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The Conquest of Space: The Construction of Chicana Subjectivity in Performance Art

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Author
Arrizón, A

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Alicia Arrizón and Lillian Manzor
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Conquest of Space: The Construction of Chicana Subjectivity in Performance Art

Alicia Arrizón

An analysis of contemporary Chicana/o theater must be mapped beyond the historical implications of El Teatro Campesino. The emergence of El Teatro Campesino as part of the Chicano theater movement in the Southwest (and parts of the Midwest) was oriented toward the cultural affirmation of working-class Mexicans. The social and political upheavals of the Civil Rights and the United Farm Workers movements were two of the main sources that influenced the beginning of El Teatro Campesino in the 1960s. Recent criticism on El Teatro Campesino's evolution reinterpret the company's history and analyzes the gender relations at work in its productions. As Yolanda Broyles-González points out, female roles in the trajectory of El Teatro Campesino have been subjected to reductive characterizations. She suggests: "Throughout the course of El Teatro Campesino's dramatic evolutionary process, the female roles have remained fairly constant in all the genres: variations of the same three or four types of categories. These characters are defined in a familial or age category: mother, grandmother, sister, or wife/girlfriend."¹ The designations of sisters, wives, girlfriends and mothers usually fall into one or two categories, la puta or la buena, the whore or the virgin. This dichotomy continues to characterize the female roles even after the period of the early actos²

Broyles-González also examines both the working-class Mexican oral performance and the collective performance practices of El Teatro Campesino. Although El Teatro Campesino's collective system of production characterizes the power of group "action," the contributions of dramatists such as Estela Portillo Trambley in the 1970s, and, later, Cherrie Moraga in the 1980s, have created a broader space for Chicana/o theater and cultural development.³ Estela Portillo's baroque and obscure play The Day of the Swallows (1976) and Cherrie Moraga's play Giving Up the Ghost (1986), precisely ten years apart, are symbolic of their...
decades as well as of the transition in representational strategies from the 1970s to the 1980s. The former plots a misogynist lesbian, Doña Josefa, who, trapped against her own will, prefers to die rather than accept her lesbian desire. Later, in *Giving Up the Ghost*, the representations of both lesbian and heterosexual desire define the paradoxes of culture's concepts of sexuality. Yvonne Yarbro-Bejarano has studied the representation of female-desiring subjects in Moraga's *Giving Up the Ghost*. She suggests that the representational subjectivity as "sexual beings is shaped in dialectical relationship to a collective way of imagining sexuality." From Portillo's *The Day of the Swallows* to Moraga's *Giving Up the Ghost*, the transition breaks new ground in Chicana/o theater. Although Portillo's treatment of a lesbian character in her play was motivated by economic reasons, Moraga's political awareness deconstructs the cultural forces that have shaped the roles that men and women should assume. This significant transition in Chicana/o theater constitutes the opening of an alternative space. Since the 1980s, more emphasis has been given to the female subject in this alternative space, and more direct questions of sexuality have emerged. In the 1990s, self-representation has become one of the most recurrent practices in Chicana performance art. Chicana performance artists such as Monica Palacios and Laura Esparza embark on a multifaceted process of recreating their own stories in an attempt to acquire a fuller sense of themselves as Chicanas, women, performers, and/or queers. Palacios's lesbian representation in the 1990s subversively enlarges this alternative space mainly to critique the reinscription of heterosexuality and homophobia in the public sphere.

Within the context of the cultural specificity of Chicana identity, I try to show some ways in which representation on stage involves a total rethinking of the gendered self as an autobiographical subject. In this sense, the gendered self is understood within a representational subjectivity in which the "real" person becomes a metaphor of representation. The technology of self-representation functions to perform the metaphorical resonance of reality, "a metaphor that functions as a trope of truth beyond argument, of identity beyond proof, of what simply is." Analyzing the work of Monica Palacios, *Latin Lezbo Comix: A Perfor-
mance about Happiness, Challenges, and Tacos, and Laura Esparza, I DisMember the Alamo: A Long Poem for Performance, I bring to focus the concept of the gendered self as an essential part of the representational "plotting" necessary for the performative space. Both performance pieces are included in this anthology as documents that represent the possibilities of writing, recalling the memory of past productions. Although my analysis is based mainly on these "documents," I have definitely been influenced by their staging. Thus, in some instances, I include the reading of passages taken from performances I have seen on stage that are not in these published scripts.

Both Palacios and Esparza share the same concerns in unmasking the system of representation. While Esparza subverts the official history of the 1836 Alamo episode to invent "herstory", Palacios is extremely humorous performing her struggle to come out in her Catholic Mexican/Chicano household and in show business. Moreover, in Palacios’s Latin Lecho Comix her politics of representation are based upon a notion of the self that moves toward integrating specifically sexual and ethnic components of identity. As pointed out by Yvonne Yarbo-Bejarano, Palacios not only exposes her coming-out narrative and the homophobia of her "people," but "Mexicanizes the signifiers of European-American history and popular culture to negotiate complex relations of power and race."

Judith Butler, in particular, has proposed ways in which naturalized conceptions of gender might be understood as constituted, but, have possibilities of being reconstituted differently. She has deconstructed theatrical or phenomenological models that situate the gendered self prior to its acts. In this context, Butler understands constituting acts not only as constructions of the actor's identity, but as "constituting that identity as a compelling illusion, an object of belief." Theoretically, her argument deconstructs forced gendered identity and taboo. In practice, the gendered self conveys an open space to create and recreate the many possibilities of its construction. In the case of Chicana subjectivity and its self-representation, the construction of a plural gendered identity problematizes the relationship between self and other: marginal and dominant culture. Chicanas as creative subjects try to understand the self in relation to the paradoxes and contradictions caused by conquest, annexation, and assim
aura Esparza, I bring to the fore part of the performative space, recalling the analysis is based on the reading on stage that concerns in unearthing subverted desires to invent performing her ticano house- Latin Lesbian a notion of sexual and yonne deering-out narr- Mexicanizes popular culture. This natural-constituted, nly. She has
t Butler un- the actor’s spellng illu- argument. In practice, and recreate of Chicana of a between self s creative paradoxes and assimilation. Subordinated to a superior system as a result of caste and class relationship stratified by racial and ethnic status, Chicana identity cannot be subsumed under the simple ideological category of nonwhite. In Gloria Anzaldúa’s terms of the new mestiza, the Chicana has a “plural personality,” thus “not only does she sustain contradictions, she turns the ambivalence into something else.” Ambivalence, then, becomes the process that enabling, in practical ways, the necessary struggle for one’s self-identification within the enactment of power relations.

As a cultural practice, performance art does not have an absolute definition. Diana Taylor problematizes the notion of performance as an autonomous system of production, separated from both the dramatic text and its representation. As Taylor puts it, “The term performance, and specially the verb performing, allow for agency, which opens the way for resistance and oppositional spectacles.” For performance artists such as Laura Esparza and Monica Palacios, the technology of self-representation involves the performative subject as an allegory of identity. Esparza and Palacios sardonically define the enactment of self-representation as a “narcissistic requirement of art,” which, in essence, underscores the power relationships within theater, female representation, and performance art. This very notion of performance art pushes the boundaries of the institution of theater and its political economy, which historically has excluded the marginal subject. As one of the main conditions of performance art, the representational strategy is produced within narratives of identity that are informed, in turn, by questions that link the gendered self with representation.

Although performance art engages diverse cultural, personal, social, and political systems of representation, it rebels against institutions or modernism. Many critics have explained this rebellion as the continuous struggle of twentieth-century art against commodification. For example, Jeanie Forte explains, “As a continuation of the twentieth-century rebellion against commodification, performance art promised a radical departure from commercialism, assimilation, and triviality, deconstructing the commercial art network of galleries and museums while often using/abusing their spaces.” Esparza and Palacios allude directly and indirectly to this “radical departure” suggested in Forte’s text; they are particularly concerned with the political
implications of performance as a transgressive display of self. The placement of the self is the “real” space of representation and can be seen as a model for contemplation. Within this context, the relationship between self and representation enables the (im)possibility of identity to be the subject of performance.

As is true of any performance, *IDismember the Alamo* and *Latin Lesbian Comic* are representations without reproductions. According to Peggy Phelan, this process functions as a paradigm for another economy, “one in which reproduction of the Other as the Same is not assured.” Phelan suggests that performance art cannot truly be documented. If it is documented, then the work is represented by a photograph, a performance script, or a video tape. When a performance goes through this process, according to Phelan, it ceases to be performance art. Phelan indicates that: “the document of a performance then is only a spur to memory, an encouragement of memory to become present.” I concur with Phelan when she states that “performance’s only life is in the present.” However, it is a very particular present, which can be transformed and modified once its spatiality has been recorded either as a visual or written text. It is a significant present with a memorable past in which future stagings or readings become the grand possibility of documentation.

In *Latin Lesbian Comic* Palacios’s queerness is significant to the act of self-representation. She explains how she came to accept her sexuality:

MONICA: I’m so glad I’ve matured. And as I became more involved in the gay and lesbian community, I started using the word more. And one day I said the word a bunch of times. ([*Repeats the word LESBIAN seven times*] AND I GOT OVER IT! Because, folks, it’s just a word. I was making a big deal out of nothing. It seems to the American thing to do! [See this volume.])

Just as Palacios exposes herself, connecting her sexual identity to the space within self-representation, her show goes beyond traditional stand-up comedy. It challenges this tradition by exploring the possibilities of one-woman performance. As a condition of performance art, the political economy implicated in a one-woman show has contributed enormously to broadening the space in Chicana theater. This excerpt from Laura Esparza’s *IDismember the Alamo* graphically reveals this condi-
tion of performance art:

Here I’m telling the family story as a performance art piece: that particular phenomenon in performance history driven by the economic requirements of American theater and the current government disposition on funding the arts; this particular chapter of performance history that clues us into the personal stories of every artist, actor, painter, poet or choreographer who has ever seriously considered the narcissistic requirements of art. I am giving away the family secrets, performing the family monologue, selling the family jewels, I’m colonizing myself! ¡Chinga tu madre!24

By telling the family story, Espazar gives away “the family secrets.” She sells the “family jewels,” the privacy of her own family, to recreate her personal story. Espazar’s presence as the act of self-representation involves her own performance as metaphor of her own identity. The role of the actress as the representor of herself on stage positions the self to evaluate the power dynamics, which are expressed ironically, as “the current government disposition on funding the arts.” This “disposition” is what prompts her to give away the beloved secrets of her familia.

Palacios’s aggressive approach attacks the power dynamics in stand-up comedy show business. In Latin Lezbo Comic, Palacios takes time off from her sunny pronouncements to reveal a crucial event in her career. She recalls the time when she was trying to fit into “generic comic: straight, white, male” mainstream clubs: “And every time I’d tell male comics I was from San Francisco, they would respond with a stupid homophobic comment. I wanted to smack them in their abdomens with an oar! Instead, I walked away angry and confused. My tummy ached. So you can imagine how I felt on stage.” (See this volume.)

Latin Lezbo Comic goes beyond enjoyment and humor. Palacios’s performance is one of challenges (and tacos), where comedy becomes the tool of reconstructing ways of understanding and of making visible the queer self. The practice of humor that Palacios conducts interpolates audience members into a dialogue that asks them either to identify with her or take responsibility for addressing the oppression, racism, and homophobia of their own lives. Palacios refuses to accept the “heterosexual” world that denies her a space in show business:

I just hated how comedy was and still is a boy’s game.
Club owners don't like to book women because, quote, "They talk about women things and their periods." End of quote.
Yet guys would get on stage, grab their dicks, talk about shit, and talk about farts, and the audience would be on the floor! I wanted to make them stick their tongues on ice trays!
Bitter? I'm not bitter. I'M A WAITRESS! (See this volume.)

Palacios's aggressive approach attacks the power dynamics in stand-up comedy show business, in which males are powerful and women are passive. It also subverts the rule of representation by placing the white heterosexual spectator in the position of passivity. Overall, the public is challenged with a humor that sardonically censures repression and, in particular, transgresses the order of tradition. As Yarbro-Bejarano points out, "Centering the Chicana lesbian subject also means decentering the traditionally privileged spectator, and Palacios's show raises the same issues of audience reception as Moraga's work for the theater." Indeed, Palacio's lesbian representation "denaturalizes" the conventional and heterosexual spectator.

Her didactic spectacle intends to break heterosexist misconceptions about lesbians. As Palacios points out, "Most important for me, the show is out there hopefully educating people. I make it really funny, but I hope I'm out there making my point."

Palacios is also hilarious in presenting her struggle to come out in the private sphere; she recalls the time she first brought the woman she loves to a family reunion. Palacios performs the reactions of each member of her family. Although her precocious niece calls her "LEZBO," her older sister replies, "I'm not sure I understand it. Her girlfriend is nice—I GUESS THAT'S WHAT SHE CALLS HER! HER LOVER—PERSON?!!" Through her enactment of the family's reactions, Palacios performs different voices as a way of presenting with sardonic pleasure the family story, what she calls, the "double dyke familia":

MONICA: But what a big burn on my family, because my other older sister is also a LESBIAN! You know, my family thinks—
FAMILY: Did you guys eat the same thing? How does this happen?
FILM ANNOUNCER: [Commercial voice] Just when this Mexican Catholic family thought they had one lesbian daughter, they actually have two! Experience their confusion in
DOUBLE DYKE FAMILIA!

Every year, the familia had that same holiday wish: "Por favor, let them bring men home to dinner. We don't want to march in that gay parade!"

DOUBLE DYKE FAMILIA! (See this volume.)

Palacios's personal narrative humorously affirms her individual self as well as her collective sense of identity, making the audience "crack up." Within these comic narratives, the performance of assumed ethnic and sexual identities transgresses the patriarchal and heterosexual privilege and indicates that it is not an "accident" that lesbians and Chicanas are often marginalized in and out of mainstream circles. In this context, the process of self-representation as an act of resistance reconsiders (her) performance in relation to the centrality of the performer. Both the lesbian and the Chicana are moved center stage.

In *I Dismember the Alamo*, Laura Esparza departs from the Alamo's historical event to trace her family lineage. Esparza and her collective self become the subject of performance. She exists because her great great great grandmother survived the Battle of the Alamo in 1836. The construction of Esparza's identity is based upon a collective subjectivity that transcends the excessive limitations of individualism. Esparza insists that the personal is the truthful history, that the story of the Alamo is "herstory." She claims, "My body is the battlefield / of the colonized self. / The land where conquests of / Spanish, and Mexican, and American I have occupied my cells" (see this volume.).

This particular space of her colonized "body" must be interconnected to agencies that claim the history of the self from an identity that comes from somewhere else. Indeed, she sees herself as an extension of a history. "An important part of my myth is the heritage I have from the city. I feel the land and location of Texas in my blood and bones. I know that place as my body."²⁵

In relation to the way one conceives one's identity, Gayatri Spivak suggests:

To an extent, the way in which one conceives of oneself as representative or as an example of something is this awareness that what is one's own, one's identity, what is proper to one is also a biography, and has a history. That history is unmotivated but not capricious and is larger in outline than we are."²⁶
Although Spivak is particularly speaking of Assia Djebar, the Algerian novelist, her remarks can be applied to other contexts. The basic understanding of the personal as the political “intermediary” of a collective consciousness involves the story of one’s life with greater possibilities of representation—an identity that is constructed from other identities. Thus Esparza’s self-narrative story cannot exist without Texan history and its transgression, or Palacios’s self-identity enactment cannot be accomplished without the representation of her lesbian subjectivity. In this context, the process of self-representation is crucial to the philosophical “plotting” necessary for the politics of identity and its performativity.

The history of Texas is an inevitable subject in Laura Esparza’s self-identity process of representation. Born and raised on the west side of San Antonio, Texas, Esparza rewrites history as a way of writing her own narrative. The cry of “Remember the Alamo,” which became a call to arms for Anglo-Americans and Mexican-Americans in both Texas and the United States, is “dismembered” in Esparza’s own version of history:

The history of Texas, to me, is a neighborhood I know by heart. The history of Texas is located here in my heart, in my blood. [Lipstick X applied over heart]
The history of Texas is never like a book or a movie. You can’t put your hand on it. What happened can only be described one mirror at a time. (See this volume.)

Esparza’s exploration of her Chicana identity and its multiple subjectivities leads her to “dismembering” the Alamo. Esparza’s “dismemory/dismembering” is a critique of patriarchal and Anglo ethnocentric history. Marguerite Waller has pointed out:

Her dismemory/dismembering of patriarchal, nationalistic history leads not to an alienated (national/ethnic/sexual) identity, but to accountable citizenship in a serious but carnivalesque world whose energies flow with, rather than against, her multidimensional Chicana subjectivity.

In the opening scene of her performance, Esparza sings “Volver, Volver,” a Mexican traditional song that translates as “return, to go back.” It is a return to “herstory,” the history of the Alamo, which defines her identity in relation to her ancestors.
tors who fought at the Alamo. She appears sitting behind a white rectangular screen, “or in a white tent, or better yet a white 1950s refrigerator with two white wings, somewhat resembling the Alamo facade” (see this volume). One sees her eyes through a hole cut in the screen and her wide open legs sticking out of holes. There is also a television set. While the theme music from the movie The Alamo, starring John Wayne, is playing in the “preshow ritual,” the movie begins to run on the television set. That is when she starts her show.

Esparza claims the history of Texas as the “story” of her family, showing family pictures and newspaper clips in slides projected through the white screen:

We have a family story,
A little familial history,
A ritual secret of sorts. We tell it to each other,
The family secret,
Our creation story of how we discovered
ourselves. (See this volume.)

Esparza tells the family story, a history she thinks is important to “invent” as a way of empowering the self and its collective means. In order to do that, she subverts the official history of the 1836 confrontation at the Alamo between Texans and the Mexican army. For example, when she presents a slide of Jim Bowie, an “official” hero of the Alamo, she says:

There are some who say that Jim Bowie, hero of the Alamo, was protecting a hoard of gold he stole from the Apaches and hid in a well at the Alamo. Westward expansion, slaves, there was something for everyone, besides “freedom.” And freedom for whom? Did Gregorio know what he was fighting for? (See this volume.)

The myths about the Alamo event portray heroes, such as James Bowie, as a defender of his home, a good Texan. Bowie was an infamous wrangler who made a fortune running slaves and had come to Texas searching for lost mines and money. Other “heroes” such as William Barret Travis, according to Rodolfo Acuña, “had fled to Texas after killing a man, abandoning his wife and two children.”

These men are portrayed as heroes who sacrificed their lives
to defend their land and their comrades-in-arms. Esparza makes Gregorio Esparza, her great great great grandfather, the main protagonist of her own history version. In the first part of her performance, Esparza introduces her great great great grandfather as a hero of the Alamo. His name, Gregorio Esparza, is highlighted in the newspaper clippings projected on the screen. She uses the Alamo’s historical event and *The Alamo*, the movie, to emphasize the role that Mexicans played in the battle. John Wayne directed, starred in, and produced the movie *The Alamo* in 1960. This movie and countless other Hollywood productions glorify the Anglo-American settlers who wrested Texas from Mexico. Esparza’s performance humorously subverts this idealistic view:

In the family mantra
We have a grandfather
Actually, he’s not my grandfather but
My great great great grandfather
or is it my great great great great grandfather,
I can never get it straight
Maybe only three greats for
old Gregorio Esparza.
Anyway, he’s the star of the story. (See this volume.)

Although Esparza introduces Gregorio Esparza as the “star” of “herstory,” it is precisely Ana, her great great great grandmother, who becomes “the real story.” Esparza claims to be alive only because Ana survived. It is precisely the denial of women as active subjects in the Alamo’s historical event that Esparza both foregrounds and subverts. Transgression within transgression functions as a system of subversion. Esparza begins her performance by making Gregorio Esparza the real hero of the Alamo event, but it is precisely the memory of Ana, Esparza’s great great great grandmother, that is used to subvert both “official” Anglocentric history and Gregorio’s patriarchal story:

1,920 acres of land she could not claim by her rights as a hero of the Alamo.
1,920 acres she could have tilled to feed her family. She fed her babies buggy meal to keep them alive.
1,920 acres she could not claim because her last name was Esparza, Mexicana like the land she stood on. An exile in her own land.
Espinosa makes her, the main part of her reat grandfa-
rter Esparza, is on the screen.
ho, the movie, the battle. John
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ends her her of the
a, Esparza's
at both "official story:
her babies
was Esparza, n land.

(both courtesy of Laura Esparza)
(courtesy of Laura Esparza)
Her cells are my cells.  
Her grito is mine.  
She lived past the glory the hype of history,  
And I am here simply  
because she survived. (See this volume.)

The power of Esparza's performance lies in the emphasis on personal experience and emotional material, such as family pictures. The slide projections of her loved ones on the white screen contain a truth-effect that stresses the process of self-representation. This effect becomes fundamental to enhancing the relationship between the representational and the real. "The real is read through representation, and representation is read through the real." For Laura Esparza, the Alamo's intertextuality exists only as references that construct her family's historical background in San Antonio and deconstruct the legendary myths of the Alamo:

That's how I have this story to tell you now  
because it was never found in history books.  
It was part of being my name, part of my body,  
my locus,  
my tierra,  
family rooted in story. (see this volume.)

Esparza invents a history as a way of constructing her identity. In her own version, only a herstory is the "real" story. Esparza's body is a result of and presented as a battlefield of "the profane war of lies" (see this volume.). Her body's presence becomes synonymous with her "locus" and "tierra." Her body "gives birth" to her story, as she presents family pictures and newspaper clips on the white screen. The pouring out of history functions as a discourse and metadiscourse of representation. Both discourse and metadiscourse narrate the dramatic story of los Esparzas:  
"That's how I have this story to tell you now, because it was never found in history books" (see this volume.). Discourse and metadiscourse are reinforced with visual images, photographs, and newspaper clippings, and convey meaning as an expression of self-representation.

The construction of the body reinforces Esparza's internal struggle and the Chicana's multiple selves: "The Indian in me
will battle my Spaniard / My Spaniard will battle my Mexican and / my American will have its own internal Alamo with my Chicana" (see this volume). Using lipstick on her naked chest and wearing a rebozo around her waist, Esparza ends her performance by drawing diagrams on her body. This ending responds to her multiple subjectivity as the reasoning of self-representation. She adds:

I am this:
anIndia
inside a mestiza
inside a gringa
inside a chicana.
I am all of these
and my psyche is like a road map of Texas
traversed by borders
with never any peace at these borders. (See this volume.)

The process of self-representation configures a particular space that inscribes a gendered ethnic identity within multiple border crossings. In this context, one must understand the very notion of identity as a dynamic process, one which is never static. Esparza's identity is defined within a narrative that seeks to construct a space conducive to a heterogeneous agent, which is the product of mestizaje and colonization.

Palacios's closing number is composed of a mixture of popular songs in which key words in the lyrics are substituted with the word *vagina*:

[Sings to the tune of "Lullaby of Broadway"]
C'mon along and listen to
My lullaby of Vagina.
The hit parade and bally-hoo,
My lullaby of Vagina.
[Sings the next lines like a traditional medley, but replaces the key word with *vagina*]
I left my vagina in San Francisco...
Vagina Cathedral...
The days of wine and vagina... (See this volume.)

The playful substitution of *vagina* highlights the grammars of sexuality in a unique way that humorously honors womanhood.
Using the vagina parody challenges the social and cultural construction of female body and desire. The parody breaks the silence of sexual repression and inscribes an erotic space in which the gendered self centers the vagina not merely as object of female desire, but as the subject of transgression for gender-based structures of power. Moreover, the parody of the vagina serves as the focal point of her queer sexuality.

Laura Esparza's and Monica Palacios's performances and selves emerge as inherently political. Their performance art is the product of the relationship of women to the dominant system of representation, situating their gendered selves and ethnicity within a feminist critique. The technology of self-representation places the subject position exercising greater determination in the construction of subjectivity via performance art. Esparza and Palacios engage the process of self-representation as an act of resistance that reconsiders performance in relation to the centrality of the female ethnic "other." Both performances are autobiographical, grounded in the belief that representation is constituted through a performatif space in which gender and identity (ethnic and/or sexual) involves constructing acts of the self. The performances of Palacios and Esparza demonstrate that the very identity-constructing acts create enough space to construe their representation. I read these performances as texts which attempt to theorize the performative space of Chicana identity and self-representation.

Notes

3. The significant contributions of Josefina López, Denise Chávez, and Edit Villarruel have been representative in Chicana/o theater.
5. Estela Portillo Trambley confesses in an interview that she wrote about a lesbian character, Doña Josefina, for economic reasons. She says, "The plot is about lesbians; I knew nothing about them, but I was going to sell it. Well, it got published, it appeared in four anthologies, I get invited to talk about it, it gets analyzed to death, and it's a play I wrote in a very short time and for a terrible reason! I was just being
mercenary." Consult Juan Bruce-Novoa, Chicano Authors: Inquiry by Interview (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1980), 170.
9. Both pieces are included in the first section of this anthology, "Play and Performance Texts." All further references to these pieces are included parenthetically within the text. Palacios and Esparza have been performing their respective work throughout the country since 1991.
10. Monica Palacios performed at the University of California, Riverside, on March 2, 1993. Her performance was the major event that took place during the celebration of Semana de la Mujer. Co-sponsored by MECHA and the Chicano Student Program, Palacios's performance attracted more than 150 people to the theater. After this performance, she was invited in 1994 and 1995 by the Gay, Lesbian and Bisexual Student Program of this campus.
11. Yvonne Yarbro-Bejarano, "The Lesbian Body in Latina Cultural Production," forthcoming in Entiendo?: Queer Readings, Hispanic Writings (Durham: Duke University Press). I do not include a page number because I am quoting an early draft of this essay. I would like to thank Yvonne Yarbro-Bejarano for giving me the opportunity to read her unpublished work.
13. Butler, 520.
17. By "marginal subject," I refer specifically to people of color, gays and lesbians.
20. Phelan, 147.
22. Phelan, 5.
23. Other Chicana performance artists who practice this tradition include Ruby Nelda Pérez, Carmen Tafolla, Denise Chávez, Raquel Salinas, Dolores Chávez, Belinda Acosta, Sylviana Wood, and Mary Sue Galindo.
24. This particular passage is very provocative and expressive. It serves as a good example to illustrate the act of self-representation as a condition of performance art. However, in the final written script of the performance, this section was not included.
25. Yvonne Yarbro-Bejarano, ¿Entiendes?: Queer Reading, Hispanic Writings. In this essay, Yvonne Yarbro-Bejarano relates the work of Palacios to other Latina artists. She uses as an example the work of Cherríe Moraga, Ester Hernández, and Marcia Ochoa to talk about cultural productions and the lesbianization of the heterosexual icons of popular culture.
26. Monica Palacios expressed this sentiment after she performed Latin Leo Coyote at the University of California, Riverside, in 1993.
27. See Waller, "Pocha or Pork Chop?: An Interview with Theater Director and Performance Artist Laura Esparza." This interview is included in this anthology.
29. The Alamo was a military defeat in San Antonio, Texas. However, it was a moral victory for Anglo-Texans and Mexican-Texans who supported the state as a republic with a provisional government and called for its independence. San Antonio became the leading city of the newly formed Republic of Texas until the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo was signed, which, in essence, granted the whole Southwest to the United States.
30. Marguerite Waller, (see this volume).
31. In the performance, her spread legs, clad in heels and fishnet hose, mark the spot onto which pictures and newspaper clippings will be projected.
33. Phelan, 2.
34. I would like to thank Juanita Heredia for reading an earlier draft of this essay. Her wise and useful comments helped me to consider the final title. This paper is dedicated to Monica Palacios and Laura Esparza, whose creative works have influenced my own.