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Staging the Self, Staging Empowerment: An Overview of Latina Theater and Performance

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> "We're going to have to do something about your tongue . . . I've never seen anything as strong and as stubborn." And I think, how do you tame a wild tongue, train it to be quiet, how do you bridle and saddle it? How do you make it lie down? Wild tongues can't be tamed; they can only be cut out.
>
> *(Gloria Anzaldúa).*

The origins of U.S. Latina[1] theater and performance can be situated in the Southwest during the time this geographical region was still under Spanish colonial domination.[2] Historically, Latinas have contributed to all the creative and technical components of U.S. theater and performance from its incipiency. I begin this chapter with a brief overview starting in the twentieth century and offer an example of an early type of performance, and then I proceed to focus, primarily, on the works created since 1980, briefly analyzing three Latina plays. Anglo American theater has slowly begun to recognize and incorporate theatrical cultural productions by Latinas (and Latinos) into its canon. But just when it seems that members of this ethnic group are being incorporated into mainstream theater, it becomes apparent that less than 2 percent of the plays produced in the United States are written by them.[3] Given this virtual invisibility, I will address issues of self-representation and empowerment and at

the same time attempt to contest the stereotypical and racist depictions historically created. Latina dramatic artists have chosen to voice their own concerns regarding issues of identity formation as subjects who constantly inhabit a liminal cultural space where multiple aspects of their cultures (mainstream and marginal) overlap. Furthermore, their contestation also addresses issues of gender and sexual discrimination from within their own ethnic groups, especially starting in the late 1970s when the first wave of Latina feminism produced empowering literary works that were later transformed and transferred to the stage.[4] In confronting the issues mentioned above Latina playwrights insist on making their voices heard and as the epigraph by Anzaldúa states, their "wild tongues" will tell their own stories regardless of the consequences faced from mainstream and Latin@ cultures. Alicia Arrizón, the preeminent scholar of Latina theater and performance, states:

> [The Latina] subject is the one who replaces whispers with shouts and obedience with determination. In challenging her assigned position, she begins to transform and transcend it . . . She is the . . . taboo breaker. She is the transgressive, the lusty and comical performer, the queerest among us . . . Latinas today bring a rebellious sensibility to the task of dismantling the structures that have defined, silenced, and marginalized them.[5]

These ideas of rupturing the silence and defying the patriarchal roles assigned to Latinas have been theorized by several Chicana feminist writers, especially Tey Diana Rebolledo and Yolanda Broyles-González.

In *Women Singing in the Snow* Rebolledo exalts women whom she calls *mujeres andariegas* and *mujeres callejeras* (women who wander and roam, women who walk around), and explains that whenever women step outside of the oppressive roles traditionally assigned to them they are chastised and considered "whores, loose women." The author reclaims, redeems, and reempowers such terms[6] when she offers the following definition:

> [w]omen who wander and roam, women who walk around, women who journey: the terms imply restlessness, wickedness. They are not bound by societally constructed morals, nor cultural practices. The negative cultural stereotypes placed on mujeres andariegas result from a patriarchal culture that wills women to be passive, self-denying, and nurturing to others. And [these] women . . . can be demanding, self-satisfying, and worse, perhaps they don't need a man . . . [They are] symbols of empowering the body, sexuality, and the self.[7]

Such terms, then, can be applied to Latinas in theater and performance when they empower themselves by breaking the chains of patriarchy, even

at the risk of being considered traitors[8] to their communities and ethnic groups, to finally reclaim their experiences, their voices, and especially their bodies on stage.

Along similar lines Broyles-González theorizes about the Latina performance artist who can be considered *atravesada*, *traviesa*, and *entremetida* (crosswise, mischievous, meddling). When explaining the meaning of the terms, she states:

> a crosswise woman (*atravesada*) . . . [that] crosses conventions, borders, and hierarchies with wisdom. When the *atravesada* is grotesquely comical, then she is a *traviesa*, a trickster. Laughter is the ingredient [that] magically changes everything, which turns the *atravesada* into a *traviesa*, the trickster who shocks us out of the complacency of seriousness . . . She is an extravagant *traviesa atravesada pelada* . . . *Entremeter* . . . carries the connotation of "voicing" and breaking decorum, breaking the established ongoing rules of his-story, interrupting and inserting new elements, and breaking onto the scene.[9]

In their (re)codification of previously oppressive terms, both Rebolledo and Broyles-González contribute theories of empowerment for Latinas whose voices traditionally have not been heard. Latina theater and performance, then, can be analyzed through the theoretical framework of Latina and third world feminisms. Whether we apply the theoretical terminology created by Anzaldúa (new *mestiza* consciousness)[10] or by Chela Sandoval (oppositional consciousness),[11] we must situate the Latina subject in a "third space" or in between cultures from where she is empowered to enact her own (re)presentation(s).[12]

Historical and Cultural Differences

The term "Latin@" is, by no means, all encompassing; it is critical to note that Latin@ cultures are far from homogeneous within themselves and among each other. The racial and ethnic groups that form these cultures are a result of racial and ethnic *mestizaje* throughout the Americas that comprise indigenous, African, Asian, and European (especially Spanish) ancestry. The long history of colonialism in the Americas also created a caste and class system where each subject was situated in a hierarchical social structure according to the color of one's skin with white at the top and black/indigenous at the bottom.[13] This type of racism and classism was also found in and expanded to the United States in its colonial, postcolonial, and neocolonial encounters with Latin America. The histories of people of Mexican, Puerto Rican, and Cuban ancestry in relation to the United States are strikingly varied and the task of detailing them here is an impossible one. However, it is important to consider that each of these

ethnic groups relates to the United States differently, whether in terms of annexation, migration, or exile.[14] After pursuing its Manifest Destiny and concluding the war against Mexico in 1848, the United States annexed more than half of its territory[15] with the broken promises that Mexican citizens would keep their land, language, and economic power. Instead, Mexicans became second-class citizens in a "new country," in their old land. For Puerto Ricans, the United States represents a totalising imperialist power given the island's relationship to it as a free associated state, a euphemism for "colony."[16] Puerto Rico became a U.S. territorial possession[17] after 1898, as a result of the war with Spain, and in 1917 its people became U.S. citizens. The most important waves of migration to the U.S. mainland, and especially to New York, occur in the 1920s, 1930s, and 1950s. It is important to note that out of the three Latino groups referenced here, Puerto Ricans are the only ones that historically have not been concerned with migrating to the United States as undocumented people.[18] This, of course, comes at a big price given their colonial status and once they migrate to the major cities like New York, they are also treated as second-class citizens. For the same reason and in the same year as Puerto Rico, Cuba also became a U.S. possession; however, its colonial status lasted only until 1902. The first wave of Cuban migration to the United States happened in the late 1860s as Cubans migrated to Florida[19] because of the need for tobacco laborers in that state.[20] The second migration wave (by mostly middle- and upper-class whites) occurred in 1959 when Fidel Castro deposed Fulgencio Batista's dictatorship and imposed a socialist state. Soon after the Bay of Pigs fiasco in 1961, most of these immigrants became exiled.[21] Finally, the third important wave of Cuban immigrants happened in 1980 when the Marielitos, who were described as the "unwanted homosexuals, and mentally ill of the island," arrived.[22] This last wave of immigrants was composed of mostly mulattos from the poorer classes who were not welcomed by the more economically established, mostly white, Cubans in Miami.[23] Although each group's history and relationship to the United States is remarkably different, in general terms, Latin@s (especially when grouped as such) are still considered an "Other" and are marginalized in the United States. Because of this status as subaltern subjects, Latina dramatic artists have been able to create a contestatory body of work denouncing their marginality and exalting the positive cultural aspects of their communities.

Initial Staging(s)

From its beginnings to the 1940s U.S. Latina theater and performance can be divided into two types: the professional and the popular. The first kind was presented exclusively inside theater houses, and it was created for

the upper classes that preferred to attend shows, primarily monolingual Spanish productions where the works of established Latin American and Spanish playwrights were highlighted.[24] The second type was a poor people's itinerant *teatro de carpa* (tent theater) where the artists performed in Spanish (and sometimes incorporated words in English) as they set up their tents in small towns and wherever they found congregations of workers.[25] The most accomplished companies (both types) traveled throughout the United States, Puerto Rico, Cuba, and Mexico. Virginia Fábregas, who was originally born and raised in Mexico and later moved to California, is a primary example of a woman who was an entrepreneur, playwright, and actor. She presented professional theater to middle- and upper-class Spanish-speaking audiences in the U.S. Southwest. On the other hand, there were other women such as Carmen Soto de Vásquez,[26] the owner of a theater house in Tucson, Arizona, around 1915, who participated in *teatros de carpa* and wrote and performed their own work.[27] In Texas the famous *Tejana* singer Lydia Mendoza and her mother, Leonor Zamarripa Mendoza, led their family group in a variety show as they traveled throughout the Texas Valley to entertain migrant agricultural field workers. Leonor wrote and directed the comic sketches, taught her children how to play various musical instruments, and created costumes for the family—activities that helped the family save money.[28] All of these women's contributions helped the survival of the companies in the first half of the twentieth century. Because of its economic maintenance and low traveling costs, *teatro de carpa* became the most enduring and famous type of entertainment in which Latinas participated.

Out of the many women who represent both types of Latina theater and performance, there are two in particular who left their indelible mark: Josefina Niggli (1910–1983) and Beatriz Escalona (1903–1979). Niggli, a child of an Anglo American father and a Mexican mother, was originally born in Monterrey, Mexico, into a wealthy family that left for San Antonio, Texas, during the Mexican Revolution. She lived most of her life in that state and given her privileged upbringing she was one of the few women of Mexican ancestry to formally study theater and performance in the United States. Niggli graduated in 1931 with a bachelor of arts degree from Incarnate Word College in San Antonio and a master's degree from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in 1936. Two years later, she published her *Mexican Folk Plays* with that university's press.[29] She is often criticized for her assimilationist views and for attempting to make Mexican culture palatable to Anglo society through her writing. Nevertheless, her writings have begun to be reexamined and recovered. Niggli was a pioneer in Latina letters in general, given that she also published works of poetry and narrative when few Latin@s had access to U.S. publication venues.[30]

Beatriz Escalona, famous for her *teatro de carpa* contributions, was another accomplished woman in Texas. Although she did not have the privilege, like Niggli, to study theater formally, she did this organically and started when she was young. Because she could not afford the high prices of the theater houses in San Antonio, where she was born, she started working as an usher and was able to see most of the shows while working. She later succeeded in inscribing herself in the male-dominated world of *teatro*; and on stage she was free from the patriarchal restrictions of her time. Her company, *Atracciones Noloesca*, became renowned and traveled throughout the United States and internationally. Escalona became the epitome of a *peladita*, a destitute, downtrodden Mexican social type that she called La Chata Noloesca. Her humor incorporated the *rasquachi*[31] aesthetic and was often associated with bodily functions. Tomás Ybarra Frausto states, "[t]he crude and ribald content of many such comic sketches centered around what Mikhail Bakhtin calls 'the lower stratum,' humor related to body functions: copulation, birth, growth, eating and defecation."[32]

Throughout her career Noloesca wrote and performed her own comic sketches that incorporated music and dance. The following is a song recently found in her archival materials[33] that offers an excellent example of her strong voice and rasquachi humor:

El chivo
Por aquellas piedras negras
donde se amansan los chivos
[h]ay corazones ingratos
y pechos adoloridos.
Ya se acabaron los chivos
ahora que comen las aves
como han de cornar los chivos
si tienen pa' tras las llaves [cuernos].
Un chivo pegó un reparo
calló junto a las lomitas
que comerán los borregos
que van regando bolitas.
Ya con esta me despido
con las frutas de un olivo
y aquí se acaban cantando
los versos del pobre chivo.

[The Goat
Around those black hills
Where goats are tended to

There are ingrate hearts
And souls/hearts aching.
The goats are gone
Now what do birds eat?
How can goats gore
If their horns are backwards.
A goat parried [and]
Fell by the hills
What do lambs eat
They they're dropping little balls?
And now I bid you goodbye
With the fruits of an olive tree
Here ends the song
Of the poor goat.]

This song entitled "The Goat" makes reference to the bodily functions (eating and defecating) and daily activities (*cornar* or "to gore") of the animal, and, by cultural implication, to cuckolded or betrayed heterosexual men, especially within Mexican and Chican@ cultures. While in English this sexual betrayal of a husband by a wife makes reference to and carries the connotation of birds,[34] in Spanish the reference is associated with several horned farming animals, particularly the goat. The betrayed man is called *chivo* or *cornudo* (horned, cuckolded), and is depicted as having invisible horns (put on him by his wife) that everyone, except him, can see. The specific reference in the song to these cuckolded men starts in the third and fourth verses that allude to the existence of "ungrateful hearts" and "hurt souls/hearts" when singing of the place where goats roam. The second stanza contains the most powerful verses that lament, "How can the (poor) goats attempt to gore when their horns are positioned backwards on their heads?" The backward and, therefore, dysfunctional horns represent the men's penises that are believed to be useless after the betrayal. One can only imagine a *carpa* filled with mostly working-class people who would laugh constantly throughout La Chata's performance of this song, especially as she incorporated many lewd corporal signs while singing it. Escalona represents exactly a *mujer andariega* and *traviesa*, as defined above, a woman who is not afraid to speak her mind and make fun of patriarchal power; here she does this by ridiculing men and their "broken" penises while empowering women to take control of their sexuality.

Traveling theater companies like Escalona's frequented the areas where Mexican and Chican@ workers were employed. They set up their tents on the outskirts of town, and attempted to address the issues pertaining to the communities they visited. Ybarra-Frausto indicates: "[e]ssentially a form of entertainment for the masses, *carpas* helped to define and sustain ethnic

and class consciousness. Their robust ribaldry and rebellious instincts were wedges of resistance against conformity and prevailing norms of middle-class decency within Chicano communities."[35] *Teatros de carpa*, and their significant work throughout the first half of the last century, served as models for modern-day Latin@ theater and performance.

Like Mexican theater, the origins of Puerto Rican theater in the United States were based on *teatro popular* or leftist proletarian theater as well as professional theater. Both types were produced in Puerto Rico and in the United States at the same time.[36] Given the island's relationship to colonialism, as stated above, the majority of Puerto Rico's most famous plays focused on criticizing this issue. In the United States, the Puerto Rican immigrant experiences of discrimination, language differences, and destitution were also reflected in theatrical works prior to 1960.

In its origins, Cuban and Cuban American theater too had a working-class base. *Teatro bufo*, a comical, minstrel-like theater, became popular in the nineteenth century and the beginning of the last one. Originally, and until the 1980s, most Cuban theater in the United States was written in Spanish, and it favored middle- and upper-class views of the experience of exile and nostalgia for life on the island.[37] Sandoval-Sánchez and Sternbach indicate that it was not until a new, bilingual generation of Cuban American writers emerged in the 1980s that these notions and attitudes began to be challenged.[38]

Post-1960s

Chicana/Latina theater, in its present form, owes much to the theater produced in the 1960s during the civil rights movement, when people of color (especially Chican@s and Latin@s) were reclaiming their own rights and identities while denouncing their second-class status. The works of ensembles like *El Teatro Campesino* (ETC) and the Puerto Rican Traveling Theater (PRTT) intended to make theater accessible to the masses. Later, both companies also offered writing and acting workshops, producing some of the most famous Latin@ actors and playwrights.[39] Unfortunately, in ETC, which was led by Luis Valdez, the contributions of the women in the ensemble, Socorro Valdez, Diane Rodríguez, and Olivia Chumacero, were not acknowledged.[40] All three women developed solo careers as writers, directors, and producers after they left the ensemble. Unlike ETC, PRTT was run and directed by Miriam Colón, who was apparently more sensitive to women's issues and struggles within and outside of the ensemble.

In 1971 *El Teatro Nacional de Aztlán* (TENAZ) was formed as a Chicano theater organization to tackle the issues of the time. Overall, TENAZ had a nationalist agenda that privileged male power. *El Teatro de la Esperanza*,

originally from Santa Barbara, California, as an ensemble member of TENAZ, made an effort to include and acknowledge women's issues in their plays. But this ensemble was an exception within the umbrella organization, and, therefore, the women who were members of separate ensembles within TENAZ formed their own organization called Women in *Teatro* (WIT). This facilitated the creation of all-women ensembles in California like *Teatro Raíces* and *Teatro Chicana*[41] in San Diego and *Las Cucarachas* from San Francisco, led by Dorinda Moreno. In 1974 Moreno's group wrote and performed the play *Chicana* that traced Chicanas' historical ancestors,[42] such as Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz and Adelita.[43] Chicanas in WIT demanded that their needs be recognized within TENAZ: "[t]he need for women's playwrights, producers, and directors; the need for strong women's roles in the messages through which we educate our public; the needs of the individual woman, such as child care; and the need for support of all *Raza* for the development of women in *teatro*."[44] By the late 1980s the most powerful positions within TENAZ were held by women: Lily Delgadillo was the chair and Evelina Fernández the artistic coordinator.[45]

The all-women ensembles within TENAZ also created *Teatropoesía*, a theatrical performance that incorporated theater, poetry, and music. Yarbro-Bejarano states that it "exploits the beauty and power of words, a dimension often neglected in Chicano Theater, combining the compact directness and lyrical emotion of the poetic text with the physical immediacy of the three-dimensional work of theater."[46] Many of the women in this new genre were not playwrights or actors, but they utilized their artistic abilities to get their message of resistance and change across to the audience. As Chicanas, they extended their solidarity to the struggles in the Americas in general, such as those of the people from El Salvador and Nicaragua.[47] One *Teatropoesía* performance piece entitled *Tongues of Fire* was based on the first Chicana/Latina anthology of feminist writings: *This Bridge Called My Back*, edited by Gloria Anzaldúa and Cherríe Moraga. Throughout the 1970s and 1980s Latinas created an impressive body of theatrical performance work, whether as part of ensembles or on their own. There were also important collaborations with Latin American theaters that contributed to their knowledge of the theater of protest and activism.

Themes and Languages

Overall, the issues in Latina theater and performance are as varied as the people that compose these groups. The most common topics can be listed under issues of gender and sexuality, class, and race. Most writers

explore the subject of identity formation (be it sexual or ethnic), family and cultural matters, the challenge of Latin@ stereotypes, poverty in the barrios, nostalgia for the "homeland," the need to assimilate, homophobia, incest, body image, and education, among many others. These topics are presented in a variety of languages that range from monolingual Spanish or English, to bilingualism or Spanglish. Occasionally, one encounters other indigenous and European languages in dramatic cultural productions by Latinas, like Nahuatl in works by Chicanas such as Elvira and Hortensia Colorado,[48] and German in plays by Cuban American lesbian performance artist Alina Troyano, whose artistic name is Carmelita Tropicana.[49]

Recent works such as Troyano's *Leche de Amnesia (Milk of Amnesia)*, Chicana playwright Josefina López's *Simply María or The American Dream*, and Colombian Asian writer Milcha Sánchez-Scott's *Latina* all present issues of assimilation into the mainstream, Anglo society. Initially, this theme is presented as the only alternative to "fit in" but as the protagonists struggle to find pride in their cultural and ethnic identities while managing their lives in the mainstream, they each reach a compromise at the end.[50]

Theater Labs

Latin@ playwrights have been fortunate to have had a small but effective number of spaces where their work and voices have been nurtured. Such Latin@ theater labs began to emerge in the 1970s, and have been responsible for the majority of Latina dramatic cultural productions since then. On the east coast, Miriam Colón's Puerto Rican Traveling Theatre (PRTT) company developed into a writing lab in 1979.[51] In California, the Bilingual Foundation for the Arts at the Los Angeles Theater Center was created in 1973 by Mexican actor Carmen Zapata and a theater designer from Argentina, Estela Scarlata. Its artistic director, Margarita Galbán, was originally from Cuba.[52] José Luis Valenzuela has chaired the Los Angeles Theater Center's Latino Theater Lab (LATC) since 1985. LATC has produced Evelina Fernández's *How Else Am I Supposed to Know I'm Still Alive* and *Luminarias,* which deal specifically with issues of women's sexuality, identity, midlife crisis, and women's support systems. In 2002 LATC also produced Fernández's *Dementia,* a play about homophobia, AIDS, and dying in the Chican@ cultural context. José Cruz González, for several decades, has directed another lab in California: the Costa Mesa South Coast Repertory's Hispanic Playwrights Project. One of the main contributions by this lab was the publication of the anthology *Latino*

Plays from South Coast Repertory.[53] New York is the home of one of the most renowned labs of this kind: International Arts Relations Hispanic Playwrights-In-Residency Laboratory Group (INTAR), which was directed for over a decade starting in 1981 by the famous Cuban American playwright and director María Irene Fornés. She is the author of over forty plays and is considered the "godmother" of Latina playwrights such as Cherríe Moraga and Migdalia Cruz.[54]

Post-1980s

The beginning of contemporary Chicana professional theater can be situated in 1986 with the publication of Cherríe Moraga's first play, *Giving Up the Ghost*. With this play, she became a pioneer in writing about Chicana/Mexicana lesbian desire and identity from a sympathetic perspective.[55] Originally from California, and of Anglo and Chicana ethnic heritage, Moraga is one of the most famous Latina writers. She has produced literary works in several genres: theater, poetry, essay, short story, and memoir. Her plays also incorporate issues of labor exploitation among women and men in the Chicana/o and Mexican immigrant communities (*Heroes and Saints, Watsonville: A Place Not Here*). Other Chicana playwrights such as Edith Villarreal (*My Visits with MGM—My Grandmother Martha*) and Denise Chávez (*Novenas Narrativas*) have also written works that specifically deal with women's issues of identity formation and generational conflicts. Two of the younger playwrights' works—Josefina López's *Real Women Have Curves* and Milcha Sánchez-Scott's *Roosters*—concentrate on themes about identity, self-image, exploitation of immigrant labor, and life in the barrios.[56]

Migdalia Cruz, who was born in New York, is perhaps the best-recognized dramatist of Puerto Rican descent; she has written more than thirty plays and musicals with themes that represent the life of Puerto Ricans in urban settings. Among her most produced works are *Miriam's Flowers, Fur*, and *The Have-Little*. Dolores Prida, along with María Irene Fornés, are two playwrights of Cuban ancestry who have had successful careers in theater and have been nationally and internationally recognized for their work. Two of Prida's most famous plays are entitled *Coser y Cantar* and *Beautiful Señoritas*, and their focus is on dismantling Latina stereotypes (especially as sexually promiscuous women) and national/ethnic identity formation. Two of Fornés's most produced plays are *The Conduct of Life* and *Fefu and her Friends*, which undertake issues of repressive military regimes and refusal of patriarchal domination respectively.[57]

Three Examples of Latina Theater

I will now briefly discuss examples of works by three prominent Latina writers: Migdalia Cruz (*The Have-Little*), Dolores Prida (*Botánica*), and Evelina Fernández (*Dementia*). Cruz's play was created at INTAR under the tutelage of Fornés in 1986–87, and it also premiered there in 1991. The play exposes the life of a poor Puerto Rican family living in New York in the 1970s, where the father is an alcoholic who has physically abused his wife and has been kicked out of the apartment, as a result, by his wife. He also attempts to molest his teenage daughter Lillian, the protagonist who is constantly looking for love. The mother, Carmen, physically abuses her daughter out of desperation and frustration about her life. Lillian's friend Michi represents her opposite—a smart and ambitious girl who always dreams of getting out of the South Bronx and attaining the "American Dream" through education. As a complication in the story, at the age of fifteen, the protagonist gets pregnant by her boyfriend who dies of a drug overdose soon after. Lillian's life is presented as one of abandonment as she loses everyone except her newborn son (her father leaves because of his addiction, her mother dies young, and her best friend moves away without saying good-bye). At the end, the story of hopelessness and entrapment in a dangerous barrio, her parents' story, is repeated in her life, and Lillian finds herself a prisoner in her own home. One of the recurring images throughout the entire play is that of blood (that of murder, overdose, menstruation, death); Lillian says, "I hope nobody gets kilt. There's always so much blood. Can't jump rope over blood. It gets in the sandbox and the little babies try to eat it . . . We keep away from the sandbox now. It's strange when people from an island are scared of sand."[58] The play offers no resolution for the protagonist who has resigned herself to praying for a better life. Cruz's realism depicts life as she knew it in New York where she witnessed crimes and death all around her. The playwright, though, is more like Michi the protagonist's best friend, as she managed to get away and take control of her own life to become a *mujer andariega* and *entremetida* who can now tell these stories in her own voice and without romanticizing her past.

In *Botánica*, by Prida, we also find a young protagonist, Milagros Castillo, who fervently insists on being called "Millie" because she negates her Puerto Rican and Cuban ancestry, and her name in Spanish represents everything she has learned to hate about herself. Millie's household also has an absent father, and she is raised by her mother and especially by her grandmother who owns a *botánica*. For Millie, this space represents the "backwardness" of her ethnic cultures, and she desperately fights her elders to get rid of the store and move out of the New York barrio

they have known as home. The protagonist attends a private, expensive university, majors in business, and returns home to "modernize" (read "assimilate") her family and the clients who believe in miracles more than in a Protestant work ethic like she does. Millie's internalized racism and classism had been her defense mechanism while in college, where she was constantly accosted for the way she looked, talked, dressed, danced, and (even) the way she was named, "Miracles." Unlike Migdalia Cruz's play, this one offers a resolution and a "happier ending" given that Millie learns her lesson through miracles performed by the saints in the *botánica*. At the end, when she receives a phone call where she is presented an offer to assimilate completely by selling the family's *botánica* and their home, she states: "No, it won't be necessary, because—because I've changed my mind. No, it's not the money. It's that—that I've decided that my buffaloes [cultures and sense of self] are not for sale."[59]

Evelina Fernández's play *Dementia*, as mentioned above, undertakes difficult and silenced subjects in Chican@ culture: homophobia and AIDS. Although queer writers like Moraga, Anzaldúa, Luis Alfaro, Mónica Palacios, and others have brought queerness to the forefront of the Chican@ imaginary, ignorance and bigotry still abound in this community. Unfortunately, this often translates into discrimination, fear, and isolation of such subjects. *Dementia* details the life of a Chicano community activist, Moisés, who is dying of AIDS complications and who has lived his gay life secretly. On his deathbed, he has only one wish, to dress up as a drag queen and throw a party for himself with his loved ones. The complication arises when Raquel, Moisés's ex-wife who does not know he is gay, decides to join the party. Throughout the play, the character of Lupe (a drag queen who is also Moisés's alter ego and whose name is based on the Cuban singer by the same name) constantly accuses him of being a coward for not coming out to Raquel and to the world. Toward the end of the play, Moisés responds:

> [w]e were so scared people would "know." All we could wish for was to be "normal." To "feel" like a man, love a woman and have kids, like a man. Do you know how many of us got married, had kids and did what we were "supposed" to do? Do you know how many of us are still pretending? . . . Still dying of "cancer" or "pneumonia" because their families are still ashamed to say they died of AIDS[?] . . . So what if I'm a coward! I've never been courageous . . . There is no greatness in me . . . I am no fucking "hero."[60]

In the end, Moisés still dies without fulfilling his wishes, like many protagonists with AIDS who die too young at the end of other plays. *Dementia* is an important contribution, given these topics and the fact that it was

produced at a time when there was an oppressive silence surrounding the topic of AIDS and queerness in general and especially in the Latin@ communities. As in the other examples discussed, in this play Fernández's "wild and sharp tongue" is utilized to give voice to the voiceless: the queer and the sick/dying who are abandoned by the communities they once served.

All three playwrights, in their own style, present a small example of Latin@ life and critical topics of importance to such communities. Even when the plays do not offer a solution to such problems, the fact that these issues are written about is fundamental. These Latina playwrights struggle to create works of art that can represent their lived experiences as close to their reality as possible.

Latina Performance Art

The second type of theatrical cultural production in which Latinas have participated since the 1970s and especially in the last two decades is performance art. This is more related to the works of *Teatropoesía*, as discussed above, than to plays in the strict sense of the genre. Many performance artists present their solo or one-woman shows in community and university spaces. These shows often incorporate slides, music (recorded or live), visual art, photographs, and the artists' own bodies. Given their economic production cost, Latina artists have witnessed a recent proliferation in their own work in their communities, and yet continue to occupy minimal space and time within the mainstream artistic world.

In her definition of Latina performance, Arrizón emphasizes the issues of resistance and agency when she states that:

> Performance art, with its focus on identity formation, enhances the cultural and political specificity of categories such as ethnicity, race, class, and sexuality . . . This definition moves identity formation into the realm of indefinite processes unfolding in the bodily "acts" of the performer, the agency of production, and the spectator . . . Chicana [and Latina] performativity must be located in the realm of negotiations which transforms silence into sound, invisibility into presence, and objecthood into subjecthood.[61]

The three most recognized and produced Latina performance artists are Alina Troyano (*Leche de Amnesia or Milk of Amnesia* and *Memorias de la Revolución or Memories of the Revolution*); Mónica Palacios, a Chicana from California (*Latin Lesbo Comic: A Performance about Happiness, Challenges, and Tacos* and *Greetings from a Queer Señorita*); and the Puerto Rican-Cuban-American Marga Gómez (*Marga Gómez is Pretty, Witty,*

and Gay; *Half Cuban / Half Lesbian*; and *La Familia Cómica*). All three of these artists deal specifically with queer, feminist issues and Latina cultural identity through comedy. Troyano's *Leche de Amnesia (Milk of Amnesia)* highlights and contests assimilation into U.S. mainstream culture:

> In high school I was asked to write an essay on the American character. I thought of fruits. Americans were apples, healthy, neat, easy to eat, not too sweet, not too juicy. Cubans were like mangoes, juicy, real sweet, but messy. You had to wash your hands and face and do a lot of flossing. I stood in front of the mirror and thought I should be more like an apple. A shadow appeared and whispered: *Mango stains never come off.* I didn't write about fruits in my essay, I didn't want them thinking I wasn't normal.[62]

The young protagonist, Carmelita Tropicana, in her attempt to assimilate, is reminded by a shadow (read: a Cuban cultural ghost) that she can never "be an apple" and that instead she will always be "stained" or marked with her ethnic, (in)visible traits. As a queer Latina, Troyano's use of fruits for the metaphor of difference is appropriate given the generalized stereotype of queers as "fruits" or "fruity."

In a similarly humorous manner, Mónica Palacios, in *Greetings from a Queer Señorita,* centerstages Chicana lesbian desire and identity by giving voice to a previously silenced subject:

> I wish they would have told me [that I was a lesbian] sooner. I wish someone would have taken me aside—preferably an angel and said: "The reason you felt like an outsider when you were growing up . . . the reason you've had the unexplainable weird feelings for women—is because you were born a lesbian and NOBODY TOLD YOU!" But now I know. Because I have reached/Deep in the Crotch of My Queer LATINA Psyche./And it told me to kiss that woman./And she tasted like honey./And I kissed her entire body until I passed out!/When I came to—I realized I was a lesbian!/Lesbian—Lesbian—Lesbian! . . . And I didn't have horns or fangs or this uncontrollable desire to chase Girl Scouts: "Hey little lady, can I bite your cookies?"/I was ready to embrace myself./I was ready to embrace other women./And feel safe./And feel a sense of equality./And feel myself gripping her sensual waist./Massaging her inviting curves./Kissing her chocolate nipples./And sliding my face down/Lick . . . /Down/Lick/Down/Lick/ Wanting all of her inside my mouth/And knowing I was never, ever going back/Because honey is/*too sweet*/To give up.[63]

Palacios is not afraid to shout her sexual desire for women after she struggles to become comfortable with her queer identity. Throughout her performance, she dismantles taboos to encourage and empower queer and nonqueer Latinas to assert their identity and take control of their bodies.

Marga Gómez, in *La Familia Cómica,* also highlights assimilation and Latina stereotypes, especially in Hollywood. The protagonist recounts, again in a comic way, her struggles as an actor in the film industry where the roles offered to her were specifically those of a gang member, a whore, and a maid. Frustrated with these choices, especially since she comes from a performance family (her father and mother were a singer and a dancer, respectively) background, she decides to drop out of the acting circles and create her own stand-up and solo performance shows directed exclusively at Latin@ and/or queer audiences.

Other Chicana performance artists from Los Angeles and San Antonio respectively are María Elena Fernández (*Confessions of a Cha-Cha Feminist*) and Laura Esparza *(I DisMember the Alamo: A Long Poem for Performance).*[64] Both focus on Chicana feminism and historical identity. Fernández's protagonist recalls her childhood in Los Angeles as a *chola,* and Esparza rewrites her Mexican ancestors into the history of the Alamo as she uses her own body as a screen to project their images on stage. Another important performer is María Elena Gaitán, a Chicana artist and community activist from East Los Angeles. Gaitán produced an important body of work related to the struggles of oppressed peoples of Mexican and indigenous descent. Some of her titles include *Chola con Cello: A Home Girl in the Philharmonic, The Adventures of Connie Chancla, Aztlán—Africa: Songs of Affinity, De Jarocha a Pocha,* and *The Teta Show.*[65] Her topics include issues of racial discrimination, labor exploitation, women's history, African-Mexican cultural and ethnic ties, and breast cancer.

The most recent work in Latina performance is exemplified by Chicana artists Adelina Anthony and Vicki Grise. Anthony has toured with three performance art pieces throughout the country: *Mastering Sex and Tortillas* (a work about lesbian sexual identity), *La Angry Xicana* (a stand-up comedy routine on the discrimination faced by the protagonist as a Chicana and queer), and *Tragic Bitches* (a poetic performance about the pain and struggles of Xicana queer love and intrafamily violence).[66] Vicki Grise has collaborated with Chicana writer and *teatrista* Irma Mayorga on the creation of *The Panza Monologues* (on issues of body image among Latinas). She has also created *Rasgos Asiáticos,* which traces the Chinese cultural heritage and ancestry in Mexico.[67] In the spring and summer of 2007, Grise created *A Farm for Meme,* a multimedia text installation that premiered in Los Angeles and was also performed in Butari, Rwanda. This performance piece highlights the struggles of a community to save the largest urban farm that was located in Los Angeles and bulldozed for land development.[68]

Conclusion

This short overview of Latina theater and performance allows for an appreciation of the expansiveness of the field and its various topics and themes that have concerned such writers and artists in the last century and a half. Although each Latino group has a different civic and historical relationship to the United States, as a collective they struggle to assert their identity and take their place in U.S. society. The communities whose works are highlighted continue to occupy marginalized spaces in mainstream U.S. society, where these women's artistic production is either erased or tokenised. Whether in the professional or popular arenas, Latina theater and performance artists have continued to create and produce their own works to rupture stereotypes and taboos placed on them. Each artist has faced discrimination and isolation for confronting the mainstream's and their own community's social ills. Nevertheless, it is thanks to their fearless and risk-taking stances that Latina artists have created safer spaces for the marginalized. It is clear that some accomplishments have been made by women in general in the world of American theater as a whole; but it is even more obvious that it is still necessary to continue to demand access in all theatrical and other art spaces in the United States for the voices of Latinas to continue to be heard. All of the playwrights and performance artists discussed here fit specifically into the definitions provided above about women who take control of their own tongues, bodies, and lives to continue to assert their own identities individually and communally. The hope is always that the struggles will continue to lessen as more and more Latinas achieve their status as published and produced artists nationally and internationally.

Notes

1. This term was first used in the 1980s for women of Latin American descent who were born and/or are living in the United States. In Chicana and Chicano studies it has been customary to separate women of Mexican ancestry from the group, and instead use both terms "Chicana/Latina" given that the first is demographically the largest group of all. However, in an attempt to not privilege any individual ethnic group, I will only use the term "Latina" or its plural when referring to the group as a whole and "Chicana" when referring specifically to that group. Unfortunately, given the gaps in the study of Latina theater and performance, the three major groups referenced throughout this text are Chicanas, Puerto Rican/Nuyoricans, and Cuban American. The dramatic work of Latinas with ties to Central and South America still needs to be researched.

2. Nicolás Kanellos states that as early as 1789 there were theatrical productions in Spanish in Monterey, California. See Nicolás Kanellos, *A History of Hispanic Theatre in the United States: Origins to 1940* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1990).
3. Maria Teresa Marrero quotes an article from the 1998–99 season with these statistics: "82 percent of all plays produced were of male authorship. That leaves 12 percent of female authorship, regardless of ethnicity. A paltry, appallingly miniscule 1.8 percent were written by playwrights with Hispanic surnames . . ." See Maria Teresa Marrero, "Out of the Fringe? Out of the Closet: Latina/Latino Theatre and Performance in the 1990s," *The Drama Review* 44.3: 149.
4. According to Yvonne Yarbro-Bejarano in her study of *Teatropoesía* (Yvonne Yarbro-Bejarano, "*Teatropoesía* by Chicanas in the Bay Area: *Tongues of Fire*," in *Mexican American Theatre Then and Now*, ed. N. Kanellos [Houston: Arte Público Press], 78–94), in the Bay Area, the writings by Lucha Corpi, Lorna Dee Cervantes, Sandra Cisneros, Alma Villanueva, Gloria Anzaldúa, Cherríe Moraga, Maria Moreno, Ana Castillo, among others, were considered primarily responsible for opening up Latina feminist spaces on and off the stage.
5. Alicia Arrizón, *Latina Performance: Traversing the Stage* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1999), xvi.
6. There are other terms used by Rebolledo that serve a similar purpose by alluding to rebel women: "atravesadas, escandalosas, troublemakers, malcriadas, and wicked women." For more specific details on the minor variations on each term, see her chapter entitled "Mujeres Andariegas: Good Girls and Bad," in Tey Diana Rebolledo, *Women Singling in the Snow: A Cultural Analysis of Chicana* (Tucson: The University of Arizona Press), 183–206.
7. Ibid., 183.
8. Anzaldúa, a leading third-world feminist theorist, clearly states that one (especially women of color) must not fear being called a "sell-out" when fighting for self-empowerment. She states, "I feel perfectly free to rebel and to rail against my culture. I fear no betrayal on my part . . . [s]o *mamá, Raza*, how wonderful, *no tener que rendir cuentas a nadie*. To separate from my culture (as from my family) I had to feel competent enough on the outside and secure enough inside to live life on my own . . . [a]nd if going home is denied me then I will have to stand and claim my space, making a new culture—*una cultura mestiza*—with my own lumber, my own bricks and mortar and my own feminist architecture." See Gloria Anzaldúa, *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza* (San Francisco: Spinsters / Aunt Lute, 1987), 21–22.
9. Yolanda Broyles-González, "Performance Artist María Elena Gaitán: Mapping a Continent Without Borders (Epics of Gente Atravesada, Traviesa y Entremetida)," special issue, *Frontiers: A Journal of Women Studies* (2003): 92, 94.
10. Anzaldúa, *Borderlands/La Frontera*, 79.
11. Chela Sandoval, "U.S. Third World Feminism: The Theory and Method of Oppositional Consciousness," *Genders* 10 (1991): 11.
12. Homi K. Bhabha states: "The importance of hybridity is not to be able to trace two original moments from which the third emerges, rather hybridity to me

is 'the third space' which enables other positions to emerge. This third space displaces the histories that constitute it, and sets up new structures of authority, new political initiatives which are inadequately understood through received wisdom" (211). He also identifies liminality as powerful and productive when he explains: "[w]ith the notion of cultural difference, I try to place myself in that position of liminality, in that productive space of the construction of culture as difference, in the spirit of alterity or otherness" (209). See J. Rutherford, "The Third Space: Interview with Homi Bhabha," in *Identity: Community, Culture, Difference,* ed. J. Rutherford (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1990), 207–21.

13. For a more detailed discussion of the colonial caste system and its relationship to social class and ethnicity (especially as related to Mexico), see Douglas R. Cope, *The Limits of Racial Domination: Plebeian Society in Colonial Mexico City, 1660–1720* (Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 1994).
14. These terms are utilized by Arrizón, in *Latina Performance: Traversing the Stage* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1999), 5.
15. In my historical oversimplification, my intent is not to negate the violent and devastating history of Spanish colonization imposed on the indigenous native populations in the territory that was renamed "New Spain" first and "Mexico" second. For a thorough history of Chicanas/os, see Rodolfo Acuña, *Occupied America: The Chicano's Struggle Toward Liberation* (San Francisco: Canfield Press, 1972).
16. For more details on Puerto Rican history and identity, see Juan Flores, *Divided Borders: Essays on Puerto Rican Identity* (Houston: Arte Público Press, 1993).
17. Samoa and the U.S. Virgin Islands, although each with its own history of colonialism, have a similar status as U.S. territories such as Puerto Rico.
18. This civic status privilege for Puerto Ricans has been analyzed by Alberto Sandoval-Sánchez, especially in the face of the anti-immigrant and anti-undocumented bashing in the post–September 11 "terrorist hysteria." See Alberto Sandoval-Sánchez, "Imagining Puerto Rican Queer Citizenship. Frances Negrón-Muntaner's *brincando el charco*: Portrait of a Puerto Rican," in *None of the Above: Puerto Ricans in the Global Era,* ed. Frances Negrón-Muntaner, New Directions in Latino American Culture (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 147–64.
19. In 2003, Nilo Cruz, a gay Cuban American writer, became the first Latino playwright to receive the Pulitzer Price in drama. His play *Anna in the Tropics* details the lives and struggles of Cuban tobacco and cigar workers in Florida during 1929.
20. For more details, see the essay, "Two Centuries of Hispanic Theatre in the Southwest," in *Mexican American Theatre Then and Now,* ed. Nicolás Kanellos (Houston: Arte Público Press, 1989).
21. See Arrizón, *Latina Performance,* 14.
22. See ibid., 15.
23. Ibid.
24. See Kanellos, *Mexican American Theatre Then and Now.*

25. See Yolanda Broyles-González, *El Teatro Campesino: Theater in the Chicano Movement* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1994); and Tomás Ybarra-Frausto, "I Can Still Hear the Applause. La Farándula Chicana: carpas y tandas de variedad," in *Hispanic Theatre in the United States*, ed. Nicolás Kanellos (Houston: Arte Público Press, 1984), 45–61.
26. See Nicolás Kanellos's essay in *A History of Hispanic Theatre*.
27. For examples of other women of Mexican and Latin American ancestry who participated in earlier theater and performances, see Elizabeth C. Ramírez's *Chicanas/Latinas in American Theatre: A History of Performance* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2000), especially the first two chapters that offer the sociohistorical context before 1950.
28. Lydia's father, Francisco Mendoza, was the one to drive the family from town to town. It was also his idea to write signs with the family's artistic names "Familia Mendoza. Variedades. Lydia Mendoza" or "Lydia Mendoza, la guitarrista, y el grupo de Variedades de Sketches Cómicos." See Yolanda Broyles-González, especially Chapter 1 in *Lydia Mendoza's Life in Music or La Historia de Lydia Mendoza: Norteño Tejano Legacies* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001).
29. Arrizón (1999) provides an in-depth analysis of Niggli's play *Soldadera*, in particular the representation of the character of Adelita, "[c]ontradictions abound: Anglo women play Mexican *soldaderas*; they wear clean and colorful skirts and shawls; they are surronded (sic.) by basketry and cacti meant to evoke folk art and a warm, exotic country side . . . Despite her childlike qualities, Adelita is revealed in the end as an aggressive, valiant hero. Beyond the folklore and subjective historical interpretation of *Soldadera*, Niggli's depiction of Adelita and the other female soldiers centers the courage and bravery of these women." See Alicia Arrizón, *Latina Performance*, 60.
30. See Elizabeth Coonrod Martínez's book on Niggli entitled *Josefina Niggli, Mexican American Writer: A Critical Biography* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2007), which, according to the publisher, recovers Niggli's works and situates her among the lineage of influential Latina writers.
31. Although Ybarra-Frausto published the first article on "rasquachismo" in 1990, Broyles-González, in 1994, also presented a pertinent working definition in his contribution: "[t]he *rasquachi* aesthetic is the inventiveness driven by necessity: not only economic necessity, but also by the need to resist, to speak out, and to address the burning issues of the day. *Rasquachismo* makes the most out of very limited performance resources and, thus, is not ensnared in the cumbersome machinery of theatrical productions, their aesthetics, and their politics." See *El Teatro Campesino*, 94.
32. Ybarra-Frausto, "I Can Still Hear the Applause," 50.
33. The San Antonio Conservation Society hosts three of Escalona's Scrapbooks, and I found two songs on the back of two postcards in 2004, *El chivo* and *Pero nunca hicimos nada*. See Urquijo-Ruiz, especially Chapter 3 for an extended analysis of Noloesca's performance.
34. See any unabridged English dictionary for a detailed explanation and history of the term.

35. Ybarra-Frausto, "I Can Still Hear the Applause," 53.
36. See Kanellos, *A History of Hispanic Theatre.*
37. See Alberto Sandoval-Sánchez and Nancy Sternbach, eds., *Stages of Life: Transcultural Performance and Identity in U.S. Latina Theater* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2001).
38. Ibid., 48.
39. See Elizabeth C. Ramírez, *Chicanas/Latinas in American Theatre,* 141, for more details on PRTTC.
40. See Broyles-González's chapter on the participation of women in ETC, "Toward a Re-Vision of Chicana/o Theater History: The Roles of Women in el Teatro Campesino," in *El Teatro Campesino.*
41. Teatro Chicana's collection of plays was recently published as part of the University of Texas Press Chicana Matters Series in 2008. See Laura E. Garcia and others, eds., *Teatro Chicana: A Collective Memoir and Selected Plays,* Chicana Matters Series (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2008).
42. See Yvonne Yarbro-Bejarano, "Chicanas' Experience in Collective Theatre," *Women and Performance,* vol. 2, issue 2 (1985); and Broyles-González, *El Teatro Campesino,* for a more detailed discussion on women's participation in theater during the 1960s and 1970s.
43. Yarbro-Bejarano, "Teatropoesía by Chicanas in the Bay Area: Tongues of Fire," in *Mexican American Theatre: Then and Now,* ed. Nicolás Kanellos (Houston: Arte Público Press, 1989), 74–94.
44. See Yvonne Yarbro-Bejarano, "The Female Subject in Chicano Theatre: Sexuality, 'Race,' and Class," in *Performing Feminisms: Feminist Critical Theory and Theatre,* ed. Sue-Ellen Case (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1990), 138.
45. Yarbro-Bejarano, "Teatropoesía," 78.
46. Ibid., 79.
47. Ibid., 82.
48. Ramirez, *Chicanas/Latinas in American Theatre,* 136–37.
49. See Alina Troyano's "Your Kunst is your Waffen," in *I, Carmelita Tropicana: Performing Between Cultures* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2000).
50. All three writers' works are readily available given that they are three of the most famous, and their plays/performances are among the most produced. See Troyano, *I, Carmelita Tropicana: Performing Between Cultures* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2000); López, *Simply María, or The American Dream* (Woodstock: Dramatic Publishing, 1996); and Milcha Sánchez-Scott and Jeremy Blahnik, "Latina" in *Necessary Theater: Six Plays about the Chicano Experience,* ed. Jorge Huerta (Houston: Arte Público Press, 1989), 85–149.
51. Ramírez, *Chicanas/Latinas in American Theatre,* 141.
52. Ibid., 142.
53. See Juliette Carrillo and José Cruz González, eds., *Latino Plays from South Coast Repertory: Hispanic Playwrights Project Anthology* (New York: Broadway Play Publishing, Inc., 2000).
54. See Huerta and Ramírez for more information on Fornés's influence on Latina writers.

55. Estela Portillo Trambley's anthology *Sor Juana and Other Plays* contains the play *Day of the Swallows* (written in 1971), which is considered the first of its kind for incorporating lesbian identity issues in the Chican@ cultural context. Moraga cites *Swallows* as an example for her in spite of the play's homophobic treatment of lesbians. See Estela Portillo Tramble, *Sor Juana and Other Plays* (Ypsilanti, Michigan: Bilingual Press, 1983).
56. For a more in-depth discussion of all the writers mentioned in this paragraph, see Elizabeth C. Ramírez's chapter entitled "The Emerging Chicana Playwright: A Political Act of Writing Women," in *Chicanas/Latinas in American Theatre: A History of Performance* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2000).
57. See Alberto Sandoval-Sánchez and Nancy Saporta Sternbach, *Stages of Life: Transcultural Performance and Identity in U. S. Latina Theater* (Tempe: University of Arizona Press, 2001), especially Chapter 2 for a discussion of both Fornés and Prida in general and as queer writers who had not acknowledged their sexuality as lesbians during the publication of these works.
58. Migdalia Cruz, "The have-little" (excerpt), in *Contemporary Plays by Women of Color: An Anthology*, ed. Kathy A. Perkins and Roberta Uno (New York: Routledge Press, 1996), 108.
59. See Dolores Prida, "Botánica," in *Puro Teatro: A Latina Anthology*, ed. Alberto Sandoval-Sánchez and Nancy Saporta Sternbach (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2000), 45.
60. Evelina Fernández, *Dementia*, unpublished manuscript, 55–6.
61. Arrizón, *Latina Performance*, 73–74.
62. See Alina Troyano, "Milk of Amnesia—leche de amnesia," in *O Solo Homo: The New Queer Performance*, ed. Holly Hughes and David Roman (New York: Grove Press, 1998), 28.
63. See Monica Palacios, "Greetings From a Queer Señorita," in *Out of the Fringe: Contemporary Latin@ Theater and Performance*, ed. Caridad Svich and María Teresa Marrero (New York: Theatre Communication Group, 2000), 388–89.
64. Arrizón, *Latinas on Stage*.
65. See Urquijo-Ruiz, "Las figuras de la peladita / el peladito y la pachuca / el pachuco en la producción cultural chicana y mexicana de 1920 a 1990" (diss., University of California, San Diego, 2004), especially Chapter 3 for a discussion of Gaitán's unpublished works.
66. This is a collaboration with Chicano artists Dino Foxx and Lorenzo Herrera y Lozano.
67. Except for *The Panza Monologues*, all of Anthony's and Grise's work remain unpublished.
68. Grise's latest work *Blu*, a play highlighting intergenerational gang violence and the participation of Latin@s in the war in Iraq, won second place in the Latino Playwriting Awards at the Kennedy Center College Theater Festival in the United States.