historical continuity between past and present circumstances influencing the production of barrio social space and its representations. Only in identifying the tense relationship between socially deforming (barrioizing) and culturally affirming (barriological) spatial practices—which together produce the form and meaning of the barrio—will we come to understand the nuances of this recurring dialectic.

THE MATERIALITY OF PLACE-ATTACHMENT: SENTIMENT, EXCHANGE, AND REPRESENTATION IN THE BARRIO

If the barrio is a complex and contradictory social space for its residents, the motives for defending its territorial and cultural integrity against external disruption must be similarly variegated. The nature of these complexities begs the question: Why is this vulnerable urban milieu so important to Chicanos? Ernesto Galarza, a pioneer in academic Chicano studies, has addressed this question about the substance and significance of the barrio in various capacities as scholar, writer, political advocate, and community adviser. In an interview on the topic of urban displacement in San Jose, California, he was asked

BARRIOLOGY EXAM
BY ANTONIO GÓMEZ
C/S, PhD, BARRIOLOGIST EMERITUS

1. What does the barrio sidewalk mechanic utilize to support his car above ground? _____

2. What does the barrio mechanic use to remove grease from his hands after completing his task? _____

3. What is the greatest single cause of interruptions in street games? _____

4. If someone is said to be *encanicado*, it means that he is
   A. disguised.
   B. a marble fetishist.
   C. in love.
   D. in jail.

5. If you have a cough, what medicine will your *abuelita* be most likely to prescribe?
   A. limonada con miel.
   B. pulmotol.
   C. gordo lobo.
   D. all of the above.

6. According to your *abuelita*, soon after taking a shower or bath you should not
   A. go to a wake.
   B. get a haircut.
   C. cut your nails.
   D. A & B.

7. *Menudo* is made from tripe, which is
   A. the cow's stomach.
   B. the cow's flank.
   C. horse meat.
   D. mutton.

FIGURE 3.   Courtesy of the Con Safos Editorial Collective and Sergio Hernández (illustrator).

whether he saw "the preservation of the barrio . . . as desirable." Galarza's response reveals his materialist orientation toward understanding Chicano urban place politics:

> . . . the preservation of a barrio is not the ultimate answer to anything. It's the same sort of thing you get when people talk about preserving a way of life. It's a pretty meaningless phrase. . . . Now there are always *sentimental reasons* for wanting to help people not lose their homes. These are *powerful feelings* but they don't give you much of an intellectual idea of what's going on. (Quoted in Barrera and Vialpando 1974: 13; emphasis added)

I doubt that his reply was meant to devalue or disempower local mobilizations against the disparate impacts of urban restructuring. Rather, I believe he was stressing that an uncritical sentimentality should not be the limit of consciousness informing or resulting from such defensive struggles. This point is clarified in the interview, as Galarza subsequently interrogates the barrio's sociospatial location in the political and economic order of the San Jose metropolitan system.

To follow his prescription for materially analyzing the barrio's sociospatial situation does not, however, require dismissing "sentimental reasons" and "powerful feelings" as forms of false consciousness. In fact, affective motivations for preserving the integrity of working-class community places may be richly, if not always consciously, attuned to the political economy of urban growth. This point is argued by John Logan and Harvey Molotch, who note that

> [p]oor people . . . are not in a position to effectively claim that their neighborhood, *as used by them*, is either a national resource or useful for attracting capital. Instead they must make a more "emotional," a less "public-regarding" . . . case for their rights to their homes and shops. Their claims can be dismissed as idiosyncratic, even if understandable, efforts to intervene in legitimate market and governmental planning processes. (1987: 135–136; original emphasis)

This characterization of emotionally driven interventions in urban planning also raises the question of how "public-regarding" claims and interests are defined. In their study *Urban Fortunes: The Political Economy of Place*, Logan and Molotch offer ample evidence that these definitions, couched in the positivist rhetoric of cost-benefit analysis and clinical discourses of blight removal, are socially constructed and almost always in the service of private developers and other "place entrepreneurs" who, with their business, media, and government allies, are principal actors in the metropolitan growth coalitions. The material and discursive power of these coalitions allows them to control urban form and meaning such that whatever is good for business is, *ipso facto*, rendered synonymous with the civic interest. Consequently, the escalation of land values and the deepening of the tax base through increased property tax revenues are seen to be inherently good for the city and its citizens.

It has been abundantly demonstrated, however, that urban-renewal and redevelopment projects are usually quite selective in their distribution of associated costs and benefits, beginning with the fact that federal urban-renewal projects "demolished more homes than they built and displaced more neighborhood residents and activities than they relocated" (Boyer 1983:275). Of the 57,300 acres of central-city land made available through federal subsidies between 1954 and 1969, "60 percent of the disposable land went to non-residential uses" (Mollenkopf 1983:42). With regard to urban highway construction, numerous studies concur with Mark I. Gefland's summary observation that "[n]o federal venture spent more funds in urban areas and returned fewer dividends to central cities than the national highway program" (1975:222). Further account must be taken of the specific loss of low-income housing through neighborhood gentrification, of the various uncompensated material costs of relocation (Downs 1970), of the disruption of place-bound social and economic networks (Logan and Molotch 1987), and of the psychologically devastating "grief response" (Fried 1963) commonly accompanying the severance of home and neighborhood attachments. All told, it becomes clear that while private developers and contractors profit handsomely from their participation in "public" redevelopment projects, their material and psychological costs are borne most heavily, if not exclusively, by the poor and working-class former residents of the areas in which they are sited.

Under the reigning imperatives of cities as engines of surplus accumulation, the use-value orientations to residential place of the poor and working classes can never hope to be equated with the greater good of the city, since, as Logan and Molotch point out, they are not "useful for attracting capital" (1987:135). Ironically, the very fact that the barrios are so often situated in the destructive path of urban restructuring makes their residents exceptionally well positioned to observe and analyze the machinations of capitalist urbanism. Consequently, the "less public-regarding" arguments made by Chicanos in defense of their home turf can be read as *counter*–public arguments, which critically interrogate exchange-value definitions of metropolitan benefit, thus contesting the powerful collective representations of urban-growth coalitions. Cities are thus characterized by competing needs and interests, with those on the side of surplus accumulation having the predominant capacity to shape public opinion or redevelop the city in spite of it.

While it is clear that economic profit drives the engine of growth interests, it is not as apparent what sort of profit barrio residents derive from their inner-city neighborhoods. In a coauthored study with Herman Gallegos and Julian Samora, Ernesto Galarza has provided an excellent summary of the phenomenological substance that constitutes the barrio's "social and cultural capital" (Fernández-Kelly 1995), bringing to the foreground those "intan-

gible" considerations for preserving place that are offered by barrio and other low-income residents against the plans to make "higher and better use" of the land on which their communities are located.

> The intangibles relate to values or preferences which have little to do with the physical redistribution of assets. There appears to be something eminently proper about urban planning that in one process scatters the blight of the downtown slums and rekindles the sparkle of the central city with high-rising chrome. What makes it germane, nevertheless, to discuss intangibles is that all this is happening in the name of Community; and the successful crash of urban redevelopment through the Mexican-American *barrios* is demolishing such community as the ethnic minority had been able to contrive.
>
> This is a crucial matter. If the city offers anything valuable it is those physical points of intercourse, of exchange, of reciprocity and mutual influence, of services and information, of model and example, of variety in styles. When these points of contact disappear, community has faltered. And that is what has been happening in the Mexican-American low-income *barrios*. These were the taverns, the restaurants, the "joints," the motion picture theaters, the barbershops, the small grocery stores, the dance halls upon which the grapevine of the *colonia* was strung. Usually unprepossessing, often tawdry, never luxurious, they were the best in the way of public life that the neighborhood could afford, and the neighbors were comfortable in them. But their very appearance condemned them to destruction along with the deteriorating housing in which their customers lived. (Galarza, Gallegos, and Samora 1969:23; original emphasis)

This critical analysis details the place-based interpersonal networks that make barrios such important resources—physically, culturally, and economically—for their residents. As such, it offers us "an intellectual idea of what's going on" in the everyday production of barrio social space, thus respecting Galarza's own advice against adducing purely "sentimental reasons for wanting to help people not lose their homes." Of course, the very practices and places of community building he describes are what generate the deeply affective attachments that so often cast an emotional patina over people's perceptions and recollections of their home environments.

According to Raymond Williams, when such expressed attachments to urban working-class milieus are mediated in literature, they embody a particular

"structure of feeling" that derives its urgency and affective force precisely as such places are displaced or threatened with erasure under the pressures of capitalism's ceaseless restructuring of space, or what David Harvey (1993) describes as the recurring "spatial fix" of capital:

> The old urban working-class community; the delights of corner-shops, gas lamps, horsecabs, trams, piestalls: all gone, it seems, in successive generations. These urban ways and objects seem to have, in the literature, the same real emotional substance as the brooks, commons, hedges, cottages, festivals of the rural scene. And the point of saying this is not to disprove or devalue either kind of feeling. It is to see the real change that is being written about, as we discern its common process. (Williams 1973:297)

Here, as throughout his theoretical writings, Williams is calling for a materialist reading practice in which the "operations of criticism themselves become an integral part of 'what the text says'" (Silk 1984:165–166). He is careful not to claim that the critical significance of such feelings is transparently manifest in their narrated text form, but rather, is subject to interpretation from them. Rendered as literature, the "real emotional substance" of working people's attachments to urban place can and must be analytically mined, following Williams—and echoing Galarza's prescription for materially situating the "powerful feelings" of barrio residents—to identify "the real change that is being written about, as we discern its . . . process" (Williams 1973:297).

As it happens, Galarza himself produced a literary account of those "intangible . . . values and preferences" specific to the barrio that help ensure its residents' survival while inspiring their affective place-attachments. In "Life in the Lower Part of Town," a chapter from his memoir of early childhood, *Barrio Boy*, Galarza recalls the practices and ethos of everyday life in his immigrant community in early-twentieth-century Sacramento, California. I will treat some of his text in specific detail in Chapter 1. For now, I wish to broadly note that his narration of youthful occupations and pastimes in the barrio expresses a subdued but present nostalgia, inspired by his recollection of how the nascent barrio provided a nurturing social space within the margins of the city's larger social map. Galarza's recollections of life in downtown Sacramento are thus similar to those narratives of "[t]he old working-class community," with its "urban ways and objects," described by Williams. Both acquire critical social meaning not from the manner in which their respective

milieus are figured, but, once more, insofar as their figurations can be read as "response[s] to a specific social deformation":

> It is not so much the old village or the old back-street that is significant. It is the perception and affirmation of a world in which one is not necessarily a stranger and an agent, but can be a member, a discoverer, in a shared source of life. . . . For we have really to look, in country and city alike, at the real social processes of alienation, separation, externality, abstraction. And we have to do this not only critically, in the necessary history of rural and urban capitalism, but substantially, by affirming the experiences which in many millions of lives are discovered and rediscovered, very often under pressure. (1973:298)

In *Barrio Boy*, the intimate and nurturing quality of social relations in the lower part of town mediates substantial "experiences of directness, connection, mutuality, sharing, which alone can define, in the end, what the real deformation may be" (ibid.). Focused on the recollection of Galarza's youthful experiences, *Barrio Boy* offers no perspective of the adult Galarza returning to observe the changes that eventually transpired in his downtown neighborhood. However, in his larger corpus of reflections on the situation of urban barrios, he does "come home," in a manner of speaking, to document the social and spatial deformations that would befall poor and working-class Chicano communities across the Southwest.

Galarza's scholarly analyses of barrio social space consequently derive some of their critical strength from an intimate knowledge of its place-making dynamics. When he observes that "the successful crash of urban redevelopment through the Mexican-American *barrios* is demolishing such community as the ethnic minority had been able to contrive" (Galarza, Gallegos, and Samora 1969:23), there is little doubt that his formative years as a "barrio boy" contributed an experiential element to his critique. Although restrained, an affective tone is manifest in revealing figurative language within his otherwise dispassionate scholarly discourse. Consider as an example the indignation coming through his account of a particular barrio's fate against the urban-growth machinery:

> I see what has been happening in Alviso [in Greater San Jose, California] as part of a very broad trend towards the super-urbanization of America. The *urban giants* being created now are not "communities" in any real sense. The people there feel no sense of community. This process is in fact *destroying what does remain of human communities*. The Mexican communities are very vulnerable to *this kind of cannibalism*. They've been cut off for many decades from their cultural and institutional roots. What is happening in Alviso has already happened to many barrios in the Southwest. (Quoted in Barrera and Vialpando 1974:14; emphasis added)

Rendered by Galarza as malevolent behemoths, the "Sunbelt" metropolises devour those vulnerable communities in the path of their aggressive expansion. His collective literary and scholarly texts on Chicano social-geographic experience range between such deconstructions of macro-urban systems and narrative reconstructions of micro-urban processes. As such, they exhibit two of the principal rhetorical tendencies—understanding "rhetoric" in the expanded sense that Michel de Certeau suggests—that inform the structure of feeling in much barriological expressive culture: an affirmative orientation toward community place practices and a critical orientation toward dominant spatial practices.

These tendencies will variously appear and reappear in my examination of the everyday cultural production of barrio social space (principally in Chapters 1 and 2) as well as of the textual representations of the barrio's past and present transformations under the pressures of capitalist urban development (principally in Chapters 3 through 5). Specific variations of these affirmative and critical rhetorics will also be addressed, most notably with regard to the barrio's internally generated cultural milieu. As I noted earlier, the social dynamics within barrios produce their own pressures and contradictions. Recognizing this, I will variously discuss textual mediations of intracultural tensions associated with changing patterns of immigration, economic restructuring, internecine gang violence, and the cultural hegemony of patriarchy and normative heterosexuality. With their complicated conjuncture of internal and external forces, the barrios of Los Angeles and other California cities have been real and rhetorical locations from which, and about which, to enact ideologically expressive critiques of domination, whether this comes from within or from outside their social spaces. The collective Chicano communities, past and present, as well as the specific activists, writers, and artists discussed in *Barrio-Logos* are, in varying balance, intervening in this intimate social space while interrogating the larger landscapes of power through the political culture of their expressive works.

If the everyday practices of cultural and social reproduction in the barrios are often unselfconscious responses to the external degradations of Chicano

social space, the mediations of space and place by those Chicano artists and writers discussed in the latter half of *Barrio-Logos* reveal a fundamental critical consciousness reminiscent of *fin de siècle* avant-garde artists in Europe. Edward Soja praises the latter for having "perceptively sensed the instrumentality of space and the disciplining effects of the changing geography of capitalism" (1989:34). I argue that much the same perception is at work in the texts of urban Chicano artists. This critical consciousness is akin to the contestative impulse that Ramón Saldívar describes as the "dialectics of difference."

> The language of narrative, especially that of Chicano narrative in its place of difference from and resistance to American cultural norms, can best be grasped as a strategy to enable readers to understand their real conditions of existence in . . . America.
>
>   This narrative strategy for demystifying the relations between minority cultures and the dominant culture is the process I term "the dialectics of difference" of Chicano literature. (1990:5)

Substituting *culture*—with its reference to multiple expressive media and practices—for *narrative* in Saldívar's description, my study of everyday practices and textual discourses argues that we must understand the urban barrio as a literal "place of difference" and a complex site of material and symbolic production. A brief summary of the contents of the subsequent chapters should serve as a map for the reader's traversal of *Barrio-Logos*.   (Stop here.)

The first chapter, "Creative Destruction: Founding Anglo Los Angeles on the Ruins of *El Pueblo*," traces the early period (1860s–1930s) of struggle between barrioization and barriology in Los Angeles, and functions as a pair with Chapter 2, which extends the discussion to the present. I detail how Los Angeles was initially transformed into an Anglo city and illustrate the physical, repressive, and ideological strategies—the landscape, law, and media effects—through which Chicanos were subordinately located in the dominant social space. These strategies principally consisted of urban-planning practices, police vigilance and containment methods, and hegemonic representations of the "Spanish romance" and the "Mexican problem." Alternately, I discuss the tactics of everyday life and self-help institutions with which Chicanos laid claim to cultural and civic space for their needs and interests. Similarly, I analyze the discursive production and defense of barrio social space by Spanish-language journalists.

Chapter 2, "From Military-Industrial Complex to Urban-Industrial Complex: Promoting and Protesting the Supercity," is structured similarly to Chapter 1 in its movement between discussing dominant strategies of sociospatial repression (barrioization) and subaltern tactics of sociospatial resistance (barriology). Presenting World War II as a watershed for both tendencies, I reveal the intensification of their dialectic in this period. At its repressive pole, powerful growth coalitions first imagined then began to reconstruct Los Angeles as the supercity of the future, rallying their attendant ideological and repressive apparatuses to the cause. Once more, Chicanos found themselves squarely in the path of this monumental urban morphology: their residential places were coveted by planners and developers as prime spaces for massive urban-renewal and freeway constructions. But as before—and with many of the same discursive, institutional, and popular cultural tactics—Chicanos in the central-city barrios repeatedly defended their use-value orientations to place against the exchange-driven imperatives of the urban-growth machine. A new addition to the barriological tool kit in the postwar period was the development of specifically *literary* forms of discursive intervention by which Chicanos critiqued, with increasing aesthetic sophistication, the instrumentality of dominant spatial practices in marginalizing their communities.

The third chapter, "'Phantoms in Urban Exile': Critical Soundings from Los Angeles' Expressway Generation," focuses on texts of significant critical geographic consciousness produced by writers and artists who came of age during Los Angeles' supercity growth from the late 1950s on. The narrative imaginations of these artists—who are cognizant of the continuing erasure of Chicano cultural landscapes—are haunted by spectral figures of various sorts, as suggested in the chapter title. The artists treated in this chapter are short-story writer Helena María Viramontes, poet Gloria Alvarez, lyricists Willie Herrón and Jesús Velo of the rock band Los Illegals, performance artist and playwright Luis Alfaro, poet and writer Gil Cuadros, and multimedia conceptual artist and writer Harry Gamboa. While these artists carry on the discursive tradition of critiquing external domination first practiced by their Californio journalistic forebears, they do not hesitate to interrogate the corruption of social space by intracultural conflicts. In light of this, I allude to Chicana literary critiques of patriarchal community space, an issue I take up more fully in Chapter 5. I deal more substantially here with how selected writers respond to the alienation of homosexual difference within the normative heterosexuality of Chicano familial culture. Similarly, I discuss the mediated community-disruptive effects of internecine conflicts and intrabarrio tensions tied to the contemporary exacerbation of Chicano gang subculture.

Chapter 4, "Art against Social Death: Symbolic and Material Spaces of Chicano Cultural Re-creation," looks at significant efforts by Chicanos to defend and enrich their aggrieved community spaces in three different urban areas: Elysian Valley in Los Angeles; the Logan Heights barrio of San Diego; and the downtown barrios of Sacramento. With regard to Los Angeles, I will be looking at the literary representations of space produced by Ron Arias through a fantastic narrative makeover of the barrio in his novel *The Road to Tamazunchale*. For Barrio Logan I will discuss the grassroots construction and aesthetic embellishment of a Chicano "people's park" in the heart of the barrio as a community space of representation, as well as its discursive representations in the documentary film *Chicano Park* and the poetic memoir "Logan Heights and the World" by Juan Felipe Herrera. And, most substantially, with reference to Sacramento, I will consider how the community artist-activists of the Rebel Chicano Art Front meld practical interventions in urban place politics with textual representations of the same into a particularly rich form of barriological praxis. This chapter thus illustrates the multiform re-creative practices by which Chicanos have attempted to materially and symbolically reconstitute places of community well-being in the face of the degradations to which they have been subject.

The final chapter, "Between Nationalism and Women's Standpoint: Lorna Dee Cervantes' Freeway Poems," considers a group of poems from Cervantes' prize-winning 1981 collection, *Emplumada*. These poems—"Poema para los californios muertos," "Freeway 280," and "Beneath the Shadow of the Freeway"—variously figure the destructive impact of the Interstate 280 freeway as it cuts through the Greater Santa Clara Valley region and central San Jose barrio of Cervantes' youth. While she reveals a broad social-geographic consciousness akin to her contemporaries in other cities, Cervantes further specifies the constraints experienced by working-class women within Chicano communities. Her texts, therefore, variously focus on the historical violations (and the violation of history) done to the broad Californio-cum-Chicano population through intercultural conflict, and the violations done specifically to Chicanas through intracultural gender conflict. Cervantes alternately expresses a nationalist critique in defending the present and historical interests of *la raza* ("the race," or Chicano people), then decries the patriarchal oppressions within the same *raza*. This ideological variety is plotted across the poems as they map a tightening circumference of social geographies traversed by the freeway: from the Greater Santa Clara Valley through a San Jose barrio and into a matriarchal home.

Creative Destruction

O N E

Founding Anglo Los Angeles on the Ruins of El Pueblo

. . . if in discourse the city serves as a totalizing and almost mythical landmark for socioeconomic and political strategies, urban life increasingly permits the re-emergence of the element that the urbanistic project excluded. The language of power is in itself "urbanizing," but the city is left prey to contradictory movements that counterbalance and combine themselves outside the reach of panoptic power.

—MICHEL DE CERTEAU, *The Practice of Everyday Life*

MI CASA YA NO ES MI CASA

Bandido Blues: Terror and the Law Effect in Early Anglo Los Angeles

Although California became a state in the American union (1850) shortly after the end of the Mexican-American War, the full cultural dislocation of the laboring *poblador* class and the displacement from power of the elite, landowning Californios was not immediately effected in Southern California, isolated as it was from the national economic system by the lack of a connection to the growing national railroad network. The demographic and infrastructural machinery for a generalized *mexicano* deterritorialization did not gain steam until the completion of the first transcontinental railroad trunk line from San Francisco in 1876, and the subsequent arrival of direct transcontinental links in