Wild Tongues

TRANSCRATIONAL MEXICAN POPULAR CULTURE

RITA E. URQUIJO-RUIZ
WILD TONGUES
The Chicana Matters Series focuses on one of the largest population groups in the United States today, documenting the lives, values, philosophies, and artistry of contemporary Chicanas. Books in this series may be richly diverse, reflecting the experiences of Chicanas themselves, and incorporating a broad spectrum of topics and fields of inquiry. Cumulatively, the books represent the leading knowledge and scholarship in a significant and growing field of research and, along with the literary works, art, and activism of Chicanas, underscore their significance in the history and culture of the United States.
To my three families:
Urquijo-Ruiz, González, and Porter
"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 E. ANZALDÚA
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My family, as many Mexican families do, has always enjoyed a good laugh; even in the midst of difficult situations, or perhaps because of them, we have managed to amuse each other. Sometimes we laugh out loud, _a carcajadas_, until our stomachs or cheeks hurt; other times, we enjoy a good riddle or a _chiste_ that elicits a smile. My mother, Carmen Ruiz Abril, who usually appeared to everyone as too serious and quick-tempered, had a loud laugh whenever my tía Rita, her youngest and only sister out of six siblings, would joke around with her. Mom loved music, and it was no mystery why she married my father, Jesús Urquijo Chávez, since he played two types of guitar—classic and _requinto_—really well. There were eleven children (three boys, eight girls) in my family back in 1980. At that point I was the third youngest and one of my father’s favorites. He died when I was about to turn nine years old, but I remember his profound knowledge of jokes and music. On Sunday afternoons Dad would sit most of his children down around him to enjoy the music from his guitar. Since he could not sing and could not remember lyrics as well as he could remember the music, I was usually the one he would ask to sing a song while he played. Of course, I would oblige _con gusto_, as I felt very special to have him entrust me with such a big task. My memory, as it relates to music, has always been excellent, and I would not disappoint him as he played song after song and I sang each one from beginning to end. “Gema,” a beautiful bolero, was one of our favorite songs. He and I also knew that Mom loved “Gema,” so we would dedicate it to her often.

When my mom and dad got married, our paternal grandmother, Dolores Chávez, gave them two adobe rooms that she separated from her home by planting a few tall plants for a little bit of privacy. My dad was a _maestro de obras_, and he could design and construct any structure, from a simple house to a mansion; however, he only managed to build three walls that he attached to the old adobe structure—never finishing the addition that was supposed to be a large room. Instead, the two adobe rooms had to be multipurpose: one was a kitchen by day and my parents’ bedroom by night as they...
slept on the floor, and the other functioned as a bedroom, a living room, a sewing room, and a TV room all at once. It was in this second room where I remember sitting in front of our black-and-white TV watching Cantinflas, Tin Tan, La Willy, and other actors in classic Mexican movies, where I was first introduced to many of the characters covered in *Wild Tongues: Transnational Mexican Popular Culture*. Often, my siblings and I would sit together, fighting for space on the only bed in the room, to watch these films. I remember everyone laughing at the slapstick comedy and linguistic maneuvers that these comedians would present. Our small television set had lost its main plastic dial, and every time we needed to change the channel we would get a small electric shock when we touched it. When the films were getting boring, which meant less slapstick and more talking, inevitably one of my older brothers would touch the TV button. Then he would shock everybody, as we would usually sit in close proximity to each other. The fun would continue for a few minutes by having everyone form a line to be shocked. There was never a dull moment at home. How could there be with so many intelligent, mischievous children who had to be entertained? Little did I know that I would be storing memories that would surface and provide me with fodder for my scholarly pursuits.

When my dad died at a young age, Mom was forced to raise us by herself. With him no longer around, I was forced to defend and protect myself and my two younger sisters from the older brothers, who would bully and push us around. I was small in age and stature, so I mostly had to defend myself verbally; this is where my “Wild Tongue” comes in. My middle name became “hocicona/loudmouth” as well as “marimacha/tomboy,” as I would not desist in my oral defense and tough attitude against familial injustices. Since Mom was not around because of her long hours at work in other people’s homes, she insisted that I had to learn to defend and protect myself from anyone. I learned from the best. My mom did not suffer fools well, and she became my role model of a powerful woman who would stand up for herself. But somehow, as hard as she worked, our family was barely sustaining itself financially. Therefore, in order to help her in this enormous task, at sixteen I left home in Hermosillo, Sonora, for Los Angeles, California, where I was to attend high school, learn English, and return to Mexico to become a bilingual secretary. Nobody in my family had finished high school, but I believed I could do it. And I did. But I also finished a bachelor’s, a master’s, and a doctorate degree along the way. In graduate school, when I had to select a dissertation topic, it seemed only fitting that I would write about a subject that would allow me to connect my two cultural experiences: as a Mexicana and as a Chicana. My aim in *Wild Tongues* is to
bridge the cultural productions in both countries by Mexican and Chicana/Chicano artists in order to explore how national boundaries and nationalist narratives define and constrict notions of identity.

My exploration of blurring the cultural borders artificially constructed and constricting began when I was an undergraduate student and saw a clear connection between my two separate and disparate lives on each side of the border. At the University of California, Riverside (UCR) the cultural programmers at Chicano Student Programs organized the visit of several artists each year. The most special visit to me was when Lalo Guerrero came to our campus and filled up the main auditorium. I had heard of Guerrero only as the singer of the *ardillitas* (his version of the Chipmunks) when I was growing up in Mexico. To my surprise, I found out that there were many types of music that he had composed: from his parodies to his *pachucada* songs. My interest in connecting the two aspects of my life spent in each country was sparked at this concert.

Later on, Chicano Student Programs at UCR also invited artists and writers like María Elena Gaitán, Cherríe Moraga, Luis Alfaro, and Mónica Palacios, among several others, who would eventually become part of my graduate studies research. *Wild Tongues* allows me to analyze Mexican and Chicana and Chicano cultural productions, which have traditionally been studied separately, in order to theorize the role of popular culture in both the United States and Mexico. It is one of the few books that analyzes Mexican and Chicana/Chicano popular culture through a transnational lens.

*Wild Tongues* argues that the cultural production of and about people of Mexican descent in the United States cannot be seen in isolation from the cultural production of Mexico. To account for this interrelatedness, a comparatist, historically grounded approach is necessary. My study offers a way of re-imagining the limitations of nation-centered thinking and reading. These analyses also reveal the ways in which cultural productions mutually influence the United States and Mexico because they are a product of transnational capitalism. For example, the figures of the *peladita* and the *pelasdito* (down-trodden, destitute, comic figure) and the *pachuca* and the *pachuco* (Mexican zoot-suiters) are connected across the border. In *Wild Tongues*, I discern these transnational connectivities by tracing their configuration in a variety of cultural productions including literature, theater, film, music, and performance art. The concept of transnationalism derives from a transnational capitalist socioeconomic milieu that exists on the border in these transnational sites.

These four figures symbolize the destitute and/or working classes in both countries; they represent anti-establishment and dissenting voices.
In the Mexican historical context, especially during the 1920s, the peladita and the peladito become stock characters who, as social critics, comment upon certain aspects and political decisions of the Mexican government. In the United States, the pachuca and the pachuco also represent an anti-establishment and marginalized figure during the 1940s. In *Wild Tongues* I use archival research and oral histories to recover, reconnect, and reinscribe these comedic and theatrical figures in Chicana/Chicano and Mexican cultural studies. Until recently, these fields of study have traditionally privileged the male figures of the peladito and the pachuco. My study reinscribes the peladita and the pachuca, the female versions of the destitute working class and their contributions to the genre.

To understand the cultural productions in which these are central figures, it is necessary to situate them in a historical, social, and economic context. Throughout the twentieth century the United States and Mexico have depended on each other economically, especially in the arena of cheap labor, where the latter has constantly supplied the former. This dependency has existed under conditions of economic exploitation in which workers of Mexican descent are constructed as classed and racialized subjects. Nevertheless, comedians and other social critics have denounced and resisted the exploitation and reification of Mexican laboring bodies through cultural productions that display the four figures this project analyzes.

*Wild Tongues* is divided into five chapters; each one examines a particular figure through a different cultural production. A main focus of the analysis of each chapter is language use. Each of the four figures uses the language of the working class, in which Spanish and English are sometimes combined through code-switching, depending on the need to communicate a particular idea. In addition, the pachuca and the pachuco use Caló, a language particular to them. Moreover, a specific way of dressing sets them apart from the rest of the working-class community.

Chapter 1 examines the character of the peladito in Daniel Venegas's novel *Las aventuras de Don Chipote, o Cuando los pericos amam* (1928), translated as *The Adventures of Don Chipote, or, When Parrots Breast-Feed*, and analyzes its emergence and transformations while it situates its origin specifically within teatro de carpa (tent theater) on both sides of the border. This figure is generally seen as a comedic and naïve character that highlights the exploitation of the working class. In this novel in particular, the peladito calls attention to the brutalized and exploited body of the undocumented Mexican laborer during the 1920s; he is presented in a constant state of hunger and sleep deprivation. To highlight and analyze the functions and transformations of the character through the physical body, Mikhail
Bakhtin’s theory of the carnivalesque is especially useful because I seek to present the grotesque reification of the characters.

In chapter 2 I analyze the work of a Mexican peladita, Amelia Wilhelmy (“La Willy”), and a Chicana peladita, Beatriz Escalona (“La Chata Noloesca”), within the context of teatro de carpa and rasquachi humor. In Mexico, La Willy was famous for portraying a character called “El soldado Juan Marihuano,” cross-dressing as a male revolutionary soldier who criticizes the government and the failed Mexican Revolution. In San Antonio, Texas, La Chata owned her theater company (Atracciones Noloesca) and traveled the southwestern United States, New York, and Cuba portraying the peladita in her comedy acts. Both comediennes survived technological advances that eradicated most carpas after World War II. Traditionally, Chicana/Chicano cultural studies have privileged the figure of the male peladito, especially in the works of El Teatro Campesino. This chapter reinscribes both the Mexican and the Chicana peladitas in order to acknowledge their legacy, as well as the binational and reciprocal influences of these characters, who offer alternatives to male-centered traditional studies and highlight the connections between comedy, gender, sexuality, and rebelliousness. To date, very little is written on Wilhelmy, and what exists examines her only in very general terms among other male Mexican comedians. On the other hand, for Noloesca we have a few works by Chicana/Chicano scholars who have analyzed her from gendered perspectives.

The next chapter examines the connections between and reciprocal influences of the cultural representations of the figures of the pachuco on both sides of the border through the music of the post–World War II era—particularly that of composer and singer Lalo Guerrero. The main texts are a play and film entitled Zoot Suit by the Chicano playwright and director Luis Valdez and the film El hijo desobediente, in which Mexican comedian Germán Valdés (as “Tin Tan”) presents his Mexican pachuco. After I situate the characters historically and culturally within the framework of a subculture, I examine their representations in each text. Germán Valdés’s pachuco is represented through the comedic point of view, while Luis Valdez represents him as a rebellious figure who can never be considered laughable. Nevertheless, the mutual influences on the representations of this figure on both sides of the border must be recognized. The main theoretical framework informing this chapter is the idea of the power of resistance and rebelliousness that a subculture and its young participants deploy to reclaim their laboring and exploited bodies.

Chapter 4 examines the pachuca/chola and the connection to all four characters in the work of María Elena Gaitán. The figures “Sufrida del Pue-
blo" (also known as the "Chola with Cello") and "Connie Chancla" are the protagonists of two performance-art pieces created by this Chicana artist and activist during the 1990s. Her work offers a feminist critique of the economic exploitation and physical brutalization of working-class people of Mexican descent in the United States. Gaitán’s characters carefully blend the language and defiant attitude, among other characteristics, of the peladita and pachuca’s cultural offspring, the chola, thus expanding a long genealogy of these figures. The characters are situated within a contemporary Chicana feminist framework and represent strong female figures who occupy public spaces previously unavailable to them. Informing these characters are the theories of Chicana critics Tey Diana Rebolledo and Yolanda Broyles-González about strong public female figures who go against the norms by denouncing their spatial and linguistic restrictions in a patriarchal society.

In chapter 5 I analyze the work of Dan Guerrero, the son of the legendary Chicano musician Lalo Guerrero, who brings all of these topics and characters together through his performance ¡Gaytino! by inscribing a sixty-five-year-old queer subject into history. Guerrero’s autobiographical performance presents his constant struggle in accepting his subjectivity as a queer Chicano in a country that constantly discriminates against both Chicanos and queers. Chicana queer theory, as formulated by Gloria Anzaldúa and Cherrie Moraga, is essential for expanding the notion of home and in the creation of my concept of “the queer zone of comfort” to contextualize queer Chicanas/Chicanos, who must inhabit a safe space in order to bring all aspects of their subjectivity together to create change from within and for their various communities.

Wild Tongues points to the permanence and contemporaneity of these four characters—the peladita/peladito and the pachuca/pachuco—in the cultural productions of Mexico and the United States. Moreover, it reinserts and reconnects these figures at a binational level through mostly unknown texts, such as Lalo Guerrero’s pachucada songs and La Chata’s unpublished skits. These texts offer a critique of the invisibility and the exploitative economic system that working-class Chicana/Chicano and Mexican people experience on both sides of the border. At the core of this book remains my critique of transnational capitalism that continually affects cultural productions on both sides of the border.
The hordes of Mexican performers who entertain in the United States know that the Chicano community goes crazy when something reminds them of their blessed cactus land. And, naturally, they exploit it all the time. Thus wherever there are theaters or even the humblest stages, whether the performers are good or bad, there will always be a drunken tramp.

Daniel Venegas, *Las aventuras de don Chipote, o Cuando los pericos mamen*

In *Las aventuras de don Chipote, o Cuando los pericos mamen* (*The Adventures of Don Chipote, or, When Parrots Breast-Feed)*, Daniel Venegas proposes, above all, to educate and to persuade Mexicans to stop immigrating to the United States in order to avoid being exploited. To do this, Venegas uses parody and satire in describing his characters and their trajectories from one country to another. The novelistic construction of the peladito—an ingenious and comedic teatro de carpa character that will be defined and contextualized later—allows the author to criticize the abuses and exploitation of Mexican immigrants in the United States. When the novel introduces Don Chipote, the main character, in a negative manner, it does so in an ambiguous tone precisely because this mockery can cause the reader to laugh at the supposed stupidity of immigrant workers as well as to lament the physical and economic abuses they suffer in the new country.

This mocking tone and the satiric style of the text help the elitist reader (the Mexican middle class at the time of publication) to disidentify completely with the working-class characters who are seen as despicable and laughable peladitos. By constantly emphasizing the scatological and/or carnivalesque functions of the peladito’s body, Venegas mocks the ingénue immigrant by calling direct attention to the exploited body. This same disidentification with the peladitos’ beaten bodies allows us, nevertheless, to see clearly the crime of economic exploitation inflicted on such characters.

To analyze the way in which the laborer’s body functions in the text I
draw on Mikhail Bakhtin's theory of the carnivalesque. The grotesque representation of the Mexican laboring body forces us to recognize a key issue: the body is an instrument used or consumed by the capitalist system that reifies and turns it into one more piece in the economic machine.

I analyze the figure of the peladito as a social type in order to expose some aspects of the social reality of the Mexican immigrant workers in the United States. But first, it is necessary to trace the origin of the peladito character from tent theater (teatro de carpa) to the novel. Venegas was also well known for his theatrical writings, so one can infer that he was familiar with this character in drama and decided to transfer him to the literary page. After tracing his origins, it is necessary to connect the peladito with the ingénue and the pícaro, two literary characters who share some characteristics with him. Further, I discuss the transformations that occur when the peladito is transferred from the dramatic to the literary space and the ways in which those transformations serve the author's purpose of criticizing his economic and physical abuse.

**THE AUTHOR AND HIS NOVEL**

While there is little biographical information available on Venegas, by the time *Las aventuras de don Chipote, o Cuando los pericos mamane* was serialized in the Spanish newspaper *El Heraldo de México* in Los Angeles in 1928, he was a well-known playwright and journalist. Literary scholars believe that he was part of a small middle-class Mexican community that fled to the United States during the Mexican Revolution and lived there for a short period of time. Nicolás Kanellos indicates that the author's biographical information is revealed in his writings. From 1924 to 1929, Venegas published a weekly newspaper in Los Angeles, *El malcriado* (The Mischievous One). Malcriado was also his pseudonym. In his newspaper he published satiric commentaries on the daily life events of the Los Angeles Mexican community, and several of these articles eventually became part of his novel.6 Kanellos points out that aside from his newspaper writings between 1924 and 1933, Venegas wrote a series of dramatic plays and was the director of a *compañía de revistas* (review company) in 1932. Some critics believe that he returned to Mexico during the repatriation years between 1929 and 1939.7

In his introduction to the 1984 edition of the novel, Nicolás Kanellos suggests that Venegas was a benefactor and defender of Chicanas and Chicanos and calls him "a learned man who knew deeply the urban environment of Los Angeles and that identified spiritually—and because of his lived experience—with the most humble segments of the Mexican community abroad
or more precisely [with] Chicanos” (14). This supposed identification with “the Chicano,” a term that at that time described a “Mexican immigrant laborer in the United States,” and the narrator’s self-identification with these workers allow Kanellos to assume that Venegas attempted to represent the working-class Mexican community not in a mocking way, as other elitist writers of his era did, but in a manner that Kanellos calls “heroic” and as a form of vindication. While Kanellos constructed Venegas as a defender of Chicano laborers, this characterization appears flawed when the novel is analyzed carefully and against other Mexican elitist texts of that time, especially the writings of Jorge Ulica.

Venegas, through his narrator, manifests his elitism when he makes fun of the Mexican community, clearly showing his ideological contradictions. Kanellos indicates that writers such as Venegas and Ulica used to hit the community with sharp and moralizing criticism, not allowing Chicanos to assimilate even though they lived in “el macizo” or the United States. With their newspaper columns they protected Mexican culture, the Spanish language, and Mexican traditions; they attempted to represent a true México de afuera [immigrant Mexico] in the United States. (1984, 11)

But Kanellos fails to mention that these writers, who are supposedly the “defenders of Chicano Justice” because they criticize assimilation and the oppressive economic system, are primarily expressing their nationalist, culturalist, and elitist points of view. Kanellos’s reading of Venegas’s work is forced. Even though Venegas criticizes the exploitation of Chicanas and Chicanos in the United States, he also mocks the naïveté of Mexican immigrants, thus demonstrating his classism. This novel presents contradictory ideas that arise out of various discourses, including elitism, paternalism, and nationalism, all of which are applied to the Mexican economic immigrant community in the United States.

Don Chipote was lost for a half-century, from 1928 to 1978. While searching for and recovering documents written between 1850 and 1940 on the origins of Latin American theater in the United States, Kanellos found the novel. Kanellos wrote an introduction to the novel and negotiated with the Secretaría de Educación Pública, Centro de Estudios Fronterizos del Norte de México, for it to be published for the first time in Mexico in 1984. The central theme of the novel is the story of a Mexican immigrant with peladito characteristics who leaves his hometown of Necatécuaro, a fictitious place situated in a central state in Mexico, in order to look for work in the United States. The novel situates the protagonist in the U.S. Southwest in
the 1920s. Since Kanellos first discovered Don Chipote in 1978, Chicana/o literary scholars have considered it a Chicano novel due to its main theme of the Mexican immigrant experience and the use of the term Chicano.

Kanellos argues that other elements besides the theme make this a Chicano novel, including the use of language, which he labels "Chicano Dialect" and which consists of "a latent bilingualism and sometimes a tridialectism that contrasts Caló, the Spanish used by working-class Mexican Americans, and universal Spanish." Another "Chicano" element is the defense of Mexican immigrant workers in the United States through protest of their mistreatment. Kanellos also points out that generally, Chicana and Chicano narrative presents a "protagonist that goes through a long process of self-identification where he reaffirms his bicultural heritage and patrimony in the U.S. Southwest." Literary critics, including Francisco Lomeli, Tomás Ybarra-Frausto, Joseph Sommers, and Rosaura Sánchez, corroborate Kanellos's basic criteria for Chicana and Chicano texts but at the same time disagree with some of the characteristics that he lists.

The novel's main theme is the search for work in a foreign country and the adventures of the Mexican immigrant as he travels north, on foot, to the United States in order to satisfy his most basic needs, such as hunger. The peladito in the novel, Don Chipote de Jesús María Domínguez, is a destitute man who has four children and is married to Doña Chipota de la Encarnación Morado de Domínguez. He is a naive farmer who believes Pitacio's story of adventure and wealth in the United States. When Pitacio returns to Mexico, he pretends to speak English and dresses in a ridiculous outfit that seems "elegant" to everyone else. Pitacio is described as a lazy and calculating man who takes advantage of Don Chipote's and Doña Chipota's naïveté to gain room and board in their home even though they do not have enough food or space for their own family. For several days, Pitacio tells them stories and relates his adventures on the "other side" (a euphemism for the United States) that are full of lies and exaggeration. He makes them believe that one can "barrer el dinero con la escoba" (sweep money with a broom) upon arrival (155). Don Chipote believes every word Pitacio tells them and promptly decides to leave so that he may also become rich. However, it is obvious that this will never happen as its impossibility is already alluded to in the novel's subtitle: Cuando los pericos mamen (When Parrots Breast-Feed). The novel presents us with a humorous account of the protagonist's trials and trepidations during his journey to and his stay in the United States.

Don Chipote leaves with his loyal dog, Sufrelambre (Hungerpangs), a few items of old clothing, very little money, and a little bit of food. When
he is on the other side, or across the border, he meets Policarpo, a poor Mexican immigrant like himself who becomes his best friend. They form a great pair, and it is understood that their stories are very similar; they support each other throughout most of their stay in the United States. Once Don Chipote gets to Los Angeles, he begins to earn extra money and starts court ing a woman (a flapper) and neglects his wife and family in Mexico. Doña Chipota, who is very concerned about and angry at her husband because she does not trust him, decides (without telling him) to leave for the United States. She takes Pitacio with her to help with the children and to show her the way, since he has already been there. While they are in Los Angeles, by chance, she finds Don Chipote in a theater performing a song for his new girlfriend. The story ends with the entire family, along with Pitacio, first jailed and then deported to Mexico. But if the family was poor at the beginning of the novel, by the end they are in worse economic conditions because they had to sell their belongings to finance the trip to the United States.

The novel is divided into nineteen chapters and an epilogue. Its three major themes are the departure, the time in the United States, and the return to Mexico. The second part is the longest and could be divided further into the different types of employment that the protagonists obtain. Through the narrator, Venegas presents his sharpest criticism of Don Chipote’s and Policarpo’s exploitation and treatment as Mexican undocumented workers while they are at the different work sites. By humorously replicating the popular speech patterns of illiterate Mexican workers, as well as by using popular sayings, Caló, and Anglicisms, Venegas mocks their naivete and facilitates a distancing or disidentification from the characters.

As Don Chipote leaves Mexico to better his economic situation, the structure of the story is established: a chain of events that occur throughout his journey on the road. Poverty is the perfect motif so that he, Policarpo, and Hungerpangs face a series of problems: hunger, cold, physical attacks, and other abuses. In this regard I find Bakhtin’s view of temporal and spatial categories useful. Bakhtin defines a chronotope as literally, “time-space.” A unit of analysis for studying texts according to the ratio and nature of the temporal and spatial categories presented. The distinctiveness of this concept as opposed to most other uses of time and space in literary analysis lies in the fact that neither category is privileged; they are utterly interdependent. The chronotope is an optic for reading texts as x-rays of the forces at work in the culture system from which they spring.
The chronotope of the road structures the trip from one country to the other for all the characters. Such journeying structures most of the novel except when Don Chipote and Policarpo stay in Los Angeles and establish a more stable home for several months. Although the entire family is deported to Mexico, Policarpo, whose tracks we lose toward the end of the novel, seems to remain in the United States forever.

The circularity of the novel indicates that Don Chipote will live the rest of his life in Mexico when he is deported home. However, although the circle is complete with the character’s return, the repetition of a similar trip north remains a possibility because the epilogue presents the character as someone who still dreams of his life in the United States and is perhaps going back:

And all the while, he dreamt... And in his dreams he saw [the] bitter adventures, [of] which he had [been] the protagonist, unwind like a movie reel, sweetened by the remembrance of his flapper’s love. It was a memory that would not allow him to forget the troubles that Chicanos experience when leaving their fatherland, made starry-eyed by the yarns spun by those who go to the United States, as they say, to strike it rich.23

Don Chipote’s recollection of his time in the United States is bittersweet rather than bitter, especially as he remembers his “flapper” girlfriend along with the difficult times. Aside from already knowing the way well, the protagonist has also learned a few survival tricks in order to obtain what he wants more easily. Therefore, it can be argued that he will return to the United States as soon as he gets another chance, even if it means that he defies the narrator’s wishes to keep him in his native Mexico. The narrator insinuates that his protagonist has learned his lesson well and will decide to stay, but the novel’s ending suggests the opposite.

The novel’s omniscient narrator is depicted as very intelligent and superior to the characters even though he somewhat identifies with them based on his previous working experience. He intervenes several times in the narrative to clarify points, and it is during these interruptions that he criticizes the exploitative nature of the economic, social, and political systems in place in the United States that allow the mistreatment of these workers. Nevertheless, given the novel’s ideological contradictions, especially as presented by the narrator, he is not to be trusted. Therefore, the reader must question the narrator’s motives and information presented as “fact.”

Robert C. Elliot, in his chapter on Gulliver’s Travels, analyzes the satiric elements in the text, whose narrator is similar to Venegas’s. Elliot describes old Gulliver, the narrator of his own adventures, as a misanthrope who in
the end hates humans so much that he would rather not be human at all. Venegas's narrator is similar to Swift's in that the former hates the blatant exploitation of Mexican immigrants; however, it can be argued that Venegas fails to show the absolutely negative side of exploitation and instead creates an example of how a peladito like Don Chipote, who is considered stupid and naive, can "make it" in the United States. This example may serve as an invitation rather than a deterrent for others to migrate to the new country. Still, Venegas's obstinate narrator, in the end, is also disillusioned, disenchanted, and unsure of Mexicans' ability ever to succeed in the United States.

THE NAÏVE CHARACTER

Given that Don Chipote and other characters in the novel are defined as naïve, the author uses the narrative tool of "not understanding," because they have recently arrived to the new country, to criticize the society and culture of the United States. Such naïveté also helps these characters survive their abuse as immigrant workers. According to Elliot, the protagonist in a satire "is a true innocent, totally untouched by experience, has no inner life, no character at all . . . [T]o maintain this innocence . . . the narrator would be over-paradoxical." Venegas's narrator demonstrates his protagonist's innocence by making fun of him throughout the novel. It is precisely Don Chipote's innocence and naïveté that create the perfect satire given that "an ingénu is a superb agent of indirect satire as he roams the world uncritically recording or even embracing the folly which it is the satirist's business to undermine." Thus Don Chipote does not criticize anything directly; he merely goes through life withstanding the abuse and becoming used to his new life in the United States to the point of not wanting to return to Mexico again. This is especially true once he finds his last job, as a dishwasher in Los Angeles. His naïveté does not allow him to see his own exploitation, and therefore this is where the narrator's criticism is offered on behalf of the protagonist.

According to Bakhtin, the "figures [of the rogue, the clown, and the fool] carry with them into literature . . . a vital connection with the theatrical trappings of the public square, with the mask of the public spectacle . . . [They] are laughed at by others." Bakhtin articulates the direct link of these comedic literary figures to theater, especially to theater performed in open-air spaces. We can extend that link by deduction to teatro de carpa, as we shall see later. Bakhtin states that the fool is characterized by "a naïveté expressed as the inability to understand stupid conventions [and that] . . .
opposed to greedy falsehood and hypocrisy we have the fool’s unselfish simplicity and his healthy failure to understand.” The inability of this character to understand what is happening around him, especially if he is out of his element, whether in his own or a new country, is key in Venegas’s novel, given that all of these instances allow the reader to become aware and critical of the abuses revealed. The characters in Don Chipote fit perfectly into Bakhtin’s descriptions of these literary types, and the plot incorporates the “device of ‘not understanding’—deliberate on the part of the author, simple-minded and naïve on the part of the protagonists—[which] always takes on a great organizing potential when an exposure of vulgar conventional is involved.” Don Chipote’s naïveté allows the reader to see the events from his perspective and at the same time offers a critique and an opportunity to observe more closely the systematic exploitation of these workers as a cheap labor force.

Venegas uses the “device of not-understanding” as soon as Don Chipote arrives to the border. His lack of information about laws and regulations in northern Mexico and the United States allows the reader to observe the mistreatment of such migrants as seen in later examples. Another immigration reality the novel details, which historian George Sánchez also describes, is the humiliation of immigrants at the border when they are forced to bathe and are fumigated because they are deemed filthy. Sánchez writes:

What many Mexicans who crossed the border after 1917 at El Paso seemed to remember most vividly were the baths they were forced to endure each time they crossed. The baths were maintained at least through the 1920s and became one of the most humiliating aspects of the border crossing. Migrants would be forced to remove their clothes and bathe while their clothes were being washed and dried. It was easy to distinguish people who had recently crossed the border because their clothes were often quite wrinkled from this process.

The novel describes this humiliation in a comedic manner, creating a mockery and a caricature of the naïve farmer (campesino) who is ignorant of all things related to immigration:

Not satisfied with merely impeding Don Chipote’s passage, the officer took note of Don Chipote’s grimy appearance and directed him to the shower room in order to comply with the procedure that the American government had created expressly for all Mexicans crossing into their land. Don Chipote could not understand why they treated him that way.
Everyone laughed at his naiveté, but someone explained that it was necessary for him to bathe and disinfect his clothing before he could go to the other side... There thou has it: Don Chipote actually taking pleasure in the first humiliation that the gringo forces on Mexican immigrants. When the delousing was over, he went to the room where people wait for their clothes, which, after being placed in the fumigating steam, appear as neatly pressed as if they had just come from the tailor shop. Don Chipote began to get dressed. But, thanks to his marvelous luck, those tatters had shrunked so much from the steam-cleaning that his clothes looked as if they were made for one of his Chipotito children... Nevertheless, since he had nothing else to wear, he had to put them on and become the laughingstock of all those who saw him.

Although described in a mocking manner, this detailed humiliation exposes the abuses Mexican immigrants experience as they cross the border. The narrator's description reduces the protagonist to a clown. In this example, the narrative device of "not-understanding" enables the reader to observe how racialized constructions of Mexicans as "unclean" read "diseased" in U.S. immigration policy. Accordingly, Mexican immigrants must be "cleansed" before entering the United States. Bakhtin further explains that the device of "not-understanding" was "widely employed in the eighteenth century to expose 'feudal unreasonableness.'" Don Chipote unwittingly exposes various examples of "unreasonableness" in the capitalist system in the U.S. Southwest.

Everything is new and strange for the ingénue. Such defamiliarization is especially evident when Don Chipote gets a job in the railroad industry and is absolutely exhausted after his first day at work. The reader knows that the protagonist and Policarpo are expected to do the toughest job, pushing the "puchicarros" (pushcarts), because of their ignorance and newness to the job on the "traque" (railroad track). The boss, clearly, does not care about their physical exhaustion and exposes his exploitation, which can be characterized as "feudal unreasonableness."

Tired from carrying the water barrel on his back, Don Chipote came to the place where his companions worked. The foreman, [not] feeling sorry for him, gave him a pick-ax [to continue working], not realizing that the poor guy was ready to throw in the towel after hauling the water barrel for more than a mile. This kind of treatment for the poor guys who work in the camps and in the railroad sections is so common that one doesn't even take notice. Moreover, on these jobs, the foreman is a slave driver of
the Mexican infidel, who has to do his bidding. He cares very little about their suffering as long as he pleases the company that employs them.36

Here the overseer's power is clear as he exercises it over the workers, including Don Chipote, who, because he's a bracero, has no other option but to obey regardless of his exhaustion; otherwise he runs the risk of being fired and quickly replaced by another worker also longing for a job. The novel portrays the pervasive abuse of workers as “beasts of burden” from the first day they work in the railroad industry.

Bakhtin indicates that the ingénue may be a foreigner in a new country where, given his status as such, it is difficult for him/her to understand how the social structure of the new place works.37 Adolfo Gilly underscores this same idea in his discussion of the displacement and uprooting of foreign workers.38 Accordingly, the technique of defamiliarization is used in the development of a satiric style in Don Chipote and arises from the difficulties Don Chipote and Policarpo face in the United States.

Don Chipote and Policarpo come from a rural area of premodern Mexico where, to a certain extent, campesinos have some control over their working schedules and are able to take lunch and other necessary breaks throughout the day. In a capitalist system and urban environment, the worker does not control his/her own working hours, and it is difficult for these two characters to become accustomed to schedules that do not allow them enough rest. When they begin to work in the “traque” their exhaustion is such that they slept like... logs for the remainder of the night. And they would have kept right on sleeping, were it not for the boss pounding on the door and telling them to go to work. Because the poor guys didn't wake up after the first few knocks, the foreman, with all courtesy, redoubled his hollering, accompanied with “hells” and “godamits,” which got our countrymen out of bed, thinking that the house was falling down. Once they realized what was going on, they got themselves together quickly, packing some bean tacos and showing up ready to start work on the traque.39

Don Chipote and Policarpo jump up quickly, frightened out of their wits, get their lunch ready, and immediately obey the foreman. However, after several days of working on the “traque” the two continue to oversleep, but their fear and reaction to the foreman has changed dramatically:

The sun was already high in the sky and the other workers were ready to leave when the foreman gave the order to depart. But upon realizing that two workhands were missing, he furiously stormed off to their room. Don Chipote was dreaming about his little Chipotititos when the fore-
man started to knock down the door with his fists, making our two partners jump out of bed with a start. Weathering the storm that the foreman unleashed upon them, they went to the pushcart, leaving the old man to say whatever he wanted, because, in the end, they didn’t understand a word. (My emphasis)

Here, the characters have began to get used to the foreman’s yelling and fail to pay attention to him, especially since they do not understand what he is saying, including his insults, in English. They think that “gaideme” and “sanabagan” are their new nicknames. This allows them to begin to confront their reality of alienation by ignoring their mistreatment while making up the meanings of the English words to their own advantage.

The characters’ naiveté also exposes the debt system created through the company store that keeps the workers absolutely dependent on their employer. Because they are not fully aware of such abuse, the protagonists order supplies to fulfill their basic needs from what the narrator calls “el suplai” or “papá suplai,” referring to the company store. Since they are illiterate and unfamiliar with the types of food they can order in their new country, they must enlist the help of another worker to write their list for them: “Well, the truth is, sir... we don’t know nothin’ ’bout what folks eat ’round here. An’ if’n they send it to us... if’n you’d be so kind, jus’ put down whatever you’d git.” They only order food in this manner a few times before they run out of money; when Doña Chipota asks her husband to send her money, he has nothing to send her. He tells Policarpo:

That jus’ gets [me sad]. ‘Cause you’ve awready seen how that Suply store fetches back most o’ these paychecks they’ve been givin’ us. Seems like we don’t work fer nothin’ ’cept the food we eat. Now, let’s jus’ see if’n I’m left over wit’ a lil’ somethin’ from this next paycheck that’s comin’ so I kin send it back ta them. An’ I’m gonna tell that fella makin’ out our food orders not ta put so many things on the list, see if’n this way I kin save me jus’ a lil’ bit more.

Don Chipote realizes the company store is abusing the workers and understands that he has to be careful with his money in order to save some to send to his family. In this particular case, his naiveté lasts only a short time, and he acts immediately to monitor his finances.

The figure of the naïve immigrant and his “lack of understanding” are useful in exposing and criticizing the abuses that workers endure. Once the protagonist has learned the ropes, he begins to acquire the characteristics of the rogue or picaro, which he uses to his advantage.
THE ROAD AND THE PICARESQUE NOVEL

Don Chipote eventually becomes more self-sufficient—economically speaking—than when he lived in Mexico, as is common among protagonists of picaresque novels. In the picaresque novel, according to Bakhtin, the road on which the characters travel exposes the social stratification and the way in which the economic system functions. This road presents “the sharply intensified exposure of vulgar conventions and, in fact, the exposure of the entire existing social structure.” In brief, through his migration from one country to another, as well as within the second country, there is an “exposure” of the system. Don Chipote's travels from Nectáucuaro to Los Angeles reveals, from a critical perspective, the social structures and the way they are organized in each country. Each different type of job that Don Chipote gets become a lens into society by exposing it through these labor circles.

The road and the trip bring about the protagonist’s encounters with characters from different social backgrounds and geographical areas within Mexico. In the urban sphere, the campesinos serve to expose and criticize various aspects of life in the big cities as well as the way they are treated as ignorant, naïve, and prey to abusive characters. The text provides several examples of this abuse, such as when Doña Chipota, her children, and Pitacio want to cross the Rio Grande, and the coyote (smuggler) steals their money and does not provide the service promised.

At the same time the novel exposes these abuses, it also presents the ways in which the main characters are transformed once they learn to survive the abusive system. It is also important to note that Don Chipote takes advantage of the fact that he is seen as naïve in order to get what he wants, such as when he is in the hospital in Los Angeles for three long weeks. He decides to stay there because this is the first time he can eat well and rest.

Being “ingenuous” is a primary characteristic of the picaro. As described in Historia social de la literatura española, this character's life “is marked, since his childhood, by something elegantly brutal: hunger, that appears obsessively, again and again, in the novel.” In order to satisfy this hunger the pícaro uses his intelligence in the form of ingenuousness. From beginning to end, hunger marks Venegas’s entire novel. From the first chapter, hunger is the central theme, as presented in the following excerpt: “[H]aving an appetite which made him feel as though he were hog-tied, he began to cram his face with dinner in the presence of his family—I mean ‘dinner’ if one can call a puddle with three beans, a mortar of chili sauce, a jug of atole, and some tortillas ‘dinner.’” This type of animalistic hunger
and the many ordeals that the characters go through to satisfy it color the entire text.

*Historia social* indicates that the pícaro also “identifica lo bueno con lo material” (identifies what's good with material things), and therefore he believes that “hay que sobrevivir, y más que eso, hay que triunfar” (one must survive, and even more, one must triumph).\(^4\) This applies partially to Don Chipote since he can be considered a combination of both characters, the pícaro and the naïve (according to Bakhtin's definitions). The idea of being individualistic and triumphant, in terms of acquiring material possessions, can be seen at the end of the novel when Don Chipote has become accustomed to living in a capitalist, modern society and is no longer interested in satisfying his most basic needs such as hunger but instead decides to consume material goods.

The novel, regardless of the narrator's comments, shows how even a naïve character like Don Chipote, who is illiterate, monolingual, and destitute, is able to have a better life in the United States than in Mexico regardless of the abuses he experiences. It is important to remember that the protagonist returns to Mexico because he is deported and not necessarily because he fails at attaining a better economic situation. On the contrary, once he becomes a dishwasher in a restaurant in Los Angeles, Don Chipote finds more economic stability and earns enough money to send some to his family and keep some for his new luxuries like dressing well, entertainment, and even having a lover. It is precisely this better economic situation that allows him to start forgetting about his wife and family in Mexico, which in turn compels Doña Chipota to go to Los Angeles to search for him until she succeeds.

Another theme in the picaresque novel that is also at work in Venegas’s novel is the dehumanization of the protagonist: “The pícaro has learned the rules of the game; the main one being dehumanization.”\(^5\) Such a novel presents a sharp critique of this kind of mistreatment:

A defense of man’s dignity . . . [is] a statement about the conflict between the individual and the world; between the powerful and the weak; a dialectic confrontation where the person is progressively corrupt and fragmented; a pessimistic and negative view of human relations and life; the unavoidable reality of a society divided by class; a critique of all of this and an impressive ending . . . The Imperialist State demands an absolute surrender, which also means an absolute dehumanization.\(^5\)

Venegas's novel presents this theme through the treatment of characters as beasts of burden, without anyone being concerned for their well-being. The
only criticism about this is offered by the narrator, who intervenes by exposing the abuse. The novel sharply criticizes the “Imperialist State” (the United States), as detailed in the discussion below.

**Corpus Delicti: EXPLOITATION AND MOCKERY**

In keeping with Venegas’s carnivalesque style, the laborer’s body is presented as grotesque. Such representation, while comical, makes plain the material reality that immigrant workers experience. Bakhtin’s theory of the representation of the human body in the novel is especially useful:

> [I]n the process of accommodating [the] concrete human corporeality, the entire remaining world also takes on new meaning and concrete reality, a new materiality; it enters into contact with human beings that is no longer symbolic but material. Here the human body becomes a concrete measuring rod for the world, the measurer of the world’s weight and of its value for the individual. And here we have the first attempt of any consequence to structure the entire picture of the world around the human conceived as a body—which is to say, in a zone of physical contact with such a body.

Here Bakhtin refers to the human body as something concrete, material, and palpable that stops being only something symbolic and instead serves to measure and assess what surrounds the social body. In this manner, the worker’s body in Venegas’s text becomes concrete, and through it the author offers a clearer view of the world that it inhabits. Bakhtin states that “the human body is portrayed by Rabelais in a variety of different aspects . . . [one of them being the] grotesque allegorization (the human being as a microcosm).” Such allegorization facilitates a view, through the physical body and its anatomic and grotesque physiological representation in relation to the job, into the sociopolitical-economic system of the country where this happens.

Don Chipote’s and Policarpo’s bodies allegorically represent laboring bodies, that is, all the undocumented workers who suffer the same abusive and exploitative treatment in and out of their country. The focus on the body reveals the abuses these workers suffer. The crude description of the campesinos’ basic needs, especially the ones related to the physical body, materializes these bodies as mere laboring instruments. The following are examples of the corporeality Bakhtin mentions, starting with an onomastic study—the names of the main characters and their significance—to con-
cretize the peladitos’ bodies and thus present the cruel mockery of these workers as disposable objects.

Beginning with the title of the novel, in which the protagonist’s name appears, the reader notices the burlesque and mocking tone of the text not only because of the similarity of the name to that of the legendary character of Don Quixote but also because of the references to the beaten body. According to Jorge Mejía Prieto’s dictionary of Mexicanisms, the word chipote derives from the Nahuatl word xipotli, meaning head contusion or inflammation as a result of a blow to the head. Thus, Don Chipote’s name refers to his physically abused body, which becomes clearer when the novel, in a carnivalesque style, details the beatings and exhaustion that he endures. His children, little Chipotitos, and his wife’s name, Doña Chipota, the diminutive and feminine versions of the protagonist’s name, respectively, continue the theme of the battered body. Nevertheless, it is important to highlight Doña Chipota’s entire name, Chipota de la Encarnación Morado de Domínguez, because of the corporeal emphasis added to her name. Her second name—Encarnación (Incarnation)—and last name—Morado (Purple)—overstate and reify this character’s beaten and deformed body. Venegas gives his characters laughable names that situate them within a laboring and exploitative context where their bodies are lacking basic human needs—water, food, shelter—and are exposed to metaphorical and literal beatings.

This satiric tone is extended to the dog’s name as well, Sufrelambre or Hungerpangs, as it suggests everyone’s hunger throughout the novel. According to Gonzales-Berry and Rodriguez, “Don Chipote’s dog has acquired its name by [creating a neologism]: the juxtaposition of two words that, together, offer a characterizing name . . . in order to highlight an immutable reality in the world of the characters.” This reality is that of absolute poverty for the characters, in both countries, and everything that it implies.

Finally, Policarpo’s name is also related to the physical body. The first two syllables—Poli, meaning “many”—and the last two—carpo, or carpal, carpus—reference the group of bones in the wrist that connect the hand to the forearm. Therefore, his name signifies “many hands/arms,” which relates specifically to the word brazo, from which bracero, the term for Mexican immigrant workers, is derived. According to Acuña and other historians, this term refers specifically to the laborers hired in the United States after 1942. However, Venegas used it two decades earlier: “No one took any notice of him. For as pitiful as his situation may have seemed, the inhabitants of that place were already accustomed to seeing this and even worse, because Ciudad Juárez is where caravans of braceros go to emigrate from
their fatherland in search of work, obligated by the disgrace of our Mexico” (my emphasis). The Larousse dictionary of the Spanish language defines this *bracero* as “a laborer employed to work the land” and gives as a synonym “worker,” defined, in turn, as “a man who works a lot or a hard-working man.” Even though this dictionary does not specifically state it, the etymology points to the word *brazo*, or arm. Therefore, a synecdoche is used for the body of the workers by referencing only the arm(s). The United States, through its capitalist economic system, reifies the workers by using them for their arms but is not interested in what happens to the workers’ bodies or minds. As industrialization fragments the production process, it only needs part of the laborer’s body in its mechanization.

Each of the characters’ names highlights a specific part of the laboring body (and synecdochically the whole): “Chipote/Chipota” references the beaten head, and by extension, the bruised body; “Sufréelambre” (Hungerpangs) alludes to the empty stomach, the workers who are hungry constantly; and finally “Policarpo” suggests the many pairs of arms U.S. industry needs, or the worker’s reified body. Nevertheless, even though each character represents one part of the body, it is important to note that the three characteristics mentioned before—beaten, hungry, and used—apply to all the characters, and it is precisely the last one, being used and reified, that brings about the other two and helps keep the worker’s body in perpetual physical abuse and hungry.

Throughout the novel, state officials physically abuse the workers. For example, Don Chipote is beaten in Ciudad Juárez when he falls asleep at the train station: “And this is the city in which Don Chipote spent the night, sprawled out sweetly on the planks of the railroad station platform. His dream had suddenly been granted to him, and he had no intention of waking up. Were it not for a well-placed kick in the pants by a Juárez cop, he would have certainly continued to dream about his little Chipote children.” After being kicked by the policeman, Don Chipote has no other option than to gather his few belongings and leave. His displacement gets him in trouble with the law when he’s not aware of the laws of the city. In another example, the protagonist and his dog walk toward the plaza, where, after listening to a live-music band and being exhausted, they fall asleep on a bench. Another policeman finds them, assumes that he’s drunk, and decides to take him and Hungerpangs to jail while beating them all the way there:

Don Chipote, more asleep than awake, could not answer any questions to the satisfaction of the cop. After the cop gave Don Chipote a good whup-
ping, he sent our poor hero marching to the slammer as his final destination. . . . The distance between Ciudad Juárez's Central Plaza and the jailhouse was not very great. And since the officer appeared to have been in a hurry to provide his guest with lodging, he clubbed and beat Don Chipote all the way, making sure that Don Chipote did not rid himself of the daze acquired from the first big thumping. The cop did not miss a step providing Hungerpangs with one swift kick in the rear after another.65

This excerpt highlights Don Chipote's lack of familiarity with an urban space like Ciudad Juárez, where the mere fact of falling asleep on a park bench brings about a great beating by a representative of law and order.

The final example of physical abuse occurs when Don Chipote has not slept enough because he spent the night thinking that his wife has been cheating on him while he is away. This lack of sleep results in an accident and self-injury: "During one of these sleepy spells . . . the foreman got upset and went over to him and boxed Don Chipote's ear with a 'godamit.' Don Chipote looked all over himself as if a snake had bit him. Then he raised the pick-ax over his head as high as he could, and he struck at the rail with such bad aim, that, instead of hitting the beam, the pick-ax buried itself into his foot."66 This accident highlights the fact that the foreman's yelling scared Don Chipote and caused him to react clumsily and to hit his foot. However, the protagonist's thinking about his wife's behavior during his absence cannot be the only reason for his lack of sleep; instead, the reader must keep in mind that Don Chipote's exhaustion is due to the railroad company's overwork and other abusive practices that do not allow the workers to rest throughout the long day.

Policarpo also suffers many abuses. For example, on his first day working construction, another physically demanding job, halfway through his shift,
it was the trolley whistle that had made him make a run for it, thinking that it was quitting time.\textsuperscript{67}

Policarpo's co-workers make fun of him when they realize how tired he is and that he wants to leave early. He must make his body withstand such physically demanding labor in order to satisfy his hunger. However, by the time he gets home, the only thing he is able to do is sleep, completely disregarding his stomach's need for food. He would sleep the entire night except that Don Chipote wakes him up to eat:

It didn't take long for our fellow compatriot to return with a bag under his arm, which contained Policarpo's sack lunch. When he went inside, he made the loudest noise possible so that Policarpo would wake up and see what he had done for him. But Policarpo was oblivious, so tuckered out that he had done nothing but snore since going to bed. [Don Chipote] went up to him and shook him around. He talked to him and did all he could to wake him up. But Policarpo just moaned and flipped over on his other side.\textsuperscript{68}

Up to this point, the characters never forget to eat, and hunger is an important trope throughout the novel. As an integral part of the grotesque realism related to the laboring body in the novel, these characters' suffering is constantly taken lightly and mocked. Bakhtin indicates that “the essential principle of grotesque realism is degradation, that is, the lowering of all that is high, spiritual, ideal, abstract; it is a transfer to the material level, to the sphere of earth and body in their indissoluble unity.”\textsuperscript{69} In Venegas's text such degradation is not only symbolic but rather embodied and materialized, which in turn exposes the reification of the Mexican immigrant's body.

The examples presented above all concentrate on the peladito's body, its exploitation, physical abuse, and physical needs, which in turn highlight and materialize the body, making it impossible to ignore it. That is, although the previous descriptions make fun of the characters, they allow the reader to see the worker's exploitation, which makes their presence, through their material bodies, no longer invisible. Such bodies become the evidence of the system's violence and crime against these workers: the corpus delicti.

Once the purpose of the mistreated peladito's body is established, it is imperative to trace this character's origins and function within teatro de carpa. The grotesque images related to this character's bodily functions become offensive for the middle-class Mexican readers of the day and in turn facilitate the author's mockery of these working-class characters.
THE FIGURE OF THE PELADITO

Several characteristics of the figure of the ingénue and the rogue converge in the character of Don Chipote. This convergence results in a new figure that critics have called the peladito. Mexican philosopher Samuel Ramos was one of the first to write about the “pelado”:

His name defines him; he is an individual whose soul is exposed. The *pelado* belongs to social fauna of low category, and it represents the big city’s human waste. In the economic hierarchy he is less than a proletarian, and intellectually he is primitive. Life has been hostile to him, and he resents it bitterly. He is naturally explosive and dangerous . . . He explodes verbally and always reaffirms himself in aggressive and lewd language. He has created his own dialect; his lexicon consist of common words to which he has attributed new meaning . . . [H]is real-life situation [is] that he is worthless.

Ramos establishes the identity of the pelado in absolute and negative terms as he attempts to define Mexican identity and national character during the 1950s. For Ramos, the pelado, with animal-like characteristics and described as primitive, dangerous, aggressive, and human waste, embodies barbarity and should be shunned by society as despicable.

It is important to point out that Ramos is describing the figure of the pelado and not the peladito, as the diminutive suffix in Spanish, *-ito*, represents another version of this character. According to Carlos Monsiváis, “Thanks to a comedian, the diminutive is legalized, the Peladito, the smiley Picaro of the city limits . . . in such a brief time, a drastic change [is created]: the ferocious Pelado becomes the inoffensive Peladito.” Throughout several decades, on both sides of the Mexico-U.S. border, the peladito was better represented by one of the most famous Mexican comedians: Mario Moreno, “Cantinflas.” He presented this character in the popular carpa theaters on the outskirts of Mexico City starting in the 1930s. Before acting as a peladito in the film industry, Moreno worked for several years at the Folies Bergère, the most famous entertainment house in the city. Although Moreno, as Cantinflas, was one of the comedians that made the figure of the peladito very famous, there were others who also embodied and represented this type of character in both Mexico and in the United States. It is a common assumption that all comedians who dressed like peladitos copied their costumes from a famous comic strip character named Chupamirto.

In September 1927 *El Universal*, a leading Mexican newspaper, published a comic strip entitled *Vaciladas de El Chupamirto* (Chupamirto’s Mis-
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chief). The text was written by “J. C.” (J. Collantes), and the drawings were by Dux (Jesús Acosta Cabrera). On Saturday, September 3, one of Dux’s comic strips presented two male characters speaking to each other on the street, and one of them has an uncanny resemblance to the peladito prototype best represented by Cantinflas.78 The following description applies to Chupamirto and to the peladito in general:

Dux and J Collantes’s Chupamirto is the archetypical indigenous [man] with lots of hair that covers his horse-like face . . . he wears long cotton pants, big shoes, and a cap . . . [He wears] a fitted shirt . . . [He] is a peladito like the workers of La Merced [in Mexico City]: skinny, disheveled . . . [He] attempts to and is able to prevent his pants from falling by keeping them right below the waist. He is a very comical figure.79

The only clothing item missing from this costume is a rag on his shoulder that Cantinflas calls his “gabardina,” or overcoat. The direct relationship between Chupamirto and Cantinflas, who was considered an inimitable comedian, is clear.80

The Cantinflas-like character is a version of the peladito from the teatro de carpa presented in both countries. This character was already part of the stock characters performed in the carpas in Los Angeles, California, between 1922 and 1933. Venegas’s novel does not exactly present any of its characters as a peladito with the strict definition of his costume, but some of the characters fulfill other characteristics.81 Broyles-González indicates that total body involvement was a performance ‘language’ to which Chicana/o and Mexicana/o audiences were accustomed . . . [T]he Carpa . . . performance aesthetic capitalized on mime. It was for the most part based on human body movement and [facial] expression, not on language. Words only refined the substantial meaning carried by physical action.82

This idea is also corroborated by Ybarra-Frausto when he describes La Chata Noloesca’s routine.83

Drawing heavily from clowning and miming techniques, the core of her comedy routines was centered on the physicalization of ideas, so that psychological and emotional stages were made externally transparent through physical actions. Few words in the routines were left without gestural accompaniment, either facially or bodily. Movement was constant, fast-paced and slapstick.84

This comedy act by the peladita or the peladito must incorporate such physicality or exaggerated slapstick movement in order to transmit the emotional
or psychological states of the character to the audience. Venegas's text does not offer one peladito character; instead, both Don Chipote and the narrator, among other minor characters, share this figure's characteristics. Ultimately, the narrator is the one who is most similar to the peladito in manipulating other characters, including Don Chipote, Polcarpo, and Doña Chipota, who are the ones to show more physicality and can be described as laughable figures in the text. While these characters are naïve and clownish,
the narrator is an astute manipulator who has the power of language to describe them as such.

The narrator utilizes various linguistic codes throughout the novel in order to mock or defend the characters. In some instances he shows serious criticism of the characters' oppression, and in others he describes them as idiots and naïve. The main discursive tool for this narrator-peladito is language since it is an essential characteristic of the peladito on stage, especially when describing a comedic situation. Ybarra-Frausto states:

Laughter stimulated by verbal virtuosity is a staple of Mexican comedy. Directly linked to the picardía of spoken language, especially among urban working-classes, much humor stems from adroit manipulation of linguistic resources such as puns and double entendres. The albur, an aggressive chain of wisecracks predominantly of a sexual nature, is a common source of much proletarian Mexican humor.55

The novel presents several instances of the sexual humor that Ybarra-Frausto denominates as picardía in order to laugh at the characters' naivety. When Don Chipote is in Arizona he receives a letter from Doña Chipota in which there is much double entendre with respect to Pitacio's activities with her around the house:

Pitacio has behaved like this . . . half good, half bad. Because, if you're talking about work, he's more or less lazy. But when inside the house, he doesn't stop going back and forth to help me. And, guess what else, he's already put a pump for me in the kitchen so I don't have to go so far for water. And that's not all neither. Because he pumps it for me and won't let me pump it myself, he says, so I don't wear myself out. So with all this, you can just see how much he really cares about you, [he does whatever he can to/for me; What I don't like is that] he doesn't look after the farming, because he wants to spend the whole day inside the house. So the cornfield didn't turn up too much, because he didn't give it a second weeding. As for the chile, yes, indeedy, he's sure taken care of that, because that's what he likes best. Just the other day I went to the field ready for sowing, and he showed it to me, and, my word, was it ever hot. And I tell you that just the other day, when he brung over his chile and we ate, it burned me so much I was even panting.86

The picardía in this example is about the possibility that Doña Chipota and Pitacio are having an affair because Don Chipote is gone. The words "pump" and "pumping" in the Spanish version are given a sexual meaning, and when the phrase "me hace cuanto puede a mi" is used, the literal translation should
be “he does whatever he can to me” instead of “for me.” When she indicates that Pitacio wants to spend all day in the house, Don Chipote interprets this picardía as if she were saying that all he wants to do is have sex with her. Finally, there is also the double entendre of the chile peppers to signify Pitacio’s penis. She states “me lo enseño” / “he showed it to me” and “me picó tanto que hasta me hizo sacar la lengua”; the second phrase must be interpreted by her husband as “he ‘poked’ me so hard that he had me panting” to refer to prolonged and exhausting copulating. The narrator’s linguistic manipulation (specifically in the original language) to create this picardía is clear, and he laughs at Don Chipote’s reaction to the double entendre.

This same letter from Doña Chipota continues with similar humorous descriptions of her activities when she details the priest’s visit: “el señor cura ha venido algunas veces a preguntar por ti, y luego nos encerramos a rezar para que te vaya bien” / “The priest has dropped by a few times asking for you. And then we shut ourselves in to pray so that things’ll go well for you.” The verb “to pray” is supposed to also be interpreted as “to have sex.” This information leaves Don Chipote worried when his friend finishes reading him the letter because he firmly believes that his wife is no longer faithful and “le hace de chivo los tamales” (is cuckolding him). Again, these are all examples of the narrator’s mocking of the characters’ naïveté through picardía.

Another example in which the narrator demonstrates his linguistic dexterity is in the epigraph to this chapter when he is describing the types of shows that characters like Don Chipote—peladitos borrachentos, drunken tramps—participate in and consider entertaining. Here the phrase in question is the translation of “United States” as “Estamos Sumidos” to imply “Estamos hundidos” or “fregados,” “We are screwed” or “fucked,” to refer to the situation of Mexican immigrants, especially those who are undocumented and living in the United States. Mexico is also referred to as “la santa nopalería” / “the holy cacti land.” In this exaggeration, the country’s desert topography is used to generalize that the land is arid and infertile. The excerpt also calls the movie house a “jacalón” or “big shack” in a negative manner because it is a place where Mexicans, who are considered “dirty,” congregate.

The characteristics of the peladito found in teatro de carpa—use of language, costume, and physicality—are divided, then, in the novel between the naïve characters (especially Don Chipote) and the narrator, who considers himself intelligent and above everyone. The narrator mocks the other characters through their physicality, representing them negatively, although there are a few instances when he defends them by exposing and criticizing their exploitation.
TEATRO DE CARPA

The figure of the peladito in teatro de carpa in the first decades of the twentieth century was used in the United States to entertain the Mexican community living primarily in the Southwest. One of the main topics in the carpa was assimilation, or negating one's cultural and linguistic roots in Mexico. Kanellos indicates that one of the audience's favorite comedy routines included a peladito who made fun of assimilated Mexicans by calling them "agringados," or "Americanized," as illustrated in the following song of the times:

Andas por hay luciendo
Gran automóvil
Me llamas desgraciado
Y muerto de hambre
Y es que no te acuerdas
cuando en mi rancho
Andabas casi en cueros
Y sin huaraches.
Así pasa a muchos
Cuando aprenden un poco
de Americano
Y se visten catrines
Y van al baile
Y él que niega a su raza
Ni madre tiene,
Pues no hay nada en el mundo
Tan asqueroso
Como la ruin figura del renegado.
Y aunque lejos de ti,
Patria querida,
Me han echado
Continuas revoluciones,
No reniega jamás
Un buen mexicano
de la patria querida
de sus amores.

You go around sporting
A big automobile
You call me unfortunate
And dying of hunger
And it's because you don't recall
When you were on my farm
Going around almost naked
And without huaraches.
That's what's happened to a lot
Of people that I know here,
Who have learned a little
About American ways
And they dress up like dandies
And go dancing.
But he who negates his culture
Doesn't even have a mother.
'Cause there's nothing worse
Nor more dirty
Than that horrible figure of the renegade.
And although far from you,
My beloved homeland,
I have been thrown out
By continuous revolutions,
A good Mexican
Will never renounce
His beloved fatherland.

This song criticizes assimilation and materialism for new immigrants from Mexico. To negate one's ethnic origin is, for the singer-actor of this song, as well as for Venegas and his narrator, an unforgivable act even when Mexico's civil wars and revolutions have forced the immigrant to leave.

In another example, Don Chipote and Policarpo approach a man whom they think is Mexican and ask him if he knows where they can find work, but he replies in badly pronounced English: "Juát du yu sei? Ai du no tok spanish" / "What did you say? I don't speak Spanish." Don Chipote and Policarpo are surprised and do not understand what is happening; as naïve characters they are not prepared to laugh at this "agringado" as another peladito-like character would have done. Instead, the narrator intervenes to criticize this situation by saying:

I don't want to go any further without first providing a brief analysis of the weakness of some Mexicans who, like the guy approached by Policarpo, cross the border and forget how to speak their language. Disgracefully, these people abound. And they, who have come to the United States
with one hand covering the holes in their seats and the other looking for a handout—who like the majority of Mexican immigrants have suffered immeasurable mistreatment by our gringo cousins, doled out to those of us who work on the railroad—have forgotten even the parish in which their fat heads were anointed when they were baptized. They speak a few words of English and boast of being gringos, especially when they come across fellows who are fresh off the boat, to whom they brag about their knowledge of tok inglis.\textsuperscript{95}

Here, the narrator demonstrates disdain toward these “agringados,” who, according to him, deny their cultural background because they are ashamed to be Mexican. The narrator’s nationalism is also used to criticize these characters for their lack of compassion toward newly arrived compatriots like Don Chipote and Policarpo who, he believes, are responsible for keeping Mexican culture alive.\textsuperscript{96}

Ybarra-Frausto argues that this type of humor was also utilized in the carpas. “A dominant theme was the process of agringamiento . . . Many asides poked fun at those who attempted to join the melting pot: ‘No, si mi compadre ya es muy agringado, ya no es Juan Palomares. ¡Ahora se llama Johnny Pigeonhouse!’”\textsuperscript{97} Jorge Ulica’s chronicles mock this type of character in a similar manner.\textsuperscript{98} Both authors maintain a burlesque and disdainful tone toward their characters while attempting to present them in a sympathetic manner.

According to Kanellos, numerous Spanish-language revistas (magazines) of the era published plays and articles detailing the life of the Mexican immigrant community and included notes related to theatrical presentations. In his essay on teatro de carpa and the peladito in the U.S. Southwest, Kanellos explains:

The term Carpa is ancient Quechua for an awning made of interwoven branches. In Spanish it signifies canvas cover, tent, and finally, a type of folksy and down-to-earth circus. [These circuses, which later traveled to the U.S. Southwest, brought] about the creation of the satirical, often political, review which starred the character that today is recognized as the Mexican national clown: the pelado or naked one, penniless, underdog. Somewhat reminiscent of Charlie Chaplin and best exemplified by Cantinflas, the peladito improvises a dialogue which “brings to the scene the fine humor of the people, their critical spirit, their complaints and desires . . .” The carpas became in the Southwest an important Mexican-American, popular culture institution. Their comic routines became a sounding board for the culture conflict that Mexican Americans felt in
language usage, assimilation to American tastes and life-styles, discrimination in the United States and *pocha*-status in Mexico.

Such theater spaces provided, then, an important public service to the Mexican community, and although going to the carpa would not resolve such social problems, it served other purposes aside from entertainment. Tomás Ybarra-Frausto provides another view into the carpas’ purposes for the community:

> [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. Carpas motivated and helped establish a new sense of self-identity for the Mexican American in the Southwest by a) valorization and vitalization of Chicano vernacular, especially incipient forms of code-switching; b) elaboration of a critical mode exemplified in the anti-establishment stance of the Pelado; c) maintenance of oral tradition and humor in its various modalities as a cultural weapon applied symbolically to annihilate and vanquish oppressors; d) elaboration of a down-to-earth, direct aesthetic deeply imbedded in social tradition.

A critical aspect of the carpa was the fact that it provided a space for presenting issues that the community could discuss; here, people had an opportunity to gain an awareness of social class and ethnic conflicts. For instance, the carpa provided examples of how to rebel against the oppressive middle- and upper-class Mexican norms imposed on the working-class Mexican community.

**THE PELADITO AND THE MEXICAN MIDDLE CLASS**

The original readers of Venegas’s text had to be mostly from the exiled middle class that migrated to the United States as a result of the Mexican Revolution. This community struggled to maintain its class status among the Anglo society and therefore did not care for the lifeways of the Mexican working class. Kanellos indicates that “the Pelado, . . . while dearly beloved by the working class of the colonias, was censured by the bourgeoisie, ever mindful of impressing upon Anglos the high quality of Mexican and Hispanic culture.” Such groups were ashamed that their compatriots created and performed ribald shows in the carpa to entertain working-class Mexican communities through scatological humor. According to Monsiváis,
In the carpa there is no “bad taste” . . . Here vile movements and innu-
endos rule (which are unthinkable for traditional middle classes, rigidly re-
strained by decorum or their nationalism that demands good behavior: “decent
Mexicans don’t snore nor do they strike forbidden poses while sleeping”), dou-
ble entendres are understood . . . Ramos identifies what is “civilized” with
what is desexualized or modest.102 (My emphasis)

It is this repudiation of what being middle-class signifies that is presented
on the carpa stage. Monsiváis establishes that the Mexican middle class
pretends to always behave well. That is to say that the middle class acts sur-
prised and scandalized when presented with the working class’s ways of liv-
ing; for instance, the public acknowledgment and presentation of jokes re-
garding bodily functions is unacceptable and shameful. The argument is
that these Mexicans and their dirty actions make all Mexicans look bad in
the eyes of Anglo society. The Mexican middle class, then, chooses to dis-
identify from the working class.

The carnivalesque style employed in Venegas’s novel, especially regarding
bawdy humor, is also present in teatro de carpa, where the peladito’s reper-
toire consists primarily of scatological humor. Once again, Ybarra-Frausto’s
description of such shows is useful: “The 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.”103 This is precisely the type of topic that arises when Doña
Chipota and her children (along with Pitacio) travel from Necatécuaro to
Ciudad Juárez, where everyone must defecate and urinate after waking up:

The fair lady woke up and immediately began to get ready to continue
the voyage. So as not to carry around more than what was necessary, she
went out into the pasture, squatted down, and dumped what she had now
been carrying around uselessly, for the beneficial part had already been
strained out. She then went to roust out the little ones, who promptly
sprang to their feet. And after the order had been given, they too went to
the field to drop a load. But the smallest one didn’t need to go to the pas-
ture with his siblings, because he had made himself lighter who knows
how many times during the night, to the point that he looked like a vi-
olin in a puddle of water, as he was nearly swimming in his own juices. For
Doña Chipota, this was nothing new, and, grabbing him by the feet, she
washed him up. So, in less than two shakes of a baby’s tail, she changed
his clothes, but not without having first removed the encrustations with a
little spit and a few rubbings with a baby blanket. He was now ready. The
rest of the flock showed up, now a little lighter.104
This excerpt offers the type of peladito characters that exist in the novel as well as in teatro de carpa. It is important to point out that the narrator exaggerates and indulges the reader with gross details regarding the characters' bodily functions; this is especially true of the part about the baby's situation, when it is not enough to mention that he defecated and urinated many times throughout the night, but there are specific details regarding the way in which his mother must struggle to wipe him clean. Aside from the scatological description permeating the excerpt, there is also the use of language that dehumanizes the characters, such as the use of "patas" (animal legs) instead of "pies" (feet) when referring to the baby as an animal.

Right after this paragraph, the narrator describes the characters in the act of eating, implying that there is really no difference for them between defecating and eating. The implication, again, is that, like animals, these characters act instinctively.

The novel is saturated with exaggerated details about the characters' bodily functions. Gonzales-Berry and Rodríguez identify approximately 150 such examples in the novel. A notable one is the case of Don Chipote on his way to Ciudad Juárez:

Naturally, the provisions prepared by Doña Chipota had not taken into account such a long stretch; likewise, Don Chipote did not know how far the place was where he was going. So they finished the sack of gordas, then started to economize. And when the opportunity presented itself, Don Chipote bought a ton of tortillas and chili peppers. But since the tortillas were the first to go, there were days when the two ate nothing but chilis [chiles], the result of which was that when they had to dispose of their digested food, it was so painful that they even cried out loud.

This scene is supposed to make the reader laugh at the protagonist's pitiful situation, but for a middle-class reader such a description may instead cause disidentification and even nausea. The following scene describes Don Chipote and Policarpo as animals only concerned with eating and defecating (like Doña Chipota and her children, discussed above). Here these two characters have been hired recently to work in the railroad industry and have a few days off before they begin.

The only thing that made them get out of bed was the fact that the sardines and crackers they had eaten the day before were now fully digested and insisted on leaving lickety split. This is something which, as the reader knows, is extremely important to attend to or risk peritonitis. Since they had nothing else to do than to eat and surrender to bodily
pleasures, as soon as they felt the first gastronomic warnings, our immigrants didn’t wait a moment to make their contributions to nature, unlike high society people, who are obligated to dissemble even in the most routine fashion. (My emphasis)

The most important aspect of this excerpt is that the narrator comments on the fact that the Mexican middle class, unlike our characters, feels obligated to fake or hide anything related to such bodily functions. Such a comment could serve to mock this middle-class social behavior, but instead the only ones constantly mocked are the main characters, who continue to be described in a dehumanizing manner.

Such scatological descriptions help in the materialization of the workers’ bodies, which is necessary for these working-class characters to stop being invisible in a society that would rather erase their presence and only take their labor. It is imperative to recognize that these characters are invisible to both the Mexican upper classes and the Anglo communities of all classes. Venegas directs his text to the former, but it is not clear that such a community really cares to see its working-class compatriots except to use them as servants. The grotesque descriptions offered in the novel present the narrator’s and, by extension, the author’s classist points of view given that the working-class immigrant characters are represented as vulgar, stupid, and illiterate. The construction of such caricatures of the Mexican working class allows the upper classes’ disidentification with it; Venegas himself suggests, with his mocking tone, what is absent from his text: good taste and refined ways of being. Again I refer to Bakhtin, who offers the following regarding this idea:

Alongside this grotesque anatomical-physiological use of corporeality for “embodying” the whole world, Rabelais... was concerned with direct propaganda on behalf of the culture of the body and its harmonious development... To the medieval body—coarse, hawking, farting, yawning, spitting, hiccupping, noisily nose-blowing, endlessly chewing and drinking—there is contrasted the elegant, cultured body of the humanist, harmoniously developed through sports.

Bakhtin explains the different attitudes of distinct social classes regarding bodily functions: the upper classes always see them as private, unlike their working-class counterparts. In the novel, characters’ constant preoccupation with their basic needs for food, shelter, and survival in general serves to clearly differentiate and distance them from their readers, who unlike them, are not concerned with such issues and instead obsess over presenting a proper and well-behaved Mexican community to Anglo society.
CONCLUSION

This chapter traces the origins, transformations, and functions of the figure of the peladito in Venegas’s novel *Las aventuras de don Chipote, o Cuando los pericos mamen / The Adventures of Don Chipote, or, When Parrots Breast-Feed*. Venegas’s project—to inform and educate possible Mexican immigrants to the United States about the abuses and exploitation they could face—also includes several ideological contradictions given that the text itself abuses its characters by depicting them as idiots and naïve, utilizing a carnivalesque style. Nevertheless, the strategy of representing the characters with a focus on their bodies and bodily functions brings attention to their corporeality and their bodies as exploited, utilized, and abused.

Regardless of the possible disidentification of some upper-class Mexican readers from the novel, it nevertheless achieves its primary goal: to represent and bring attention to the social conditions and reality of working-class Mexican immigrants in the United States. Such representation allows for a criticism and indictment of the exploitative capitalist system that victimizes such workers. Venegas offers his best character, the narrator, as the true peladito of the story.

Although the novel highlights exploitation, it fails to accomplish the ostensible goal of deterring future Mexican migration to the United States. There are several hints in the novel that the protagonist will probably migrate again in spite of the problems he encountered the first time. The naïve characters in the text are able to accomplish a few goals in the end, especially not being hungry any more. Their lives are less economically challenged, but they continue to face racism and exploitation as immigrant workers in a new country. It can be inferred that Don Chipote will continue to attempt to change his life of economic misery in Mexico by migrating again, and this time with a better understanding of the way the new society works.
In chapter 1 I presented a detailed study of the masculine character of the peladito by tracing its development from written materials (like comic strips and magazines) to the carpa (or tent shows) and eventually into film (as in the case of Cantinflas) in transnational Mexican popular cultures before I analyzed it in the novel by Daniel Venegas. Throughout Mexican and Chicana and Chicano cultural productions the male characters are usually the ones privileged with fame, fortune, and publications about them. However, I consider it imperative to recover and reinscribe the work of women in these spaces as well in order to have a more complete notion of this type of artistic production on both sides of the Mexico-U.S. border.

Mario Moreno’s character, known as Cantinflas, is often cited as the most famous comedian to represent the peladito; however, before there was a Cantinflas there was a long list of women on both sides of the border who were already representing the female version of this character: the peladita.1 In this chapter I trace the genealogy of this dissident social type, beginning with teatro de carpa, through two major artists: La Willy in Mexico and La Chata Noloesca in the United States.

Theater scholars in both countries, such as José María y Campos, Nicolás Kanellos, and Yolanda Broyles-González, have traced the origins of teatro de carpa and the peladita and peladito characters all the way to pre-
Columbian times. However, it is the Mexican Revolution that should be credited as the time when these social types and characters emerged in great numbers. This civil war created a displacement of people within and outside of Mexico. In the beginning, during, and after the revolution, many middle-class Mexican families exiled themselves to the United States, and those who could not leave the country, especially those of lower socioeconomic status, migrated to the big cities of Mexico, in particular to the capital. This was a time when Mexico, as a nation, was defining "lo mexicano" (Mexicanness), and the teatro de revista (revue, a precursor of the carpa) served as a space where all Mexican social types were seen on stage. According to Ybarra-Frausto, "Being politically partisan, the revista functioned as a tribunal for the debate of national issues. Its essence was an acerbic, critical stance personified in the irreverent pelado [and pelada] and the insouciant singer-dancer-actress who added a sparkling levity to serious social concerns." Both Ybarra-Frausto and Pablo Duenas cite the period of the 1920s and 1930s as the golden era for theater in the Spanish-speaking United States and in Mexico. Although the teatro de revista had an audience comprised of various social classes, the carpa had mostly working-class people and the poor. Pedro Granados asks, "¿Por qué el pueblo iba a la carpa? Porque era barato, porque estaba en el barrio y en todas partes, porque el cine era mudo y . . . el pueblo no sabía leer." (Why did people [especially the poor] go to the carpa? Because it was cheap, it was located in the barrio and everywhere else, because movies were silent and . . . people [who went to the carpa] did not know how to read). The fact that many people of Mexican descent on both sides of the border were illiterate had much to do with the success of the carpas, where they could be easily entertained. Although located in many of the city's poorest areas and on the outskirts (arrabales), the carpas were a big economic success for their owners because they were the places where the majority of people could be entertained for little money. Both countries had entertainment spaces for the poor and for the middle and upper classes.

In the United States, the origins of Chicana and Latina theater can be situated in the Southwest during the period this region was still under Spanish colonial domination. From its beginnings to the 1940s, Chicana 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, who preferred to attend monolingual Spanish productions in which the works of established Latin American and Spanish playwrights were highlighted. The second type was a poor-people's itinerant tent theater (teatro de carpa) in which 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. The most accomplished companies (of both types) traveled throughout the United States, Puerto Rico, Cuba, and Mexico. Virginia Fábregas, who was 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 participants in teatro de carpa who wrote and performed their own work, such as Carmen Soto de Vásquez, owner of a theater house in Tucson, Arizona, around 1915. 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 entertaining migrant agricultural fieldworkers. Zamarripa Mendoza 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. All of these women’s contributions helped the companies survive during the first half of the twentieth century. Because of its low traveling costs, teatro de carpa became the most enduring and famous type of entertainment in which Latinas participated.

One of the many women of Mexican descent who left indelible marks in professional theater spaces was Josefina Niggli (1910–1983). As a child of an Anglo American father and a Mexican mother, she was born in Monterrey, Mexico, into a wealthy family who left for San Antonio, Texas, during the Mexican Revolution, as many others did. She lived most of her life in Texas and 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 in 1936 with a master’s degree from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Two years later, that university’s press published her *Mexican Folk Plays*. 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 Latinas/os had access to U.S. publishers.

But unlike the privileged women mentioned above, the two women presented here as famous peladitas did not have formal training in theater and performance; instead they learned the trade from their birth or in-law families.
Amelia Wilhelmy, "La Willy," was born in Mazatlán, Sinaloa, Mexico, on May 29, 1901. Her father, Adolfo M. Wilhelmy, was a singer-comedian, and her mother, Refugio Juárez, was an actress in a traveling theater company. Both of Amelia's parents were very young when she was born, and she was raised among the artists, watching everyone, including her parents, perform. As a six-year-old, she was fascinated with Emilia Trujillo, "La Trujis," one of the most famous stars of the time, who traveled with the company and performed a cuple entitled "El mosquito." At the age of six Wilhelmy had already learned Trujillo's famous number, and she performed it on a theater stage in Guaymas, Sonora. She sang:

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El mosquito y la mujé
Son dos cosas parecías
Porque si el mosquito pica,
Porque si pica el mosquito,
Las mujeres también pican
Si un mosquito se propone,
Te achicharra el maldecío
Pero hay hembras muy molestas
Que achicharran al mariño
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The mosquito and the woman
Are two similar things
Because if the mosquito bites
Because if it bites, the mosquito
Women also bite [sting you]
If a mosquito wants to
It can fry you, that wretch
But there are horrible women
Who fry [bother] their husbands

The Spanish used in these lyrics is written phonetically to represent a colloquial accent from southern Spain, where some consonants, especially at the end of words, are aspirated (like the r in mujer, which becomes mujé). Apparently, little Amelia had learned how to imitate the accent, the dancing, the facial expressions, and Trujillo's every move. So the first time she imitated her idol on stage the audience wanted her to repeat the song over and over, and when La Trujis attempted to substitute for her, the audience boooed her off the stage.
After traveling through the state of Sonora, Wilhelmy's family continued on tour through northern Mexico and the U.S. Southwest when she was very young; later she studied for a few years in Mexico City, and during the years of the revolution the entire family moved to the southeastern Mexican state of Yucatán. When she was eighteen years old, she got married to Juan Antonio Pérez, an orchestra director; she had her first child (Luis) with him and divorced him soon after. In 1922, as a single mother, she returned to Mexico City and got a few jobs in the smaller carpas and by 1928 was one of the stars at the Teatro María Guerrero, where she performed with Roberto de Soto's company. De Soto always claimed to have "discovered and rescued" her from the poorest carpa, but she had already gained some fame by then. Before going to the María Guerrero Theater, Wilhelmy had worked at a prestigious carpa called La Mariposa, where she met José Muñoz Reyes, a famous comedian known as "Chupamirto," who is considered a prototype of Cantinflas and could have been more famous than Mario Moreno had he been less insecure about his work. She became Muñoz Reyes's common-law wife and had a daughter, Refugio, and another son, José Antonio, with him.

According to Dueñas, La Willy grew to be one of the most beloved actors of the carpa; her audience always adored her, and fans followed her to every theater or carpa where she moved to. La Willy considered herself a true student of La Trujis and came to be one of the top three peladitas to represent characters such as a drunkard, an indigenous woman, and a marijuana addict. Wilhelmy created her own characters and comedy sketches. One of the first characters that she developed around 1928 was called "Juan Mariguano," a pot-smoking soldier of the Mexican Revolution. Miguel Angel Morales cites a theater critic who wrote that "ella misma escribió su parte... es de admirar cómo la talentosa artista escribe monólogos, parodias, pequeñas escenas y versos alegres, con raras facultades de escritora festiva. Y aquella noche de su debut obtuvo su primer gran triunfo, al parecer como diminuto soldado mariguano" (she herself wrote her part... it is admirable how the talented artist writes monologues, parodies, small scenes and happy songs, with the rare faculties of a festive writer. And that night during her debut, she was triumphant for the first time when she appeared as the small marijuana-smoking soldier). Morales published two photographs of Wilhelmy dressed as Juan Mariguano that capture the actress in the middle of an act. In the first, she is standing against what seems to be a big wall, holding her side as if s/he has just been shot. Her legs are spread apart as if s/he were about to fall to the ground, and her face has an expression of pain on it. In the second photograph, s/he is simply standing, with
peladita makeup on (eyelids painted white, eyebrows painted dark), holding and smoking a marijuana cigarette looking crossed-eyed from the effects of the weed. The character is showing her/his belly and is wearing loose-fitting trousers, jacket, and military cap.

It is through this character in particular that Wilhelmy presents a peladita who is in charge of criticizing the military campaigns and government decisions explicitly during the Mexican Revolution. Wilhelmy says of her character: "Esta es la caracterización . . . que ha gustado quizás más al público. ¿Por qué? Es muy sencillo: yo he estudiado profundamente a estos Juanes desventurados que, aprovechan los asuetos del cuartel, visitan, a escondidas de sus superiores, las cantinas y las pulquerías de barriadas de México. Ya ebrios hablan . . . de su valor y triunfo" (This is the characterization that audiences have liked the most. Why? It is very simple: I have studied in detail these unfortunate Juanes [social types] that, taking advantage of their day off, visit, without the knowledge of their superiors, the cantinas [bars] and pulquerías [pulque bars] in the barrios in Mexico). Once drunk, they speak their valor and triumph. As she became famous with this character, the Mexican critic Pablo Dueñas writes, "se volvió imprescindible en los teatros importantes y en las postales de moda, donde no apareció desnuda (no tenía el físico requerido), sino en traje de charro, de borracha y dama del barrio" (she became indispensable in the [most] important theaters of the city and in the famous postcards of the time, where she would not appear in the nude [she did not have the required physique], but rather dressed up in the gallant attire of the charro, [or] as a drunkard or barrio prostitute).

Years later, once she was established as a star, Mario Moreno "Cantinflas" acted on stage with her, and this was considered his privilege. Of her work in the carpas she stated: "¡Yo no reniego de [las carpas]! No, señor. Toda mi vida de arte la he pasado en las carpas de los suburbios. Ahí me he formado. Me he ido superando poco a poco, hasta donde me ha sido posible. Me he dado a conocer a públicos que, a pesar de su humildad, son a veces más comprensivos que otros aparentemente más selectos. Por eso, pues, a nadie ocultó ni ocultaré nunca que empecé a adquirir mi personalidad en las carpas" (I do not renounce the carpas! No, sir. I have spent all of my artistic life in the suburban carpas. I formed myself there. I have improved myself [there] little by little [and] as much as possible. [There] my audiences have gotten to know me, and in spite of their humility, they understand me better than the more apparently 'select' audiences. That's why I never have and never will hide the fact that I began to acquire my personality in the carpas).

Latina cultural critic Iris Blanco, who lived the carpa experience as an
audience member in Mexico City, remembers having seen Wilhelmy on stage on several occasions. Blanco states: "Yo la ví en las carpas que estaban por el Abelardo Rodríguez. Pero ya ella era, aunque trabajaba en carpas, muy consagrada" (I saw her in the carpas that were by Abelardo Rodríguez. But at this time, although she worked in the carpas, she was a consecrated artist). Blanco also explains that in one of her main acts, "La Wilhelmy, . . . siempre con rebozo and sus huaraches, . . . de aquí vienen las imitaciones como la India María . . . se amarraba el rebozo . . . [a] la cintura y se hacía un nudo [en frente] entonces todo su chiste era hacer ese baile de brincar la panza para arriba y todo eso. Claro, eso era la grosería. Era la pelada más pelada" (Wilhelmy, always wearing her shawl and huaraches . . . this is where the imitations like La India María come from . . . she would tie her shawl . . . around the waist and would make a knot at the front and the whole act consisted of dancing and making her [exposed] belly move up and down [simulating copulation]. Of course that was considered [very] vulgar. She was the most pelada of them all). Blanco’s personal observation of Wilhelmy emphasizes that she was a true pelada, unafraid to be free on stage to represent sexual and bawdy acts.

As Wilhelmy’s fame increased, her shows were moved from teatro de carpa venues in the city to more prestigious ones, and she was hired to act in several successful films. One of her most memorable roles was as “La Guayaba” (Drunk Woman), a companion to another drunkard, “La Tostada” (Toasted), personified by a famous actress of the time, Delia Magaña, in Nosotros los pobres (We, the Poor). Wilhelmy is clearly another example of a peladita who, along with Escalona, provides a solid part of the genealogy of transnational Mexican social types in theater and performance.

A CHICANA PELADITA: “LA CHATA”

Tomás Ybarra-Frausto argues that the carpa helped in the creation of a new sense of identity for people of Mexican descent because it validated and revitalized code-switching, it presented the anti-establishment character of the pelada and pelado, and it used oral tradition and humor as cultural weapons against the oppressors. Beatriz Escalona, an emblematic member of the carpa, was born on August 20, 1903, in San Antonio, Texas. Her mother became a widow at an early age, and since they lived very close to a railroad station, she sold food to the train passengers. Escalona helped her mother do this, and according to Ybarra-Frausto, this introduced her to a world bigger than her barrio where she intermingled with the diverse people who traveled through the city. The community of Mexican descent in San Anto-
nio had a long tradition of theater and performance given that, along with Los Angeles, this was one of the main cities where touring artists and carpa stopped.

Escalona had relatives in Monterrey, Mexico, and while visiting them, she sold flowers from her relatives’ garden in order to make enough money to buy a ticket to the Teatro Independencia. No matter which city she was in, Escalona always attempted to go to theaters and found ways to pay for her tickets. In San Antonio, in order to see the Tandas de Variedad that toured through her city, she began working at the Zaragoza and El Nacional theaters as an acomodadora (usher) so she could watch the shows while working. Escalona was a charming and intelligent young woman, and while the Areu Company was in the city, one of the Areu brothers, an impresario, started courting her. He asked her to marry him and go on tour. Alicia Arrizón argues that although Escalona married into a famous company, she still had to work hard at creating her own sketches and learning about the company.

Her marriage to Areu did not last long, and upon her divorce she created her own traveling company, which she named Atracciones Noloesca: Variedades Mexicanas. With this group she traveled throughout the United States (including New York), Cuba, and Mexico. She wanted to represent Mexicanness in these places although technically her company was not Mexican but Chicana/o. Her ensemble was composed of actors like Henry Flores (“Don Chema”) and Ricardo González-González (“Ramirín”) as well as female dancers. Alicia Arrizón states that “La Chata [Escalona’s stage persona] truly broke new ground . . . her participation in the public domain as an actress, director, and founder of a traveling troupe defied [patriarchal] power dynamics . . . With her artistic sensibility and powerful sense of freedom, she succeeded innovatively in a male-dominated field where women have been . . . marginalized.” This is to say that Escalona beat the odds, as a woman, to become very successful in this male-dominated field. Given her defiant stance against gender norms, she can be considered a true pioneer because in the 1930s and 1940s there were very few women, especially of Mexican descent, who owned their theater companies. Her economic solvency was important for Escalona to be able to accomplish her artistic and personal goals.

Throughout her career Escalona wrote and performed her own comic sketches, which incorporated music and dance. Two songs on the backs of postcards offer excellent examples of her strong voice and ribald humor. “El chivo” (The Goat) offers an excellent example of her use of double entendre and rasquachi humor:
Por aquellas piedras negras
Donde se amansan los chivos
Hay corazones ingratos
Y pechos adoloridos.
Ya se acabaron los chivos
¿Ahora qué comen las aves?
¿Cómo han de cornar los chivos
Si tienen pa' tras las llaves?
Un chivo pegó un reparo
Calló junto a las lomitas
¿Qué comerán los borregos
Que van regando bolitas?
Ya con esta me despidó
Con las frutas de un olivo
Y aquí se acaban cantando
Los versos del pobre chivo.

Around those black hills
Where goats are tended to
There are ungrateful hearts
And souls/chests 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
That 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 makes reference to the bodily functions (eating and defecating) and the daily activities of the goat (cornar means to gore, and, by cultural implication, to cuckold or betray heterosexual men, especially within Mexican and Chicana/o cultures). While in English a wife’s sexual betrayal of her husband is related to a bird that lays its eggs in another bird’s nest, in Spanish the reference is associated with several horned farming animals,
particularly the goat. The betrayed man is called *chivo* or *cornudo* (horned) 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, which allude to the existence of “ungrateful hearts” and “hurt souls/cheeks [pechos]” 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?” In alluding to the horns being the emasculated man’s penis, the fact that the horns (penis) are positioned backward (broken penis) renders the male useless. In relationship to the woman who does the cheating, it is implied that only a “woman of loose morals” would betray her husband. Aside from the sexual connotations and making her the object of laughter, the song also incorporates a reference to the animal defecating little balls as part of the humor related to bodily functions. One can only imagine a carpa filled with mostly working-class people laughing constantly throughout La Chata’s performance of this song, especially since she was known to incorporate many lewd corporal signs while on stage. Escalona represents precisely a *mujer andariega* and *traviesa*, defined by Tey Diana Rebolledo and Yolanda Broyles-González as a woman who is not afraid to speak her mind and to 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.

The second song, “Pero nunca hicimos nada,” takes on the topic of having extramarital sexual relations that are unacknowledged:

A un charrito una mañana  
Me jallé por el Torreón  
Me habló de amores,  
Me cuadró mucho  
Y me agarró el corazón.  
A la mañana siguiente  
Mecitópa’la enramada  
Le di mis besos, le di mi vida,  
Pero nunca hicimos nada.  
Lagrimitaque suicida  
En el mar se quiere ahogar,  
Vuelve lágrima a mi vida  
Que en el alma tengo mal.  
Mичarrito me decía,  
“Vamos Chata, a juyir

---

*LAS PELADITAS*
Y la otra tarde ya convencida
Nos juimos pa' San Luis.
Y en el Torreón me tantieron
De mujer adulterada,
Me jui de juida con mi charrito
Pero nunca hicimos nada.
Y después de muchos meses
Con una que se jalló
Se fue el charrito, me dejó sola
Y me volvi pa'l Torreón.
Y a los pocos días enferma
Me vi triste y agitada
Se fue mi charro, vino un chamaco
Pero nunca hicimos nada.

I found a charrito (peasant)
In Torreón one morning
He spoke to me of love
I liked him a lot
And he took my heart.
The next morning
We had a date by the bushes
I kissed him, gave him my life
But we never did anything [sexual].
Little suicidal tear
That wants to drown in the sea
Come back to my life
Because my soul aches.
My charrito would tell me
"Chata, let's run away"
And the other afternoon I was convinced
And we left for San Luis.
And in Torreón they accused me
Of being an adulterous woman
I left with my charrito
But we never did anything [sexual].
And after several months
With a woman he found
The charrito left, left me alone
And I went back to Torreón.
And a few days later, [I was] sick
I felt sad and agitated
My charro left, a baby came
But we never did anything [sexual].

In this song, Escalona once again sings about a woman who is sexually free enough to run away with a man and have sexual relations but feels that she has to lie about it until a baby, as an inevitable result, is born. She is supposed to have a great time with this man at the beginning, enjoying her freedom once she is in another town away from her own; however, as he betrays her, she must return to Torreón, where she is accused of being “adulterous” or a mujer callejera for running away with a man. The humorous part is the verse/title, which repeatedly states that they never had sexual relations until she can no longer deny it because of the arrival of a baby. And although this woman seems sad and in a bad situation in the end, it can also be argued that in negating her sexual relations with her charrito, she is also negating and erasing anything that it could signify and at the same time erasing its significance in her life. On the other hand, the song can also be interpreted as the woman stating that sex with this man was so bad or quick that it was really “nothing” or worthless, that he was not a good lover.\(^{33}\)

Both songs offer examples of how Escalona’s work incorporates all aspects of the peladita in terms of the characteristics explained above. Her witty and traviesa character also serves as an excellent example of the pelada.

EL VIAJE A HOLLYWOOD (THE TRIP TO HOLLYWOOD)

In the sketch “El viaje a Hollywood,” Escalona makes a few bilingual jokes, including those that arise when confusing one language for another.\(^{34}\) She preferred to work exclusively in Spanish and pretended not to speak English when she was on stage unless she used it in her humor. She purposefully mispronounced words in Spanish to represent common speech and to add to the sketch’s double entendre and language games. Here, La Chata pretends to have taken a trip to Hollywood, where she is supposed to get a part in a film. She packs her bags and goes to the airport:

Ese viaje a Hollywood, hay que terrible, que barbaridad, pues resulta que allá está Pedro González González, ustedes lo conocen y me dijo, cuando haiga una oportunidad para películas te voy a mandar llevar. Pos que hay nomás va llegando un telegrama y que me dice te necesitan para filmar una película de guerra, pos a la carrera fui y me empaqué toda mi ropa en mi dos velices y dije yo—pues hay que ir a Hollywood a verme en la
La Chata Noloescia as a peladita. Courtesy of Tomás Ybarra-Frausto from his private collection.
pantalla, que si yo soñaba con verme en la pantalla, pos agarré mis dos velices llenos de ropa y corri pa'l aeropuerto porque me mandaron el ti- quete pa’ que me fuera en avión; por allá voy con los velices al aeropuerto corriendo, y a las cinco de la tarde salí y pa las cinco y media ya estaba en Los Angeles Capilori. Luego, llegué, luego luego . . . y nomás llegué y agarré mis dos velices y baje por la escalinata y puse mis dos velices en un lado y me quedé viendo los edificios ya que los puse mis velices en el suelo y dije ah, ah y luego vi pa’ abajo y dije ohhh, me volaron mis velices me los robaron . . . me los robaron! . . . pero como yo iba a Hollywood a filmar, dije pos que me importa, al cabo yo voy a ganar mucho dinero.

That trip to Hollywood, oh, it was terrible, how awful, well, Pedro González González is there, you know him, and he told me that, when there’s an opportunity for films I am going to invite you to come. So I received a telegram where he tells me that they need me to be in a war film and I packed all my clothing in two bags and I said, well, let’s go to Hollywood to see myself on the big screen, I would dream about being in movies, so I got my bags full of clothing and I ran to the airport because they sent me a plane ticket, and there I go running to the airport and I left at five in the afternoon and by five-thirty I was in Los Angeles, Capilori [California]. I got there right away. Once I was there I got my two bags and as soon as I got off the plane I put my bags on the floor and looked at the tall building and I said ah, ah, and then oh, oh, when I noticed that my bags were stolen, they were stolen, but since I was going to Hollywood to do a film, I said it doesn’t matter since I’m going to get soo much money.

In this first part, La Chata appears naïve, like Don Chipote, when she arrives in a big city like Los Angeles, and because she is distracted by the tall buildings, her bags are stolen. Although she is not from the interior of Mexico and a poor peasant like Don Chipote, she pretends that San Antonio is too small of a town compared to L.A. and acts as if she is in a new world. Although her trip starts badly, she still has high hopes that since she was invited to be in a film, it will not matter that she has absolutely no clothing with her because she has gone to the big city “to strike it rich.” The sketch continues:

Pos luego luego agarré un carro y allá me lleva Mr. John Wayne, ese señor es el productor, es el que hace las películas pos nomás llegué y me dijo pá- sele, pásale que la estamos esperando, dije yo—¡Ay que bueno! Pos nomás a mí me esperan. Dijo, con usted vamos a filmar una película de guerra. Dije yo ¡suave! ¡Con lo que me gusta a mí montar a caballo con mi pistola en un lado . . . echando balas! . . . Dijo no, no, si no va montar a ca-
bollo ni va a echar balas, no, no, no. Vamos a filmar con usted una película de guerra y a usted la vamos a agarrar pa’ tanque. ¿Ay señor y usted cree que vine desde San Antonio, Tejas pa’ que me agarrre de eso? Ay dijo, pos si de eso tiene la figura, ¡la vamos a agarrar pa’ tanque! Aquí la vamos a poner de tanque.

Then right away I took a car that took me to see Mr. John Wayne, that producer man that makes the movies, and as soon as I arrived, come in, come in we were waiting for you—Wow, that’s great, you’re only waiting for me. He said, we are going to have you in a war film. I said, that’s great! I love riding a horse with a gun on my side, shooting! He said, no, no, you won’t ride a horse and you won’t shoot a gun, no, no, no. You are going to be in a war movie, but you’re going to be the tank. Sir, and you think I came all the way from San Antonio, Texas, so that I’m that? Well, he said, that’s what you look like, like a tank, and that’s what you’ll be.

Here, once again, La Chata demonstrates her naiveté at thinking that one of the most famous actors of the times, John Wayne, will put her in a movie. The entire part is about laughing at herself and her physical figure by calling herself a “tank.” One can imagine her audience, laughing at and with her.

In the next part she defends herself:

Le dije pos está usted muy equivocado Mr. John Wines ... Dijo yo no me llamo John Wines, me llamo John Wayne ... Dije, pos pa’ mi usted es puro wine, ¡qué bárbaro! Pos cómo me va agarrar de tanque señor—Dijo, por eso es lo que va hacer y si no lo quiere hacer vale más que por donde entró se salga—Váyase, váyase! Me quedé pensando—dije no pos si yo quiero trabajar que me vean en la pantalla ... dije Mire, señor, Mr. John Wine, suponiendo que yo la haga de tanque ... ¿Cuántos soldados me va echar arriba? ... Me dijo, ¡todos los que aguante! ... Ay ¡que bárbaro! Dije no señor si se me va a desconchifar todo ... me va a desbaratar este hombre ... dije no, vale más irme por donde vine y me salió muy enojada.

I told him, you’re very mistaken Mr. John Wines ... He said, my name is not John Wines, it is John Wayne ... I said, well to me you’re a wine [worthless, wiener]. How awful! Because if you want to turn me into a tank, sir ... He said, well, that’s what you’re going to do or you can leave to where you came from. Leave, leave. I started thinking—No, well, I want to work, for people to see me on the big screen ... I said, look, Mr. John Wine, let’s suppose I do the part of a tank, how many soldiers are you going to put on [top] of me? And he said, all the ones you can handle! How barbaric! I said, no way, you’re going to break me, he is go-
ing to undo me ... I said no, I better go back to where I came from, and I left, very angry.

The joke continues when she calls John Wayne “Mr. Wine” (pronounced in Spanish) implying wiener or a piece of meat; it is supposed to be funny to the audience for her to change his name in this manner, especially given that he is so famous. There is also the double entendre about how many men will be on top of her and, of course, his reply, as many as she can take before they break her. Here is the sexual connotation that La Chata is playing with in terms of “who is on top.” She decides to leave immediately before she is (sexually) abused by Mr. Wine.

After leaving the movie studio, La Chata is hungry and goes into a restaurant:

Como tenía mucha hambre, yo llevaba bastante, mucho dinero por ... Si iba bien preparada. Nomás vi un restaurante y me metí y le dije a la muchacha—Señorita, yo quiero un caldo. Se quedó viendome y me dijo, I don’t know ... dije I don’t know como que ora no, pos ora es cuando quiero el caldo, mire un caldit, calientit, pa’l estomagit ... y dijo I don’t know what you mean ... y dije, ah se lo tragó Benjamin. Ese es muy tragón, donde quiera que entro se acaba todo no deja pa’ los demás hombre ... Dije mira señorita por favor un caldit ... pero no me entendió.

Since I was so hungry, I had enough money, just in case ... I was well prepared. As soon as I saw a restaurant, I went in and I told the young woman—Miss, I want some soup. She stared at me and said, “I don’t know ... ” I said “Not now? But now is when I want my soup, look I want a “caldit, calientit, pa’l estomagit” and she said what do you mean and I said, Oh, Benjamin, ate it ... He’s a glutton, wherever I go, he has eaten everything and never leaves anything for others. I said, look Miss, please give me a “caldit” [soup], but she didn’t understand.

La Chata states that because she does not speak English, she has a tough time getting some food even though she has plenty of money since the woman at the restaurant does not understand what she’s saying. She decides to “try” to speak the language by omitting the last vowel; this is similar to non-Spanish speakers who pretend to speak Spanish by adding a vowel (usually an “o” or an “a”) at the end of each word. La Chata also listens and interprets what she hears phonetically, which turns into a language game that only bilingual people can understand and laugh at. Ybarra-Frausto writes that “what usually brought down the house were jokes based on the misunderstandings of language.”³³
Thus, at this point her audience is rolling with laughter. She insists that she wants some food:

Entonces le dije mira—mejor déme un par de huevos rancheros como me gustan a mí con mucho chilito arriba y la huerca nomás se quedaba mirándome y no me daba nada. Y le dije huevits con chilits... chilits y hacía el chilits pero nunca me dio el chilits y entonces dije esta no me entiende y empecé a hacer como gallina empecé a pegarme en la pierna y dije cacaracacá y cacaracacá y en el cacaracacá me aventaron pa’ fuera... me aventaron y no me dieron nada de huevos rancheros ni nada... me dio mucho coraje.

Then I said, look—you better give me some huevos rancheros instead, just the way I like them with a lot of chili on top, and the girl just stared at me and wouldn’t give me anything. And I told her “huevits con chilits... chilits... chilits” and I motion for a chilits but she never gave me a chilits and then I said, this girl doesn’t understand me and I started to imitate a hen and I started hitting myself on the leg and I said “cacaracacá” [three times] and they threw me out... they threw me out and did not give me anything... no huevos rancheros, nothing... and I was very angry.

Here, La Chata does a physical act of pretending to be a chicken in order to mimic that she wants some “eggs” with chili. There is a possibility that when she is pretending to make signs for the word “chile” that she is probably pointing to her crotch to imitate a penis to represent the phallus. This is only speculation on my part based on the examples of lewd carpa humor offered by other comedians.

Here is another attempt at playing with language. José R. Reyna, a Chicano folklorist, notes that “most jokes of this type are simply plays on words in Spanish, but a large number are of a cross cultural nature. That is, they involve errors of pronunciation and the ensuing misunderstanding due to ignorance of English or Spanish. The significance of these jokes is that they allow the Chicano to exalt his own position over the Anglo and the Mexican, neither of whom understands both languages.”

Although Escalona attempts to keep most of her jokes in monolingual Spanish throughout her sketches, she still manages to play with both languages enough to have the audience understand and laugh at the jokes.

The language games continue:

Entonces dije pos digame una palabra cualquiera en inglés nomás pa’ que me den algo... entonces dijo ay pida a cup of coffee and cake...
Then teach me a word or two in English to order some food... then he told me to ask for “coffee and cake”... you’ll like that, it will be nice and hot for your stomach... so I got to the first restaurant I found, sat down and said “a cup of coffee and cake” and really fast, they gave it to me with a piece of cake... I don’t even like sweets, but I was hungry, so oh well I ate the cake and I got full... I said to myself, then let’s look for another Mexican to teach me another word in English... and I looked for another Mexican and he said to ask for “ham sandwich” and that I would like that... So I arrived at another restaurant and I said to the young woman “ham sandwich,” she stared at me and said “white or rye...” and I didn’t know what to do and I said “ham sandwich” and she repeated “white or rye.” I looked at her very sadly and said “cup of coffee and cake.”

Finally, here La Chata attempts to learn some phrases in English for ordering food and succeeds at first in ordering a simple thing like “coffee and cake.” But when she tries to get a different type of meal, the details of the meal make her feel trapped, and she must revert to her first lesson. This specific part of the sketch is an old joke in which people change a particular detail of the meal to be more specific and to require the knowledge of more words in English. The sketch finishes with La Chata returning to San Antonio by asking for a ride, after having a few other adventures.

CONCLUSION

In this chapter I make a connection between two peladitas, one in each country. I consider it important to also offer a study on the female character given that, generally, the masculine social types are the first ones to be studied and the publications about them abound. In order to create this ge-
nealogy of Chicana and Latina theater and performance, I provide a historical background on each side of the border and then illustrate it with the specific examples of La Willy and La Chata, who represent the perfect prototype of the peladitas.

Although each woman lived in her own distinct environment, there were some commonalities, such as the fact that they were both very famous and survived the end of the carpa era by moving directly into film, radio, and/or television. They were also divorced and had children who were in the carpa environment for most of their lives. Although many women participated in show business during the first half of the twentieth century, very few were as strong and intelligent as these two, who carved a place for themselves in performance history and whose work was powerful enough to continue to be recovered.

The artists discussed in this chapter demonstrated their concern with entertaining their audiences in a way that they would enjoy even if it meant that they had to create their own sketches as part of their creativity and their politics. They used types of characters that transgressed the restrictions of the day. Amelia Wilhelmy and Beatriz Escalona served as a cultural bridge for new generations, helping them to fuse the pieces of their Mexican identity as their experiences would take them to one and then the other side of the Mexico-U.S. international divide.
At the end of the 1930s, young people in the United States began to wear "zoot suits," which became very popular in the 1940s among ethnic-minority youth who wore it on weekends and for special occasions. The suit was created on the East Coast by an African American man, and it became popular in several big cities due to labor and other migrations. The 1940s were characterized by great migrations of African Americans who sought to get out of the Jim Crow South; migration to urban centers like New York, Chicago, Detroit, San Francisco, and Los Angeles offered better jobs, better pay, and the chance to get out from under sharecropping and tenant farming. On the West Coast, thanks to World War II and with the help of the railroad, several industries that required cheap labor developed—fishing, agribusiness, oil, automobiles, and, of course, any industry related to the military. When the United States began to participate in the war and recruited thousands of young men into the armed forces, industries that previously had offered
jobs primarily to white males were forced to employ ethnic minorities and women of all ethnicities for the first time.

The community of Mexican descent was displaced and deterritorialized in the nineteenth century, after the U.S.-Mexico War. This community also migrated within the United States to the agricultural fields and to the urban centers where they lived with other ethnic-minority communities. To this, another element was added in the 1940s when the United States formally established the Bracero Program, which encouraged Mexican nationals to migrate and gave them temporary work contracts. These distinct groups of immigrants—national and transnational—lived together in the poorest parts of the cities, especially when they had recently arrived. These newly formed communities shared geographical and social spaces where they worked and had fun. Important cultural exchanges occurred, especially between Mexicans and African Americans, who also shared their "zoot-suiter" counterculture with the Mexican community.

An important industrial center of the time was the city of Los Angeles, California, where pachuca/o culture became both popular and infamous at the same time. Here, the zoot suit was worn by African Americans, Filipinos, and Mexicans in particular. But given that these suits were expensive, some youth in the Mexican barrios wore only a part of it. The pachucada called these suits "drapes" or "tacuches," and in order to be considered "true pachucas/os" they had to wear the suit, have a specific hairstyle, and speak the dialect called Caló. The term "pachuco" originates from a linguistic transformation of the words "El Paso" (for the city of the same name in Texas); when the pachucos from there referred to it they called it El Pasuco, El Chuco, or El Pachuco. This counterculture eventually became popular among working-class youth of first- and second-generation immigrants in the United States. Their social status as well as their manner of dressing and speaking created an ethnic stereotype of the pachucada as rebels, delinquents, antipatriotic, and criminals.

Young women and men who identified as pachucas and pachucos existed from the late 1930s until the 1940s, especially in Los Angeles and other big cities. Their first popular cultural representations—which were all negative—were published in the sensationalist newspapers in English and in Spanish. In Mexico, one of the first authors to write about the pachuco was Octavio Paz. He provides a scathing interpretation of the pachuco in The Labyrinth of Solitude as a "sinister and emotionless clown who does not attempt to make [others] laugh and [instead] chooses to terrorize... [He] searches for and attracts his own persecution and scandal... [He] does not affirm nor defend anything except his exasperating way of 'not-being.'"
For Paz, the pachuco victimizes himself, and the United States should get rid of him since “[he] appears to incarnate freedom, disorder, the forbidden. Something, in sum, that should be repressed.”\textsuperscript{12} Scholars in Chicana/o studies and other fields criticize Paz; for example, Carlos Blanco-Aguinaga in “El laberinto fabricado por Octavio Paz” (The Labyrinth Fabricated by Octavio Paz) states that “it appears to be a fact that Chicano youth who enter The Labyrinth . . . read its first chapter very critically [and] from a more direct understanding of the historical reality of pachuquismo than, evidently, Octavio Paz had in 1947.”\textsuperscript{13} It is precisely this “historical reality” that must be clarified and detailed in order to understand the pachucada and to interpret and analyze the different cultural representations of more recent scholarship.

During the early 1940s, according to the Mexican cultural magazine So- mos Uno, representations of the pachuco in that country first appeared in teatro de carpa, in film, and in comic strips.\textsuperscript{14} For example, in 1943 there was a showing in Mexico of the U.S. film directed by Malcolm St. Clair entitled Jitterbugs in English and Los dos pachucos in Spanish (meaning “the two pachucos”). This film featured the famous duo Stan Laurel and Oliver Hardy dressed in zoot suits and performing slapstick comedy. It is clear that although all the artistic representations of the pachucada originated in the United States, Mexico and Latin America became big consumers of it. A few months after Jitterbugs debuted across the border, Germán Valdés, the Mexican comedian better known as “Tin Tan,” became well known for his character of the pachuco, which he created in Ciudad Juárez, Chihuahua, after he became familiar with the pachucada from El Paso and Los Angeles. Valdés took his character to Mexico through radio shows, teatro de carpa, and film. During that time there were several Mexican traveling troupes, and among them was that of Valdés, who toured throughout the United States (especially in the Southwest). These comedians traveled to major cities like Los Angeles, San Antonio, and Chicago to entertain the communities of Mexican and Latin American descent. Avina also indicates that Valdés was familiar with Los Angeles, especially the San Gabriel area, since it was in Medina Court that he studied and spoke with the pachucos. This is one of the reasons Valdés was introduced as the comedian who was arriving in Mexico City directly from Los Angeles; his managers billed his act as legitimately “American.”\textsuperscript{15} Valdés acted, as the pachuco, in several Mexican films, but this chapter concentrates on his first one, entitled El hijo desobediente (The Disobedient Son, 1945), directed by Humberto Gómez Landeros. In it he portrays his original characterization of the pachuco, which became diluted in subsequent films. In this chapter I connect
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the pachucada transnationally through other Chicana/o cultural representations such as plays and music.

The very first representations of the pachucada in cultural productions like magazines, theater, and film happened primarily in Mexico; in the United States this did not happen until the end of the 1960s and beginning of the 1970s, especially in literature. The famous Chicano singer and songwriter Lalo Guerrero began writing and producing his pachucada music in the 1940s, but it did not get transferred into other cultural productions until the 1970s. During the Chicano movement of the 1960s there was a search for icons of resistance as models for Chicanas/os. Some of the ancient indigenous cultures—Aztec and Maya especially—were displayed to represent knowledge and resistance. In California, the pachucos also became heroes because of their survival in and struggle with mainstream society. One of the first Chicanos to heroize pachucos was the artist and activist José Montoya, who at the end of the 1960s began to draw and paint images of pachucos and pachucas and to memorialize them in poetry. In Sacramento, by 1971 Montoya and the artist group Royal Chicano Air Force (RCAF) decided to create an art exhibit about the pachucada that included visual art (drawings and paintings), historiography, newspaper articles, personal photography, a hologram (with a couple dancing the “boogie woogie”), and a group of lowriders with their cars from the 1930s and 1940s. Montoya explains that inviting this group of lowriders was very difficult to coordinate because when all the cars were being driven from San Jose to Sacramento the drivers were arrested by the police, who identified them as “suspicious” individuals. The charges were later dropped, and the group participated in the event. This exhibit was a great success and vindicated the pachucada by representing them in a positive light. However, Montoya reveals that there were members of the Chicana/o community who complained about the exhibit because they still had a negative view of the pachucas/os.

In Chicana/o communities there is a belief that it was Luis Valdez who initiated a contemporary interest in pachucas/os when he dramatized historical reality in the play Zoot Suit. However, his original intent had been to create a dramatic representation of Montoya’s poem “El Louie,” which details the life and death of a pachuco. According to Montoya, there were some legal issues that precluded Valdez from doing this, so instead he began the research for his famous play. Nevertheless, the two of them continued to collaborate on other projects; during the first production of Zoot Suit, Montoya’s drawing of a pachuco graced the cover of the program. It is then, thanks to both of them, that positive contemporary cultural represen-
tations of the pachucada began in Chicana/o art, theater, radio, magazines, music, and literature.

Given that the pachucada has been represented in cultural productions on both sides of the border, it is important to do a transnational study of these representations; in order to do this it is necessary to recover and reconnect these figures so as to reinscribe them in each of the cultural contexts that have marginalized them. Because the masculine figure of the pachuco has been given the most attention in each context, I consider it important to also reinscribe the pachuca into the discussion in each country. The pachuca received more attention in the U.S. context, especially in Chicano art, in the newspapers of the time and, in a deplorable manner, in Zoot Suit, than in the Mexican context; however, this character still remains extraneous. Across the border there was never really a full representation of the pachuca; whatever roles were available were always marginal, as in some of Valdés's films (as Tin Tan's girlfriends).

The artistic representation of the pachucada under discussion here, primarily through songs of the time, allows me to highlight the cultural connections that existed among the population of Mexican descent on both sides of the border. Inevitably certain aspects of Mexican and Chicana and Chicano cultures went back and forth across the border and influenced each other. Dick Hebdige's theory on subculture indicates that "the process whereby objects are made to mean... 'style' in subculture... begins with a crime against the natural order... But it ends in the construction of a style, in gesture of defiance or contempt... It signals a refusal... which eventually has] some subversive value." When the pachucada dress style is seen as a subculture, the group automatically is posited against the status quo and dominant society in general. Hebdige also indicates that certain objects in such a subculture are "appropriated, 'stolen' by subordinate groups and made to carry 'secret' meanings: meanings which express, in code, a form of resistance to the order which guarantees their continued subordination." Certainly this is applicable to the clothing as well as the hairstyles of the pachucada.

Unlike Hebdige, José Agustín, a renowned Mexican cultural critic, offers his own definition of alternative culture and does not name it "subculture" but rather "contracultura" (or "counterculture") because he considers it to be not "under" the dominant culture but instead working "against" it by confronting it. His definition states that "counterculture covers a series of cultural expressions and movements, usually youthful, collective, that surpass, reject, and marginalize themselves [and] that face or transcend the institu-
tional culture." He also argues that while such institutional culture "consolidates the status quo and obstructs [or] destroys the possibilities of . . . authentic expression among young people, it also supports oppression, repression, and exploitation by those in power." Referring to young people's lack of satisfaction, Agustín indicates that "counterculture generates its own means and transforms itself into a body of ideas and signs of identity that contain attitudes, behavior, its own language, ways of being and dressing, and in general a mentality and sensibility alternative to those of the system . . . It is a fact that counterculture arises when society's rigidity augments . . . [It is] a political phenomenon." Although the pachucada was a phenomenon among youth on both sides of the border, World War II created this rigidity in the United States, and it affected youth in particular because they had to deal with the threat of being drafted into the armed forces.

As Agustín indicates, a critical aspect of counterculture is the way youth express themselves through music, which plays a key role in connecting the individual to the group. During World War II the pachucada enjoyed jazz music along with other types of Latin American and Afro-Caribbean sounds. It is not coincidental that both of the texts I analyze here have music in common. I will critique the music in Valdés's _El hijo desobediente_ and in Valdez's _Zoot Suit_, especially the music based on Chicano artist Lalo Guerrero. Thus, music—whether through listening, singing, or dancing—serves to establish transnational Mexican cultural connections as it travels across the border.

I also establish that cultural productions that represent the pachucada, including music, film, and theater, also create a space of rebelliousness and resistance against the status quo that eventually results in violence against youth by the repressive state. Stuart Hall indicates that "[in] stereotyping, there's a connection between representation, difference and power . . . Stereotyping is a key element in the exercise of symbolic violence." Such stereotypes then create a symbolic violence that in this case is transformed into physical violence against the pachucada. Hall explains that "stereotyping reduces, essentializes, naturalizes and fixes 'difference . . .' [It] is part of the maintenance of social and symbolic order . . . [It] tends to occur where there are gross inequalities of power. Power is usually directed against the subordinate or excluded in the group." This is specifically applicable to pachucas and pachucos and other zoot-suiters across the United States during the various race riots of the 1940s.

Hall establishes the theory regarding the power of representation to create negative images in order for the state to exercise its repressive power on those who are marginalized. Regarding popular culture, George Lipsitz in-
dicates the power it may have given: "At a time when . . . capital and repressive state apparatuses hold the upper hand everywhere, cultural production plays a vital role in nurturing and sustaining self-activity on the part of aggrieved peoples. But it also serves as a concrete social site, a place where social relations are constructed and enacted as well as envisioned. Popular culture does not just reflect reality, it helps constitute it." That is to say that popular culture can constitute a different and empowering reality for a marginalized group. Therefore the pachucada can be seen as a positive element that has the possibility of creating a disruption in the dominant culture in order to create a "new reality." To understand pachucas and pachucos as well as their cultural representations, it is critical to first establish the social-historical context of their time.

**MEXICAN AND CHICANA AND CHICANO YOUTH CULTURE**

The decade of the 1940s is marked by U.S. participation in World War II, beginning in December 1941, which becomes a key factor in understanding the reality of the Mexican and Chicana/o communities in the United States. David G. Gutiérrez indicates that the war marks a critical historical change in these communities' participation, or lack thereof, in cultural, social, and political life in the United States, given the decision to contract hundreds of thousands of Mexican workers as cheap labor in order to cover the demand due to the war. The U.S. Congress passed the Bracero Program, or the Emergency Farm Labor Program, a government-to-government agreement that took effect in 1942. This program sanctioned these labor migrations, which complicated the social and economic reality for the communities of Mexican descent living in both countries but especially in the U.S. southwestern states. Gutiérrez states that according to political leaders of Mexican descent, some of the recurring problems these communities faced during the first few decades of the twentieth century were caused by a number of migration waves of Mexican workers; the assumption was that these new immigrants impeded the adaptation or assimilation into U.S. society by staying within their own communities, maintaining their language and culture separate from mainstream society. Many of them, although in the country for only a few months at a time, would move into neighborhoods where Mexican Americans lived. Some Euro-American and Mexican American community leaders posited the idea that with the country at war it was imperative to be ultrapatriotic, especially as members of an ethnic minority.

During this time, according to Gutiérrez, these communities had what
is called the "second-generation problem . . . intergenerational tensions stemmed from a range of sources, including language differences, disputes over diet in the home, outright rejection of parental authority, and at the extreme, juvenile delinquency and crime among U.S.-born Mexican American youth." Chicana and Chicano youth did not identify as much with their parents' Mexican culture and did not feel fully accepted into U.S. mainstream culture either. This state of disidentification with both cultures was considered a grave and potentially dangerous problem that could affect everyone, not just those of Mexican descent. Thanks to the sensationalist press in Los Angeles (and other cities), Mexican youngsters were stereotyped as dangerous and antipatriotic members of a pachuco "gang culture." This critique of the Mexican American communities, its youth, and its problems with adapting insinuated that these were internal factors created by the group itself, not by the dominant society. However, it is important to remember that there were external factors that affected this group, such as racism, racial segregation, dual-wage labor systems, and social, economic, and educational discrimination, among other issues.

Carey McWilliams in North from Mexico (1948) offers a different view of Mexican American youth during the time. He indicates that by March 1942 the Japanese American population had been sent to detainment camps, a fact that did not solve the country's issue of finding the internal enemy during the war. Therefore, it was necessary to find another ethnic group that would serve as a scapegoat. A few days after the last Japanese family was interned, the Southern California press began to fabricate the first images of Mexican Americans as a criminal element. In Los Angeles, this decade was characterized by a series of racist and violent acts against Mexicans Americans along with other ethnic-minority groups. During the first years, the victims were youth between the ages of thirteen and twenty-three who were identified as "pachucos" or "zoot-suiters." But how does the pachucada become such a dramatic element in popular culture at the national and international levels? Two key historical events situate the pachucadas and the pachucos as violent and rebellious figures within, but not exclusive to, the Anglo/Euro-American imaginary. The first is the Sleepy Lagoon case (August 1942), and the second is the zoot-suit race riots.

During the Sleepy Lagoon case twenty-two young Mexican Americans were arrested for allegedly killing a young man, José Díaz. All of them, according to the authorities, were members of the 38th Street Gang. At the end of the trial, seventeen young men were sentenced to time in jail, and this case became the largest en masse trial in Los Angeles County as well as a clear public example of racism against Mexicans. McWilliams states that
at the end of the trial the community formed the Sleepy Lagoon Defense Committee, which collected funds to free the young men who were wrongly accused of a crime they did not commit.43 These young men were victims of a sensationalist press in the city of Los Angeles that considered them guilty because of their ethnicity and because they wore zoot suits.44

It is important to highlight that before the Los Angeles newspapers’ stories appeared, several social science studies conducted and published during this decade described people of Mexican descent in a pathological manner. McWilliams states that “the [social] data [gathered during this period allegedly] ‘proved’ that Mexicans lacked leadership, discipline, and organization; that they segregated themselves; that they were lacking in thrift and enterprise and so forth.”45 This interpretation served as “evidence” to determine Mexicans’ character. These publications also focused on Mexican children, stating that “a mountainous collection of master’s theses ‘proved’ conclusively that Spanish-speaking children were ‘retarded’ because, on the intelligence tests, they did not measure up to the intellectual caliber of Anglo-American students.”46 It is necessary to remember that such intelligence exams were not available in Spanish, and therefore it was difficult for the students to obtain high marks on them, unlike their Anglo counterparts, whose primary language was English. Alice McGrath wrote a newspaper article entitled “Lupe Doesn’t Go to School,”47 in which she holds the racist educational system responsible because it did not understand or respect this student’s Mexican culture, with the result that Lupe dropped out of school in the tenth grade.48

These negative stereotypes were consistently deployed during that time, even in official government documents. McWilliams tells us that according to social science studies, “the Mexican was ‘lawless’ and ‘violent’ because he had Indian blood; he was ‘shiftless and improvident’ because such was his nature; his excellence as a stoop-laborer consisted precisely in the fact that he did not aspire to landownership. Point by point, [these] cultural traits reinforced the earlier stereotype of ‘the Mexican.’”49 These racist views were also applied to young people indiscriminately.

At the center of these racist stereotypes was not only these youngsters’ ethnicity but also their working-class background. McWilliams points out that “if you were born of Mexican parents financially unable to move out of certain specific slum areas, you could be a gangster from birth without having to go to all the trouble of committing a crime. For Los Angeles had revised the old saying that ‘boys will be boys’ to read ‘boys, if Mexican, will be gangsters.’”50 This stereotype of young Mexican people as delinquents and gangsters automatically was used against the defendants throughout the
entire Sleepy Lagoon case. The accused were not allowed to bathe, change clothing, or get haircuts because the court forbid them to do so; for several weeks, they looked like homeless delinquents and derelicts to everyone in court.

After the Sleepy Lagoon case the court commissioned Police Captain E. Durán Ayres (who was a half Mexican, half Anglo) to write a report on the facts and to explain the causes of these youngsters’ “delinquent behavior.” The report established:

The Caucasian . . . when engaged in fighting, particularly among youths, resorts to fisticuffs and may at times kick each other . . . but this Mexican element considers all that to be a sign of weakness, and all he knows and feels is a desire to use a knife or some lethal weapon. [H]is desire is to kill or at least let blood. [A]dded to this inborn characteristic that has come down through the ages, the use of liquor, then we certainly have crimes of violence.  

The Captain’s racial attitudes are evident in this report, as according to him, the pachucos have a tendency toward violence, which is hereditary due to their Mexican/indigenous past. Aside from providing this information as “facts,” he adds the topic of alcohol and so enhances his “findings.” This report demonstrates the racist sentiments against Mexicans prevalent in the dominant society and reflected in its repressive and ideological apparatuses, including the press and the police.

The Los Angeles courts criminalized Mexican youth. After the case was appealed, the Sleepy Lagoon Defense Committee requested that the office of the city coordinator demand that the press cease instigating violence with racist articles about Mexican communities. Later the two parties agreed that the press would no longer employ the word “Mexican” in stories about crime; but, as McWilliams indicates, the press immediately found other loaded words with which to replace it: “zoot-suiter” and/or “pachuco.” Thus, the press continued to criminalize Mexican youth. These same words were used every time the police arrested a young Chicano or Mexican, no matter the degree of gravity of the crime. He was photographed and labeled with a phrase that read “Pachuco Gangster” or “Zoot-suit Hoodlum,” whether the young man was a pachuco or not.

McWilliams clarifies that it was difficult for young people to purchase the zoot suits and that those who were able to do so were a counted few. Instead, there were several variations of the “suit”: “For the boys, peg-topped pants with pleats, high waists up under the armpits, the long loose-backed coat, thick-soled [shoes], and the duck-tailed haircut; for the girls, black
huaraches, short black skirt, long black stockings, sweater, and high pompadour. The length of the coat and the width of the shoulders became . . . a mark of prestige." Several ethnic minorities including African Americans, Filipinos, and Mexicans/Chicanas/os used this suit as a symbol of rebelliousness against the dominant society and as a sign of pride, not as a "badge of crime," as the press called it.

McWilliams argues that for young people of Mexican descent, "[zoot suits] are often used as a badge of defiance by the rejected against the world and, at the same time, as a symbol of belonging to the inner group. It is at once a sign of rebellion and a mark of belonging. It carries prestige." This rebelliousness and the prestige that accompanied it were demonstrated only during special occasions because, according to McWilliams, the suit was designed for a specific activity: "a style of dancing which means disaster to the average suit. The trouser cuffs are tight around the ankles in order not to catch on the heels of the boy's quick moving feet. The shoulders of the coat are wide, giving plenty of room for strenuous arm movements; and the shoes are heavy, serving to anchor the boy to the dance floor as he spins his partner around." For these youngsters, this type of music and dancing required strenuous physical movements that could not be accomplished with other types of clothing. This indicates that the suits could not be worn every day but rather for weekends and special occasions such as dances and parties and that these youngsters could appear as "delinquents and hoodlums" only a few times a month.

Robin D. G. Kelley dedicates a chapter of *Race Rebels* to Malcom X and his relationship to zoot-suit culture. Kelley also indicates that it was important for zoot-suiters—African Americans, Chicanos, and Filipinos—to wear the suit not only just to wear it but to state a specific type of rebelliousness: "The zoot suiters and hipsters who sought alternatives to wage work and found pleasure in new music, clothes and dance styles of the period were 'race rebels' of sorts, challenging middle-class ethics and expectations, carving out a distinct generational and ethnic identity and refusing to be good proletarians." Inevitably, their rebellious stance against dominant society's expectations only helped in their criminalization.

Kelley also argues that "for many working-class men and women who daily endured back-breaking wage work, low income, long hours, and pervasive racism . . . urban dance halls were places to recuperate, to take back their bodies." Kelley's notion of "taking back their bodies" is especially applicable to youth of Mexican descent who do physically demanding jobs during the week and look to escape that during the weekend. Macias concurs with Kelley that the youth who frequented the dance halls could sup-
port each other and manage to forget, although only for a short moment, the racism against them and the exploitative labor they faced each day. He also debates the notion that dancing is central to the working-class Mexican American community because, as Rosa Linda Fregoso likewise indicates, it contains ritualistic properties that help to nurture and maintain the culture. This, according to Macías, is contrasted with Anglo notions of dancing only “as an end in itself [since] Mexican Americans appreciate the need for ‘pleasure, joy, and excitement’ in life.” However, although this idea of music and dancing as central aspects of Mexican culture is interesting, it is still an essentialist notion. According to Macías, “The musical subcultures in which drapes [zoot suits] flourished rejected the values of the work world for those of the dance hall, and when black and brown zoot suiters dressed up they were escaping the degradation of work and collapsing status distinctions between themselves and their oppressors.” The pachucas and pachucos attempted to forget about society’s demands on them and their bodies and to fuse social class distinctions by wearing expensive suits, or parts of them, and showing off. Of course, this was only an illusion because after the dance or diversion was over, they still had to face their harsh reality of not belonging to the nation because of their racial and ethnic backgrounds.

The pachucada’s rebelliousness in clothing and hairstyles was constructed as antipatriotic. Kelley argues that by March 1942 the zoot suit had officially become a symbol against the war and the nation and that the War Production Board had prohibited its production, sale, and wearing because of the great amount of clothing material used to make one. Therefore, Kelley continues, “wearing the suit (which had to be purchased through informal networks) was seen by white servicemen as a pernicious act of anti-Americanism.” Some of these Anglo servicemen attacked Mexican youth, whom they considered traitors to the war effort and the nation.

The press, through its slew of racist articles against Mexican youth, participated in instigating what were later called “the zoot-suit race riots.” The Sleepy Lagoon Defense Committee had requested earlier that the newspapers stop using the word “Mexican” in articles associated with crime because it predicted that they would create public disturbances by instigating racist attitudes against Mexican Americans. The press ignored the committee’s request and instead detailed violent events before they happened: “[T]he press now whipped public opinion into a frenzy by dire warnings that Mexican zoot-suiters planned mass retaliations [for the previous attacks by servicemen against them]. To insure a riot, the precise street corners were named at which retaliatory action was expected and the time of the anticipated action was carefully specified.”
The press prepared the field for violent actions that became a full-fledged riot, but what it failed to report was that police officers were in charge of protecting the assailants, the majority of whom were Anglos, and punishing the victims, who were mostly of Mexican descent. McWilliams writes that none of the English-language papers reported that Mexican youth were resisting the attacks. McWilliams's intentions in defending the Mexican community are sincere; however, it is important to note that he victimizes these youngsters because he fails to offer examples of resistance to the violence, as do some of the articles published in alternative newspapers such as the Chicago Defender and the California Eagle during the riots. In brief, young people of Mexican descent neither instigated nor continued the fights, and instead of being protected by the police, "twenty-seven Mexican boys, gathered on a street corner, were arrested and jailed that evening [June 5]."  

The arrests of youth continued throughout the riots for several days, and although the police arrested a few Anglo soldiers, they were released without being charged.

The policemen's participation in the riots is also well documented, particularly in Spanish-language newspapers, including La Opinión of Los Angeles:

[I]t was due to the steps taken by the [Mexican] Consulate that police intervention [in the riots] began because by the time the crowd approached the corner of First and Rowan in Belvedere, the [police] agents had become mere spectators and as a curious detail, it bears mentioning the fact that there was an LAPD car, like a caboose or for rear protection, behind the row of vehicles that transported the sailors [who were the assailants].

Although this Spanish-language paper did not necessarily publish the same inflammatory and sensationalist headlines as its English-language counterparts, it still reported the facts in a biased and conservative manner. McGrath comments that at the beginning La Opinión "was more or less supporting the idea that these were bad boys and it would be good for the community if they were identified and punished." That is, in almost all the articles related to this topic during that week, the pachucada was held responsible for the riots. Nevertheless, in a liberal gesture, La Opinión published the telegram that Eduardo Quevedo, the president of the Coordinating Council on Latin-American Youth, sent to Washington, D.C., in which he criticized the press for its inflammatory articles: "Supposedly such attacks [on Mexican youth] are a reprisal for what some navy men have gone through [at the hands of pachucos], which has been exaggerated by the local
press as examples of Mexican youth's lack of respect for the Armed Forces, [which] in fact has no grounds." Quevedo is aware of the participation of the press in fabricating these "facts." However, he was not the only one who criticized the press for its actions; the mayor of Los Angeles, Fletcher Brown, did something similar: "[T]he mayor, upon admitting that the situation was very serious, criticized the American newspapers that, according to him, have been using sensationalist language when writing about the recent riots." Quevedo also states that "this situation is provoking racial antagonism . . . [Therefore] we beg for an immediate response from the Office of War Information to moderate the attitude of the local press that openly has approved these riots and it is dealing with this matter in a decidedly inflammatory manner." For public figures like Quevedo it was important to identify the negative participation of the press in instigating the riots.

However, the press, along with city officials, denied that the riots were racially instigated: "Our records indicate that the riots between pachucos and navy men in the last few days are not due to racial or religious differences," stated Sheriff Eugenio Biscailuz in reference to the issue of racial discrimination. Instead of taking into account the racism of the riots, the press (published in both languages) participated in creating a falsehood that Mexican American youth were being supported by Nazi forces. La Opinión stated that "John Upton Terrel from the local Daily News [said] the encouragement of these quarrels between pachucos and Navy men is due to the Nazi agents that, he asserts, exist in our locality." Terrel's words fed the hysteria.

But even as the Anglo press, the Los Angeles Police Department, and members of the armed forces denied that the riots were racially motivated, Eleanor Roosevelt, the First Lady, took issue with the reports:

[S]he referred to the Pachuco problems in a press conference . . . and stated that [the cause] was not limited to more or less exotic suits, but rather that this is rooted in the discrimination that has been present against Mexicans, not only in California, but in other states along the Mexico-U.S. border. [She also stated] that this discrimination against Mexicans has been one of her main concerns and that this should be nipped in the bud.

Even though the First Lady publicly acknowledged that there was a racist element in the riots, the police, the armed forces, and the press did not acknowledge the truth in Roosevelt's observation until several years later.

Young Chicano men were victims of racism in a public setting and were not wanted in their city; however, the press constantly welcomed and praised another group of Mexicans, the braceros, who supplied the cheap labor var-
ious industries desperately needed during wartime. An article in *La Opinión* during the week preceding the riots had a headline that read, “Elogio a braceros mexicanos” (Praise for Mexican Braceros), and two other headings stated, “Mexico has sent 26,000 workers to the U.S.” and “Pachucos called to declare.”

In other words, the dominant society made a clear distinction between the “good” and the “bad” Mexicans. The first were a foreign element who had very limited rights, came from Mexico temporarily to help the United States economically during the war, and were to return to their country immediately after. Pachucas and pachucos, on the other hand, were native-born; the country could not get rid of them legally unless they were put in prison or jail for their allegedly criminal activities. The bracero was a desirable Mexican, and exploiting him was easy; and although the pachucas and pachucos also worked under exploitative conditions, the fact that they were citizens made them an internal enemy that was difficult to annihilate.

Discrimination against the pachucada had local, national, and international implications. Because Mexico and the United States had a binational agreement that regulated bracero employment, the former could offer some protection to people of Mexican descent who were victims of such racism. El Comité Mexicano Contra el Racismo (Mexican Committee against Racism) was established in Mexico City and sent a letter thanking the Sleepy Lagoon Committee at the end of the trial: “On behalf of the committee . . . once again, I congratulate you and all the people who, with their noble work, were able to free and vindicate the 21 Mexican American young men who were victims of the anti-Mexican, racist beliefs in California.”

According to the journal *Somos Uno*, in Mexico, youth associated with the pachuca and pachuco culture were called “tarzanes” because their long hairstyle was associated with the character Tarzan in the films of the time. Because of their clothing and language they were also called “pachucos” and “tirilones.” However, a distinction must be made between the terms as used in Mexico: the “tarzanes” were specifically depicted as the criminal element in many cultural productions of the time, while the “pachucos” or “tirilones,” given Valdés’s influence, were not seen as delinquents but were not necessarily welcomed into Mexican culture, either.

*Somos Uno* points out that Mexico, during the war and given the Good Neighbor program, which created an economic and political alliance with the United States, slowly started accepting its neighbor’s cultural influences that were especially disseminated through films from Hollywood. The linguistic influence could be easily recognized in the importation of words like “oquey” (OK) and “parquiar” (to park); and the nightclubs started to change their names to imitate the great jazz clubs in Los Angeles.
Eduardo Obregón Pagan specifies that during the summer of 1943 in Mexico City there was a student protest organized against U.S. racism toward Mexicans. The participants protested against U.S.-owned businesses. Sanborns, a major restaurant and pharmacy interest, was one of the most affected. As a result of protests the participants created the Comité de Defensa de los Mexicanos de Afuera (Committee in Defense of Mexicans Abroad), which continued to protest Anglo racism and the lack of involvement by the Mexican government in the matter.84

PACHUCADA SPEECH: CALÓ OR TOTACHA

In regard to the language of the pachucada and the way it traveled across the border states, Barker notes that “the pachucos from El Paso used the Southern Pacific railroad to go to other Southwestern cities. The railroads became carriers of the pachuco style and speech, and main railroad towns in the Southwest became sub centers for pachuco activity.”85 This same critic cites the Tucson native singer Lalo Guerrero as one of his main informants who heard Caló for the first time in his own city, in 1933. At that time Guerrero started working in a bakery owned by young people from El Paso; he and other youngsters from the barrios learned to speak Caló by listening to them.86 Later on, Guerrero himself produced music about the pachucada; subsequently, his lyrics in Caló were imitated by the next generation of young people. José Montoya, in turn, cited Germán Valdés’s films along with Guerrero’s records as cultural productions in which Chicano youth like him could hear Caló.87

Literary critic Rosaura Sánchez agrees that a resurgence of studies about the pachucas/os and their language that came on the heels of the production of Zoot Suit, the play, in 1979 helped to create a myth.88 In defining this linguistic code Sánchez states: “Caló as an urban code is a synthesis of the different varieties spoken by Chicanos in the Southwest, for it incorporates standard Spanish, popular Spanish varieties, loanwords from English, and even code-switching. It is primarily characterized by its penchant for innovativeness in its expansion of the lexicon to produce an argot, the slang of young Chicanos, primarily male.”89 Sánchez further states that “the uniqueness of the Caló variety lies in the quantity, in the number of colorful expressions, combined with Caló lexical items . . . Caló is not a secret language. As an intra-group sub code, it is an element in group solidarity, whether it forms part of the verbal interaction of gangs or of youth in general.”90

Pachucada counterculture was heavily influenced by African American zoot-suiters who migrated from the East Coast and who also had their own
way of speaking, which they called “jive.” Mainstream culture associated Caló and jive with drugs and alcohol. Milt Mezzrow offers the following explanation about the African American zoot-suiters’ language: “This jive is a private affair, a secret inner-circle code cooked up partly to mystify the outsiders, while it brings those in the know closer together, because they alone have the key to the puzzle. The hipster’s lingo is a private kind of folk poetry, meant for the ears of brethren alone.” This idea of the secrecy of language is true for other zoot-suiters’ groups. A 1944 *Esquire* magazine article states that “jive has etymology, formal rules, a constantly expanded vocabulary currently estimated at over a thousand words, and an infinite number of phrase combinations . . . [Y]ou can’t understand the people who use it . . . [I]t is the Negro’s defense mechanism.” These groups use such linguistic codes as part of their own identity and against the system that discriminates against them. It is important to note that a version of Caló traveled across the border into Mexico, where it was referred to as “totacha.” Valdés, as a famous pachuco comedian, becomes one of the main speakers of this code.

**THE MEXICAN PACHUCO IN FILM: *El hijo desobediente***

Germán Genaro Cipriano Valdés del Castillo was born on September 19, 1915, in Mexico City; at the age of twelve, his father’s new job as a customs officer moved the entire family to the Ciudad Juárez–El Paso border. Valdés graduated from junior high school, and some of his first jobs were as a busboy, as an errand boy, and at a radio station sweeping and sticking labels on acetate records. When he was working as a sweeper at the XEJ radio station in Juárez, someone asked him to try out a microphone to see if it was working properly. Instead of doing a regular microphone check, he decided to imitate Agustín Lara, one of the most famous singers of the time. The owner of the radio station at first was upset when he heard the song because he thought that someone had put on an actual Lara record, but once he discovered it was Valdés’s impersonation he was very impressed and decided to offer him a contract as a comedian for a new radio show. One of Valdés’s first acts was to parody Lara’s music by transforming the sad or romantic lyrics into funny ones; one of his artistic names was Tin Tin Larará, which was also a parody of the singer’s last name.

Valdés’s career in radio was very successful, but instead of only imitating famous voices, he decided to create his own original characters. In 1938 he created his most famous character, the pachuco, and his artistic name, Topillo Tapas, was given to him by Pedro Meneses, the owner of the radio.
WILD TONGUES

station. Meneses tells the following story: “I bought him one of those suits that blacks in Chicago call [a] Zoot Suit . . . an absurd attire where everything is enormously big and long; the jacket, the pants, the tie, the hat with an enormous feather, the shoes, and a chain that forms a very wide angle on the right side of the pants.”

In his first film, Tin Tan the character wears a lapel pin in the shape of a minstrel’s head. This racist, thoughtless statement could be the comedian’s version of his homage to African American culture. Monsiváis (1992) states that Valdés based his character of the pachuco on Cab Callaway’s in the film Stormy Weather. Photographs of Valdés’s first costumes depict more a character from a carpa than a stylized pachuco because his first costume was caricaturesque and exaggerated.

The Juárez radio station also had a small theater frequented by comedians on tour. At one point a Mexican traveling company owned by Jorge Maulmer and his half-brother Edmundo Hernández Gijón (better known as Paco Miller) invited Valdés to substitute for a comedian who was arrested for marijuana possession. Valdés’s act with this company was so successful that they asked him to stay for the rest of the touring season through U.S. cities including San Francisco and Los Angeles. The company traveled along the U.S. and Mexican Pacific coast all the way to Mexico City. Once in their final destination, Valdés found that there was another comedian with the name of Topillo in Mexico City and had to change his. He describes the experience in the following way: “When I became a comedian my name was not Tin Tan but rather Topillo Tapas. In that same year, 1943, I was touring through Mexico with the impresario Jorge Maulmer . . . [who] told me . . . don’t worry about the name. I am going to think of one that sounds good. I’ll surprise you [with it] in Aguascalientes.”

Maulmer was playing with the phrase “sounds good” in Spanish because the new artistic name he thought of, Tin Tan, was supposed to imitate the sound of a bell. Valdés describes his surprise and disappointment: “When I saw [my] new name on the poster I almost fell over. I did not like it at all. The worst thing was when my colleagues laughed so hard at me. Tin Tan! Even the bells seemed horrible to me when they reminded me [of it].”

After his time in various theaters throughout Mexico City, Valdés was invited to participate in a short film entitled He Who Eats It Pays for It (1943), and later that same year he had a small role in his first feature film, entitled Hotel de verano (Summer Hotel); this is how he began his career as a film actor.

Since Valdés had lived in Ciudad Juárez most of his life, he spoke English well, and when he was first developing his pachuco character for the radio station he used Caló and some phrases in English that are also heard in his films. Aurelio De los Reyes comments on Valdés’s use of language:
The forties announced and denounced another phenomenon, pochismo, the crossing, the transition of the relatively weak Frenchisms to the vigorous anglicization of customs. Tin Tan was the first great representative of Spanglish, a language that, like the Franglais in Paris, has gained much use currently. *What sumara con la daga. Run pa’cá. Run pa’llá* [What’s up with the sword? Run here. Run there]. Spanglish found in Tin Tan the perfect spokesman and took advantage of his origins (the terrible barrio of Los Titeres [Puppets] in Juárez) and his attire (that of the total pachuco), to give more consistency to its activity. 

De los Reyes also states that Valdés, through his character of Tin Tan, exemplified and made available this new linguistic phenomenon in all of Latin America.

According to Max Parra, Valdés “contributed, like few others, some linguistic peculiarities from Chicano culture in the United States that returned and influenced [people] in Mexico.” Parra argues that there are several famous phrases Valdés used that are still in line among rebellious youth in Mexico City; for example: “¿Qué pasó carnal?” (What’s happening, bro?). According to Parra, Valdés’s biggest influence was incorporating his pachuco character and language into Mexican culture. Even today, Valdés’s films continue to be shown on Spanish television channels on both sides of the border; and although his character became less and less pachuco with time, his linguistic code remained almost the same throughout his oeuvre.

The film that best represents Valdés’s pachuco character in its totality is his first full-length comedy, *El hijo desobediente*, directed by Humberto Gómez Landeros. Tin Tan’s straight man is played by his best friend, Marcelo Chávez; the film also includes some of the famous female actors of the time, Cuca Escobar and Marga López. The film, whose title is from a corridor, or ballad, by the same name, details the story of a son who suffers divine punishment for disobeying his father. Valdés’s character, a pachuco from Chihuahua, still lives at home with his parents; they own a ranch and work the land. His father, Rogaciano Rico, is a very serious man who wants his son to grow up and have a decent job. However, the young Tin Tan (Germán Rico) is only interested in acting on stage, playing an instrument, and singing in front of a live audience. The music and misadventures of the protagonist, who is disowned by his father, are the main themes of the film.

The film follows Tin Tan, who has boarded the train without a ticket from Chihuahua to Mexico City, where he intends to become famous. The passengers are the first to disdain the pachuco character, especially because he is traveling without money and has not eaten in several days. At one
point he decides to sit next to an older man who looks to be middle-class and who has just ordered dinner. Tin Tan decides to pretend that he has met this man before and insists on calling him Don Rutilo (the character's name is Modesto Rojas) while he stuffs his face with the chicken that the gentleman was ready to eat. Modesto becomes very angry when he finds out what Tin Tan is doing and asks the train officials to get rid of him. They check his ticket and ask him to get off at the next train station, but before this happens, Tin Tan pretends to be famous and puts a picture of himself in Modesto's jacket pocket. The picture is accidentally exchanged for the one of the millionaire Marcelo Fortuna, who is Modesto's boss. Modesto hopes to use his boss's picture to make a sleazy business deal with Fortuna's family in Mexico City, who live and tend the hostel called La Providencia that is owned by Fortuna. Fortuna's family, however, has not seen Fortuna in many decades and has no idea what he looks like. Modesto, as a butler, decides to betray his boss by showing the family his picture (which is now a picture of Tin Tan) and telling them they have to treat him as well as they can to pass a test that Fortuna has set out for them to decide who will receive an inheritance. The family members—Dadivosa, the mother; Plácido,
the father; Angel, the son; and Cuca, the daughter—are lazy loafers who do not want to work for a living.

A short onomastic study of the characters’ names demonstrates their metaphoric representations. For example: Tin Tan and Marcelo have last names related to money—Rico (Rich) and Fortuna (Fortune), respectively. In the family, the names represent the opposite of their original meaning: the mother (Dadivosa, Generous) is not generous at all; instead she mistreats her maid, Socorro (Succor or Help), by paying her with counterfeit money. The father (Plácido, Placid) is not nice. The son, instead of being an Angel as his name says, is a shameless criminal who has been in jail and tries to kill Tin Tan throughout the film. The daughter, Cuca (nickname for Refugio, Refuge), does not help anyone either; instead, she is the laziest of all and spends her days reading magazines. The family’s last names are Mata and Fortuna, which, when combined, literally mean “Fortune Killer.” Modesto, Marcelo’s butler, is not “Modest” at all, and his last name, Rojas (Red), represents “the red numbers” in his boss’s bank account because of his criminal activities. Finally, the only ones true to their names are Socorro, who helps everyone she can, and Don Rogaciano (from the verb “rogar,” to beg), who at the beginning of the film coaxes his son Tin Tan to get a real job and stop dressing as a pachuco. In this film, then, the roles are inverted in regard to the supposedly upper-middle-class family (who are all crooks) and the pachuco, who is the most intelligent, innocent, and respectable of the characters.

Given the Mata Fortuna family’s laziness, the hostel is almost bankrupt because they run off every guest, even the ones Socorro brings in from the train station every once in a while. When the pictures of Tin Tan and Marcelo are inadvertently exchanged, everyone believes that Tin Tan is the family’s rich relative (especially because of his last name, Rico) who wants to visit without letting them know who he is in order to see how they treat him and if they deserve the money. Tin Tan is not aware of the mistake with the pictures and is surprised by the family’s royal treatment of him, which helps him decide that he will stay in the hostel for some time. At some point Marcelo meets Tin Tan and finds out what is happening. He asks Tin Tan to allow him to pretend to be his butler to catch all the culprits, including Modesto, in the act of stealing his money. After many misadventures, everything comes out in the open and Marcelo informs Modesto that he would have inherited much of the money had he not betrayed him. The family is sent to an insane asylum after losing their senses with Tin Tan’s trickery. Marcelo (who loves music) decides to purchase a theater house where he and Tin Tan, who has taught him how to really live
life, can perform together every night. During opening night, Tin Tan’s father, who has forgiven him by then, decides to go see the show and sits at a table with his son’s girlfriend, Socorro. The film ends on a happily-ever-after note with Tin Tan and Marcelo performing a comedic musical routine that alludes to the fact that the protagonist has become as famous as he aspired to be at the beginning.
During the 1940s, fame in Mexican cinema was mostly based on the success of its actors rather than that of the directors, and Tin Tan along with Cantinflas were two of the most famous and successful comedians. Most films of the era also relied on music and lyrics sung by leading actors rather than on a detailed, clever, or complex story line. In the film analyzed here, the music becomes a key component of its success especially because of the language that Valdés uses. The film’s music establishes a transnational connection between the pachucada in the United States and Mexico. *El hijo desobediente*, which is a film with music but not necessarily a “musical,” opens with Tin Tan pretending to scat to the boogie-style song “El pachuco alegre,” imitating African American jazz singers. A version of this song was included on the compact disk entitled *Pachuco Boogie: The Original Historic Recording* produced by Arhoolie Records. The CD states that this song was recorded by the Yáñez Brothers and Pedro Ayala from Mission, Texas, circa 1949.

Todo pachuco es cosa sin igual,  
Pero que nunca deveras camellan,  
Y que las jainas deveras los siguen  
Para que se sientan medio “fine” Para bailar  
Toda carnala que quiera ser feliz  
Con su pachuco, que tenga su veliz  
Vaya escuchando, y arregle su veliz  
Luego camellan para mantener al infeliz  
Oh mama yo quiero casarme  
Con una rucaila que sepa planchar

All the pachucos are a strange sight,  
They never really do any work  
But the girls really go for them,  
so they can have a good time dancing.  
Any sista who wants to be happy  
With her pachuco, should get her suitcase,  
Listen now, pack her suitcase  
And go out and work to support the bum.  
Oh mama I want to marry  
a woman who knows how to iron.

The main topic of this song is a negative view of the pachuco who depends on women to survive. Tin Tan does not sing the lyrics in the opening scene, however; he only scats to the chorus. According to Monsiváis,
this song was originally written and performed by Valdés and Chávez, which contradicts the information provided about it in *Pachuco Boogie*. Since this disparity had not been pointed out before, it is really not known who is the author of the song. Nevertheless, this is not as important as the fact that this song traveled transnationally back and forth across the border, providing a perfect example of the reciprocal cultural influences of the times.

In another scene Tin Tan and Marcelo (who at this point is still pretending to be his butler, Pascual) go out drinking at a bar. Once they are drunk Marcelo asks Tin Tan to sing a song with a mariachi. When Tin Tan asks him which song he wants, Marcelo replies: “Cántame el hijo desobediente” (Sing me the ballad of the disobedient son). As stated above, this is a Mexican corrido that was also published in a pachuco version that includes Caló. Tin Tan decides to sing this version, creating another transnational connection to Chicana and Chicano culture. In other words, Tin Tan, by having lived on the Chihuahua/Texas border and having traveled to California, is the cultural agent who travels with these songs across the border. He takes a song from one cultural context (Chicana and Chicano) and reinscribes it into a Mexican context and vice versa.

Un domingo estando herrando,
Se encontraron dos mancebos,
Echando mano a sus fierros
Como queriendo pelear.
Cuando se estaban peleando,
Pues, llegó el padre de uno,
“Hijo de mi corazón
Ya no peleen con ninguno.”
Quítense de aquí, mi padre!
Que estoy más bravo que un león
No vaya a sacar mi espada
Y le traspase el corazón.
Hijo de mi corazón,
Por lo que acabas de hablar,
Antes de que raye el sol,
La vida te han de quitar.
Lo que le encargo a mi padre
Que no me entierres en sagrado,
Que me entierres en tierra bruta,
Donde me trille el ganado.
Con una mano de fuera
Y un papel sobre dorado, 
Con un letrero que diga: 
“Felipe fué un desgraciado.”

One Sunday while doing ironwork 
There were two young men 
Who grabbed their iron rods 
As if they wanted to fight [each other]. 
When they were fighting 
The father of one of them arrived 
My dear son 
Don't fight with anyone. 
Get away, father! 
Because I am angrier than a lion 
I might take out my sword 
And pierce your heart [with it] 
My dear son 
Because of the way you speak [to me] 
Before the sun comes out 
Someone will take your life 
What I ask of you father 
Is not to bury me in sacred land 
Bury me in unholy land 
Where cattle can trample me. 
With a hand sticking out 
And written on golden paper 
A sign that says: 
Felipe was a wretch.

A PACHUCO VERSION, IN SPANISH, OF EL HIJO DESOBEDIENTE

Un domingo entrando a lunes 
Se encontraron dos pachucos 
Metiendo mano a sus filas [navajas] 
Como queriendo forjar [pelear] 
Cuando se estaban forjando, 
Pues llegó el jefe [padre] de uno, 
“Hijo de mi corazón 
Ya no pelees con ninguno.” 
“Quitese de aquí, mi jefe 
Que estoy más bravo que burro
No vaya sacar la fila
Y le trapase el menudo [tripas]."
"Hijo de mi corazón
Por lo que acabas de hablar
Antes de que raye el sol
La vida te han de quitar."
"Lo que le encargo a mi jefe
Que no me entierre en Califas
Que me entierre en Arizona
Con tres costales de grifa [droga]."
"Con una vaisa [mano] de fuera
Y un picotazo en el brazo
Yo ya no quiero morfina,
Ahora quiero cosa fina."117

A PACHUCO VERSION, IN ENGLISH, OF "EL HIJO DESOBEDIENTE"

Late one Sunday, almost a Monday
Two pachucos met up
Grabbing their fileros (knives)
As if they wanted to fight
When they were fighting
The old man of one of them arrived
"My dear son
Don't fight with anyone."
"Get away old man!
'Cause I am more angry than an ass
I might take out my filero (knife)
And pierce your belly [with it]"
"My dear son
Because of the way you speak [to me]
Before the sun comes out
They'll have to take your life."
"What I ask of you old man
Is not to bury me in Califas
Bury me in Arizona
With three sacks of pot [drugs]."
"With a hand sticking out
And a prick on my arm
I don't want morphine
Now I want a finer thing [cocaine]."
In the film Tin Tan sings the last eight lines of the pachuco version of the song that refer to drugs like marijuana, morphine, and cocaine. Aside from the references in this version, another difference from the original is the carnivalesque language used in speaking about the belly or intestines rather than the heart. In this scene, Tin Tan and Marcelo stay in the bar until the latter refuses to pay, and both are taken to the police station along with the mariachis. There Tin Tan retells the story to the judge through songs utilizing Caló and gets in trouble when he uses words like “carnal” (brother) to refer to him. Carlos Blanco-Aguinaga, who saw Valdés as Tin Tan when the comic was just starting his career in the carpas in Mexico City, indicates the following about this character and his use of language:

[We were used to seeing] Palillo, Mantequilla, Schillinski, and in film, because movie houses were already there, Cantinflas . . . and this guy [Tin Tan] arrives dressed with a coat and tie . . . as a pachuco, and he has a hat with a feather, and his friend Marcelo was also dressed up. And they were also pochos, which was worst of all. To be pocho in Mexico at that time, imagine what it was like. Our reaction was a bit ambiguous. We liked him but he was a pocho, and that was not good. But his use of language, we young people liked that.118

In the film, the judge cites Tin Tan for making fun of him and states that he owes “fifty pesos as an infraction for not speaking the official language.” In the film, the entire issue with Tin Tan as a pachuco is the purity of Castilian Spanish and the fact that this character is violating those linguistic rules; therefore speaking in Caló becomes “criminalized.”

This topic of language and legal problems for using Caló is also in a song written and performed by Lalo Guerrero in which the Mexican and Chicano versions of a pachuco meet in Juárez. Guerrero was one of the first Chicanos to write songs regarding the pachucada. He indicates that at first it was simply to mock the pachucos in music. So he studied Caló and their way of speaking when he was growing up in Tucson, Arizona. His first two songs were “La pachuquilla” (The Little Pachuca) and “El pachuco.” They were such hits that his recording company asked him to write more. Young Mexican people on both sides of the border used to listen to his songs by standing around the jukeboxes for hours at a time in order to memorize the dialogues in Caló. Guerrero later wrote “El pachuco y el tarzán,” “Los dos carnales” (The Two Pachucos), “El pachuco guinao” (The drunken pachuco), “La boda de los pachucos” (The Pachuco Wedding), and other songs with El Trío Imperial. While all of these initial songs were with a guitar trio,
later he also wrote the songs, performed with a band, that were included in *Zoot Suit*. The song entitled “El pachuco y el tarzán” is from 1947.

En Ciudad Juárez, Chihuahua
Frontera de El Paso, Tejas,
Se encontraron dos carnales
Encerrados tras las rejas.
El primero era tarzán
De la Capital venía,
El segundo era pachuco
De California salía.
El tarzán le preguntó:
—¿De’onde viene usted carnal?
¿Por qué lo echaron al bote?

Y el pachuco le comienza a platicar:
—Pos ¿sabe qué gai? Yo apané el rufo allá en Los ¿vé? Y me descolgué pa Juarilez ¿sabe? Quedé bute jarioso y me fui a un resta ¿vé? Y me pregunta una ruca que si qué quiero de refi y le digo yo: “Esa, pos tráigame unas de lámina con unos de cemento.” Pos se escamó de a buti la ruca y llamó a la jura pos, me entabicaron.

Entonces el pachuco:
—¿De’onde viene usted camita?
¿Por qué lo echaron al taris?
¿Digame por qué se agüita?
—Yo vengo de bute lejos,
De la mera capirucha,
No le tengo escame a nadie
Pos aquí traigo mi trucha.
Pos verá lo que pasó
Acabado de llegar,
Póngame mucha atención.

Y el tarzán le comienza a platicar:
—Nel, pos ¿sabe carnal? Me fui a una cantina ¿vé? Y bute de volada me sale una guichapa. Me dice que si quiero tomar birria, pos allá en Mexicles la birria se come, ése, no se toma ¿vé? Pos es carne, hombre. Pero como yo no le hago al totacho, pos acá le dicen birria a la cerveza, nel, pos yo no me daba cuenta ¿vé? Pos yo dije: “ésta me quiere vacilar” y me puse muy locote y me serrucharon al taris ¿vé?

En Ciudad Juárez, Chihuahua,
Frontera de El Paso, Tejas,
Se quedaron los carnales
Encerrados con sus quejas.

In Ciudad Juárez, Chihuahua,
The border of El Paso, Texas,
There were two pachuchos
Behind bars
The first one was a tarzán
Coming from Mexico City
The second one was a pachuco
From California.
The tarzán asked him:
"Where do you come from brother?
Why are you in the tank?
And the pachuco begins to talk:
Well, you know what, guy? I hopped on the train in L.A., see? And I took off to Juárez, you know? I was really hungry and stopped at a restaurant, see? And a woman asked me what I wanted to eat so I answered: "Hey, bring me some metal sheets [tortillas] with some concrete mix [beans]" [using Caló terms for each item. Goes to jail for his use of language.] Well the woman was really scared and called the police and well, they threw me in the tank.

Then the pachuco [asks]
Where are you coming from brother?
Why were you thrown in jail?
Tell me why are you so down [sad]?
—I come from very far away
From Mexico City [like the Big Apple]
I am not afraid of anyone
Because I have my knife with me.
Well, you see what happened
As soon as I arrived
Pay attention.
And the tarzán begins to talk:
—No, well you know what brother? I went to a bar, see? And right away a woman came up to me. She asked me if I wanted to drink some “birria,” well in Mexico “birria” is eaten, not drunk, see? because it's a type of meat, man. But since I don't speak the language [from here] well, here, birria is beer; no, well I didn't know, see? So I told her: "hey, you want to trick me?" and I got really crazy and they threw me in jail, see?
In Ciudad Juárez, Chihuahua,  
The border of El Paso, Texas,  
There stayed two pachucos  
Behind bars with their complaints.

The main intention of the song is to make the listeners laugh since these two pachucos (one from California and the other from Mexico City) are in jail because they do not communicate well with the people from El Paso who do not speak Caló, which becomes a criminalized language. Although the song is merely a joke, it is important to highlight that someone like Guerrero makes the transnational connection across the border with these two characters by having them meet in a geographic halfway point like El Paso. This city signifies the linguistic and cultural connection between the two countries, through the pachucos. Guerrero acknowledges the existence of these two figures and makes them “speak” to each other in his song even if it’s because they are in jail. In each song, a woman is depicted as the culprit of the pachucos being in jail when she does not understand either one even though they speak in their own regional Caló version (from Los Angeles and Mexico City). Since the linguistic code for each region is different, each character misses the mark and is misunderstood.

Their crimes are of a linguistic nature as in Tin Tan’s film. The supposed problem of the “corruption of language” by the pachuco was a serious concern at this time in both countries, and these songs address it by giving each pachuco a jail sentence. Monsiváis states that “the classism that pretends [to have] syntactic preoccupations . . . rejects the innovations in the name of purity of language . . . Tin Tan is rejected for attempting to corrupt the immutable speech, property of the elite. Tin Tan is denounced by newspaper writers and linguists.” Such linguistic concerns are addressed in each country, and we shall see a few other examples addressed later.

Lalo Guerrero wrote another song in which he references Tin Tan, entitled “El pachuco.” It is very likely that he watched Tin Tan’s films while growing up in Tucson, Arizona. In this song, Guerrero compares the comedian’s hairstyle to that of the pachuco and describes a pachuco attire:

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Sin quererlo me quedé
Viendo de cabeza a pie
El vestuario que llevaba este individuo
Con sus pantalones guangos
Y apretados al tobillo
Y su saco hasta las corbas le llegó.
Su corbata colorada
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Y su camisa rayada
Sus zapatos que traía
Son tres suelas encimadas
Y traía una melena
Como la que trae Tin Tan [emphasis mine]

Without meaning to there I was
looking up and down
at the attire worn by this individual
With his loose pants
Tightened at the ankles
And his suit jacket was all the way to his knees
His red tie
And striped shirt
The shoes he was wearing
had three soles
And his long hair
Was like the hair Tin Tan wears

Here, Tin Tan's hairstyle is used to describe the hair of the pachucos from the United States as if he had been the originator of the counterculture instead. In an interesting inversion, this Mexican comedian is taken as the prototype of the pachuco even to describe the pachucos he had tried to imitate.

In *El hijo desobediente*, once Tin Tan and Marcelo become famous film stars, as part of their comic routine they sing a few songs that reveal the connection between the pachucada on both sides of the border and even farther into Latin America and Spain. For example, Tin Tan tells his straight man that he is going to sing him a song that is truly “chicanota” (Chicana), and he begins to sing “Allá en el rancho grande.” For the song, which is more associated with Mexico than with Mexicans in the United States, he begins by speaking in English and yelling things like “yippee, yoo-hoo.” Marcelo stops the music and says, “You’re crazy. You’re singin’ a song that is one hundred percent Mexican, and you’re yelling as if it were a ranchera [country song] from the U.S.” Tin Tan replies, “And that’s why you’re upset? Well, ‘El rancho grande’ is famous all over the world, brother. Wherever it goes, its rhythm is adjusted and the yelling [too].” Marcelo dares him to sing the song the way it is supposedly sung in Argentina, and Tin Tan proceeds to sing it like a tango, then like a Cuban mambo, as a Spanish flamenco, and finally he scats, imitating the jazz singers from the United States. In these musical styles, the comedian stereotypes aspects of these
cultures in order to make people laugh. This international musical connection becomes important because, as is discussed later, in the United States pachuca and pachuco counterculture reflects the interests of young people who listened to songs that mixed African American and Afro-Caribbean rhythms like the mambo, guaracha, botecito, and danzón, along with Mexican rhythms like the corrido and the ranchera.\textsuperscript{123} Lalo Guerrero and Don Tosti were two of the most famous singer-songwriters to do this type of rhythm mixing.\textsuperscript{124}

One may infer that through \textit{El hijo desobediente} Valdés is able to present several transnational cultural and linguistic connections between the pachucada in both countries. The main narrative trope in this film is the variety of music presented from beginning to end. Valdés strongly influenced Chicano musicians and artists like Guerrero and Tosti during the 1940s and 1950s, but he also influenced future generations of Chicanos, even today. For instance, José Montoya remembers that in the 1950s his mother used to scold him for dressing like a pachuco; she admonished him that if they lived in Mexico he would not dress in such a manner. But Montoya replied that Mexico had pachucos like Tin Tan who dressed in a similar way.\textsuperscript{125} The United States did not produce films with Mexican or Mexican American pachucos in them like Mexico did during its golden age of Mexican film. Therefore, people of Mexican descent born and living in the United States had Tin Tan's character as a visual and linguistic role model for several decades until \textit{Zoot Suit} arrived on the scene in the 1970s (as a play) and 1980s (as a film). In the past twenty years or so, there has been a resurgence of films and music by Valdés as Tin Tan. Contemporary Mexican and Mexican American generations in both countries continue to enjoy them in DVD format or on Spanish-language television channels. In most Latino barrios in the United States, these films are readily available for purchase.

\section*{PACHUCO YO, ÉSE: LUIS VALDEZ AND HIS TWO \textit{Zoot Suits}}

In a similar manner in which Germán Valdés was a pioneer in presenting cultural productions of the pachucada in Mexico, a few decades later in the United States the Chicano playwright and filmmaker Luis Valdez began to create his own version of pachucas and pachucos. Valdez was born in Delano, California, a rural community known for its agricultural industry. His family members were farmworkers, and he was the second of ten children. Given the constant labor migration for farmworkers, Valdez's education was often interrupted, but from a very early age he was interested in theater and puppetry. After graduating from high school he attended San
Jose State University, where he studied theater. He wrote his first play, *The Shrunken Head of Pancho Villa*, and produced it in 1964. A year later, César Chávez and Dolores Huerta, the leaders of the United Farm Workers Union (UFW), invited Valdez to develop a worker-centered agit prop theater as a vehicle to express the struggles and needs of the workers. Thus, El Teatro Campesino (ETC), the most famous and influential Chicano theater, began in the crucible of farmworkers’ struggle for labor, wages, and human rights.

In 1967 Valdez left the UFW in order to develop his own plays with the more general themes of oppression and racial discrimination against Mexican and Chicana/o communities, be it in the field of education, the armed forces, or labor exploitation in general. Valdez created El Teatro Campesino Inc. and toured the United States, Mexico, and Europe as it created several representations of “actos” (one-act plays), “mitos” (myths), and corridos. Jorge Huerta describes an acto as “improvised scenes that present the realities of the struggle [and] the most expedient form of presenting [the struggle] to the public eye.” About myth he argues that “like the early Biblical dramas [it] mingles realistic characters with allegorical figures. ‘Bernabé’ [the first mito] attempts to reconcile indigenous deities with barrio realities in a form that explores a neo-Maya vision of the Chicano.” According to Huerta, Valdez describes these two terms this way: “the acto ‘is the Chicano through the eyes of man,’ whereas the mito ‘is the Chicano through the eyes of God’ exploring the Chicanos’ roots in Mayan philosophy, science, religion and art.”

Regarding the last term, corrido, Huerta defines it as the theatrical adaptation of classical Mexican ballads in which live music was used to act out the song’s lyrics. This style was especially used in the play *La gran carpa de los rasquachis*, which premiered in 1973. Attesting to the multiple influences on Valdez, Huerta posits that European theater and writers like Bertold Brecht, commedia dell’arte, and agit-prop theater were influences on El Teatro Campesino. However, Yolanda Broyles-González in her acclaimed book, *El Teatro Campesino*, presents a detailed analysis of indigenous and Mexican influences on the ensemble; she privileges the rasquachi style in particular as well as teatro de carpa and the work of Cantinflas. Broyles-González defines the rasquachi aesthetic as “the creation of artistic beauty from the motley assemblage of elements momentarily seized.” She cites Ybarra-Frausto, who includes a “spirit of defiance” in the definition of this term when he indicates that the ‘funky’ milieu of the carpa engendered its pervasive aesthetic, rascuachismo, a way of confronting the world from the perspective of the downtrodden, the rebel, the outsider. To be rascuachi is to possess an ebullient spirit of irreverence and insurgency, a carnivalesque topsy-turvy vision where authority and de-
corum serve as targets for subversion." She also clarifies that, in general, when El Teatro Campesino (ETC) is referenced, the majority of the credit is given to Valdez and not necessarily to the ensemble, which creates a patriarchal, linear, and hierarchical view of the group. Critiquing the theater scholars who are “Valdezcentric,” Broyles-González offers a wider view of the ETC; she details the work of the ensemble as a whole and the contributions to it by women in particular. According to her, the ETC also emphasized the teachings of ancient indigenous cultures in its work. Domingo Martínez Paredes and Andrés Segura, from Mexico, were responsible for teaching the ETC members about Maya and Aztec cultures. This contributed in great part to the construction of the myths that Huerta discusses and to the pivotal idea of In lak'ech (You are my other self) that the Teatro, under the direction of Valdez, adopted and enacted in many of its plays. Much of the ETC’s learning in terms of techniques, topics, and teachings culminated for Valdez in the play that offered him the most individualized attention and fame: Zoot Suit.

Luis Valdez remembers that at some point somebody gave him a copy of Guy Endure’s pamphlet on the Sleepy Lagoon case that sparked his interest. Later on, he spoke with Gordon Davidson and Ken Brecher about writing a play for the Mark Taper Forum’s series New Theater for Now. They accepted Valdez’s idea, and he set about researching the historical materials and court records for the Sleepy Lagoon case and the Zoot Suit Riots. Valdez tells us that the first pachuco who inspired him to research the pachuco counterculture and taught him about the word Chicano was his cousin Billy Durán, a close friend of César Chávez. In their youth, Durán and Chávez dressed like pachucos and spoke Caló.

Creating a pachuco character was nothing new for Valdez, who had participated during his early years with the ETC in creating pachucos for the plays Los vendidos and Bernabé. In the first play, the character Johnny Pachuco is a mannequin for sale at Honest Sancho’s store. This character is imbued with and represents a negative stereotype of urban youth; he “does everything necessary to survive in the city. He steals, carries a knife, dances, resists arrest, and makes an excellent scapegoat. We can lay the blame for all our ills on the pachuco figure and rest assured that it is he who makes it difficult for other, decent Mexican Americans to succeed.” In the documentary The Bronze Screen, Luis Valdez says:

Hollywood deals in stereotypes in every movie that it makes. It is not reality... There’s a concoction that’s dramatized and fictionalized and has to take place within the time space of a two-hour time frame... The im-
age of the gang, I think, has doubled back on itself and it's created more
gangs. What they're projecting is an identity. A lot of the kids that are
in California prisons got their first instruction off the big screen watch-
ing gangs. A lot of the fault for that is directly attributable to this nega-
tive stereotype that continues to be perpetuated for the purpose of mak-
ing money in the movies.142

Although Valdez's criticism of stereotypes is valid, this is precisely what
he does in Zoot Suit when he portrays a group of teenagers as a gang using
extreme violence in the fight scenes that include knives—especially when
this is historically inaccurate. Broyles-González (1994) indicates that the
use of stereotypes was one of the reasons eight of the survivors from the
Sleepy Lagoon case sued Valdez.143 In the film Bernabé, Luna (Moon) is a
male character who dresses like a pachuco and descends from the heavens
to help the protagonist marry his mythological sister, Tierra (Earth), a sol-
dadera, or female revolutionary soldier. Luna and Tierra are the children of
Sol, the Sun. In this play, the pachuco demonstrates his linguistic ability to
speak Caló as well as his male-chauvinist attitude in acting as his sister's
protector, rendering her helpless.144

In terms of technique, in Soldado Razo the allegorical character of Muerte
(Death) is the narrative voice that reminds the audience that whatever they
are watching is only fiction in the form of a play and that the action can be
repeated with a snap of the fingers; such techniques are later used in Zoot
Suit by the character of El Pachuco.145 One characteristic of the pachucos
was that they snapped their fingers throughout the day to the tune of mu-
sic such as rhythm and blues or bebop, whether they were at a dance hall,
listening to the radio, or just standing on a street corner. Valdez's most fa-
mous play, then, brings together everything he had practiced and learned
with the ETC.

In Zoot Suit Valdez combines the two historical events of the Sleepy La-
goon murder case and trial and the Zoot Suit Riots to offer a story about
racism and classism against the communities of Mexican descent in Los
Angeles. He bases his story on the life of Henry Leyvas, one of the young
men from 38th Street wrongfully accused of killing José Díaz.146 The play
condenses the key personality traits of the twenty-two young men into four
male characters: Joey, Smiley, Tommy, and Hank, with the last one serving
as the group leader. Four female characters represent all the women: Bertha
(the whore), Della (the virgin), Dolores (the mother), and Alice (the "white
savior").147 In the 1981 film version of the play, another group of women is
added: the singing trio that alludes to the popular Andrews Sisters of the
1940s, who sang the famous pachuco song “A Zoot Suit (for My Sunday Gal).” These three women are nameless as a group and individually; they only serve as a sexual and musical adornment.

In the film and play, the Los Angeles press is taken to task for instigating such discrimination against and persecution of Mexican communities. In the first version of the play, more so than in the film, stacks of newspapers and newspaper sheets are used to represent seats, the judge’s bench in court, some items in jail, and the clothing that Dolores is hanging out to dry. The play makes the press responsible in this way by using the newspapers as props throughout all domestic and social spheres.\(^4\) Huerta (1992) states that this use of newspapers demonstrate the 1930s “living newspapers” style and that “the giant page backdrop through which El Pachuco cuts his way . . . is an effective metaphor for the all-pervading presence of the press.”\(^1\) Although this does not happen in the film, the same effect is achieved by a new character, a reporter who orders the Navy-men rioters to “kill the pachuco bastard” after ripping off their zoot suits.

The violence against the pachucos is represented not only by the fighting but also by the stripping off of their clothes. Because the pachucada feels especially empowered when wearing these clothes, stripping them becomes a humiliation and an assertion of power by their assailants.\(^1\) Newspaper photographs show pachucos left in their underwear, beaten up and bloody on the sidewalks where the LAPD officers arrested them.\(^1\) If the zoot suit is considered a pachuco’s armor, being stripped of it disempowers, humiliates, dominates him. In 2003, fifty years after the riots, the artist Rubén Ochoa invented a *tachuche* covered with glass to represent the danger to the rioters if they attempted to take it off the wearer. This suit is described as a “glass encrusted zoot suit,” and Ochoa establishes that “the pachoco’s clothes of the 1940s made meaning with their bodies, hateful and desirable . . . [and mine] was the new improved tachuche zoot suit.”\(^1\) In *Zoot Suit*, Valdez chooses two colors, black and red, in dressing his main character, El Pachuco, because he is associated with smoke and mirrors that represent the Aztec god Tezcatlipoca, who, in turn, represents death and birth, knowledge and consciousness.\(^1\) Since El Pachuco represents this indigenous power through his clothing, once he is stripped he is rendered powerless and left in a loin-cloth to represent his indigenous past.\(^1\) However, El Pachuco stands up at the end of the stripping and recedes slowly into a black screen with his arms extended in the form of a cross representing also a mestizo Christ as a potential savior.

The play’s plot is advanced through dance and music because these are supposed to be the preferred activities of the pachucada.\(^1\) Most of the mu-
Music presented in *Zoot Suit* comes from African American jazz performed in big-band style, Mexican music, and the pachuca/o songs by Lalo Guerrero, who in turn represents Afro Caribbean sounds. As in *El hijo desobediente*, music is used to make the transnational cultural connections with other non-Chicana/o cultures in the United States and with Mexican culture across the border. The first song in the play and film is entitled “Perdido,” a jazz song by Duke Ellington and his orchestra that serves to connect the Chicano pachucos with African American zoot-suiters. Then there is a swing entitled “Vamos a bailar” by Lalo Guerrero, which is followed by a mambo and a paso doble. At the Reyna home, the song “Soldado razo” (Buck Private), performed by Pedro Infante, is playing on the radio in the kitchen, and with it the cross-cultural connection is made because the singer and song are Mexican, but it is referring to Hank, a Chicano who is going to war on behalf of the United States. In the boys’ bedroom Rudy, Hank’s brother, is singing the Andrews Sisters’ “A Zoot Suit (for My Sunday Gal)” as he listens to it on the radio. As a joke on Rudy, this song is about dressing really well as a pachuco to go out, but instead Rudy, being the youngest and jobless, does the opposite by borrowing his father’s oversized coat and putting rubber bands around his ankles to imitate the tapered pants.

Once Rudy is dressed he walks into the kitchen and, in Caló, tells his mom, who is making fresh flour tortillas, to give him food: “Órale jefita, uno de lámina con uno de cemento” (Hey, boss woman [give me] a metal sheet with some concrete mix). This is the exact phrase Guerrero used in his song “El pachuco y el tarzán.” Valdez researched Guerrero’s music for his play and film, and this song shows, once again, the transnational Mexican cultural connections made through music. Dolores and Enrique scold Rudy for his use of Caló and begin to discuss the meaning of being Mexican versus being Chicana and Chicano. This scene deals directly with what Gutiérrez argues regarding the problems of generational differences among such families, in this case specifically with respect to language. Finally, Valdez uses an indigenous flute when the pachuco is being stripped in order to connect the pachuco with ancient cultures.

One of the main songs in *Zoot Suit*, “Los chucos suaves,” is by Guerrero y Sus Cinco Lobos (circa 1949):

- Carnal póngase abusado
- Ya los tiempos han cambiado
- Usted está muy agüitado
- y está buti atravesado
- Antes se bailaba swing,
boogie woogie, jitterbug
Pero esto ya torció
Y esto es lo que sucedió:

Los chucos suaves bailan rumba,
Bailan la rumba y le sumban
Bailan guaracha sabrosón,
El botecito y el danzón.
Esa buena jaina pues, vamos a guarachar pues carnala! Nel el swing,
   Nel eso del swing, ya chale ve, por derecho ya chale el swing esa.
   Acá una buena rumba ¿ve? A mover muy de aquellas, acá la buena
cadera ¿ve? Suénale pues . . .
Cada sábado en la noche
Yo me voy a borlotear
Con mi linda pachucona
Las caderas a menear
Ella le hace muy de aquella
Cuando empieza a guarachar
Y al compás de los timbales
Yo me siento petatear

Brother get ready
Times have changed
You're too sad
And very mistaken
Before we danced swing
Boogie woogie, jitterbug
But that's dead now
And this is what happened:
[Now] the cool dudes dance rumba
They dance rumba and have fun
They dance guaracha delightfully
The botecito and the danzón.
Hey girl, let's dance, sister! But not the swing, the swing is no good no
   more, no way. Let's dance a rumba, see? Let's shake it well, our hips,
   see? Let's go then.

Every Saturday night
I go out to party
With my lovely pachucona
To shake our hips
She dances really well
And when she starts to dance
To the rhythm of the timbales
I feel like dying

In this song, the cross-cultural connections that the pachucada has with other Latin American cultures through music are clear. The song indicates times have changed and that African American rhythms, including the “swing, boogie woogie, and jitterbug” are passé, although they are still present in the film.

“Chicaspatas boogie” by Guerrero and his orchestra is another important song in Zoot Suit:

Swing chicaspatas,
Este es mi borlo
Lo bailo en Turlock
Con una chula
Lo bailo en San Jo
Con una güisita a todo tren.
Lo bailan los carnales
Allá en Sacra
También los camaradas
Allá en San Fran
También las chavalonas
En Verdugo
También los pachucones
En El Chuco
Se pone a todo tren
Cuando bailan boogie.
En Arizona, hasta en Pomona
Lo han apañado en Colorado,
En todo Tejas y hasta en
Nuevo México también.
Los vatos en Albuquerque
Se lo avientan
En Fresno y en Stockton
Lo revientan
Lo he visto yo bailar
Hasta en San Tony [San Antonio]
En Houston y en
San Angelo le ponen
Se pone a todo tren
Cuando bailan boogie.

Swing Chicano pachuco
This is my stuff
I dance it in Turlock
With a pretty woman
I dance it in San Jose
With an awesome pachuca
The brothers also dance it
Over in Sacramento
Also the brothers
Over in San Francisco
Also the girls
In San Bernardino
And the pachucones
In El Paso
We have a great time
When we boogie
In Arizona, even in Pomona
They've learned it in Colorado
All around Texas and even
In New Mexico too.
The pachucos in Albuquerque
Dance it really well
In Fresno and in Stockton
They bust out
I've seen it being danced
Even in San Antonio
In Houston and in
San Angelo, they got it
They have a great time
When they dance boogie.

This song also shows the class and musical connections of pachucos with African American dancing, throughout the U.S. Southwest, wherever they live. Even small places like San Angelo, Texas, and Stockton, California, have rhythm. The point is that the song maps small rural towns as well as urban centers with a large concentration of workers of Mexican descent who supplied cheap labor to agricultural or industrial areas. The word chicaspa-tas is slang for Chicana and Chicano; however, literally it means small feet
or paws. This song was rewritten by Daniel Valdez for the play and film and retitled “The Zoot Suit Theme.” The lyrics are mostly in English and Caló, and the musical arrangement is like Guerrero’s original:

Put on the zoot suit, makes you feel real root [good]
Look like a diamond, sparkling, shining
Ready for dancing
Ready for the boogie tonight!

In his version, Daniel Valdez reinscribes the pachucas who look just as great as the men in their attire and hairstyle.

Another important song by Guerrero is “Vamos a bailar”:

Cuando salgo yo a bailar
Yo me pongo muy catrín
Las huisitas todas gritan,
“¡Daddy, vamos a bailar el swing!”
Cuando voy al vacilón
Y me meto yo a un salón
Las chavalas gritan,
“¡Papi vente,
Vamos a bailar danzón!”
Tocan mambo sabrosón
Se alborota el corazón
Y con una chavalona vamos
Vamos a bailar el mambo.
De los bailes que menté
El bolero y el beguín
De todos los mambos juntos
Me gusta bailar el swing ¡hey!

When I go out dancing
I dress up dandy like
And the little women yell
“Daddy, let’s dance the swing!”
When I go out to party
I go into a dancing hall
The girls yell:
“Daddy, come here,
Let’s dance danzón!”
They play a real good mambo
Our hearts get excited
And with a woman
Let's dance mambo.
From the dances that I mentioned
The bolero and the beguine
From all the dances
I prefer to dance swing, hey!

As in his song “Los chucos suaves,” here Guerrero establishes the cultural connections with different types of Latin American dances. What is special about this song is the musical medley because every time a new type of dance is mentioned, Guerrero offers a musical example of it within the same song, so he is constantly changing rhythms.¹⁵⁹

For the film version of Zoot Suit two new songs were added: “Handball,” written and performed by Daniel Valdez, and “Marijuana Boogie,” by Guerrero. The first song is delivered when the pachuco criticizes the romantic relationship between Hank and Alice and suggests that instead of spending time with that “white broad” he should take care of his sexual needs with “manuela” (his hand) by masturbating so he does not get into trouble. The song is about the inmates’ sexual self-satisfaction, especially Hank’s:

**HANDBALL**

Keep your eyes on the ball
Get your back against the wall
And let the rhythm of each stroke
Become your pleasure.
Use your mind, concentrate
You must win this bout with fate
Or become a prisoner
Of this hole forever.

This song establishes the relationship between sexual satisfaction and living one’s own life well, according to one’s rules. Additionally, it demonstrates the direct connection between power and sexual self-control. Here the pachuco incites Hank to not let himself be tricked by the “white broad,” who represents—along with his lawyer, who is also white—the “white establishment” that eventually will betray him. Finally, Hank must exercise self-control of his “tempo,” which represents his penis or power. Therefore it is not a coincidence that at the end of the song, the four pachucos who were performing it by mimicking the game of “Handball” end up completely spent, especially Hank, who at the end has pretended to “hit” the ball with all of his strength.
What follows this song is the trial of the pachucos where they are sentenced to prison and Alice’s rejection of Hank, all of which results in his solitary confinement for nine days after he challenges a guard. Hank fails to listen to the advice of the pachuco (who is really his higher self) and spends himself at all levels. The connection in this song is not necessarily with other cultures or at a national or international level, but instead it is much simpler: Hank must connect with himself, be in tune with his higher self. Valdez has reduced the struggles of the pachucos and the Mexican communities that face racism and classism into an individual’s own struggle to be in control. Hank is in a deplorable situation because he has not listened to himself, and in the end he, not the system, is responsible for the consequences.

The second song that was added for the film, “Marijuana Boogie,” brings up the zoot-suiters’ recreational use of marijuana. When the pachuco plays the song on the piano, his reflection is revealed as a “smoking face.” Given the smoke and mirror used in this scene, the pachuco’s direct connection with the Aztec god Tezcatlipoca’s “smoking mirror” is firmly established. The song in the film changes Guerrero’s lyrics somewhat; the version here is the original:

Mari, Mari-juana
Mari, Mari-juana boogie
Mari, Mari-juana
Mari, Mari-juana that’s my baby’s name.
Póngase alerta ese vato
No se vaya al rol
Porque va a empezar al rato
El piano del cantón
Porque va a empezar al rato
El marijuana boogie boys
No se agüite ese pues. Péguele duro a esas teclas, carnal. Vamos a tronárnolas . . . manos digo yo. Voy a sacar a una jaina a todo dar pa’ echar un buen borlo, ése
Mi jaina se llama Juana,
Juana, Juana, Juana
Pero ya todos los vatos
Le dicen Mari-Juana
Mari, Mari-juana cómo te quiero yo
Orale, voy a sacar a una buena jaina para pegar un buen borlo, ése
Cuando le suena ese boogie
Me siento volador
Péguele bute a esas teclas
Que ya estoy aviador
Péguele bute a esas teclas
Que ya estoy volador

Mari, Mari-juana
Mari, Mari-juana boogie
Mari, Mari-juana
Mari, Mari-juana that's my baby's name.
Hey dude get hip
Don't go out tonight
Because in a little bit
The piano will be playing
In a little bit
The marijuana boogie will start, boys.
Don't get sad, ese. Hit those piano keys hard, brother. Let's snap our fingers. I'm going to get a nice chick to have a great time, ese.

My girl's name is Juana
Juana, Juana, Juana
But all the dudes
Call her Mari-Juana
Oh, how I love you.
Come on, I'm going to get a hip chick to have a great time, ese.

With that boogie sound
I feel like I'm flying
Hit those piano keys hard
I feel like an aviator
Hit those piano keys hard
Because I'm really high now

In this song marijuana and women are combined into one, and the singer plays with the two names in a similar way that is done in English (Mari-Juana, Mary Jane). Macías states that Guerrero makes a sexist reference with a double entendre when he sings “vamos a tronarnolas ... manos digo yo” (let’s snap our fingers). The verb “tronárnolas” (to snap or to pop), can refer to taking a woman's virginity, but it can also mean to take a hit from a marijuana joint. The song is supposed to be playful and use double entendre throughout to refer to women and sex and getting high (“me siento volador”).

These last songs by Guerrero are more sophisticated in terms of musi-
cal arrangements than the songs in the section on Valdés's film *El hijo desobediente*, given that he used a guitar trio for those songs and the music was limited by the instruments. For *Zoot Suit*, Guerrero utilizes the sounds of an orchestra and incorporates jazz. One can see in *Zoot Suit*, through the different genres of music, the multilayered cultural and sociohistorical connections among the pachucadas across the Mexico-U.S. border and among Chicana and Chicano and African American zoot-suiters.

**WHAT ABOUT THE PACHUCAS?:**

**A LIMITED VIEW OF WOMEN THROUGH MUSIC**

Given the male domination of the cultural productions of the time, it is surprising that Lalo Guerrero’s first song was not about a male zoot-suit but rather about a woman, a pachuca. Guerrero recorded it with the Trio Imperial, and it is entitled “La Pachuquilla” (The Little Pachuca):

(grito: échale mi cuate!)
Caminando por la calle
Caminando por la calle
Una chica me encontré
Y al mirarla tan graciosa
Y al mirarla tan hermosa
Pa’ pronto me enamoré.
La seguí por un buen rato
La seguí por un buen rato
Hasta que al fin me animé
Me animé a hablarle de amores
Y empecé a tirarles flores
Y volteé y me dijo así:
“¡Nel ese córtese ese vacil, sabe que por derecho vale más que se borre”
¡Ay! Porque le van a forjear
Porque aquí en las poderosas,
Lo va a apañar uno al recle
Y lo puede filerear”
Hasta entonces me di cuenta
De su enaguíta ajustada
Casi todo iba enseñando
Con sus calcetines altos
Y su cabello abultado
Sus chancletas arrastrando
Yo le dije “señorita
Espero que usted me dispense
Pero ¿cómo está ese son?”
“—Nel, sabe que usted está muy verdolaga [ignorante de la vida pachuca]
pues le estoy Hablando en chicaspatas [español chicano] ése
“Ay! Cómo se agüita usted
Por qué no se pone al alba
Ya me está cayendo sura,
Se me hace que es puro esquare.”
Chale ése, no se escame, póngase bute trucha pues, ese."\(^{61}\)

(A yell: hit it, bro!)
While walking down the street
While walking down the street
I found a young woman
And when I saw she was so gracious
And when I saw she was so pretty
I immediately fell in love.
I followed her for a while
I followed her for a while
Until I finally had the guts
The guts to come on to her
I started telling her sweet things
And she turned around and said:
“No, man, cut that out, you better get outta here!”
“Oh! Because you’ll get hurt
Because here in the barrio
Someone is going to get you
And he might cut you up.”
Until then I noticed her
Her tight little skirt
She was showing almost everything
With her socks up high
Her hair in a pompadour
And dragging her shoes
I told her, “Miss,
I hope you forgive me
But what do you mean?”
“—No, you know what, you’re very green [about the pachuca/o life] I’m speaking to you in Caló/pachuco talk, man.”
"Oh, don't get all sad
Why don't you go away
I don't like you
You're a square"
No, man, don't get scared, just watch out, man.

The main theme in this song is a nonpachuco's romantic interest in a pachuca who rejects and threatens him. The song also serves to introduce the listener to a pachuca by describing her clothing, hairstyle, language, and negative attitude. She is presented as a hard and tough woman who is cold mannered and scantily clad, unlike Mexican women who are not pachucas. Her attire is described as if she were a whore or street woman who shows almost “everything” due to the shortness of her skirt. In Zoot Suit a similar idea is presented when Lupe, Hank's only sister, is wearing a miniskirt (created by rolling a long skirt up at the waist); her mother Dolores says, “You look like a puta [whore] . . . I mean, like a pachuca.” Aside from her appearance, the pachuca in Guerrero's song is also supposed to be defenseless when she threatens the man following her with a beating by a pachuco, as if she needed a violent man to help her survive any type of sexual advances. In a preceding song, Guerrero has the pachuquilla's boyfriend appearing to defend her.

As established above, drugs and alcohol are always present or alluded to when the pachucada appears in transnational cultural productions. In this case, women are no exception since they are also represented as drug and alcohol users. Don Tosti uses a famous Mexican song, “Borrachita” (Little Drunk Woman), about a rural woman who gets drunk to ease her pain as she has to leave her husband, who refuses to accompany her to Mexico City to tend to her boss. In Tosti's version, “Gúisa guaina,” the lyrics are in Caló and the man, the pachuco, is the one who leaves the drunken pachuca at home because he has to go to Main Street to tend to his boss.

LA BORRACHITA
BY IGNACIO FERNÁNDEZ ESPERÓN, “TATA NACHO”

Borrachita me voy para
Olvidarle, le quero mucho,
El también me quere;
Borrachita me voy
Para la capital
A servir al patron
Que me mandó llamar anteayer.
Yo le quise traer,  
me dijo que no;  
Que si había de llorar:  
Pa' que volver?;  
Borrachita me voy  
Para la capital  
A servir al patron  
Que me mandó llamar anteayer.\textsuperscript{162}  

I'm drunk and I'm leaving  
To forget him, I love him a lot  
And he also loves me;  
I'm drunk and I'm leaving  
For the big city  
To serve my boss  
Who sent for me the day before yesterday.  
I wanted to bring him [with me]  
He said "no,"  
That if he had to cry  
Why return [there]?  
I'm drunk and I'm leaving  
For the big city  
To serve my boss  
Who sent for me the day before yesterday.  

GUISA GUAINA (WINO GIRL)  

Guisa wine-a . . . guisa wine-a . . .  
Guisa wine-a . . . guisa wine-a . . .  
Guisa wine-a, me voy para  
Agüitarla 'stoy muy canica . . .  
póngase alalva,  
Guisa wine-a, me voy . . .  
Para la calle Main  
A wachar a mi boss . . .  
Que me mandó pitar ante ayer . . .  
Yo le dije "nel nel" . . . dijo "simón"  
Que se había de agüitar  
Pa que chillar.  
Guisa wine-a, me voy . . .  
Para la calle Main
A wachar a mi boss . . .
Que me mandó pitar anteayer
Guisa wine-a . . . guisa wine-a . . .
Guisa wine-a . . . guisa wine-a . . .

Wino girl . . . Wino girl . . .
Wino girl . . . Wino girl . . .
Wino girl, I'm leaving so
I can forget you; I'm very crazy for you
So try to understand,
Wino girl I'm going . . .
Over to Main Street
To go see my boss
Who sent for me the day before yesterday.
I told her "No, no," she said "Yes,"
I had to go.
So why should she cry?
Wino girl I'm going . . .
Over to Main Street
To go see my boss
Who sent for me the day before yesterday.
Wino girl . . . Wino girl . . .
Wino girl . . . Wino girl . . .

In these two songs, the relationship and connection with music on both sides of the border, especially with Tata Nacho as one of the most famous Mexican songwriters of parodies of the turn of the twentieth century, is clear. Tosti is familiar with Mexican popular culture since he lived in El Paso for some time. As the liner notes in Pachuco Boogie indicate, Tosti's version is "a clever parody" of a song written originally in the 1920s when Mexico's peasants were migrating in great numbers to the big cities. In Tosti's version, the one who stays is the drunken pachuca, clinging to her man, who is only going to "Main Street" to work; she appears desperate and useless without him.

Another song by Tosti is about a woman who is insulted by a pachuco when she refuses to dance with him:

**GUISA GACHA**

¡Esa! Cuando yo se lo wacho
Me siento muy al alva con usted.
Oiga! ¿Le gusta el borlote?
Tireme la cadera para acá.
Sabe . . . que pienso que le digo:
Quiero un borblo con usted.
Chava, borbloea este baile.
“—I'm waiting for my boyfriend to come back”
¡Güisa, güisa gacha!
Esa güisa suña ¿por qué
no quiere borbloea?
¿Qué tenga conmigo y mi baile?
Usted es muy suña,
Usted no se pone al alva,
Usted se piensa muy suave,
Oiga usted pues,
¿qué piensa pues?
Nomás está sentada
¿Por qué viniste a este borblo pues?
¡Allí nomás está sentada!
¡Güisa güisa gacha!
¡Güisa güisa gacha!
¡No! ¡No!63.

STUCK-UP GIRL

Girl! When I'm looking at you
You really turn me on.
Listen! Do you like to party?
Shake your hips over here.
You know . . . what I'm thinking of saying:
I want to dance with you.
Girl, let's get down and dance.
“—I'm waiting for my boyfriend to come back”
You stuck-up girl!
This stuck-up girl why
Doesn't she want to dance?
What's her problem with me and this dance?
You're so stuck up,
You don't get it,
You think you're so hot,
Listen, just what
Do you think?
You just sit there
Why did you come to this dance?
You just sit there!
You stuck-up girl!
You stuck-up girl!
No! No!  

The song does not specify whether this woman is a pachuca, but given her answer in English, it seems as though she might be from a higher social class, she might not speak or want to speak Spanish, or she simply speaks in English to put him down. However, the pachuco insults her, calling her “güisa gacha” and using Caló as if she were a pachuca. The song criticizes women who do not adhere to men’s wishes and who have minds of their own, refusing to be mere objects of entertainment.

The next and last song, by Miguel Salas and the Dueto Taxco con Mariachis Caporales del Norte, also establishes a direct connection between the pachucada in the United States and people from Mexico. This is done specifically by connecting two unlikely candidates, a bracero and a pachuca, as the title indicates. In the beginning she rejects him for not belonging to her culture, while he adores her; but in the end, they get married anyway:

**EL BRACERO Y LA PACHUCA**

El bracero y la pachuca  
Se fueron a vacilar  
Y en baile del sobaco  
Fueron a retozar.  
Como eran muy diferentes  
Comenzaron a bailar  
Y el bracero entusiasmado  
La comenzó a enamorar:

“Oh mujer del alma mía  
O ámame porque te quiero,  
O quiereme porque te adoro,  
Porque tu aliento perfuma,  
Linda princesa encantada  
Como si trajeras rosas  
De esas rosas encarnadas  
Que con sus lindas aromas  
A mi pecho cautivaras . . .”

Poesía del Testarudo  
La pachuca no entendía
Lo que le quiso decir,
Lo miraba y se reía
Y ella siguió su vaso [fiesta]:
“Ya tireme bute chancla
Braserito sin sabor,
Ya me está cayendo sura”
La pachuca dijo así:
“Nel ése, ya párále con sus palabras de la alta que por derecho me
agüitan ése. Mejor póngase muy alalva con un pistazo de aquella y un
frajito del fuerte pa’ después poder borrar, ja...” Poesía del Tirilí.
Muy prontito se engancharon
Y suspiraron los dos
Votaron mucho la chancla,
Y gozaron sin cesar
Otro día por la mañana,
Cansados de borlotear,
El bracero y la pachuca
Se tuvieron que amarrar.\[165\]

**THE BRACERO AND THE PACHUCA**

The bracero and the pachuca
Were out on the town,
And to the dance at The Armpit
They went to have fun.
Since they were such opposites
They started to dance together,
And the bracero in his enthusiasm
Started to whisper in her ear:
Oh, woman of my soul,
Love me because I want you,
Or want me because I adore you,
Because your breath perfumes,
Beautiful enchanted princess,
As if you carried roses,
Some of those full-fleshed roses
With whose wonderful aromas
You captivate my heart...”
Poetry of the Stubborn.
The pachuca didn’t understand
What the bracero was trying to say,
She looked at him and laughed,  
And she started to kid him:  
“Cut it out and let's dance  
You're so square that  
You're getting on my nerves.”  
So the pachuca said:  
“Slow down man, cut out that high-toned poetry jazz, you're really  
bringing me down. You better have a drink and get with it. And then  
smoke a joint to mellow out. Ha! Poetry of the Reefer Man.”  
So right away they hooked up  
And they both sighed,  
They danced and danced together,  
And enjoyed the evening nonstop.  
The next day in the morning,  
Tired from all that partying,  
The bracero and the pachuca  
Went and tied the knot.166

We see that the pachuca laughs at the bracero's loving words and says that his way of speaking Spanish is too high-class. Given their different cultural codes, neither one understands well what the other is saying, but after a great time at a dance (with alcohol and drugs) and spending the night together, they decide to get married, setting their differences aside.167 It is also important to note that the bracero is not threatened by the pachuca's freedom to drink and smoke marijuana as well as to be who she is; instead he considers this attractive.

Although the roles of women in general and of pachucas in particular are extremely limited in the cultural production examined in this chapter, it is still imperative to rescue the forgotten female characters in these texts. As Catherine Ramírez indicates, the pachuca has been historically and artistically erased in cultural productions on both sides of the border.168

CONCLUSION

Throughout this chapter I have offered some examples of transnational Mexican cultural productions on the pachucada on both sides of the Mexico-U.S. border. In order to do this, I analyzed Germán Valdés and Luis Valdez's texts specifically through the different genres of music that represent them. At points, the connections were not only between the two main countries and cultures mentioned, but rather with other countries in Latin
America, with Spain, and with African American culture. It is a known fact that the pachucada wore its prized attire exclusively for special occasions, like going out dancing or for parties. During their free time these young people, it was argued, attempted to reclaim their laboring bodies and turn them into bodies that could provide them with various kinds of pleasure. Their bodies belonged to them and not to their bosses during that time. Nevertheless, Macías advises us to be careful to not exaggerate the effects of freedom that the nightlife offered to these young women and men, especially as we consider their participation as consumers in the capitalist system that also consumed and used them throughout the week. To drink alcohol, smoke dope, and dance to the different types of music implicated them in the maintenance of a power structure even when some of the owners of these places of entertainment were from ethnic minorities. Macías also states that by literally buying into a system that often abused them, blacks and Chicanos tacitly consented to their own domination, hence the inherent paradox of style politics. As Robin Kelley has shown, by spending their time and “precious little money” at commercialized venues, African American workers were “in many cases reinforcing black working-class ties to consumer culture.” Some personal resistance tactics create autonomous survival spaces without ever changing power relations, and others eventually become contained and co-opted. This is to say that although the pachucada could reclaim their bodies for the weekend, that is as much as they could do while still participating as consumers in the society that subjugated them.

In regard to gender, Kelley states that “resistance to labor meant exploitation of women.” This means that although some pachucos worked during the week in order to have fun on the weekends, those who refused to work (such as a young Malcolm Little the zoot-suiter) and refused to participate with their laboring bodies in an exploitative system turned to easy ways out such as pimping and extorting women. As mentioned above, historically pachucas have not occupied the “heroine” position in Chicana and Chicano culture, and there are very few publications and cultural productions that represent them. This chapter offers only a few examples of the ways in which pachucas are represented in the texts analyzed.

With all of the pachucada’s shortcomings, I still consider it important to reinscribe the connections that have been lost for some decades between the pachucada on both sides of the border. The pachucada has come to symbolize a countercultural icon of rebelliousness and resistance for the com-
munities represented instead of remaining delinquent, rejected, and forgotten subjects. And although the pachucada in the United States continues to maintain a more serious personality, it is important to remember that in Mexico, through Valdés's character Tin Tan, the pachuco became more of a comedic figure. Recently, several musical groups of rock en español have rescued the Mexican pachucos as members of the counterculture.

Even today, pachucas and pachucos in both countries continue to appear in new cultural productions. Tin Tan films continue to be shown on TV stations and to be available for sale everywhere on the American continents but particularly in Mexico and the United States. On the other hand, Zoot Suit was produced by El Teatro Campesino in San Juan Bautista and toured nationally in 2005. The pachuca and pachuco influence has also been felt in musical bands such as Maldita Vecindad y Los Hijos del Quinto Patio and Café Tacuba. There were other film representations of zoot-suiters during the 1990s, such as Malcolm X (1992), directed by Spike Lee, and The Mask (1994) with Jim Carrey as a main character. Other musical groups or individuals, such as the Cherry Popping Daddies and Janet Jackson, have used the zoot-suiter image in their productions in order to demonstrate rebelliousness. All this is to say that such cultural representations of the pachucada and the zoot-suiters indicate certain opposition to the status quo and are certainly here to stay and to continue to influence future generations.
The origins of Chicana and Latina theater and performance can be situated in the U.S. Southwest during the time this geographical region was still under Spanish colonial domination. Historically, Chicanas and Latinas have participated in all the creative and technical components of U.S. theater and performance from its incipiency. Anglo mainstream theater in the United States, slowly and only recently, has begun to recognize and incorporate theatrical cultural productions by Chicanas into its canon. Yet less than two percent of the plays produced in the United States are written by Chicanas. Given this virtual invisibility, such playwrights and performance artists address issues of self-representation and empowerment. At the same time, they attempt to contest the stereotypical and racist depictions by voicing their concerns regarding issues of identity formation as subjects who constantly inhabit a liminal cultural space where multiple aspects of their culture overlap.

Furthermore, this contestation addresses issues of gender and sexual discrimination from within their own ethnic group, especially starting in the late 1970s when the first wave of Third World feminism produced empowering literary works that were later transformed and transferred onto the stage. In confronting the issues mentioned above, Chicana playwrights insist on making their voices heard, and their “wild tongues” will tell their own stories regardless of the consequences faced from mainstream culture and their own. As Alicia Arrizón argues, “[The Chicana] 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 ... the transgressive, the lusty and comical performer, the queerest among us.” Such ideas of rupturing the silence
and defying the patriarchal roles assigned to Chicanas have been theorized by Chicana feminist writers Tey Diana Rebolledo and Yolanda Broyles-González. In *Women Singing in the Snow* Rebolledo exalts women whom she calls *mujeres callejeras* and explains that whenever women step outside of the oppressive roles traditionally assigned to them, society considers them “loose women.” The author redefines this term when she states that *mujeres callejeras* are “women who wander and roam, who walk around, who journey: the terms imply restlessness, wickedness. They are not bound by societally constructed morals, nor cultural practices. [These] women . . . can be demanding, self-satisfying, and worse, perhaps they don’t need a man.”

These terms can be applied to Chicanas/Latinas in theater and performance when they empower themselves by breaking the chains of patriarchy even at the risk of being considered traitors to their communities in order to reclaim their experiences, their voices, and especially their bodies on stage.

Along similar lines, Broyles-González theorizes about the Chicana performance artist who can be considered an *atravesada*. She defines this term as “a crosswise woman [who] crosses conventions, borders, and hierarchies with wisdom.” “When the *atravesada* is grotesquely comical, then she is a trickster. Laughter is the ingredient [that] magically changes everything [and] shocks us out of the complacency of seriousness.” In their (re)codification of these terms Rebolledo and Broyles-González contribute theories of empowerment for Chicanas whose voices traditionally have not been heard. However, I believe that a third term, *hocicona*, or loudmouth, is necessary to highlight the way language is used. I define *hocicona* as a woman who speaks without restraints when challenging the exploitation of her people. The *hocicona* often risks censorship and even physical violence when her words are considered offensive or distasteful in nature. The term derives from the Spanish noun *hocico*, which means an animal’s snout or mouth, especially that of a dog, thereby animalizing the woman or girl who is called *hocicona*. The insult is used primarily with girls and women. However, the *hocicona* defies patriarchal norms of decency, decorum, and language in order to continue to voice her demands. Chicana theater and performance, then, can be analyzed through the theoretical framework of Chicana/Latina and Third World feminisms. Whether we apply the theoretical terminology created by Anzaldúa (new mestiza consciousness) or by Chela Sandoval (oppositional consciousness), we must situate this subject in a “third space,” or between cultures, where she is empowered to enact her own (re)presentation(s).

Emma Pérez states that Chicanas’ “works emerge from *un sitio y una lengua* (a specific space and language) that rejects colonial ideology and the byproducts of colonialism and capitalist patriarchy—sexism, racism, ho-
mophobia, etc. The space and language is rooted in both the words and silence of Third-World-Identified-Third-World-Women who create a place apart from white men and women and from men of color.” Following Pérez’s theory of sitio y lengua, I assert that María Elena Gaitán, through her actions, music, and speech, situates herself with other Chicanas who are callejeras, atravessadas, and hociconas. Gaitán creates her own linguistic and physical space/place that allows for the contestation of social ills against the threatened and affected communities she represents.

The peladita and the pachuca, like the peladito and the pachuco, have been key characters in the cultural production on both sides of the Mexico-U.S. border throughout the past century. This chapter briefly traces the genealogy of the female characters in order to examine their individual characteristics and their contributions to Mexican culture on both sides of the Mexico-U.S. border. Further, I analyze the combination of certain qualities of the pelada and the pachuca in two protagonists that Chicana artist and activist María Elena Gaitán created: “Sufrida del Pueblo” (Town Sufferer) and “Connie Chancla” (Connie Old-Slipper). Gaitán’s characters and her social critique deconstruct the racist, classist, patriarchal, and misogynist social system. Her work concentrates on California especially in the past three decades.

Gaitán presents her protagonists in two performance-art pieces: Chola con Cello: A Home Girl in the Philharmonic (1992) and The Adventures of Connie Chancla (1998). She wrote the first to criticize and satirize the wave of racist attitudes in California during Governor Pete Wilson’s administration (1991–1999), which produced several propositions against undocumented immigrants in general and Mexicans in particular. She wrote Connie Chancla on the 150th anniversary of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, which ended the Mexican-American War, to offer an indigenous-Chicana rewriting of history. Neither of Gaitán’s protagonists is a pelada or a pachuca per se, but I argue that they combine the main characteristics of each.

Since Gaitán situates these two characters in social public spaces as women, Rebolledo’s and Broyles-González’s theories regarding women who break away from patriarchal notions of gendered spaces and restrictive social norms are useful. Rebolledo explains that strong women are immediately associated with being easily accessible to men, but she proposes to invert that definition by reclaiming and redeeming words like “puta” and “callejera” or “andariega.” Rebolledo uses several other terms in order to name Chicanas and Mexican women who have stepped outside the norm, that is, who have broken with the conventional, patriarchal roles assigned to them for centuries.
These are women who don't stay at home tending to their husbands, children, parents . . . They must, therefore, be those wicked, sexual women seen as putas, or prostitutes. 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 . . . Chicana writers seize upon the notion of mujeres andariegas as symbols of empowering the body, sexuality, and the self.

Patriarchal society remarks that these mujeres andariegas are seen as lost women who do not respect or privilege their families, including their men: fathers, brothers, husbands, and sons. Therefore, to be andariega and to break with the constrictive social and cultural roles is a type of empowerment that makes them feel strong and proud to be Chicanas/Latinas. It is not until such rebellion occurs that they begin to feel like the owners of their bodies, spaces, and voices.

Broyles-González has been the only scholar to write about Gaitán's work by situating it within "Chicana performance" and "one-woman shows." Along with the theory of "gente atravesada" she adds two other terms: "gente traviesa" and "entremetida." The definition of "entremeter" or to be "entremetida" is as follows: "'to come between' and 'to speak without being asked,' or 'to interrupt impudently.' Entremeter also 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." This new definition includes the fact that the entremetida re-inscribes the untold or erased stories and history about her people's oppression and exploitation from a feminist perspective. To be an atravesada and traviesa means to break with strict and restricting historical and academic conventions through comedy and satire as a pelada character.

All theories discussed above refer to Chicanas and Latinas who challenge the politics of gender within a patriarchal society by having their voice and being empowered to do as they please by recodifying these previously oppressive linguistic concepts and terms that challenge the politics of gender. Given this challenging stance, most Chicana performance artists like Gaitán risk not being invited back after they present their works because it is considered offensive and of a "pelada" or distasteful nature; but their work continues to be presented in community centers as well as in some colleges and universities.

Before analyzing Gaitán's protagonists and defining them within the pelada and pachuca tradition, I situate these characters in a sociohistorical and artistic context as women in public spaces who empower themselves.
In chapter 2, I established the antecedents of the pelada at a transnational level with two classical examples of a peladita on each side of the border, La Willy in Mexico and La Chata Noloesca in the United States; both characters serve as antecedents to the pelada characteristics that Gaitán gives her protagonists. In regard to the pachuca, I concentrate on a few sensationalist newspaper articles of the 1940s and offer some contemporary representations of pachuca-like characters in Chicana cultural productions. Once the second genealogy of the pachuca is established, it becomes evident that Gaitán borrows from both characters to create her protagonists as pelada-chola types.

SOCIOHISTORICAL AND ARTISTIC CONTEXT

Although Chicanas and Mexican women and girls have worked inside and outside their homes for centuries, whether in the agricultural fields or in the service industries, it was not until World War II that their lives were changed dramatically by their labor. According to Vicki Ruiz, during World War II women of Mexican descent, like other women in the United States, joined the labor force due to the shortage of male laborers. For Chicanas, working outside of their homes allowed them to have their own money and a new sense of independence.20 Newspapers including La Opinión in Los Angeles ran advertisements announcing the latest in women’s fashion, luxury items, and makeup, knowing that women would purchase more, especially if contextualized in terms of glamour and cultural assimilation. Many Chicanas helped their parents financially but also tried to keep some of their earnings to purchase fashion and other items,21 as well as to spend on entertainment. Chicanas who lived in smaller towns had less opportunity to go out and have fun in public spaces, especially because the people in their towns, in particular the older women, kept an eye on them and reported their “indecent” behavior to their parents. But those who lived in the big cities could take the trolley and escape the vigilance of their barrios to enjoy their newfound freedom.22

The young women of the era began to gain more self-confidence and to have access to public spaces that allowed them to taste the type of freedom to which their mothers and grandmothers did not have access because the economic and cultural times were different. However, these liberties came with a price because on some occasions young Chicanas were physically abused by their parents, who considered them “libertines” for not following the demands on them to stay within the patriarchal social and cultural norms expected of them because of their gender.23 Such freedom was
equated with having all women, not only Chicanas, be sexually available given their visibility in public, which labeled them as “common women,” or as Rebolledo puts it, “mujeres callejeras.”

Aside from being in public without male companions, many of these women had taken the liberty of wearing their hair and clothing in new ways. The pachucas were considered loose women for these reasons.24 Such criticism is presented in a song of the time: “Mujeres apachucadas” (Pachuca-like Women, 1940s). This song, written and performed by Lalo Guerrero, is about women who act like pachucas, according to the narrator:25

Si las hembras de hoy en día
Siguen con sus tonterías
Yo no sé hasta donde
El mundo va a parar
Esas modas que traen ‘hora,
Eso es cosa que debaran
Ya las miras y
Parecen carnaval.26
Si tú le haces una cita
A una linda morenita
Su cabello negro
Como un pedernal
A la hora de la cita
Te resulta la prietita
Una güera oxigenada sin igual.
Hoy se van a la cantina
En lugar de la cocina
Toman tanto como
Un hombre and poco más
Fuman hora tras de hora
Parecen locomotoras
Toman hasta no
Poderse ya parar.
En esto también me fijo
Ya no quieren tener hijos
Y en respecto a eso
Yo no sé que hacer
Ya nomás falta una cosa
Y es que me diga mi esposa
Que los hijos yo los tengo que tener.
Hay mujeres ya casadas,
Divorciadas y dejadas
Y hasta cuatro o
Cinco hijos tienen ya,
Traen su enagua a la rodilla
Pues quieren ser pachuquillas
Imaginate nomás a esa edad.
Antes el hombre mandaba
La mujer lo respetaba
Y traía su dinero que gastar.
Ahora llega el día del pago
Y te avientan con diez centavos
Para que vayas al cine y a cenar.

If females nowadays
Keep up their nonsense
I don't know what
The world will come to.
The fashion of today
They eat it right up
You look at them
And they look like a carnival.
If you have a date
With a beautiful dark-skinned girl
Her hair black
Like a flint
When she gets to the date
The cute little dark-skinned girl
Has turned into a peroxide blonde like no other.
Nowadays they go to the bars
Instead of the kitchen
They drink as much
As a man or even more
They smoke at all hours
They look like locomotives
They drink until they can't
Stand up any more.
I have also paid attention [to the fact]
that they don't want to have children
And I don't know
What to do about that
The last thing I need
Is for my wife to tell me
That I have to birth my children.
There are married women,
Divorced or abandoned [women],
Who have four or
Five children,
They wear their skirts up to their knees
Because they want to be pachuquillas
Imagine, and at their age.
Before, the man was in charge
The woman respected him
And he brought home the money [bacon].
Now, when payday arrives
They throw you a dime
So that you go out to the movies or to dinner.

This song demonstrates, from the beginning, the disruptions in the cultural roles assigned to women when they gain more freedom to step outside of the domestic sphere. In this case, women who gained more freedom from restrictive gender roles are considered to act like pachucas. These women are called pachuca-like because the male musical narrator perceives them as rebellious, indecent, and libertine. He also criticizes the idea of assimilation and rejection of Mexican culture by Chicanas who dye their black hair blonde to fit into mainstream culture. Further, the narrator criticizes women who go to cantinas where they smoke a lot and get so drunk that they make a spectacle of themselves. What is especially embarrassing is when women surpass men’s vices and behavior in a place that was previously a male-only space. The song describes these women as being so liberated that they refuse to bear children, a task that patriarchal society considers a woman’s fundamental role. Accordingly, women’s refusal of this function completely emasculates men, who now fear that they will be expected to fulfill this biologically impossible task. Divorce and separation are mentioned as options for such liberated women who can choose to be without a man and whom Rebolledo terms mujeres andariegas. In the end, the song laments men’s distress over having to give their wives their entire paycheck and no longer being able to order women around as if they were the kings in “their” castle.

It is important to highlight that certain historical or artistic productions of the time present these women as having many liberties once they
went out into the labor force and earned their own money. Therefore, these women take control of their own bodies, voices, and actions; and although society labels them as loose, street women, or mujeres callejeras, they refuse to allow men to objectify and control them.

THE PELADA, NOT THE PELADITA: NOT A DIMINUTIVE MATTER

Previously, I drew on Mexican scholars Samuel Ramos and Carlos Monsiváis to establish the differences between the pelado and the peladito. During the 1950s, Ramos, in defining one aspect of Mexican national character, defined the pelado as “the big city’s human waste” who is “explosive, aggressive, and dangerous.”²⁸ However, according to Monsiváis, the diminutive of this character, the peladito, is supposed to be a comedic figure who is not as offensive or brash as the pelado.²⁹ Although neither cultural critic mentions the female version of these characters, I consider it important to relate some aspects of the definition of the pelado to the pelada in order to apply it to Gaitán’s protagonists. According to Tomás Ybarra-Frausto, the peladita is a “marginal lower-class, streetwise woman of the metropolis. Her ‘figuration’ was actualized on stage from within a lusty comic and linguistic tradition . . . [She also] derives from a venerable popular tradition . . . [and] foreground[s] language, compressing puns and double meanings into witty stratagems of disarmament.”³⁰ Aside from being peladas, Gaitán’s characters must also be described as atravesadas, callejeras, and hociconas—all characteristics that converge on the chola as Gaitán represents her: a strong, comedic character who refuses to be laughed at but instead makes fun of the oppressive system she criticizes in her performance art. It is important to remember that the chola is considered the cultural offspring of the pachuca, given her toughness and survival skills.

According to Tomás Ybarra-Frausto, the character of the peladita has a long-standing tradition in teatro de carpa,³¹ one that is defined by the use of the carnivalesque style,³² which incorporates comedy, double entendre, and picardía, especially as related to bodily functions. Accordingly, the carpa tradition and the peladita “helped to define and sustain ethnic and class consciousness. Their robust ribaldry and rebelliousness were wedges of resistance against conformity and prevailing norms of middle-class decency within the Chicano communities.”³³ Therefore, this type of consciousness and rebelliousness in terms of social class in the carpa, specifically through the peladita, is a key issue in considering Gaitán’s chola. However, the pelada entertains her audience with humor but also with more sarcasm and
cynicism than the peladita. In Gaitán’s protagonists, the pelada takes a no-nonsense stance and an in-your-face criticism of oppressive systems.

FROM PACHUCA TO CHOLA

As Catherine S. Ramírez, Elizabeth Escobedo, and other scholars have written, the war hysteria and anti-Mexican violence of the Zoot Suit Riots affected not only the men but also the women, pachucas, who were victims of much hatred. According to Ramírez, the few newspaper articles that show photographs of the women associated with the pachucas call them “black widows” or “slick chicks” and consider them cruel and violent gang members. Elizabeth R. Escobedo argues that “pachucas defied mainstream notions of proper feminine decorum and endangered rigid, static definitions of Mexican femininity.” La Opinión, a Spanish-language newspaper in Los Angeles, alleged that these young pachucas defied dominant society in general and their parents or families in particular and that they were shameful to the communities of Mexican descent. The newspaper called them “malinches,” a metaphor for “traitors” to their communities. Another article states that during the Zoot Suit Riots, some women went out to fight alongside the men in order to defend their communities. One article mentions a pachuca who had on brass knuckles ready for the attack. However, Escobedo argues that this woman, Amelia Venegas, was not a pachuca but actually a passerby and a mother who was appalled at the police treatment of the pachucos and was arrested and charged with “disturbing the peace” when she denounced the officers verbally for their racism.

Generally, Ramírez notes, the dominant society considered these women a threat to the nation because of their fearless and masculine behavior; “pachucas were not portrayed as patriotic, nurturing or maternal; nor did they personify vulnerability, innocence or family life. On the contrary, pachucas represented the antithesis of what it meant to be American and/or feminine. By betraying gender, they had betrayed [the] nation.” To see them as the nation’s enemy within may appear as an exaggeration, but given the times, many people believed this to be true and agreed with the newspaper representation of these women who had chosen to abandon the domestic sphere. Both the Spanish- and English-language newspapers portrayed them as loose women, as mujeres andariegas, mujeres callejeras.

Although pachucas were considered shameful and a disgrace to the communities of Mexican descent on both sides of the border, more recently Chicana feminist scholars are reinscribing their lives and actions and are re-examining their contributions to Mexican and Chicana cultures. It is pre-
ciscely because of the toughness and rebelliousness of the pachucas of the 1940s that some Chicana scholars and artists have recovered their work and lives and presented them as precursors to Chicana feminists. For instance, the acclaimed visual artist Judith Baca was among the first Chicanas to represent a pachuca-like character in contemporary art. Her triptych “Las Tres Marias” (1976), part of the critical CARA: Chicano Art Resistance and Affirmation exhibit (1991), is composed of three 68” × 16” rectangular standing panels that contain the images of two average-height women on each side. The panel on the right presents the image of a 1940s pachuca, who is defiantly looking back at the viewer. She is smoking and is wearing the fashion of the times: pompadour-style hair, heavy makeup, and the appropriate clothing and shoes. She represents a strong and rebellious woman. The panel on the left holds a painting of a 1970s chola, also with a defiant stance and look; she is dressed in a less feminine way: medium-length straight hair parted in the middle, a V-neck sweater with the sleeves rolled up, and khaki pants. Both images bear the word “loca” tattooed on their bodies, the pachuca on her fingers and the chola on her forearm. This alludes to each one living a “vida loca,” or gang life, and to the idea that they are “crazy” and will not think twice about what they need to do in order to survive. In other words, neither one of them will take abuse from anyone. Finally, the panel in the middle is a mirror that reflects the image of the viewer as she or he stands in front of the piece embraced by two women: one on each side. A photograph of Baca, the artist, appears in the CARA catalogue; reflected in the mirror, she is the third “Maria” in the rebellious trio. “Las Tres Marias” presents the direct connection between the pachuca and her cultural offspring, the chola; they are part of U.S. culture and history.

In her first play, Giving up the Ghost, Chicana lesbian writer Cherrie Moraga incorporates the image of a rebellious pachuca or chola character. With this play the author pioneers writing about Chicana/Mexicana lesbian desire and identity from a sympathetic perspective. In Ghost Moraga writes about a lesbian relationship through three characters: Marisa, Corky, and Amalia. Corky is Marisa’s younger self, and Amalia is Marisa’s lover. Corky is an eleven-year-old tomboy who is tough and characterized as a chola. Moraga titles the first of two acts “La pachuca.” But because the decade of the 1970s is referenced, Corky could not be an actual pachuca but rather a chola, and she is dressed as such, similarly to Baca’s chola: baggy khaki pants, white T-shirt; she wears her hair short and slicked back.

In her monologue at the beginning of the play, Corky states: “the smarter I get the older I get the meaner I get/ tough [space] a tough cookie my mom calls me/ sometimes I even pack a blade [space] no one knows/ I never
OF WILD TONGUES AND RESTLESS BODIES

use it or nut’ing but can feel it there/ there in my pants pocket [space] run the pad of my thumb over it/ to remind me I carry some’ting [space] am sharp [space] secretly.” Here the young character establishes her own toughness although it is kept secret like her phallic knife. Corky also identifies with the cholos’ masculinity: “my friend Tudy/ and me we’d make up our own movies/ one of our favorites was this cowboy one/ where we’d be out in the desert/ ’n’ we’d capture these chicks ’n’ hold ’em up/ for ransom [space] we’d string ’em up ’n’ make ’em take their clothes off/ jus’ pretend a’course but it useta make me feel/ real tough.”

Corky’s idea of masculinity and the only thing she knows about “being a man” is to be sexist and abusive toward girls. Her monologue continues: “funny now when I think about how little I was/ at the time and a girl/ but in my mind I was big ’n’ tough ’n’ a dude/ in my mind [space] I had all the freedom/ the freedom to really see a girl/ kinda [space] animal [space] you know?” Once again, her toughness, masculinity, and notions of freedom are associated with belittling and objectifying women, describing them as animals. Yvonne Yarbro-Bejarano (2001) establishes that Corky and her chauvinist attitude leave the character “feeling herself a free agent and rejecting the restrictions imposed on girls, [as] she considers herself a ‘dude,’ packs a blade, and hangs out with the boy Tudy . . . Her appropriation of the active role brings with it the associated attributes of the chingón, as she inscribes her erotic fantasies on [girls] in [a] context of violence and dominance.”

Although Corky confounds the idea of being “tough” with being a male chauvinist, what is important here is that Moraga decides to utilize the concept of toughness associated with pachucas and cholas to define Corky’s defiant personality. Baca’s and Moraga’s works serve as examples of the cultural connections between the pachuca of yesteryear and the chola of the present, highlighting their rebelliousness and toughness. Therefore, it makes perfect sense that Gaitán would follow in the footsteps of these two Chicana artists and design a similar genealogy for her own protagonists.

CHICANA/LATINA THEATER AT A GLANCE

To better analyze Gaitán’s protagonists it is important to situate them within Chicana and Latina theater and performance art. Chicana/Latina theater owes much to the productions of the 1960s during the civil rights movement, when people of color were reclaiming their own rights and identities while denouncing their second-class status in the United States. Ensembles like El Teatro Campesino and the Puerto Rican Traveling The-
atre (PRTT) sought to make theater accessible to the masses. Later, both companies offered writing and acting workshops, producing some of the most famous Latina/o actors and playwrights. Unfortunately, according to Broyles-González, in ETC, founded and led by Luis Valdez, the contributions of the women in the ensemble such as Socorro Valdez, Diane Rodríguez, and Olivia Chumacero were not acknowledged. All three of these women developed solo careers as writers, directors, and producers after they left the group. Unlike ETC, PRTT was operated and directed by Miriam Colón, who apparently had progressive gender practices.

In 1971 the Chicana and Chicano theater groups formed El Teatro Nacional de Aztlan (TENAZ) in order to collectively 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, and an ensemble member of TENAZ, made an effort to include and acknowledge women’s issues in its 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, in San Diego, and Las Cucarachas in San Francisco, led by Dorinda Moreno. In 1974 Moreno’s group wrote and performed the play Chicana, which traced Chicanas’ historical ancestry back to Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz and Adelita. Chicanas in WIT demanded that their issues be recognized within TENAZ: “The 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.” 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.

The women ensembles within TENAZ also created teatropoesía, a performance that incorporates theater, poetry, and music. Yvonne Yarbro-Bejarano states that this art “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.” Many of the women in this new genre were neither playwrights nor actors, but they utilized their poetic abilities in order 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, including those in El Salvador and Nicaragua. One teatropoesía
performance piece, *Tongues of Fire*, was based on Gloria E. Anzaldúa and Cherrie Moraga’s edited anthology *This Bridge Called My Back*. Throughout the 1970s and 1980s Latinas created an impressive body of theatrical performance work as part of ensembles and on their own. They also developed important collaborations with Latin American theater groups that contributed to their knowledge of theater of protest and activism.

Overall, the themes in Chicana/Latina theater and performance are as varied as the people who compose these groups. The most common topics center on 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 Latina/o 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 bilingual and/or Spanglish. Occasionally, one encounters indigenous and other European languages in Chicana/Latina cultural productions; for example, Chicana performers Elvira and Hortensia Colorado use Nahuatl, while Cuban American lesbian performance artist Alina Troyano, whose artistic name is Carmelita Tropicana, uses German in her plays. More recent works such as Troyano’s *Milk of Amnesia/Leche de Amnesia*, Chicana playwright Josefina López’s *Simply Maria, or, The American Dream*, and Colombian-Asian writer Milcha Sánchez-Scott and Jeremy Blahnik’s *Latina* all address issues of assimilation to 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.

In regard to theater labs, Latina/o playwrights have been fortunate to have had a small but effective number of spaces where their work and voices have been nurtured. These Latina/o theater labs began to emerge in the late 1970s and have been responsible for the majority of Latina dramatic cultural productions. On the East Coast, Miriam Colón’s Puerto Rican Traveling Theatre Company developed into a writing lab in 1979. In California, the Bilingual Foundation for the Arts at the Los Angeles Theater Center was created in 1973 by Mexican actor Carmen Zapata and Argentine theater designer Estela Scarlata. Its artistic director, Margarita Galbán, was Cuban American. José Luis Valenzuela has chaired the Los Angeles Theater Center’s Latino Theater Lab (LATC) since 1985. The 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,
mid-life crisis, and support systems. In 2002 LATC produced Fernández's *Dementia*, a play about homophobia, AIDS, and dying in the Chicana/o cultural context.

In Tucson, Arizona, Silviana Wood was a founding member of the ensemble Borderlands Theater. Since 1986, this ensemble has continued to produce primarily plays concerning issues specifically related to the borderland and its people. José Cruz González, for several decades, has directed another lab in California: the Costa Mesa South Coast Repertory's Hispanic Playwrights Project. One of González's lab's main contributions was the publication of the anthology *Latino Plays from South Coast Repertory* (2000).

New York is the home of one of the most renowned labs of this kind, the INTAR (International Arts Relations) Hispanic Playwrights-in-Residency Laboratory Group, which was founded and directed for more than two decades (since 1981) by the Cuban American playwright and director María Irene Fornés. The author of more than forty plays, Fornés is considered the "godmother" of several famous Latina/o playwrights.

The beginning of contemporary Chicana professional theater can be situated in 1986 with the publication of Moraga's play *Giving up the Ghost*. Chicana playwrights Edith Villarreal (*My Visits with MGM—My Grandmother Martha*) and Denise Chávez (*Novenas narrativas*) have written works specifically dealing with gender issues of identity formation and generational conflict. Two of the younger playwrights' plays, Josefina López's *Real Women Have Curves* and Milcha Sánchez-Scott's *Roosters*, concentrate on themes of identity, self-image, immigrant labor exploitation, and life in the barrios. New York–born Migdalia Cruz, perhaps the best-recognized writer of Puerto Rican descent, has written more than thirty plays and musicals with themes that represent life for Puerto Ricans in urban settings. Among her most-produced works are *Miriam's Flowers*, *Fur*, and *The Have-Little*. Dolores Prida and María Irene Fornés, two playwrights of Cuban ancestry, have had successful careers in theater and are nationally and internationally recognized. Two of Prida's most famous plays are *Coser y cantar* and *Beautiful Señoritas*; 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, respectively, focus on issues of repressive military regimes and refusal of patriarchal domination.

Overall, Chicana/Latina theater focuses on issues of repression and marginalization, be it because of sexuality, gender, class, language, race/ethnicity, or national origins. Chicana/Latina writers strive to voice their struggles regarding their marginalization in U.S. dominant society.
CHICANA/LATINA PERFORMANCE ART

The second type of theatrical cultural production in which Chicanas and Latinas have participated since the 1970s and especially in the past 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. In her definition of Latina performance, Alicia Arrizón emphasizes issues of resistance and agency:

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.7

Regarding the issue of resistance in this type of theatrical representations, Arrizón argues that "performance art, and especially the one-woman show, is uniquely suited to disruptive function. It is an exceptionally effective representational strategy because the subject explicitly . . . attacks universalizing agendas that have erased the subject's multiple determinations, as well as its agency." In addition, Arrizón highlights the specific ways in which performance art is powerful by rendering the female subjects visible: "Within the specificity of Chicano culture, the one-woman spectacle is a radical medium of expression. As the performative subject, the female-gendered self seeks power by rejecting and subverting existing structures of power. As a representational strategy in Chicana/o theater, [it] has contributed significantly to the visibility of Chicanas." Thus Arrizón argues the importance of Chicanas' and Latinas' self-representation and resistance through this art form.

Today, the three most recognized and produced Latina performance artists are Alina Troyano, a Cuban American (Milk of Amnesia—Leche de Amnesia and Memorias de la Revolución); Mónica Palacios, a Chicana from California (Latin Lesbo Comic: A Performance about Happiness, Challenges, and Tacos and Greetings from a Queer Señorita); and Puerto Rican–Cuban American Marga Gómez (Marga Gómez Is Pretty, Witty, and Gay, Half Cuban/
Half Lesbian, and La familia cómica). All three artists deal specifically with queer, feminist issues and Chicana/Latina cultural identity through comedy. Troyano's Milk of Amnesia/Leche de 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.

In her attempt to assimilate, the young protagonist, Carmelita Tropicana, is reminded by a shadow (read 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 center-stages 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.

Palacios is not afraid to shout her sexual desire for women after she struggles to become comfortable with her queer identity. Throughout her perfor-
mance, she dismantles taboos in order to encourage and empower queer and nonqueer Latinas to assert their identities 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 were specifically as a gang member, a whore, or a maid. Frustrated with these choices, especially coming from a performance family background (her father and mother were a singer and a dancer, respectively), she decides to drop out of the acting circles and create her own stand-up and solo performance shows directed exclusively at Latina/o and/or queer audiences.

There is an undeniable continuation of themes between the theater collectives of women during the Chicano movement and contemporary one-woman performance. According to Broyles-González, “One-woman shows are more visible and more immediate in their response to the issues of the day. The performances have the freedom to be radically countercultural and creative because they are neither tied to the censorship and aesthetic expectations of the theatrical institutions, nor are they tied to dominating men.”

She also states that Gaitán’s work must be considered under the category of rasquachi, which she defines thus:

> The 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. Although some may consider rasquachismo unsophisticated—because it lacks the full trappings of a proscenium theater—it is highly sophisticated in terms of its instant creativity, its appropriation and inventive mixture of diverse cultural elements, its mobility, subversive topicality, radical satirical humor, and improvisational capacity.

Broyles-González recognizes the advantages of rasquachismo in the sense of offering the artist a certain economic and intellectual independence from the official and academic constraints of theatrical institutions.

Given that Gaitán incorporates different technical support for her performances, including slides, video, visual art, and music, Broyles-González has labeled her work “neo-rasquachi performance” or “nouveau high-tech rasquachismo.” She states that

> Gaitán’s performances mark the continuation of the longstanding Indigenous rasquachi aesthetic practiced by Indigenous collectives since the
beginning of time and into the 1960s and 1970s . . . It does not require ten weeks of rehearsal and a playwright with a year's grant or residency. Its constitutive elements are typically derived from a wide range of readily available cultural resources. Here is the mature, emancipated post-movimiento woman's solo voice. She enjoys complete artistic control over her neo-rasquachi performances, and she deploys her control in part to obliterate patriarchal and nationalist agendas while advancing a womanist political vision by placing at center stage a strong Indigenous Chicana voice.  

Broyles-González thus situates Gaitán's work within the century-old rasquachi theater tradition that was highlighted by Chicana and Chicano theaters of the 1960s and 1970s. Furthermore, she recognizes Gaitán's political vision, and that centralizes Chicana and indigenous women's voices.

MARÍA ELENA GAITÁN:  
"ARTIST AND ACTIVIST FROM EAST L.A."

María Elena Gaitán was born in East Los Angeles in 1949. Her mother, Ana Saldivar, was originally from Monterrey, Nuevo León, Mexico, and her father from Del Rio, Texas. Her musical abilities are a legacy from her mother, who began to take piano lessons when she was a little girl, later on becoming a music teacher at a high school in Los Angeles. Gaitán credits her mother not only with her musical talent but also with her rebelliousness precisely because Saldivar always confronted anyone who attempted to minimize her daughter's talent or sought to fit her into established patriarchal "female modes of decency." At her mother's insistence, Gaitán decided to play the violoncello (cello), given that she was a tall young woman.

From childhood Gaitán attended the best schools, such as Alhambra High School, where very few Chicanas were enrolled, so she could develop her musical talents. She remembers the daily racism she confronted in school: white students called her "beaner" and "wetback." Gaitán remembers her music classes as the only spaces where she felt she belonged; she recounts that one of her teachers had a special way of picking the student to play the leading instrument in each category. This teacher assigned the students numbers and made them each play the same song while he sat facing the wall in order not to look at the student who was playing. In this manner, the teacher chose the winner on the basis of her or his ability to play the instrument and not because of her or his race or ethnicity. She states that it was during these competitions that she truly felt she had an equal opportunity to be chosen based on her talents. She remembers that in preparing for
these events, her passion for playing the cello helped her survive a racist and alienating high school.

The story about Gaitán's first cello lessons is critical, especially because her family did not have the financial means for this expensive endeavor. For Christmas one year, her mother made an arrangement with a known cellist to become Gaitán's teacher for ten lessons. The artist remembers that there were several big presents under the tree, and she was eager to find out if any of them were for her. When all the presents were opened except the smallest box, she was disappointed and thought that whatever was in the small container could not be that important. But when she opened it, she found a little paper that said to wait for a telephone call at a specific hour. This call was from the teacher to tell her to begin cello lessons. With tremendous sacrifice, Gaitán's mother paid for the lessons and began her daughter's illustrious musical career. Gaitán acknowledges that she was mentored by women, specifically, through most of her life as a musician.

After finishing high school, Gaitán enrolled in the California Institute for the Arts (Cal Arts) with a full scholarship; she was one of the first Chicanas to graduate from Cal Arts. At the age of sixteen, she joined the Pasadena Philharmonic and later traveled to Europe as a cellist. Although she played with the Philharmonic at such a young age, as a working-class Chicana she encountered much racism and classism in the arts. Given the fact that she lived through outrageous discrimination against her because of her ethnicity, gender, and class, Gaitán became interested in fighting against this for herself and other members of her community.

Moved by the injustices of the time against different ethnic groups, years later Gaitán abandoned her artistic career to become fully involved in social activism and participated with César Chávez and Dolores Huerta of the United Farm Workers Union (UFW) to defend the rights of agricultural workers. She also worked with Bert Corona for undocumented Mexican immigrant workers' rights. At the same time, since her mother had been a teacher at Hollenbeck High School in the Los Angeles Unified School District (L.A. Unified), Gaitán worked in education and became one of the first Chicanas to be elected to the Board of Education in that city. Throughout this period of her life, Gaitán was raising her son as a single mother.

Apart from her musical and activist career, Gaitán studied to become a court interpreter; she has incorporated this knowledge into her performances. She writes: "When I became a court interpreter, I would be the specialist on profanity. The California Court Interpreter's Association (CCIA) would send me to make my formal presentations on profanity and I collected dirty words from all over . . . Latin America . . . I did formal pre-
sentations on profanity way before I did 'Chola.'" This provides some historical background for her character Sufrida, whom she describes as "mal-hablada or using profanity."

This artist/activist is comfortable using linguistic code-switching and mixes English and Spanish in the same sentence when speaking to a bilingual person. She strongly defends what she calls her "pochismo," or language mixture, explaining that "you mix English and Spanish naturally, and one does not notice [when doing so] because one is operating at many different [linguistic] levels at the same time. Linguistic mixtures are not good and are not bad, they simply are. But [this] is a different Spanish, it's not the Spanish from Spain or from South America, it is the Spanish from Aztlan." Gaitán center-stages the use of the term Aztlan as a political act; she defines the term as "the northern borderlands between Mexico and the U.S." and continues: "Here we speak mixing languages sometimes as it is done on the borders [where two or more languages are spoken]. Many people see this disdainfully, but in the end it is a living language and we are a part of this."

GAITÁN AND HER PROTAGONISTS

At some point, encouraged by several close friends within the Chicano art scene in Los Angeles, Gaitán and poet Marisela Norte decided to write one of Gaitán's first performance shows, entitled La condición femenina, in which Gaitán played the character of a chola from East L.A. and Norte played a well-behaved, middle-class young woman from Hacienda Heights. These characters were created to represent two opposite examples of being a young woman in Chicana and Chicano families. At some point, both artists received an invitation to present their show at a woman's detention center in Chino, California, and when they thought about the possibility of offending some of the real cholas in the audience, Gaitán decided to alter her character and dress up as a 1940s pachuca instead. She states that "La condición femenina was the first time I played a chola, and the reason I went to the pachuca character was because I went to the women's prison, and I did not want those women to think that my character was making fun of them." This sensibility forced her to alternate between one and the other character, continuing to make the cultural connections explicit between the two.

Gaitán used her friend Judith Baca's triptych "Las Tres Mariás" to model her character of the pachuca/chola. Baca had a few pictures taken of herself as a pachuca, and Gaitán was able to choose from them: "Judy's work, that particular piece of hers . . . had marked me with the imagery [of pachu-
It is important to recognize the direct influence from one artist to the other in reference to these two historical characters (pachuca and chola). Aside from Baca's work, Gaitán indicates that she used her own real-life examples for her character: "[I had] my own memories of pachucas when I was a little girl because in East L.A. we had pachuca neighbors." 

Gaitán combines these two dissident characters in her performance; the show's strength is precisely the power of her characters as hociconas. Her protagonists, Sufrida and Connie, do not limit themselves in any way, especially when they speak their truths. They represent the voices of working-class Chicanas and cholas who have a point of view that is completely different from that of the dominant class. According to literary critic Rita Alcalá, "Gaitán challenges essentialist notions of *mexicanidad* by celebrating her pochismo, her hybridity, in a way that goes beyond Spanish/Indigenous, U.S./Mexican dichotomies. [T]hrough Chola and Connie Chancla, two rascuache peladas, Gaitán attacks tough topics, like xenophobia, immigrant bashing and intracultural sexism."

Gaitán describes her own fascination with cholas when she was growing up: "It was very forbidden for me as a young woman in East L.A. to be [a chola]. My mother would’ve kicked my ass in a minute. And yet, I remember having great curiosity about those . . . cholas, their toughness, their *cara de palo* [expressionless faces] and their ‘fuck you’ [attitude]. There was something [else] . . . [lo] rebelde [their rebelliousness].” It is exactly this rebelliousness and “fuck-you attitude” that she chose for her characters. She states that “there was rebellion in [the chola], and it felt very familiar, it felt totally right.” In terms of the character’s language as a “pelada” who uses profanity and is very crude, she says, “about [being a] pelada . . . what can I tell you? My mother was a schoolteacher, she also used profanity. ‘Huerca cabrona’ [damn kid] was my middle name.” This serves to indicate that such language was in her everyday experiences. This so-called vulgar language is also rooted in the carpa tradition, and therefore it is important to see the main characteristics that Gaitán rescues and appropriates for her characters. Sufrida and Connie are always ready to defend themselves and their community by taking the offensive, by criticizing those oppressing their people.

**Chola con Cello**

Ms. Sufrida del Pueblo comes onstage chewing gum and dressed as a chola: she wears black pants, a shirt with tails, and a wig combed in the style of a pachuca (a very high pompadour with a huge red bow). Sometimes Sufrida
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WILD TONGUES

has a painted teardrop drawn as a tattoo by her cheekbone. An important characteristic is her use of language; she uses Caló and code-switches between English and Spanish. As an hocicona, Sufrida does not care who feels offended by her words. The complete fusion of the pachuca, the chola, and the pelada is evident in Sufrida's attire, attitude, and language. Therefore, she is always prepared to take on the oppressive system that exploits the destitute in general and working-class Chicanas and Chicanos as well as the undocumented immigrants in particular.

One of Sufrida's main targets is California's ex-governor Pete Wilson; her show criticizes his racist, anti-immigrant, anti-Mexican campaign during the 1990s. Wilson first was the mayor of San Diego, one of the most infamous border cities for its anti-immigrant stance, and later he allied himself, for his reelection as a governor, with xenophobic groups that created several propositions against immigrants and the poor. In 1994, Proposition 187, which Wilson sponsored, negated any type of social services to undocumented workers and their children; it required state and local authorities to report people whom they believed to be undocumented. In her performance Gaitán incorporates all of her artistic and activist talents in denouncing such bigotry in the state of California in particular and in the country in general.

In her first performance presentations of Chola con Cello at the Mark Taper Forum in 1993, Diane Rodríguez, dressed as the character of La Muerte (Lady Death), was the master of ceremonies and introduced Gaitán as follows: “Let me tell you guys [that] we are fortunate to have her here tonight because she's been on a world tour . . . to raise funds for the ‘Deport Pete [Wilson] Campaign.’” The audience responded with enthusiastic applause and laughter; Rodríguez continued with her introduction, reminding all that the money collected that evening would go toward the purchase of “cellos for California schoolchildren who would otherwise never hear or see a cello.” During that time, the arts and especially music were being defunded in California's inner cities.

Once on stage, Sufrida begins her monologue indicating the racism and sexism she has experienced as a Chicana cellist:

Thank you. Thank you. Cómo están todos, eh? You know, I've always had to fight for my pinchi rights . . . even to play the cello. It's hard being a Chicana. Even the homies would get on my case. They used to go: 'Hey Sufrida, who do you think you are esa? La Jack Benny of the Chicano Movement?' Oh, and then I had an aunt who hated me to play the cello. She used to go: 'Ay, Sufrida, ¿por qué tienes que tocar ese instrumento
tan grandote? Such a big instrument . . . between your legs . . . in front of all the people. Ay, how embarrassing! Pinche vieja neurótica, ignorante. Thank God I never listened to her verdad? Oh, and then the people in classical music, they didn't like me neither, eh? Imagine, a homegirl in the philharmonic. You got a bunch of pinche gente tapada in there. One day I was going peepee in the bathroom and two viejas were in there from the orchestra during the rehearsals and one of them goes “—Oh, isn't she Armenian?” What the hell does that mean? “—No, somebody said she was a Mexican.” “—Oh she couldn't be a Mexican, not playing the cello.” So naturally, I wiped myself and I came out of the bathroom and I go: sabes qué? My mother was from Monterrey Nuevo León, México and my father was a tejano and that used to be Mexico so . . . Fuck you! We are here to stay, baby.\(^9\)

On the one hand, Sufrida's aunt tries to constrain her into a domestic role as a “niña decente” (decent girl) who should not be “opening her legs” in public, especially to put such a huge instrument between them. On the other hand, the racist, rich, white women from the philharmonic cannot believe that she could be of Mexican descent and still be part of that elite musical ensemble. In other words, Sufrida is discriminated against at the personal (familial) and professional levels for being a working-class Chicana; given this, she ends the monologue by insulting everyone in the tradition of an hocicona.

After finishing her monologue, the protagonist sings a rap song entitled “War from the Governor” in which she demands, among other things, that the state deport Pete Wilson instead of the undocumented, hard-working immigrants; she argues that Wilson is the true criminal for violating human rights. She calls on her audience to become more conscious of the physical and psychological abuses that undocumented immigrants experience because of the state's racism and violence that terrorize them. She acknowledges the vast economic contributions that undocumented immigrants bring into the state and the nation because of their labor.

In her performance, the rap song is followed by a classical song she plays on her cello. As she begins to play the instrument, the audience members, many of whom have never seen or thought about a chola from East L.A. playing a cello, are held in rapt attention. Chola con Cello shatters stereotypes based on gender, ethnicity, and class. After about one minute of the classical piece by Johann Sebastian Bach, the stage darkens and slides are projected on the screen flashing information about undocumented immigrants' economic contributions. Each line is one slide:
1.2 MILLION ILLEGAL IMMIGRANTS IN CALIFORNIA
CLEAN YOUR HOMES, OFFICES AND HOTELS
THEY CARE FOR YOUR KIDS, MAKE YOUR CLOTHES, PICK YOUR FOOD!
CONTRIBUTE 500 MILLION EACH YEAR TO SOCIAL SECURITY
(BUT CAN'T CLAIM BENEFITS)
AND WHAT ABOUT THE KIDS?
ARREST THEM AT SCHOOL? DEPORT THEM AT HOSPITALS RIGHT AFTER BIRTH?
PROFIT KNOWS NO BORDERS
DEPORT PETE WILSON
STOP ETHNIC CLEANSING IN CALIFORNIA

Each phrase provokes strong applause and whistling from the audience. The reason for using classical music in her show, Gaitan explains, is that she likes to use “opposites” in order to incite a reaction in her audience. For example, in this case the classical song by Bach is opposed to the cruel reality of the discrimination and exploitation of undocumented people used as cheap labor. Gaitan chooses a song by a European composer, usually reserved for the musical delight of the upper classes, as part of her tactic of subversion. To play the cello for this radical purpose subverts the instrument’s expected status and place in front of audiences who do not expect to hear a political message when they go to the philharmonic. In other words, Gaitan utilizes her cello as her main instrument of defense against the dehumanization of the oppressed. Although Sufrida is an hocicona, in this part of her act she stops talking and allows the cello to speak for the voiceless in a solemn and powerful moment.

CONNIE CHANCLA AND HER DESCENDANTS

Gaitán’s second performance presents Connie Chancla, short for Consuelo, a character who is more like a pelada than a pachuca. The show is composed of slides, video, prerecorded music, and Gaitán’s live cello performance. Connie offers her own version of history from a feminist point of view, which includes and describes the “Chancla people” as part of her genealogy. In her story, Connie claims her ancestors and adds the last name Chancla to everyone she talks about. This word by itself already elicits laughter from those who recognize it as a household word often spoken by a grandmother or mother. As an old, comfortable slipper or footwear, a chancla should never be discussed or mentioned in public because it may
cause embarrassment and immediately identify the speaker as a member of the working class. Therefore, in Gaitán's performance "Chancla" metaphorically represents the destitute people, and the audience understands that the protagonists will be the voiceless who now, thanks to Connie, tell their own story of colonization.96

Connie also presents relationships of religion, social class, food, women's rights, and human rights by criticizing the ways in which female and male members of a Chicana and Chicano family are treated differently from birth. She denounces the machismo perpetuated by everyone but especially by other women. One example is when some older women who have sons tell those who have daughters, "Take care of your girl chicks because my rooster is on the loose," underscoring that men have no responsibility for their sexuality. This is an example of how women perpetuate sexism. Rosaura Sánchez corroborates this idea:

Although socially conditioned, at home women act as subjects in charge of the socialization process. Thus if women come to accept their subordination, it is a lesson well taught by their own mothers. Women have been willing accomplices serving as ideological apparatuses of culture transmitting from one generation to the next the same worn-out expectations of female behavior, the same discourses . . . Chicano mothers have taught their daughters that men come first, that their brothers are more important . . . Thus Chicano women have been brainwashed into accepting their subordinate roles by other women. It is from other women that women learn that life without a man is not worth living. Women are at times their own worst enemies.97

Sánchez offers a generalization in this passage because, as we know, there are always exceptions to these expectations. However, in most cases the patriarchal expectations and notions mentioned are often replicated, and women deny themselves and others the opportunity of being their own liberators when they perpetuate the oppressive roles passed on by their female ancestors. Nevertheless, although women reproduce sexism, often they operate in societies where the power structures are against them and they have no other recourse.

After criticizing women's and men's sexism, Connie acts as the "barrio historian";98 she goes all the way back to pre-Colombian times, to Malinche, in order to analyze and challenge the notion of Chicanas and Mexican women as "whores, traitors, and chingadas" (fucked ones). Mexican writer Octavio Paz was one of the first to write about Malinche from a patriarchal, male perspective:
The Chingada, above all, is the mother. Not a flesh-and-blood mother, but a mythic figure. The Chingada is one of the Mexican representations of Maternity . . . the mother who has suffered, metaphorically or literally, the corrosive and infamous action implied within the verb [chingar, to fuck] . . . If the Chingada is a representation of the raped Mother, I do not consider it forced to associate her with the Conquest . . . The symbol of this surrender is Malinche.99

In this passage Paz demonstrates his verbal violence, misogyny, and disdain of the indigenous. For him, a woman (in this case Malinche) represents automatically “motherhood and nation.” Malinche does not exist as a single, childless, independent woman for Paz. Chicana feminists recovered Malinche;100 she represents the opposite of what Paz defines. Not only did she survive the conquest, she is also the respected “Mother of the Mestiza/o Race.”

Calling a person of Mexican descent an “hija or hijo de la chingada” (child of a fucked one) is an insult that makes direct reference, according to Paz, to Malinche as the “madre chingada.” Gloria E. Anzaldúa and other Chicana feminists claim Malinche with pride as they defend themselves from attacks on their personhood. For example, some family members ask older women if they plan to marry men (even when it is known or suspected that these women are lesbians, as in Anzaldúa’s case): “And when are you getting married, Gloria? You’re going to miss your train’ and I tell them ‘well if I get married it will not be to a man.’ They remain quiet. Yes, I am an hija de la Chingada. I’ve always been her daughter. Don’t fuck with me.”101 Anzaldúa challenges patriarchal notions of marriage and women’s age and accepts her marginality as empowering because for her to be an hija de la chingada means to be free.

When Connie begins to talk about Malinche, she jokes about her original name in order to establish a direct connection with her. She states that her real name was not Malin-Che, but rather Malin-Chancla and that her people did not belong to the Che clan but rather to the one named Chancla.102 Connie proceeds to explain the main term associated with Malinche:

Now, we come to the heart of the matter eh: because really, really what Malinche is considered is a puta . . . I’ve been pondering this word puta and I’ve decided to deconstruct it here for you today. Ok? First of all, I want you to know that the Indio people had many, many, many words for putas and they were not bad. For instance, they had this word for a puta that was “She who looks around all the time.” And then there was “She who wanders.” So a woman who wanders was also considered kind of
putona, you know? Wandering around . . . nobody to control her, she just
wanders wherever she wants. But this was not necessarily a bad thing.
Then puta . . . the best puta of all was called "She the happiness-maker."
We'll I've decided to add a few categories of my own now because we are
in modern times, actually in post-modern times if you are in academia,
so I decided to invent a puta after a very negative relationship I had with
a very backward brother from Veracruz . . . He basically asked me if I
was one of those putas who wanders around, with no man to control her,
in a car, by [my]self. And [so] the new category of putas for those of us
who run around in those cars is: "Puta Urbana." Translated for the mono-
lingually impaired: "urban puta." Now, there is an even higher grade of
putismo . . . that I have been able to discover in my life, this one I call:
"Puta Mística . . ." Now all the women who write and do art undoubtedly
fall into this category. I consider myself . . . [a] puta mística.103

In this monologue Connie deconstructs the term puta and recodifies it to
make it acceptable; she reclaims it by inverting its semantic meaning in or-
der for it to lose its power as an insult. Here, the connection between this
monologue and Rebolledo's theory about mujeres andariegas is clear. Con-
nie goes as far as to adopt the term for herself, invert it, and make it co-
medic, calling herself a "puta mística" because she is an artist, and to her,
the word has now become a compliment. Therefore, Connie, like Sufrida,
brings together the linguistic and personal characteristics that turn her into
a pelada/chola, hocicona character.

Aside from her feminist critique, Connie criticizes the commercializa-
tion and consumption of fake Mexican fast food produced by Taco Bell. She
states that although the food is affordable (and therefore sold exclusively to
poor people), it is "genetically altered food [with] chicken tumors." Through
this exaggeration about tumors (which disgusts the audience), Connie posits
an important criticism about the slow deterioration of poor people's health
through the consumption of junk or fast food. Connie assumes that due to
their exploited condition her community does not have the money or the
time to prepare organic products that are expensive and almost always ac-
cessible only in the wealthiest parts of every city. After this lesson, Con-
nie shows a slide that reads: "Taco Bell = Caca," provoking a huge laugh
and a strong round of applause from her audience. She states that instead of
teaching a Chihuahua dog to say "Yo quiero Taco Bell," they should teach it
to say: "Yo quiero Human Rights."104

For Connie, this point about defending human rights is key because it is
specifically related to the physical violence perpetuated on people of Mex-
ican and Latin American descent in the United States. Toward the end of
her performance, the protagonist shows a video of the televised beating of a group of undocumented Mexican workers by members of the Riverside Sheriff's Department on April 1, 1996, in Los Angeles County. Among this group, Alicia Sotero Vásquez was brutally beaten. She and her partner, Enrique Funes Flores, sued the state of California—and won—for the violation of their human rights. In a previously published article I describe the beating as follows:

After an hour-long high-speed chase, an old pickup truck was stopped, and a total of nineteen persons, all believed to be undocumented workers, were discovered in the vehicle. As the truck came to a stop along the freeway, everybody jumped out from the back and began to run away into the nearby bushes. Sotero Vásquez and Funes Flores had a harder time getting away because they were in the cab with the driver. The driver managed to escape through his side of the truck and was never caught, but when Sotero Vásquez tried to open the passenger door, it got stuck. Funes Flores, who had already started running, returned to the vehicle to help her out, but it was already too late. By then, the deputies were at their side. As one of them began hitting Funes Flores with his baton, the other grabbed Sotero Vásquez by her hair, dragged her out of the truck, smashed her face against the hood of the car, threw her on the ground, and continued beating her.105

Gaitán's copy of this video is manipulated to run on a loop and in slow motion with several visual effects (such as changing the background to primary colors) that enhance the beating. While the video is running on the screen, Connie plays a son jarocho song entitled "El perro" (The Dog) to indicate the dehumanization of undocumented workers. This music, similarly to the classical piece Sufrida plays in Chola con Cello, establishes a backdrop that repeatedly demonstrates the brutality of the beating, eliciting a strong reaction from the audience. At the end of the video, several slides ask questions that prompt the audience to think and act:

IS OUR PLANET COMMON GROUND?
WHO ARE THE NATIVES, WHO ARE THE ILLEGALS?
STRANGERS IN OUR OWN LAND
APARTHEID IN AZTLAN
DON'T MOURN. ORGANIZE!

Connie closes her show with these powerful phrases to the audience. The last message incites them to organize; then, it is followed by an image of the great Chicano activist César Chávez.
During the time that María Elena Gaitán created and presented her performances, she was one of few brave artists who dared to accuse Pete Wilson of his crimes. However, she paid the high price of being censored often. Given her references to Wilson's agenda, the director at the Mark Taper Forum attempted to censor her by sending another Chicana to tell her that she should not include the part of the show in which she insults Republicans and Pete Wilson because many of the audience members would take offense. Gaitán did not appreciate the fact that the censorship message was not delivered by the director himself. As a result, she did not change any part of her performance and by doing so demonstrated that she is always an hocicona: a mujer callejera and atravesada who occupies a public space shamelessly in order to voice her demands against the oppressive system that consistently attempts to erase and silence her and her community.

CONCLUSION

I have examined parts of two performance pieces by María Elena Gaitán through the Chicana theories of mujeres andariegas and atravesadas who claim public spaces as their own and by doing so become the owners of their own bodies, lives, and voices. I situated the characters of Sufrida del Pueblo and Connie Chancla as figures who are hociconas, traviesas, and atravesadas and combine important characteristics of rebelliousness, attire, and language from the pelada and the pachuca. In doing so, it was necessary to create a genealogy of each of these characters through time as well as a genealogy of Chicana/Latina theater and performance. I established the characters' artistic lineage as peladitas and drew on Judith Baca's and Cherrie Moraga's work to establish the historical connections between the pachucas and the cholas. Finally, I reinscribed Gaitán's characters into the long trajectory of dramatic cultural production on both sides of the Mexico-U.S. border.

In an interview for La Opinión, Gaitán summarizes her two characters, indicating that through them she brings together her experiences as an activist, musician, and artist: “What [Connie and Sufrida] have in common is that they are a rasquache (vulgar, coarse) character: a pelada who takes strong topics like 187 and xenophobia.” Regarding her methodology in presenting such topics, she indicates that she does this “through comedy, a character-instrument to voice, to inform. Then, with music and text I attempt to open [people's] hearts, and then I drop the punch of what I want to say.” In her own words, this artist-activist describes her artistic and community organizing efforts to use her art as a critique and denunciation.
of the capitalist, racist, classist, and sexist system in the United States that disdains and exploits working-class people, especially the undocumented, profiting enormously and neglecting to acknowledge the economic, linguistic, and cultural contributions that workers provide. Performance art, as Gaitán's medium, affords her the space to present her art in places that are accessible and affordable to the people she represents.
During the summer of 2004 Dan Guerrero performed ¡Gaytino!, his one-man show, in Los Angeles, California, in a small community theater. Once he introduced himself, the sixty-five-year-old Chicano told the audience about his longtime love affair with the stage. Guerrero had never before performed his autoethnographical performance piece, which was a work in progress, and he welcomed the audience's feedback. Alberto Sandoval-Sánchez and Nancy Saporta Sternbach discuss the term “autoethnographical performance” based on Mary Louise Pratt's definition of the same: “First, there is the issue of the ‘subaltern’ or marginal subject who constructs an identity in relation to the one assigned to her by the metropolitan or dominant culture. Second, these works are addressed to the dominant culture as well as to the subject’s own community. Finally, the fact that these performative texts constitute collaborations between the subjects themselves and their audiences, they may be said to materialize a space for negotiations and resistances in Pratt’s celebrated ‘contact zone,’ the space of transculturation.” But Dan Guerrero was no stranger to the stage; he had been in the world of show business since childhood with his father, the famous Chicano musician Lalo Guerrero, who took him to some of his shows.

The topic of ¡Gaytino!—a coming-of-age and coming-out story of a Chicano gay man, accompanied by various types of music—opened a much-needed space for Chicana/o and Latina/o queer subjectivity. Sandoval-Sánchez and Sternbach have observed that

[since] performance incorporates storytelling to a select audience, both its style and content allow for a politics of identity to emerge. For lesbian and gay performers, the performance may take the form of a coming-out story, which accents the community-building process that is often part and parcel of the performative experience. Audiences filling these performance spaces are multiethnic, multiracial, and multisexual, so the sense
of solidarity and coalition that fills the performative space has become a regular constitutive element of performance.³

The audience (a diverse group in terms of race, ethnicity, age, and sexual orientation) recognized the need for his voice and congratulated him on the courage and honesty of his testimony.

In November 2005 Dan Guerrero arrived in San Antonio, Texas, to perform ¡Gaytino! (still as a work in progress), and the audience there also welcomed his performance. Guerrero's queer act remains the only solo performance that offers a first look into the archives of Chicana/o queer life from the 1940s to the present; most performance texts on the topic of Latina/o queer identity have been written and/or performed by a younger generation. Here, I examine issues pertaining to Chicana/o queer identity and the factors that enable this subject to become comfortably queer amid family, community, and institutional homophobic rejection, including hegemonic practices of racism. A Chicana/o queer subject is often pressured to privilege one aspect of her/his identity (sexual or ethnic) over the other and continually struggles to negotiate and integrate both. I propose the concept of queer zone of comfort for Chicana/o subjectivity as notions of self, home, family, and community are articulated within a racist and xenophobic society. Mary Louise Pratt has theorized that a contact zone is “the space of colonial encounters, the space in which peoples geographically and historically separated come into contact with each other and establish ongoing relations, usually involving conditions of coercion, radical inequality, and intractable conflict.”⁴

Although my term “queer zone of comfort” might immediately remind the reader of Pratt’s term, I utilize the notion of contact zone to offer a new theoretical dimension. This queer zone of comfort is created and inhabited by a Chicana/o or Latina/o queer subject after negotiating his/her identity conflicts. It is a cultural territory where the subject is empowered by his sexual and ethnic cultural citizenship to create an ideological intervention through a politics of identity and difference. The queer zone of comfort is a safe space and a discursive location from which queers of color can decidedly contribute to the liberation of their respective communities. In order to fully inhabit this queer zone of comfort, the subject must create familial and familiar unbreakable bonds with other members of his/her community who support social change for the betterment of the group. This queer Chicana/o subject must feel empowered to shout her/his identity and confront any type of bigotry that precludes her/him from moving forward in the fight for liberation.
CREATING HOME: A CHICANA QUEER THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

A Chicana/o subject is expected to accept the patriarchal gender roles assigned to her/him. The moment s/he does not conform to those roles for whatever reason, but especially if s/he is queer, the subject is ostracized. Cherrie Moraga writes that due to homophobic attitudes toward Chicana/o queers, many have had to leave their “homes” and their biological families to “make familia from scratch . . . with strangers” if necessary in order to survive. In this exile, the concept of home becomes crucial as Gloria Anzaldúa associates it to homophobia when she describes the “fear of going home . . . and not being taken in . . . of being abandoned by the mother, the culture, la Raza for being unacceptable, faulty, damaged.” The queer Chicana/o and Latina/o subject must learn to negotiate her/his identity and to create new spaces where s/he belongs by expanding her/his familial ties with others who embrace all aspects of her/his identity. This subject must confront and overcome the overwhelming fear of abandonment by embracing her/his queer identity fully instead of seeing it as intolerable, scandalous, and offensive.

Anzaldúa states that as a member of the jotería, one has a need for creating a home anywhere one goes in order to face marginalization. She writes: “I am a turtle, wherever I go I carry ‘home’ on my back.” She also theorizes the issue of “betrayal” presented to those who have supposedly abandoned their communities: “I feel perfectly free to rebel and to rail against my culture. I fear no betrayal on my part.” In addition, she acknowledges the strengths she must have to complete these tasks: “So 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.” And finally, as if this empowerment were not enough, Anzaldúa is not afraid to create an entirely new community of her own: “And 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.”

For Anzaldúa, it becomes important to not have to answer to anyone about her sexual orientation and to create her own zone of comfort as a Chicana queer by negotiating her identity and creating that space where she can exist as both: Chicana and queer. The Chicana/o queer subject then must become aware of the different attacks on her/his selfhood and confront all obstacles with the confidence to be openly queer. It is imperative
that this subject become empowered through her/his new familial ties and home surroundings in order to confront homophobia and racism. The performance and narratives of many queers of color center-stage how they feel forced to abandon their families and communities because they are unable to exist without any aspect of their identity being denied, particularly their sexual identity. It takes courage to come out as a Chicana/o queer in a community that is culturally and ethnically nationalist, where homosexuality is condemned as a sin, a pathological degeneration, and/or scandalous and repulsive behavior. This same community also demands a selfless subject who will put her/his Raza first; one must first serve one's community and then the self in order to be considered a fruitful member of the group. But as Moraga has stated, the Chicana/o community needs to embrace its *jotería* in order to continue moving forward in the fight against a racist and imperialist nation.¹¹

**LATINA/O QUEER PERFORMANCE: DOUBLE/TRIPLE MARGINALIZATION**

Given the homophobic and racist contexts in which the Chicana/o and Latina/o subjects exist, it is no surprise that voices such as Guerrero's were previously absent on the Chicana/o and Latina/o stages and on the white queer stage as well. As David Román has stated, “Latino gay male playwrights historically have been denied a place on the stage. Performances that foreground the perspectives of gay men—as was the case with women previously—are viewed as incongruent with the larger political movement.”¹² Román adds that gay issues . . .”are often understood by the reigning heterosexist ideology of cultural nationalism to be symptomatic of white domination”; thus “Latino gay performers often must maneuver between Latino conventions on the one hand and dominant white gay traditions on the other.”¹³ This means that the work of Latina/o queer performers is double in terms of fighting the homophobia and racism of the Chicano/Latino and white queer communities, respectively. Luis Alfaro, a Chicano queer performance artist, playwright, and activist, articulates the issues in his eye-opening declaration that among Chicanas/os he acts “very queer” and that among white queers he acts “very Chicano” in order to have each group acknowledge and confront its bigotry.¹⁴ In order for a Chicana/o queer subject to be able to inhabit a queer zone of comfort she/he must feel empowered to speak loudly against any type of oppressive system and community that attempts to alienate her/his efforts for change.
A GAY, LATINO SUBJECT: THE CREATION OF ¡Gaytino!

Despite the many struggles and obstacles he faced in his communities, Dan Guerrero decided it was time to intervene in these spaces by sharing his story: “I’m sixty-five years old, and I have nothing to lose. I am both ‘gay’ and ‘Latino,’ which makes me ¡Gaytino!” He vowed to take his space in both worlds. Guerrero combined both aspects of his identity to create a new hybrid term. This neologism indicates the interconnection between the sexual and ethnic aspects of identity and the impossibility of dividing himself into two. The two exclamation marks encase the new word to indicate a type of proud shout both in English and in Spanish simultaneously. He is at once queering the Latino and “Latinizing” the queer parts of him as he anchors himself in the Chicano queer zone of comfort. In Guerrero’s autoethnobiographical journey, we witness his process of becoming comfortably queer by challenging his own internalized racism and homophobia. He must first feel and acknowledge the loss of abandoning the empowering aspects of his ethnic and sexual culture that he must re-adopt and utilize in order to create a queer zone of comfort.

Guerrero’s monologue starts when he was four years old and ends as he turns sixty-five. In his autoethnobiographical performance he pays homage to two of his heroes: his father, Lalo Guerrero, and his closest friend, the well-known Chicano artist Carlos [Charles] Almaraz. Recounting his relationship with each man, Guerrero recalls his struggle to articulate his own identity and to empower himself by negotiating all of its aspects. At first he fights his ethnic identity; as a boy of Mexican descent in a racist society during World War II, he wants to assimilate. Later, he hides his sexual orientation from his family by moving far away from home to the East Coast. It is not until after much searching and struggling with his identities that he finally becomes comfortable with all aspects of it and accepts himself. At this point, he decides to draw on his own experiences and dedicate himself to enacting positive changes in the Latina/o and Chicana/o communities. What follows is my critical analysis of Guerrero’s performance within the framework of his courageous act of being comfortably queer and coming back home to his community, from which he had run away, and embracing his joteria.

The performance begins in the 1940s when the protagonist’s family lived in various cities in Southern California. At the age of four, Dan had his first encounter with racism when another child called him “Mexican” as an insult. During this time, California publicly displayed racist signs that read: “No dogs, no Mexicans allowed.” But his father (of Mexican origin) and his
mother (of Mexican-Irish origin) seemed to be prepared for this occasion by counteracting any sense of shame and discrimination:

[Mother speaking] Mi hijito, my little son . . . you're an American, but an American of Mexican descent. [Father speaking]—My parents, your Nana and Tata, were born in Mexico. But you were born in the United States like Mommy and Daddy, so we're all of Mexican descent. Mexico is a beautiful country with a rich history and culture. You must always be proud to be of Mexican descent.18

Dan acknowledges the empowerment and support that his parents offer him on issues of racism against Mexican Americans. His parents are able to create an ethnic zone of comfort by protecting him from racism; but not knowing that their child will be gay, they are not prepared to protect him from homophobia. Dan's reply to his parents' statements is a clever one. He states that he's too young to understand what they mean: "I don't know what the hell they're talking about . . . I'm four! 'Descent.'"19 He accepts his Mexican identity from then on but confesses that as a teenager he did not "like the way being Mexican made [him] feel. Less than, not as good as. Limited."20

The protagonist deals with these negative feelings about his ethnic identity by submerging himself in Broadway musicals and in his own made-up theatrical extravaganzas. At this time, most of his childhood friends are not Mexican except for Carlos "Charles" Almaraz, who is a year younger than Danny. Charles, Dan points out, reclaims his name in Spanish, Carlos, during the Chicano movement as a political stance and a gesture of ethnic pride. The two of them are inseparable, and Dan looks up to Almaraz as someone knowledgeable who can always protect him and who encourages him in his love of musicals and performance. To an avid audience, the fact that he loves Broadway musicals indicates his initiation in a queer white identity for whom Broadway emblemizes a source of empowerment and an artistic zone of comfort.

**Lalo Guerrero: Disidentifying as "Mexican"**

By his teenage years, Dan's father's career as a musician of Mexican music has taken off and he is now famous, a fact that Dan admires and rejects at the same time. Dan is fascinated with all things related to the performance arts and the stage but not necessarily with all things related to Mexican culture. At one point in the performance, the protagonist begins to sing a Mexican song: "Hoy que lleno de emociones/ me encuentro con mi jarana/ voy a rendir homenaje a la canción mexicana. Voy a rendir homenaje/ a la?
canción más galana/ la canción más primorosa/ que es la canción mexicana” (Today, I am very excited, wearing my jarana [Mexican attire], because I am paying homage to the Mexican song. I will pay homage to the most gallant and beautiful song, which is the Mexican song). The stage directions indicate that this song ends abruptly and with the sound of a needle scratching the record. Young Dan continues: “I can’t stand that music. I think it’s ‘tacky.’ Dad writes it. He writes ‘La canción mexicana, the Mexican Song’ when barely out of his teens back in his hometown of Tucson, Arizona. There’s no mariachi on the planet worth its margarita salt that doesn’t play that song.”

Undoubtedly, the scratching registers his trauma and denial of seeing himself as a minority of color. One of the key issues in this scene is young Dan’s creation of his own identity as a Mexican American male completely independent from anyone else in his family and especially from his famous father.

Dan goes further into his rejection: “I’m not into Mexican music in my teens and Dad’s growing celebrity is embarrassing. I want to blend in—I do not want my father singing at a school assembly. I’m searching for my own identity and mine starts to get all mixed up in his.” As a young man, he would like to assimilate and be like “any other American” kid. But what the young protagonist does not know is that his father’s Mexican songs in Spanish have begun to create and reclaim new spaces for Chicana/o identity in mainstream racist society. As a Chicano musician, Lalo Guerrero, along with other musicians like himself, had been struggling against a racist music industry that had hoped to assimilate him by anglicizing his name and producing only his music in English. Ironically, the music that embarrasses Danny offers a much-needed ethnic and linguistic pride to its listeners.

Chico Sesma, a famous Chicano jazz musician from California in the 1950s, expresses a similar sentiment in regard to his parents’ music: “Their preferences were considerably different from what we youngsters enjoyed . . . [T]hey liked mariachis, boleros, things like that. I didn’t care for it at all.” And like Dan, not until he is an adult did Sesma learn to appreciate, to claim, his parents’ music and to incorporate it into his life as one of the first Chicano disc jockeys in Los Angeles. A similar reappropriation of his father’s music will later help Dan to create his queer zone of comfort where his ethnic identity is not only accepted but defended.

In his “disidentification” with his father’s music and ethnicity Danny attempts to negotiate his racist society’s contempt for all things Mexican. Instead, the protagonist proceeds to reveal his indulgence in records of Broadway musicals, “I come home every day from Garfield [High School], . . . get out my play clothes, hang up my school clothes and go to my magic carpet
of shiny black vinyl. My escape." He sings to every imaginable Broadway musical record available, from *My Fair Lady*, *Camelot*, and *Bells Are Ringing* to *Bye, Bye Birdie*. The only way for the protagonist to identify with anything related to Latina/o culture is for it to be part of the musicals, like Chita Rivera's song "Spanish Rose," which Dan sassily performs on stage. In order for Dan to accommodate his ethnicity at this time, he must look for the very few pseudo-Latino references, like Rivera's song, in his Broadway musicals. This is yet another example of Dan's rejection of and discomfort with the Mexican/Chicano aspect of his identity.

**BROADWAY MUSICALS:**
**"WHO WOULDN'T WANT TO DO THAT?"**

Dan's introduction to the world of Broadway musicals begins in junior high school when his encouraging drama teacher, Mrs. Jourdane, takes her class and Dan's friend Charles (at the protagonist's request) to the opening of the movie musical *Oklahoma* in Hollywood. This experience is described as one of the most exciting events in his life: "Huge screen. Music. Technicolor blue sky. White puffy clouds. Gordon McRae . . . Young, curly-haired, cowboy hat pushed back . . . My jaw drops. And that's just for Gordon McRae! More music. Dancers! Jumping. Leaping. Turning. Mid-air! . . . Singing and dancing through life. Who wouldn't want to do that?" The protagonist is seduced by the glamour and make-believe machine of Hollywood with the "mother of all musicals" that portrays a hegemonic nationalist discourse in a fun and exciting way. As a naive young man, Danny gives in to this seduction as an escape; he appropriates these musicals as white queers appropriated them early on, as a sign of a queer imagined community. He is now going to make them his by performing them in the privacy and comfort of his own room, where he feels free to be himself and enact what he calls his "Judy Garland secret"—obviously his own euphemism for "being gay."

The protagonist's first encounter with homophobia occurs that same day after watching *Oklahoma* as he gets on the school bus. His class peers began to shout, "Hey queer, Marie[ó]n" and make kissing sounds. Young Dan makes his body do the talking by freezing and staging silence: "I can't move. Everyone is staring at me. I wish I was invisible. I'll pretend I didn't hear. I've done it before. Walk straight ahead. Don't look left. Don't look right. Where is Mrs. Jourdane? Keep walking. Is Charles behind me? Sit real quiet. They won't notice me." This experience of panic and terror is not explained nor dealt with in the performance piece; in a way the dominating si-
lence surrounding it makes it even more present and powerful. Dan's wish for invisibility, secrecy, and silence is related to what Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick calls "closetedness": "a performance initiated as such by the speech act of silence—not a particular silence, but a silence that accrues particularity by fits and starts, in relation to the discourse that surrounds and differentially constitutes it." There are some instances when silence or closetedness becomes a necessary survival mechanism for a queer subject; however, in order to carelessly inhabit the queer zone of comfort, the subject must be able to not only speak but shout and celebrate his queer identity as Dan does toward the end of his performance once he completely inhabits the queer zone of comfort.

But for now, this self-imposed closetedness and self-enforced silence continues even when his father asks him specifically if he's gay. Dan states:

I'm studying my teenage face in the mirror one day—very matter of fact—seeing who I am and what I have to offer the world once I get out there. Not bad looking. I hate this stupid nose that goes up. Bad temper. Impatient. Kids think I'm funny. Pretty smart. Nice teeth since I got my braces off! I'm queer. It's the first time I say it out loud. I'm not upset. I don't go out and buy confetti either. I'm not exactly sure what it means. I know it means I like boys. I don't know what it'll mean in my life. I accept it. It's part of who I am. Dad asks me once, around this time—basically, if I like boys. "Your mother and I will understand. We just want to know. You act different around some boys. Like flirting." I deny it.

Clearly, Dan states his sexual identity very matter-of-factly, and he is not "upset" by his assertion. However, the fact that he denies his queerness to his father points to his fear of doing so even when his father reassures him that everything will be fine. This is an example of what Anzaldúa considers internalized homophobia: "To avoid rejection, some of us conform to the values of the culture, push the unacceptable parts [of ourselves] into the shadows." Dan's acceptance of himself in terms of his queerness is a private act. The protagonist will remain in the closet for some time, not even sharing his secret with his best friend, Charles, until later. By now, the audience knows that he is not comfortable in his own skin. He has experienced several types of discrimination that slowly start to separate him from his everyday reality. Dan makes the audience aware that he doesn't feel like he fits into his family, his community, his city. Furthermore, he silences his body's desires and his queer preferences. At this point, we understand that he must come to terms with both the ethnic and sexual traumatic aspects of his identity in
order to be fully comfortable as a Chicano queer. Dan evades any positionality in a zone of comfort that encompasses his ethnicity and sexuality. The protagonist's discomfort and lack of self-acceptance are an essential step in a subject's struggle to create a zone of comfort and to live as a complete person. But first, Dan must go through the necessary steps of negation, isolation, and removal. That is, he must negate his ethnic and queer identities, isolate himself from family and friends, and eventually move far away from family and community in order to accept his queerness. Once his queer identity is solidly established, Dan must begin to search for his ethnic identity and be able to fuse the two in order to inhabit and embody the queer zone of comfort. For Dan, the exploration of his queerness continues when he gets a volunteer job as an usher at the Philharmonic Auditorium in downtown Los Angeles. There, he witnesses Ethel Merman singing Stephen Sondheim's "Some People," as he states, "just to [him]." Then, Dan imitates Merman singing: "Some people can be content/ playin' bingo and payin' rent/ that's OK for some people/ who don't know [they're] alive." Dan proceeds with admiration for the actor: "Wow! Then Ethel looks for me. She wants me to hear the rest of the lyrics. She comes in for the kill. "Some people can thrive and bloom,/ living life in a living room,/ that's perfect for some people/ of one hundred and five." At the conclusion of the song, Dan has decided that he and Charles have to leave Los Angeles for New York City in order to fulfill their dreams of acting in musicals and studying art, respectively. They arrive in a gay mecca in 1962, seven years before Stonewall.

NEW YORK: FREE TO BE QUEER?

Once in New York, Charles and Dan rely on each other for everything. For Dan, Charles becomes a clear example of the "familia" that Moraga writes about regarding Chicana/o queers: "We get jobs quickly. The first weeks, all about discovery. We discover one Mexican restaurant in all of Manhattan . . . Mom sends us flour tortillas and chorizo . . . She sends them frozen, special delivery airmail. They arrive thawed. We cook the chorizo, heat the tortilla. Home cooking." It is clear that Dan and Charles have created a familial bond and have made a home together away from L.A. Dan describes his affection for Charles in terms of endearment and emotional survival: "If you're really lucky, you get that one best friend who helps get you through. We're that for each other. We like the same things, have the same sense of humor. We're always laughing . . . He is family." But Charles had made a deal with Dan that he would only take a semes-
ter off from school to go with Dan to New York, and when the time was over, he chose to return. Upon his friend’s departure Dan realizes his personal attachment and dependency on him: “The day Charles leaves is the loneliest day of my life. . . . I stand there a long time after he’s gone . . . I’m so lonely. I never consider going back to L.A. I’m a New Yorker. I know it the day we arrive.” It is admirable and telling that even in his loneliness Dan still chooses to stay in New York to enjoy his newfound freedom: “I’m liberated! Free from the constraints I feel in L.A. as a Mexican-American. Free from the Judy Garland secret I keep from my family. No one here cares. They are too busy.” Dan is willing to remain in the city in order to create his own zone of comfort around his queer identity and away from the constraints of his ethnicity. New York offers him the possibility and freedom of outing himself as gay because here he has anonymity, a choice of a few queer spaces, and a mostly white and middle- to upper-class queer community.

This migration to a faraway place in search of a feeling of liberation is a common theme in Latino/a queer literature and drama. Sandoval-Sánchez writes about this topic in Puerto Rican literature: “Once [a queer] moves to New York [from Puerto Rico], cruising, sexual encounters, and erotic pleasures determine his gay life away from the Island’s homophobic environment. On the Island there was no social space for queers. Neither was there a possibility to construct a gay identity.” Dan welcomes and completely embraces this sexual freedom. But given that this was pre-Stonewall New York, there are still several instances when the protagonist does not feel as free or as safe: “Gay life is still very much underground, even here. There are gay bars but I’m too insecure to play the pick and choose game.” Dan must learn to navigate this new space in order to appropriate it. He does not have to imitate everyone else since others do not necessarily have to struggle with the same aspects of his subjectivity. Dan must learn to create his own zone of comfort from what is available to him.

Instead of playing the dating game at some bars as other queers do, Dan decides to have sexual encounters with older, rich, white men who afford him a life of luxury. Dan describes them in the following way: “They’re successful, have money and [are] very often married with a wife and family up in Connecticut or Hastings on the Hudson.” At one point the protagonist has a relationship of several years with one of these men until Dan is dumped for a much younger guy. Up until then, Dan has seemed content with his way of life, but he is still not completely comfortable. He expresses great discontent in being traded for a younger version of himself, an action that indicates his lack of uniqueness and that he is not irreplaceable. Until
he succeeds in creating a queer zone of comfort by expanding his familial network, Dan continues to struggle with his identity.

Although queer life in New York is still hidden, those who know where to go can always find sexual encounters. Dan joins an acting troupe he finds himself in the middle of a sexual revolution, "a dozen hormone-raging young men and women in their 20s, away from home, parents. Throw in a lecherous comic character of dubious age and sexual preference—it's a sex pit, with a piano and drums. Sex is so rampant—I have sex with a woman. I don't need to do it again."45 He obviously feels sexually liberated in these spaces. The line about feeling so free that he even had sex with a woman becomes hilarious to the audience that by now sees Dan as gay and couldn't possibly imagine him engaged in heterosexual sex. At this point, ¡Gaytino! has succeeded in inverting heteronormativity by queering it. In regard to the sexual freedom that Dan experiences, Sandoval-Sánchez points to the experiences of Latino gay men: "New York means a scandalous and promiscuous liberation of the body and the mind... [Gay men are] free to be gay, to have gay sex. In fact, migration is the factor that makes possible the construction of a gay identity and facilitates writing on a subject which is a social, cultural, and sexual taboo."46

However, given that this is still pre-Stonewall New York, the freedom to be gay still has its restrictions. Dan recounts two moments when he is forced to acknowledge certain limitations and fears of being queer. The first example is when Bette Midler's performance at a gay bathhouse exposes queer life in the city: "Straight America starts to peek at Gay America. It's uncomfortable. They're not supposed to know this much about us. I'm not ready to come out, to be judged."47 The second example is about traveling to Fire Island—a queer paradise par excellence—where for the first time he sees gay men holding hands in public and becomes conscious of homophobia: "This simple act makes me realize how oppressed my life is, as a gay man. Always careful. Alert. On guard. It's so second nature, I don't notice, anymore."48 This critical awareness is a source of empowerment and agency. Dan realizes how his feelings of discomfort define and confine queers to silence and isolation. Now he can choose to accept his queerness and to begin to look for a stable queer relationship that he does not have to hide. At this point, Dan can begin to set the foundation for his queer zone of comfort where he can be completely free as an individual who is always proud of himself regardless of whether or not he has a partner or lover. Dan finally begins to create his queer zone of comfort with Richard, a younger, handsome, white man who has just graduated from the University of Notre Dame.49
THE QUEER ZONE OF COMFORT IN NEW YORK

Although the protagonist has clearly begun to inhabit a queer zone of comfort in regard to his sexual orientation as long as he is in New York, his ethnic identity is still denied and/or ignored. Dan pursues his acting career, although not very successfully. Since there are not many actors of Mexican descent in New York during the 1960s, at times he is rejected and told that he looks “too Mediterranean” or “too exotic” for a given part. Consequently, instead of becoming an actor, he maneuvers the troubled waters of show business and becomes an agent. In the meantime he continues to visit his family in L.A. for a few days at a time each year. Once in L.A. he always reconnects with Charles, who has now changed his name back to Carlos. By the late 1960s Almaraz has made a name for himself nationally and internationally as a Chicano artist and is fully involved in the Chicano movement. Dan starts to reconnect with his roots: “Back in L.A. for the holidays, Carlos introduces me to Chicano writers, artists, and political activists. We go back and forth from English to Spanish. It's familiar. Comfortable. I hear what they say. Something important is happening. I want to be involved. It all stays in L.A. when I go back to New York.” Although Dan leaves all this behind, for the first time he acknowledges the familiarity and comfort that he feels when he's around Chicanas and Chicanos. He has finally had an opportunity to feel completely at ease among a familial network composed of people from his same ethnic group with whom he can identity linguistically and otherwise. There is no doubt that he finally feels at home and that he has learned to “create familia” with this group of people. The familial ties have allowed him to completely inhabit the ethnic and queer zone of comfort. This invites him to eventually find his way back to his community in order to feel fully accepted and acceptable as both Chicano and queer, even as he returns to the East Coast.

During the rest of his time in New York, the protagonist continues to explore his talents and to enjoy his sexual freedom secretly away from his family. However, he continues to think about the Chicano civil rights movement in California. One day Carlos, who has remained in touch with Dan's family, sends him a note stating that Dan's father had invited him to lunch and wanted to know if Dan was gay. Carlos told Dan's father the truth. Now the secret was open and the silence broken: “Dad is totally accepting when we talk on the phone after the infamous lunch. He always knew... Why haven't I told my parents myself? The time. Distance. I never felt the need. I live my life freely—in New York. A week in L.A. at holiday time? I'm just used to things that way.” This becomes a turning point in Dan's
life. His father has pushed him to acknowledge his sexual orientation to him. After the conversation, both of them decide not to tell his mother, but she finds out a few years later when she asks Dan’s brother. She also immediately embraces his identity fully and welcomes his partner into the family as her third son. This family support becomes important in Dan’s full acceptance of his identity. He does not have a need to abandon his biological family forever like many queer Chicanos/as and Latinos/as have had to do. Once again, this is another step closer into the queer zone of comfort.

Guerrero is privileged to have his family’s support and acceptance. Not all queers of color have this luxury or are able to move away from their homophobic families. One of the aspects of Guerrero’s life that is not emphasized in his performance is social class. It is understood that he never really struggles financially, but we are not given any details about this. His economic comfort aids him greatly in his mobility and freedom to choose the zones and spaces he inhabits. For those who are not able to live away from their families, there is often a code and culture of silence among all members of the group in regard to the subject’s queerness. This silence does not necessarily always imply homophobia but instead a certain unspoken acceptance of the subject’s queerness.

**Zoot Suit on Broadway: “Home Comes to New York”**

Up to this point in the performance, the protagonist still does not feel fully comfortable inhabiting the queer and ethnic zones of comfort. However, an important Chicana/o historical theatrical event helps him to make the final transition. In 1979 a group of Chicanas and Chicanos arrives on Broadway with the Teatro Campesino in the musical production of *Zoot Suit*. Lalo Guerrero, whose music is featured in the play, also accompanies the cast. At that time, this was the only Chicana/o play that had made it to the New York stage. Dan’s worlds—Broadway and L.A., Chicanas/os and queers—finally intersect. Although he does not recognize any of the actors in the show, this event becomes one of the most important moments in his life: “Opening night at Sardi’s—East meets West. When my worlds collide. I spend many a Broadway opening night there, the room filled with famous faces. Lauren Bacall, Zero Mostel, Gwen Verdon, Bob Fosse, Ethel Merman. This night, Lupe Ontiveros, Tony Plana, Rose Portillo, Edward James Olmos. I don’t know any of these ‘Zoot Suit’ actors at the time—in a few years they’re all familia.” Although *Zoot Suit* did not succeed on Broadway, this became an empowering night in the protagonist’s life.

For the first time Dan, literally and figuratively, displaces and replaces
his white world of show business with a Chicana/o world. He no longer needs to inhabit the zone where only white people are his show-business family. It is finally after this event that Dan acquires a sense of empowerment, agency, and pride in being Chicano. From this moment forward, he can fully acknowledge that his family circle has expanded, feeling that he is ready to inhabit the queer zone of comfort once and for all. Dan is able to be himself without denying the fundamental part of his subjectivity, his ethnicity, embracing it in order to move forward. Indeed, such acknowledgment is centered in his performance.

Now aware of the Chicana/o cultural world he left behind, Dan recognizes that in his twenty years away from California, things have not changed much for Chicanas/os and Latinas/os. He decides to move back to L.A. to help bring about change in the entertainment industry: "Going home has been on my mind for a while. Family ties become more important as we mature. Not just immediate family. A larger family is also pulling me back. The *familia* from [*Zoot Suit*] . . . and those I meet through Carlos in L.A. Change is coming . . . I want to be a part of it." At this point, Dan has accepted the Chicana/o actors and activists that he has come in touch with as part of his intimate family circle. His community has expanded, and therefore his queer zone of comfort now encompasses a bigger group. He no longer has a need to remain within a white, upper-class, gay community in New York.

Eventually, the protagonist and his partner head to Los Angeles, where they re-create their home and reinscribe themselves into Dan’s family and community. Dan does not hesitate in expressing his sense of belonging: "We like our new life ‘on the coast.’ I dedicate myself to the Latino community with a vengeance. I start casting and bring in Latino actors even when the part doesn’t call for one . . . My New York friends label me a born-again Hispanic." This rebirth encompasses Dan’s identity in its entirety. He finally feels that he belongs in his community, culturally and politically. He can be queer and Chicano openly.

The protagonist is finally able to come to terms with his identity and has re-created his home and his family circle. He is finally comfortably queer. Most important, Dan is able to reconnect with Carlos and celebrates living again in the same city with him: "We spend a lot of time together over the next few years and when we’re not, we’re on the phone just like [during childhood]." But tragedy strikes; Carlos becomes very ill and after a series of tests is diagnosed with full-blown AIDS. Dan cannot accept the news: "No. No, Carlos. No, no. That’s impossible. They made a mistake. Sometimes tests are wrong." After the initial shock, Dan’s zone of comfort col-
lapses: "I can't process it. It's not just the horrific news. My entire belief system is shattered. I lose so many friends and colleagues and people I care about in New York. It's hard to keep count. But no one in my inner circle." When this crisis affects his loved ones, not only is the protagonist in complete shock, but he experiences how vulnerable and fragile the zone of comfort that queers inhabit is, especially when threatened by AIDS.

Although AIDS is not a central topic of this performance piece, it is important to recognize that as Román and Sandoval-Sánchez have stated "[More than twenty] years into the epidemic, it is no longer possible to stage a gay representation without invoking the experience of AIDS . . . regardless of the actual content of the representation." Carlos dies of AIDS complications shortly after being diagnosed. By the year 2005, there are only few reminders that the AIDS epidemic was still claiming victims every day, especially in communities of color. It was mostly through a few cultural productions such as ¡Gaytino! that AIDS was publicly acknowledged and the silence was broken. One hardly hears about it any more; indeed, the famous slogan "Silence = Death" is even more true and applicable now. Because of AIDS, Dan's queer zone of comfort is shaken up; he assumes that his intimate and familial circle was supposed to be safe and untouched by this disease. Dan is forever changed by Carlos' friendship and life experiences, and in sharing this intimate aspect of Carlos' life in his performance, the audience becomes politically incorporated into his family circle.

As Sandoval-Sánchez states in his critical reading of Quinceañera, a Chicano performance that center-stages the fifteenth anniversary of AIDS, "[In the performance space] AIDS is familiarized, that is it is turned into . . . a comfortable occasion that brings family and community together. Hence, AIDS is something that can be spoken within the realm of the familia." Undoubtedly, the queer zone of comfort must accommodate and incorporate all of its members—including the sick and the dying—especially when a member of this network faces tremendous challenges such as the death of a loved one. This is when that familial support carries the members of the group through and encourages them to continue to move forward in their lives and in their activism. In these terms, "performances about AIDS, like Quinceañera, are practices of social activism that strategically employ dramatic devices for the interpellation of the audience into a community of activism." As Dan's activism continues, he submerges himself into the Chicana/o and Latina/o worlds. Most important, his performance also becomes a tribute to his father, who emblematizes Chicana/o culture: "Dad and I work together a lot. It takes him a minute to think of me as a producer and not
just his kid telling him what to do. One show stands out. Paris. I produce a night of Chicano Music at the Cite de la Musique, thank you very much. Dad's first time abroad.  

Although the young Danny left L.A. feeling uncomfortable being "Mexican" and rejected his father's music, once the protagonist inhabits the queer zone of comfort that he has successfully created within the domain of the family and community, he welcomes and promotes everything he rejected before: "I sit there watching [Dad] perform, bringing our culture to Paris, through me. I see him capture an audience like I've seen him do for more than fifty years . . . I'm so proud—of both of us."  

When Dan uses the phrase "our culture" in the statement above to refer specifically to Chicana/o culture, we know that he has finally arrived at and inhabits the queer zone of comfort without any reservation. At any other previous point in his performance, if he would have said "our culture" he would have been referring to "queer" and/or "white" culture/s in particular, but the example above indicates that his has recodified his identity to incorporate all aspects of it in harmony. He no longer has a need to disidentify with being of Mexican descent or with being queer, which is precisely his reward for inhabiting the queer zone of comfort.

**DAN'S ACTIVISM: "BORN-AGAIN HISPANIC"?**

As Dan becomes more and more immersed in this new zone of comfort, he continues his activism working with Chicana/o and Latina/o artists and especially with another one of his heroes, the labor rights activist César Chávez. Dan schedules Chávez into several talk shows for special appearances to promote his lifelong work on behalf of farmworkers, labor organizing, and the UFW: "The response from viewers after his appearance is so overwhelming. [Chávez] asks me to book him on other talk shows . . . I'm glad to return a long ago favor . . . Years before the UFW, a young Cesar Chavez goes to all of my dad's dances whenever Dad plays in California's Central Valley. Cesar gives dad good advice" about where to play according to the agricultural picking seasons and places. When Chávez dies unexpectedly in 1993, Dan is asked to take *Latino Hollywood* to the funeral, which had thousands of people in attendance. Then the funeral was broadcast internationally, and it became a performance in itself. Dan reveals how the memorial becomes a political issue for him and why he has to intervene. He has an argument with the funeral procession organizers as to where the Latina/o actors would be situated in relationship to Chávez's casket and the Kennedy family members in attendance. After he sees Jesse Jackson stand right next to the Kennedys without asking for permission, Dan decides to
situate the Latina/o actors in that same space for the cameras of the world to see them as important members of the community. Even at the funeral, Dan creates a political zone of comfort for Chicanas/os expanding his own comfort zone: “Come on! I shout to my Latino Love Boat. I grab Eddie and Paul and Cheech and everyone and stand them with the campesinos right next to Ethel [Kennedy] and Jesse [Jackson]. We have to take our space.” With this action, the protagonist teaches his community to physically and metaphorically make their presence known and assert their importance in the community. The protagonist has center-staged his community once again in the same way that Guerrero has continued to do by producing and promoting Latina/o talent in the mainstream stages and screens. Unquestionably, his philosophy and political slogan is “We have to take our space.” Such an act of intervention is possible as a result of intersecting his queer and Chicano agendas and political consciousness as he has created his own zones of comfort.

By the end of his performance, Dan has made it clear and convinced the audience that he has become completely comfortable with all aspects of his identity and has learned to embrace them. But it becomes evident that for Guerrero, inhabiting the queer zone of comfort does not necessarily mean giving up his male privilege. With his performance as a tribute to Carlos, to his father, and to Chávez, he situates himself within the Chicano patriarchal lineage by honoring his male heroes: “I lost Dad earlier this year. Carlos and Dad. My heroes. Carlos stolen away too early. A life cut short. I still wonder about all that would have been. Dad was 88. A rich, full life lived exactly as he wanted. It was time . . . The thing about heroes? They never die.” As he is honoring his male heroes and situating himself among them, Guerrero performs and exemplifies the queer zone of comfort as a gay male. One would have to wonder what this queer zone of comfort looks like for female queers who are not part of the Chicana/o and Latina/o heteronormative and hegemonic patriarchal imaginary.

Guerrero’s performance forms a full circle in regard to his identity when he states toward the very end, “I’m looking in the mirror not long ago. Very matter-of-fact. See how I’m holding up. Teeth straight. All mine. Pushed up nose? Ehh. Temper better, for the most part. Still impatient. People still think I’m funny. I’m Gay. Latino. Chicano! And I’m sixty-five years old!” Then he finishes his performance with one of his father’s famous songs, “El Chicano,” which addresses the issue of accommodating all aspects of his Chicano identity as someone who lives between two worlds (Mexico and the United States) and is not fully accepted by either one: “I am Chicano, yes sir,/ I was born in the U.S./ In Mexico I am a pocho/ My compatriots
don't accept me/ White people discriminate against me/ as if I were a foreigner/ even though this land/ belonged to Mexico first/ Because I am bilingual/ I speak 'Chicano and gringo'/ This pocho says 'Goodbye'/ See you later! I'll be watching you!'\(^2\) With this song, both Guerreros create new spaces for their identities. Lalo Guerrero fights to create a zone of comfort for Chicanas/os who have been marginalized in terms of their linguistic and cultural identities in both countries.

On the other hand, although the song does not mention anything about being gay, Dan pushes his father's lyrics further to metaphorically incorporate all aspects of his identity, including queerness. By now it is clear that ethnicity and queerness cannot be separated, that he cannot split his subjectivity if he is to live his life fully comfortably. He has finally come to terms with being who he is to the point of shouting it to the world in order to create a space for change in a homophobic and racist society. In the words of Chicana activist and performance artist Mónica Palacios, there is always hope and room for transformation: "I figure artists are going to save this planet. So I must continue with my plan. Weaving the lesbian side of me with the Mexican side of me. And writing about it. And talking about it. And pushing for and demanding change!"\(^3\)

It is through queer Latina/o and Chicana/o performances like Guerrero's and those of Mónica Palacios, Beto Araiza, Marga Gómez, Luis Alfaro, and Carmelita Tropicana that queer Chicanas/os and Latinas/os can continue to create new spaces and familial ties within their communities. Homophobia and racism still remain present, but one must continue to strive to become comfortably queer and inscribe one's voice and presence where necessary. There is still hope that Moraga's dream of a "Queer Aztlán" will become a reality—our ultimate utopian zone of comfort. Meanwhile—within the context of the present wave of openly homophobic, xenophobic, and racist attacks against queers, immigrants, and people of color—voices such as the ones mentioned above need to be heard loud and clear in order to humanize and validate these subjects' experiences to continue enacting positive changes. Inhabiting the queer zone of comfort for Chicana/o and Latina/o queers cannot be a privilege afforded to the chosen few but a necessity for all. Then, and only then, can the social and civil rights movements for people of color remain on their course toward complete emancipation.

**CONCLUSION**

During the performance in San Antonio, Guerrero became aware that Vikki Carr—a San Antonio resident and his longtime friend—was in the
audience. At the end of the show Carr initiated a question-and-answer period. She congratulated him for his courage to share his story and for tackling difficult issues such as homophobia, racism, and AIDS. Carr embraced Dan’s identity fully and welcomed him back into the community as he freely inhabited the queer zone of comfort. The rest of the audience also embraced his performance, and in doing this, everyone became a witness of Guerrero’s journey as a sixty-five-year-old gay Chicano man with an important story to share. The audience joined Guerrero in inhabiting a safe queer zone of comfort.
This text investigates some of the artistic contributions of the characters of the peladito, the peladita, the pachuco, and the pachuca to transnational Mexican popular culture. I have attempted to recover and re-inscribe unpublished texts especially by and about women. These four social types have existed in the cultural imaginary of each country for more than a century, and there is much to be said about the fact that even now, they continue to be used in contemporary artistic and cultural productions. There is still much more of the recovery work initiated in this study to be done. Nevertheless, my hope is that it serves as a small intervention in the field of transnational Mexican cultural studies and that it inspires others to create and add their own research projects that might directly communicate with this one.

Incorporating all of the materials discussed into this text has been an important task, given that many of them have not been studied in detail. This is particularly important in terms of the work for and about women in these fields. Classism and sexism still are part and parcel of transnational Mexican cultural productions. There is still a need to recognize, recover, and re-inscribe the artistic and cultural productions that specifically criticize the exploitative capitalist system that abuses the destitute from anyplace imaginable but especially from the poorest nations in the world that dare send their people to this country.

At the beginning of the twenty-first century and with a serious threat of worldwide economic recession, it is imperative to recognize that the economic exploitation of destitute people and nations at a global level still continues. There is a great need to continue to rescue cultural productions that criticize the economic system currently in place even when it appears to be indestructible.

For now, it is encouraging to know that people are continuing to create artistic, academic, and cultural programs on both sides of the Mexico-U.S. border (and crossing other imaginary and literal borders as well). Young people in each country seem particularly interested in making and sustaining these connections across nations, and just when it appears that the con-
Connections have broken, other groups emerge to save and continue building those bridges. The projects that have emerged in the past five years related to transnational and international works continue to give hope and create spaces for new generations to acknowledge these connections. Ensuring that these new projects continue to include works by women and other marginalized subjects without being erased by the dominant culture remains a challenging task. With today's technological advancements, one could expect to bridge our two or many homes more quickly and in a longer-lasting manner. The works created by women in both countries continue to be marginalized, and there must be a way to remove the roadblocks that impede these works from reaching much larger audiences. One of the areas of study that has created and opened spaces of resistance is performance art. In the past two decades, Chicanas and Latinas have managed to create a space for their work in spite of the fact that it continues to be controversial, especially because they represent alternative sexualities and identities in general.

Given that the dominant economic system exploits the destitute from several ethnic groups regardless of their places of origin, it will also be important to dismantle the idea of studying the hegemonic group because of its sheer numbers. In other words, instead of simply creating transnational studies between two nations, there should be more space for something like transcontinental studies.

It is likely that given the importance of the four social types studied here, these figures will continue to be used in the cultural productions of groups of Mexican and Latin American descent regardless of where they live. Let us hope that globalization and the commercialization of Latina and Latino culture will serve as a vehicle of resistance at the local and global levels.
CHAPTER I

1. The novel, written in Spanish in 1928, was translated as The Adventures of Don Chipote, or, When Parrots Breast-Feed. All quotations in Spanish are from the original version published by the Mexican Secretary of Public Education (SEP) in 1984, and all quotations in English are from the version published by Arte Público Press. However, this translation by Ethriam Cash Brammer for Arte Público Press is not accurate in some cases, especially because the characters speak with a U.S. southern accent; therefore, I will edit such translation in brackets, when necessary. It is critical to include the Spanish version of each quotation to offer the bilingual and bicultural reader the opportunity to discern the comedic aspects of the novel that are lost in translation. Therefore, I incorporate each quotation in Spanish in the endnotes.

The epigraph at the beginning of this chapter states: "La palomilla de cómicos que la vacila en los Estamos Sumidos, sabe que la chicanada se pone de puntas cuando le ponen por enfrente algo que le recuerde su santa nopalera y, como es natural, esta flaqueza se la explotan por todos lados. De allí que no hay teatro o jacalón en donde tengan contrato cómicos malos o buenos, en el que falte el peladito borrachento."

2. The novel has two titles divided by "o/or"; the second one is a popular saying in Latin America regarding the impossibility of something happening.

3. Elliot presents a detailed study on the topic of satire, stating that "the satirist never actually brings about reform"; in other words, although satire may be used to strongly criticize society (as Venegas attempts to do in this novel), this ultimately does not mean that the author’s purpose is to change the social structures (1960, 271).

4. Broyles-González (1994, 7) defines this term as a "tent show. [But] it is impossible to define the Mexican carpa as one thing, for it encompassed a field of diverse cultural performance practices popular among the poorest segments of the Mexican populace. The carpa’s central association with the blood, sweat, and tears of the disenfranchised masses of Mexicans certainly accounts for the obscurity of its origins and evolution."

5. Muñoz (1999, 4) states that "disidentification is meant to negotiate a phobic majoritarian public sphere that continuously elides or punishes the existence of subjects who do not conform to the phantasm of normative citizenship."

6. There were other writers who published these types of commentaries on the
Mexican community of the city. Two of his contemporaries were Julio G. Arce, who is better known for his pseudonym, Jorge Ulica, and Benjamín Padilla, known as Kaskabel (Rattlesnake).

7. This information is taken from Kanellos’s introduction to the first edition (1984) of Don Chipote in Mexico (8, 14, 15).

8. I will use the terms Chicana and Chicano when referring to women and men, respectively, who belong to this ethnic group, as well as to working-class Mexicans who reside in the United States. Kanellos 1984, 8.

9. Ibid.

10. For an in-depth analysis of Ulica’s Crónicas diabólicas (1982) see J. Rodríguez’s introduction. See also Lomas 1978.

11. Lomas (1978, 48) criticizes Ulica’s elitism in the following manner: “Within a limited number of chronicles there is not a single one where Ulica explicitly exalts the positive qualities of the Mexican people. Nevertheless, in the majority of the chronicles, [he] depicts himself as a character/narrator relating his own experiences ... as a learned, audacious person [who is] a sharp observer with a good sense of humor [and] with good command of English. Within the chronicles, he has an elitist attitude displaying his upper class status, [as] he conducts himself in an acceptable manner and with a respectable distance from the Anglo community in general.” My translation; unless otherwise noted, all translations are mine.


13. The novel starts at the end of Porfirio Díaz’s regime, a dictatorship that was responsible for the country’s poverty, which in turn caused a massive migration to the United States. Acuña writes: “Modernization had led to the demise of the communal village and commercialization of the Hacienda. This process had been accelerated with Porfirio Díaz’s coup in 1876, when he became president. His policies encouraged the industrialization of agriculture, mining, and transportation, which led to the uprooting of the Mexican peasants, many of whom moved northward ... The interference of United States capitalists kept Mexico’s economy destabilized, thus ensuring a constant supply of raw materials and cheap labor for their parent corporations in the Southwest” (1972, 147–148). Don Chipote works on a small plot of land that yields enough food for subsistence that is considered a microfundio or minifundio. Furtado (1974, 74) writes that “la definición de minifundio ... incorpora un criterio económico y otro social: es la explotación que, por su exigüidad, no permite utilizar la mano de obra de la familia ... y no está en condiciones de proporcionar un ingreso capaz de satisfacer las condiciones de vida adecuada consideradas mínimas en la región” (the definition of minifundio ... incorporates an economic and social criterion: it is the exploitation that, given its exiguousness, does not allow use of the family’s labor ... and it is not able to yield enough income to satisfy even the minimal standard of living in the region).
14. In the novel there is a specific reference to the date November 3, 1924, and to Peach Spring, Arizona, when a friend helps Don Chipote write a letter to his wife (68/75).


17. Lomelí in his definition of a Chicano text explains that such a text may be discussed in terms of the following categories: "sociological, intrinsical, ideological and thematic." I consider the ideological perspective to be most useful for analyzing Venegas's novel because it "prescribes the value of a novel according to its social-political message in terms of concientización" (1982, 31).

18. In their introduction to Modern Chicano Writers Sommers and Ybarra-Frausto write that "Chicano literature is a form of cultural expression by a people who have survived and grown through responding to conditions of domination. The literary consequences of these conditions have been crucial. One is a lack of access to education and a resulting cultural emphasis on oral expression and transmission rather than print . . . While recognizing that Chicano literature has roots in both Mexican and Anglo-American literatures, we have tried to imply that its own cultural sources and development patterns are identical with neither" (1979, 1, 3).

19. In the introduction to their article "Problemas ideológicos en el desarrollo de la literatura chicana," Joseph Sommers and Rosaura Sánchez write that although literature may serve as a way to develop a consciousness among Chicanos of their domination and exploitation, "it is possible, almost inevitable that each literary text present contradictions . . . Certain authors have created their own interpretation of Chicano reality [that demonstrate that they] have internalized the values of the dominant social classes. In other words, their texts must be analyzed in a way that exposes the ideological contradictions they project" (1978, 42).

20. The dog's name in Spanish indicates that it is constantly hungry because of lack of food in the Chipote household. Brammer's translation as "Skinandbones" can be misleading because it suggests that the dog is thin but not always hungry. Literary critic María Herrera-Sobek (in a personal conversation in February 2003) suggested that a better translation of its name is "Hungerpangs."

21. The novel presents these two characters as more than friends or co-workers. They depend on each other in all ways imaginable—economically, emotionally, psychologically, socially—except sexually. Once they start working in the railroad industry they must do all the domestic work, previously relegated to the women in their lives, because all the immigrant workers are men. The novel indicates that men are forced to learn how to cook and do all activities related to cooking: "Como en México la mayoría de los hombres nos atenemos a las viejas nomás porque somos hombres resulta que aquí en el destierro, donde no tenemos quién nos haga las cosas, primero tenemos que llorar por la humareda" / "[B]ack in Mexico most of us are attended to by our old ladies just because we're men, here in exile, where we don't have anyone to do these things for us, the first thing we do is cry—because of all the smoke" (61/68). After Don Chipote has the accident and is hospitalized in Los An-
geles, the novel describes them as absolutely inseparable. The first day at the hospital when Policarpo is not allowed to stay with Don Chipote in the room, they have the following reaction: “La explicación les cayó como bomba a los cuates, pues como recordarán nuestros lectores, se habían jurado no separarse y menos en caso de enfermedad” / “The explanation fell like a bomb upon our heroes, for, as our readers will recall, they had sworn not to split up, especially not in case of illness” (86/93; my emphasis in all quotations). This is evocative of wedding vows in which the loved ones swear to stay together “in sickness and in health.” When Policarpo is able to visit his friend at the hospital for the first time the narrator describes them as: “Como pollo que está enamorado y no ha visto a su gallina por algunos días, así llegó Policarpo a ver a don Chipote de Jesús María Domínguez y tarde se le hacía que no daba con el cuarto donde se alojaba el enfermo para saludarlo y darle todo lo que le llevaba, de modo que cuando al fin dio con él, se deshizo en cumplimientos” / “Like a love-sick rooster who hasn’t seen his hen for days—that’s how Policarpo acted when he came to visit Don Chipote de Jesús María y Domínguez. It seemed like it had been a long time—he hadn’t been able before to stop by his sick friend’s room, say hello, and give him gifts. So when Policarpo finally dropped by, he did away with great pomp and circumstance” (94/101).

It can be argued that such feminization of these characters is another way of mocking them.

23. “[Y] mientras tanto sonaba ... y en sus sueños veía pasar como cinta pelucier la amargas aventuras de que fue protagonista, las que eran endulzadas por el recuerdo de sus amores pelonescos, recuerdo que no le hacía olvidar los fracasos que los chicanos se llevan por dejar a su patria, ilusionados por los cuentos de los que van a los Estados Unidos [a hacerse ricos] (155/160).
24. Elliot 1960, 188.
25. Ibid., 190.
27. Ibid., 162-163.
28. Gilly et al. state that during the Díaz regime (or Porfiriato) “farmers used to suffer the combined process of accumulation and loss of their land and a destruction of their lives, their relationships between them and with nature, and their ... traditions” (1979, 25), which produced migration within the country (from rural areas to urban sites) and external migration to the United States. In the novel Don Chipote first migrates from his rural town to the biggest border city of the time, Ciudad Juárez, before he crosses to the United States. When he arrives in Juárez and begins to realize how a city works, he is very surprised and feels lost: “La tarde comenzaba a caer y amo y perro, con la tristeza pintada en el semblante, vagaban por las calles de Ciudad Juárez. Desconocido y desconocedor de cuanto le rodeaba, no hallaba el pobre a qué santo encomendarse y a dónde dirigir sus pasos” / “The afternoon began to fall upon dog and master. With sadness painted upon their faces, they wandered through the streets of Ciudad Juárez” (31/37).
30. Acuña states that toward the end of the nineteenth century cheap labor was provided by Chinese immigrants in the United States, but after the “Chinese Exclusion Act” in 1882, which forced the Chinese out of the country, Mexicans became “a reserve labor pool of unskilled labor” (1972, 126–127).

31. Acuña indicates that by 1917 the United States had limited migration from some parts of southern and eastern Europe. During this year, the law also established that all immigrants had to take a reading and writing exam, be examined by a doctor, and pay eight dollars a person to cross (1972, 142). George Sánchez states that Mexican immigrants were exempt from paying this fee until 1921 (1993, 55, 57). In the novel the main characters are not able to fulfill these requirements and are forced to cross the border illegally.

32. George Sánchez 1993, 56.

33. “No contento el soldado con impedirle el paso, fijándose en lo mugroso que iba don Chipote lo condujo por el mismo procedimiento al baño que ex-profeso ha puesto el gobierno americano para los mexicanos que deseen pasar a su territorio. Don Chipote no entendía por qué lo trataban así . . . todos se reían de su candidez, [y] uno le dijo que era necesario que lo bañaran y desinfectaran su ropa para poder pasar al otro lado . . . y alí lo tenéis, gozando de la primera humillación que los gringos obligan a sufrir a los emigrantes mexicanos. Cuando hubo terminado de desinfectarse, pasó a la sala donde se espera la ropa, que puesta al vapor para su fumigación, sale tan planchada como recién salida de la sastrería . . . Comenzó a vestirse, pero por su buena suerte, sus hilachos se habían encogido tanto con el vapor . . . que la ropa quedó como para vestir a uno de sus chipotes . . . Como no había más, tuvo que ponérselas y ser el hazmerreir de cuantos lo veían” (29/35).

34. Bakhtin 1984, 164.

35. Rosaura Sánchez (1979, 48) states: “There are . . . elements in Chicano Spanish that are unique not in terms of the phenomenon but simply in terms of the range of the phenomenon. These are the loanwords in Southwest Spanish taken from the English language and adapted phonologically and morphologically to the Spanish language. These loanwords reflect the process of acculturation initiated by immigrants upon crossing the border. The loanwords are borrowed for various reasons. Often there is no Spanish equivalent with the same connotation as the English term.”

36. “Cansado llegó don Chipote al lugar donde estaban sus compañeros, con la barrica en el lomo, y el mayordomo, [no] compadecido de él, le dio el pico . . . sin tomar en cuenta que el pobre venía rendido después de cargar por más de una milla con la barrica de agua. Estas consideraciones para los pobres que trabajan en campos y secciones, son cosas que por comunes no hay quien las tome en cuenta y como, además, en estos trabajos el mayordomo es el amo negrero de los infieles mexicanos que tiene a sus órdenes, le importan muy poco los sufrimientos de éstos, con tal de tener grata a la compañía que los ocupa” (63–64/70).


38. Gilly et al. 1979. Don Chipote feels completely displaced when he is in an
urban area of Los Angeles for the first time and he is now participating, for the first
time, in a capitalist economic system. He has a new schedule, machines ("pu-chi-
carro"), and tools ("yaques, clobarras, renches") that he will have to learn how to
use. His struggle to adapt to a new and modern culture is obvious when he observes
an electric car for the first time. The narrator describes him as scared because he be-
lieves that the car was possessed and he starts to pray. Another example is when he,
Policarpo, and Hungerpangs are walking in the city of El Paso: "[D]eslumbrados y
atontados, los pobres caminaban abriendo todo lo que Dios les había dado de boca.
La admiración de estos campesinos crecía por momentos y creían estar soñando
al ver semejantes casas y tan elegantes, ya que, la mejor que habían visto era la
del dueño de la hacienda y ésta les parecía un jacal en comparación de los edifi-
cios que de tan altos les parecía que se les venían encima . . ." / "[T]he poor guys
walked slack-jawed, completely wowed and stupefied, looking at all that God had
granted them. The campesinos' astonishment grew with each passing moment. They
thought they must have been dreaming on seeing such elegant and lavish houses,
for the best home they had ever seen was the hacienda owner's house, which looked
like a shack in comparison to the edifices which were so tall that they appeared to
be lurking over them" (38/44-45).

39. "[D]urumieron de un tirón las horas que quedaban de la noche y hubieran se-
guido a no ser por los golpes que en la puerta estaba dando el boss, a la vez que les
llamaba para que entraran al camello, y como los pobres no despertaban a los pri-
meros, el mayordomo, con toda cortesía acompañada de jefes y godemes, redobló las
llamadas, con lo que nuestros paisanos, creyendo que se caía la casa, se levantaron y
dándose cuenta de lo que se trataba, pronto se pusieron a la orden, envolvieron unos
tacos con frijoles y se presentaron listos para empezar la faena traqueril" (61/68).

40. "Ya el sol estaba alto y los demás estaban listos para salir; el mayordomo ha-
bía dado la orden de salida, pero al notar que le faltaban dos camellos, se puso fu-
rioso y se dejó descolgar a su cuarto. Don Chipote soñaba en sus chipotitos cuando
el mayordomo empezó a querer tumbar la puerta con sus golpes, cosa que hizo que
sus dos parnas se levantaran de un brinco y, aguantando la tormenta que el mayordomo
les echaba, se fueron a la carrucha, dejando al viejo que dijera lo que quisiera, al cabo no
entendían nada" (71/78, my emphasis).

41. Brammer translates it as "Godam Sonovagun" (69/76).

42. "Pos, la verdá, señor . . . como no sabemos nada de lo que se come y si nos lo
mandarán, a sí usté nos hace favor, ponga lo que quiera" (67/74).

43. "Esto me pone triste, pues ya ves que de estos pagos que nos han dado la ma-
yoría lo ha recogido la tienda del suplai. Parece que trabajamos por la pura comida.
En fin, a ver si de este pago que viene me queda algo para mandárselos y voy a de-
cirle al señor que nos hace órdenes para la provisión que no me apunte tantas cosas,
a ver si así puedo juntar algo" (76/83).

44. Bakhtin 1984, 165.
45. Venegas, 132-133/Brammer, 138-139.
46. The most famous picaro in Spain is Lazarillo de Tormes, and in Mexico it
is Periquillo Sarniento from the novel of that title written by José Joaquín Fernández de Lizardi and published in 1816. All three novels share some narrative and thematic similarities.

47. Carlos Blanco-Aguinaga, Rodríguez Puértolas, and Zavala 1987, 239.
48. “[C]on un apetito que hacía creer que lo habían tenido amarrado, empezó [don Chipote] a embutirse la cena en compañía de su familia, digo cena si se le puede llamar así a un charco de agua con tres frijolitos, un molcajete de chile, un jarro de atole y gordas” (17/22).
50. Ibid., 240.
51. “Una defensa de la dignidad del hombre ... un planteamiento del conflicto entre individuo y mundo exterior y de poderosos y débiles, un enfrentamiento dialéctico en que la persona es progresivamente corrompida y fragmentada, un punto de vista materialista y pesimista de las relaciones y de la vida humanas; la insoslayable realidad de una sociedad dividida en clases, una crítica desesperada de todo ello y un final impresionante ... El Estado Imperialista exige una entrega absoluta, lo que significa también una deshumanización de igual calibre.” Ibid., 241.
52. Part of this section was previously published as “Estudio onomástico de los personajes en Las aventuras de don Chipote o Cuando los pericos mamen, in Nerter, no. 5–6 (Spring 2003): 64–67.
54. Ibid., 171.
55. In this instance the peladito resembles historical and sociological descriptions written about migrant workers whose bodies are utilized, exploited, and mistreated in a similar manner.
57. Venegas, 74/Brammer, 81.
58. “[E]l perro de don Chipote ha adquirido nombre mediante [un] procedimiento de composición neologística: la yuxtaposición de dos vocablos que, aglutinados, ofrecen un nombre caracterizante ... para subrayar una realidad inmutable del mundo de [los] personajes.” Gonzales-Berry and Rodríguez, 1996, 113. Gonzales-Berry and Rodríguez also relate the dog’s name to that of Don Quijote’s horse—Rocinante—in Cervantes’s novel.
59. Gonzales-Berry and Rodríguez (1996), like Gabriel Meléndez, make the same mistake of adding an “i” to Policarpio’s name and transforming it into “Policarpio,” and once this is done, the connection I make here is no longer obvious.
60. García-Pelayo y Gross 1994, 204, 548.
61. “Nadie se fijaba en [don Chipote] ... porque a Ciudad Juárez es a donde llegan caravanas de braceros que, obligados por la desgracia de nuestro México, emigran de su patria en busca de trabajo” (27/33).
63. Bakhtin highlights Rabelais’s series as useful to connect previously disconnected themes in a novel, such as the “series of the human body in its anatomical
and physiological aspects . . . food series, drink and drunkenness series; sexual series . . . defecation series" (1984, 170), all of which are seen in Venegas's novel and help unify the workers' bodies.

64. "En esta ciudad fue donde don Chipote pasó la noche, tirado muellamente en las baldosas del andén de la estación. Su sueño había sido de un jalón y no llevaba trazas de despertar y a no ser por el certero puntapié que le proporcionó un 'cuico' juareno en el lugar donde carga la retaguardia, con seguro que sigue de frente soñando en sus chipotitos" (28/34).

65. "Don Chipote quien más dormido que despierto, no pudo contestar nada satisfactorio para el cuico, por lo que, atizándole un macanazo, éste lo encaminó con rumbo a la cárcel . . . La distancia entre la Plaza Principal de Ciudad Juárez y la cárcel no es muy grande y como el policía parece que tenía prisa por darle alojamiento a su huésped, lo llevaba a macanazos y aventones, haciendo que al pobre de don Chipote, aún no se le quitaba lo atontado del primer garrotazo, cuando le atizaba el segundo, a tiempo que a Sufre lambre le proporcionaba un puntapié en la retaguardia" (32/38).

66. "En una de estas cabeceadas . . . el mayordomo se enfadó y fue y le pegó el 

godeme en la pura oreja. Don Chipote volvió en sí como si le hubiera picado una víbora, levantó el pico sobre su cabeza lo más alto que pudo y lo dejó caer sobre la talla con tan mala puntería, que, en vez de darle a ésta se encajó el pico en un pie" (78/85).

67. "Policarpo estaba tan bombeado que se le figuraba que a los relojes se les había acabado la cuerda y que nunca darían las cuatro, pues cuando se atrevió a preguntar la hora que era, supo con todo dolor que apenas eran las dos y media y eso que a él se le figuraba que ya había trabajado por toda una eternidad. Ya seguía tras la carrucha casi sin esperanza casi inconsciente, cuando el pitazo de un tranvía del Pacific Electric le volvió la alma al cuerpo. Oírlo, y soltar la carrucha y arrancar, todo fue uno, pues creía que era el pito de la fábrica que daba las cuatro. Un 'hey' del mayordomo lo paró en su carrera y con cara de muerto regresó a ver qué se le había atorado al viejo, pues no se daba cuenta de que era el pitazo del tranvía el que lo había hecho correr, pensando que eran las cuatro" (115/121).

68. "No tardó mucho en regresar nuestro paisano con un envoltorio debajo del brazo en el que ocultaba el itacate para Policarpo. Cuando entró hizo el mayor ruido posible para que despertara y viera lo que por él había hecho; pero Policarpo no se dio cuenta, pues era tal lo bombeado que estaba que desde que se había tirado rondaba a más no poder. [Don Chipote] se acercó, lo movió, le habló e hizo todo lo que pudo por despertarlo, pero Policarpo gruñía y se volteaba para otro lado" (117/122).


70. Very similar versions of this character exist in other cultures around the world with different names; for example, in Chile it is called roto (broken), and in the Philippines it is called the pusong.


72. Monsiváis 1988, 90.
73. Moreno was born on August 12, 1911, in Mexico City. When speaking about his artistic name, he stated: "I must tell you that I don't know what Cantinflas means; I adopted this pseudonym because one time while working in a carpita (a small tent theater) in Cuernavaca someone in the audience yelled 'Hey Cantinflas . . .' [and] since I thought it was funny, I adopted it." In Morales 1987, 168.

74. It is well documented that such carpas provided entertainment primarily to the poorest people who lived on the city margins or outskirts called the arrabal. Monsiváis describes this social space as "lo alejado por naturaleza de las ventajas y respetabilidades de la sociedad . . . donde las tragedias son de adeveras y los pobres conocen las felicidades negadas a los ricos. La palabra arrabal, con su carga de billares, casuchas, puestos de tacos y sopas en la madrugada . . . polvo, perros hambrientos, niños de mirada suplicante . . . Paraíso e Infierno" (that which is far, naturally, from the advantages and respectable aspects of society . . . where tragedies are more real and the poor know the (type of) happiness that is denied to the rich. The word arrabal implies pool halls, shanties, taco and sopes stands open very late . . . dust, hungry dogs, children with supplicating eyes . . . Paradise and Hell)." Monsiváis 1988, 78.

75. Balibrea Enríquez states that Cantinflas, while working in film, was able to "incorporate and homogenize the Mexican audiences following one of the most important ideological mandates of the film industry at that time: to create the illusion of the existence of a national community" (my translation). In a very similar fashion, the carpa shows during Cárdenas's presidency also served the purpose of consolidating a national identity. See details in Balibrea Enríquez 1995.

76. Morales 1987, 40.

77. Broyles-González writes that a character related to the peladito has his origins in pre-Columbian times: "The Spanish Franciscan chronicler Bernal Díaz del Castillo as well as the Dominican Chronicler Diego Durán document the existence of buffoonery and clowning in native performance genres of the sixteenth century, to which the carpa is heir. One pre-Hispanic American performance form described by Durán in fact bears a striking similarity to the Cantinflas-type pelado . . . 'A su modo, había un baile y canto de truhanes, en el cual introducían un bobo, que fingía entender al revés lo que su amo le mandaba, trastocando las palabras' [In their own style they had a song and dance of buffoons which featured a fool who pretended to understand backwards what his master ordered, by mixing up words]" (1994, 33; translated by Broyles-González).

78. Morales 1987, 90.

79. Ibid. 91–92, my translation.

80. This characteristic of being an inimitable comedian is precisely due to Cantinflas's language use because, as Balibrea Enríquez describes, "at the same time that it opposes the learned's linguistic register and appears to ally itself with a marginal and broken language, cantinfismo (or Cantinflas' language) is far from being nonsensical. Its functioning mechanism requires considerable mental agility. It entails starting a phrase and interrupting it as soon as one of its words suggests a
second meaning, different from the one that's needed, so that the audience understands both meanings: the one that should be used and the one being used so that a new sense [and phrase] is started.” Morales 1987, 6. For further details on Cantinflas’s language see Monsiváis 1988.

81. This text does not have a peladito that wears his classic theatrical costume. There are several examples when Don Chipote goes to the movie house, where he sees a variety show described by the narrator as a place where “drunken peladitos” participate but are not dressed classically. When Don Chipote participates in a show (“chow” in the novel) he wears a tuxedo coat with tails and his regular bell-bottom denim pants, which make him look ridiculous. Venegas, 143 / Brammer, 149.


83. Beatriz Escalona’s peladita character was known as La Chata Noloescapa. Her life’s work is discussed in detail in chapter 2.


85. Ybarra-Frausto 1984, 49.

86. “Pitacio se ha portado así... medio bueno, medio malo, pues si para el trabajo es casi flojo, mientras está en la casa no deja de trajinar de un lado para otro ayudándome. Afigúrate que ya me tiene bomba en la cocina para que no vaya tan lejos por agua, y no sólo eso, sino que él mismo me bombea y no me deja que me bombie yo, dizque para que no me canse. Con eso has de ver si te quiere a ti, pues me hace cuanto quiere pasar en la casa; de modo que la milpa no creció mucho, porque no le dio la segunda escardada. En cuanto al chile, ése sí lo ha cuidado, como que es el que le gusta más. El otro día fui al sembradio y me lo enseño, por cierto que lo tiene muy colorado. También te digo que el otro día llevó chile y cominos, y me picó tanto que hasta me hizo sacar la lengua” (73/80). Unfortunately, in Brammer’s translation much of the picardía is lost, whereas in the original it is understood without the need for much explanation.

87. Ibid., 74/81.

88. Ibid., 75/82.

89. Ibid., 111/117.

90. This word is usually used for old carpas, not necessarily for movie houses in Los Angeles. The word jacal means “shack,” and by adding the suffix “ón” the meaning becomes more negative.

91. Gutiérrez discusses the relationship, often unfriendly, between newly arrived Mexican immigrants and those who have been in the United States for several generations: “large scale immigration also created tensions and social friction between Mexican Americans and the recent arrivals from Mexico... Many Mexican immigrants expressed their own ambivalence, if not outright resentment, about their experiences with Mexican Americans [who felt ashamed of being of Mexican descent] in the United States” (1995, 63). The novel presents a few examples of this tension between the two groups.

92. Kanellos (1990, 62-63) states that “according to Luis Felipe Recinos, [Ro-
mualdo] Tirado wrote [this] song that became very popular among Mexican immigrants in Los Angeles; he would sing it while playing a peladito to the music of the Mexican song “Dame un beso” (Give Me a Kiss).

93. Translation found in Kanellos 1990 (210–211), which in turn cites Manuel Gamio’s papers.

94. Venegas, 44/Brammer, 50.

95. “No quiero pasar adelante sin hacer un pequeño estudio de la debilidad de algunos mexicanos que, como el terpelado por Policarpo, nomás cruzan la línea divisora y ya no saben hablar su idioma. Por desgracia, abundan mucho y éstos, que han llegado a Estados Unidos con una mano atrás y otra adelante; que han pasado como todos o la mayoría de los emigrantes mexicanos innumerables vicisitudes, por el hecho de haber recibido de nuestros primos las atenciones que trae el trabajo en los caminos ferrocarrileros y haber aprendido una que otra palabra del idioma yan-qui, se olvidan hasta de la parroquia en que les mojaron la chonteca cuando los bautizaron y presumen de gringos, principalmente cuando encuentran paisanos recién desembarcados, a quienes les presumen de su sabiduría en el tok inglés” (45/51).

96. Gutiérrez (1995) indicates that “the increasing flow of immigrants into the Southwest was welcomed by some Mexican Americans because the immigrants helped to rejuvenate Mexican culture, customs, and use of Spanish in their communities” (40). However, some recent immigrants have also criticized Mexican Americans as having assimilated “much of this sentiment during this period derived from Mexican immigrants’ belief that they would someday return permanently to Mexico, although by the mid-1920s a significant number of immigrants had already lived in the United States for more than twenty years. Considering themselves part of what they called Mexico de afuera . . . they believed themselves the only true Mexicans and often dismissed the Mexican Americans, whom they called pochos . . . as mongrel people without a country or a true culture” (63). It is important to indicate that such negative sentiments between the two groups were not only a mere response to Mexican nationalism and pride but instead to material conditions that affected each group.


98. Several of Ulica’s characters translate their names literally from Spanish to English, as in a vignette entitled “How to Organize Surprise Parties”: “Como se acerca el día del santo de la señora doña Lola Flores, ésta no quiso perder la oportunidad de ser agasajada y celebrada a la usanza de este país, del que se ha vuelto fervientemente enamorada. Tanto, que quien le llame Lola, Dolores o Mrs. Flores sufrirá el bochorno de una reprimienda, pues se ha americanizado a tal grado, que hasta los nombres familiares los ha traducido literalmente, más o menos mal, a la lengua inglesa, corregida y aumentada. Su nombre, ahora es Mrs. Pains Flowers; el de su esposo Ambrosio, Hungrious Flowers; el de sus hijas, Esperanza y Eva, Hope and Iva. La perrita Violeta se ha convertido en Va-yo-let” (Since Doña Lola Flores’s saint’s day is approaching, she did not want to miss out on the opportunity of celebrating it as one does in this country (United States), which she loves so much. So
much, indeed, that whoever calls her Lola, Dolores, or Mrs. Flores will be embarrassed and reprimanded. She has become so assimilated that she translated the family names, and not so well, into English . . . Her name is now Mrs. Pains Flowers; her husband Ambrosio's is now Hungrious Flowers; her daughter's Esperanza and Eva are now Hope and Iva. The little female dog Violeta is now Violet” [pronounced phonetically in Spanish as “Va-yo-let”]. Ulica 1982, 77.

100. Ybarra-Frausto 1984, 53.

“[L]a buena señora despertó e inmediatamente dio trazas de prepararse para seguir el viaje y para no ir cargando con lo necesario, se fue al corral, se puso en cuclillas y dejó lo que ya andaba cargando inútilmente, puesto que lo aprovechable ya se había colado. Después fue a despertar a la gente menuda, los que se fueron poniendo en pie y a la orden, siendo despachados también al corral para que aligeraran un poco de peso. Sólo el más pequeño no tuvo necesidad de ir al corral tras sus hermanos, porque durante la noche quién sabe cuántas veces se había aligerado, al grado que parecía violín en charco de agua, pues casi nadaba en sus propios elementos. Esto para doña Chipota no era novedad, así es que agarrándolo por las patas lo columpió y en menos que canta un gallo, lo cambió de ropa, no sin haberle quitado las costras a fuerza de salivazos y raspones con la mantilla. Por fin quedó listo. Los demás de la palomilla también se presentaron ya ligeritos” (128/134).

105. In a similar manner there are other words used to mock the characters in a dehumanizing way, such as “borregos” (sheep), “ladridos de los niños” (children’s barking), “como gatos” (like cats), “se movieron las colas” (they moved their tails [to greet each other]), “como changos” (like monkeys).”


107. “Como es natural el bastimento preparado por doña Chipota no había ajustado para tanto tiempo y como don Chipote no sabía qué tan lejos estaba el sitio a donde iba, una vez terminado el morral de gordas, empezaron las economías, de modo que donde había oportunidad, don Chipote se compraba un montón de tortillas y chiles. Mas como las tortillas se acababan primero, había días que se la pasaban comiendo puro chile, dando por resultado que cuando tenían que tirar la comida digerida, era una de apuros que hasta lágrimas les salían” (26/32).

108. “Sólo les hacía levantarse el hecho de que las galletas y sardinas endilgadas el día anterior, estuvieran ya digeridas y quisieran salirse del caso, cosa que como el lector sabe, es de primera necesidad a la que hay que atender, o exponerse a una peritonitis. Nuestros emigrantes como no tenían nada más que hacer que comer y darle gusto al cuerpo, en cuanto sentían los primeros síntomas, no esperaban impuestos a las cosas naturales y no como la gente de sociedad que están obligados a fingir hasta lo más natural” (49/55).

CHAPTER 2

1. See Dueñas 1994 and Morales 1987 for more details on the women who participated in these types of performances.


4. Nicolás Kanellos (1990) states that as early as 1789, there were theatrical productions in Spanish in Monterey, California.

5. See Kanellos 1989.


7. See Kanellos 1990.

8. For examples of other women of Mexican and Latin American ancestry who participated in earlier theater and performances, see Elizabeth Ramírez's Chicanas/Latinas in American Theatre (2000), especially the first two chapters, which offer the sociohistorical context before 1950.

9. Lydia's father, Francisco Mendoza, was the one to drive the family from town to town. It was also his idea to create 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 Broyles-González 2001 for more details, especially chapter 1.

10. Arrizón provides (1999, 160) an in-depth analysis of Niggli's play Soldadera, in particular the representation of the character of Adelita: "Contradictions abound: Anglo women play Mexican soldaderas; they wear clean and colorful skirts and shawls; they are surrounded [sic] by basketry and cacti meant to evoke folk art and a warm, exotic countryside... 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."


12. There is very little information on Wilhelmy; one of the few authors to write about her is Miguel Angel Morales, and I have taken most of the biographical details from his 1987 text.


15. Ibid., 104.

16. See chapter 1 on this comedian and his relationship, by name, to the famous comic strip.

17. This insecurity is mentioned by José Antonio Wilhelmy Muñoz, his son with "La Willy," who also stated that his father was always jealous of his mother's success. Dueñas 1994, 56.
18. Ibid., 57.
19. It is important to note that Wilhelmy chose to dress as a man for this character, transcending gender barriers.
21. Ibid., 108.
28. This information was found in La Chata’s “Scrapbook” no. 3 in the Special Collections at the San Antonio Conservation Society.
30. Webster’s Encyclopedic Unabridged English Dictionary of the English Language (1996, 486) explains that the word cuckold “apparently originally applied to an adulterer, in allusion to the cuckoo’s habit of laying its eggs in other birds’ nests.”
31. Ybarra-Frausto (1984) discusses this type of humor related to bodily functions in his article “I Can Still Hear the Applause.”
32. See chapter 4 for more details about the mujer andariegia figure.
33. I am indebted to my brilliant student and Ronald McNair Scholar Roxana Rojas from our Transnational Mexican Popular Class (which I team-taught with my colleague Rosana Blanco-Cano at Trinity University in spring 2008), who discussed this powerful idea of the woman calling the charrito a “bad lover” and that sex with him was “nada,” nothing.
34. Ybarra-Frausto was one of the first scholars to interview Escalona’s daughter Belia Areu Camargo and compile documents about her life. He recommended that I use the sketch in text, as Camargo related it to him.

Chapter 3

1. The epigraph is from a poem that José Montoya wrote in 2003 specifically to highlight the relationship between Tin Tan and the U.S. pachucos. The Spanish rock band from Mexico City called Maldita Vecindad y Los Hijos del Quinto Patio (Damned Neighborhood and the Sons of the Fifth Courtyard), who sing about Mexican pachucos, asked Montoya to write this poem. I am indebted to him for providing me with a copy of this unpublished text. I have not corrected any grammatical errors in the Caló/Spanish version because I hope the reader can appreciate Montoya’s writing in its original version. The English translation is mine.
2. The New York Times of June 11, 1943, published an article with a statement attributing this creation to Clyde Duncan, a busboy from Gainesville, Georgia, at
the end of the 1930s. However, critics including Anthony F. Macías (2001, 87) argue that this suit cannot be attributed to only one person because several jazz musicians had already worn it before that time.

3. See chapter 3 for an explanation of this labor program.

4. For more detailed texts on the relationship between pachucos and African American zoot-suiters, see Macías's (2001) and Luis Alvarez's (2001) dissertations.

5. Eduardo Obregón Pagán indicates that during the 1940s the population of Mexican descent was the largest ethnic group in Los Angeles (2003, 21).

6. In order to avoid the inherent sexism of the Spanish language with the need to write both feminine (pachuca) and masculine (pachuco) terms when referring to both genders, I use the term pachucada for both.

7. The pachucos were proud of their long hairstyle, which consisted of a pompadour on top and combed on the sides toward the back, meeting in the center of the back of the head; this style had several names, such as ducktail or duck's ass, abbreviated “D.A.,” and also lamar or Argentine. Their hair was seen as daring and an affront to the men in the armed forces, whose hair was very short. Macías states that “like the zoot suit they accompanied, these in-your-face hairstyles became politicized as they claimed space and drew attention to their wearers” (2001, 48).

8. On this topic see George Barker 1975, 183–201, and Rosaura Sánchez 1994, 129. It is important to highlight that the terms pachuca and pachuco are used specifically with working-class youth.

9. bell hooks offers the following definition: “Stereotypes, however inaccurate, are one form of representation. Like fictions, they are created to serve as substitutions, standing in for what is real. They are there not to tell it like it is but to invite and encourage pretense. They are a fantasy, a projection onto the Other that makes them less threatening. Stereotypes abound when there is distance. They are an invention, a pretense that one knows when the steps that would make real knowing possible cannot be taken—are not allowed” (1992, 341).

10. According to Pagán (2003, 193), Paz lived in Los Angeles during the so-called Zoot Suit Riots in 1943, and it was then that he observed the pachucos.

11. English translation is the author’s. The original reads “clown imposible y sinistro, que no intenta hacer reír y que procura aterrorizar . . . busca, atrae la persecución y el escándalo . . . no afirma nada, no defiende nada, excepto su exasperada voluntad de no-ser.” Paz 1993, 18–20.


13. “Parece ser un hecho que los más jóvenes chicanos que entran en El Laberinto . . . leen muy criticamente su primer capítulo a partir de un conocimiento mucho más directo de la realidad histórica del pachuquismo que el que, por lo visto, tenía Octavio Paz en 1947.” Blanco-Aguinaga 1973, 10.

14. Such representations occurred before Valdés arrived in Mexico City. See Rafael Aviña 2001, especially 32–39, for these first representations of the pachuco.

15. Ibid., 37.
16. Before this big wave of pachuco-themed cultural productions there were others, mostly with negative representations of the pachucada, created during the 1940s and 1950s, including several short stories by Mario Suárez, such as Kid Zoopilote (1947/1992), and José Antonio Villarreal's novel Pacho (1959/1970). See Ar-turo Madrid-Barela's 1974 article for an analysis of such texts. However, in Daniel Garza's short story "Saturday Belongs to the Palomia" (Group of Friends, 1962), the pachuco is the hero because he defends the farmworkers from the racist Anglo store owners who refuse to serve them when they patronize their establishments.

17. Rosa Linda Fregoso (1993, 35) indicates that Luis Valdez attempted to make this connection between Chicano and indigenous (especially Aztec and Maya) cultures. But one of the contradictions is that both of these indigenous groups were also imperialistic.

19. Ibid.
20. Ibid.
21. The reader must be cautious in differentiating the artists by their last names even though they are extremely similar except for the last letter and an accent: Ger-mán Valdés and Luis Valdez.
22. Even before this play, Valdez, in his work with El Teatro Campesino, first included a pachuco character in the 1972 play Los vendidos (The Sell-Outs).
24. Catherine S. Ramírez's dissertation (2000) was the earliest text dedicated specifically to the female figures, the pachucas.
25. "El hijo desobediente" (The Disobedient Son, 1945), perhaps because it was his first film, does not have a single pachuca character. Socorro, the maid and Tin Tan's girlfriend, speaks a few words in Caló because, as she explains, his way of speaking is contagious to her. In the carpa Valdés performed with Meche Barba, a pachuca, as his female companion. Unfortunately, no materials on these performances have been found.
26. Mine is one of few texts on transnational Mexican popular culture.
28. Ibid., 18.
29. The original in Spanish: "La contracultura abarca toda una serie de movimientos y expresiones culturales, usualmente juveniles, colectivos, que rebasan, rechazan, se marginan, se enfrentan o trascienden la cultura institucional." Agustín 1996, 129.
30. "Consolida el status quo y obstruye [o] destruye, las posibilidades de ... expresión auténtica entre los jóvenes, además de que [apoya] la opresión, la represión y la explotación por parte de los que ejercen el poder." Ibid., 130.
31. The original argues that "la contracultura genera sus propios medios y se convierte en un cuerpo de ideas y señas de identidad que contiene actitudes, conductas, lenguajes propios, modos de ser y de vestir, y en general una mentalidad y una sen-
sibilidad alternativas a las del sistema . . . Es un hecho que la contracultura surge cuando aumenta la rigidez de la sociedad . . . [Es] un fenómeno político." Ibid., 131.

32. Louis Althusser (1989) indicates that the state's repressive apparatuses (like the police and armed forces) function with the ideological forces (mass media) to compel individuals to submit to the ideology of the dominant classes. During the period under discussion here, such ideology insisted that everyone must be patriotic and support World War II (74, 77, 81).


34. Ibid., 162.

35. Lipsitz 1994, 137.


37. Ibid., 119.

38. Ibid., 123.


40. The Sleepy Lagoon case is legally known as *People vs. Zammora*. This last name was chosen randomly by the court's secretary, who also misspelled it by adding an extra *m*. Sleepy Lagoon was a water reserve located in southeast Los Angeles where many Mexican youngsters swam. Given racial segregation, members of this ethnic group could not swim in public pools except for the day before the pool was cleaned. "Sleepy Lagoon" was the title of a popular song by the famous trumpet player Harry James. The lyrics state: "A sleepy lagoon, a tropical moon and two on an island/ A sleepy lagoon and two hearts in tune in some lullaby land/ The fireflies' gleams reflect in a stream/ They sparkle and shimmer/ A star from on high falls out of the sky/ And slowly grows dimmer/ The leaves from the trees all dance in the breeze/ And float on the ripples/ We're deep in a spell as nightingales tell/ Of roses and dew/ The memory of this moment of love/ Will haunt me forever/ A tropical moon, a sleepy lagoon/ And you." Accessed spring 2003 at http://ww2.lafayette.edu/~shuppr/lamusic/sleepy.htm. Alice Greenfield McGrath, in a lecture to a Chicano studies class at the University of California, Santa Barbara, in spring 2003, indicated that it was a reporter from a famous newspaper who sarcastically gave this place its nickname, which contributed to the sensationalism of the time.

41. These riots are known as such and I will utilize this term because of its fame, although I acknowledge that linguistically the term places the blame and responsibility on the pachucas and pachucos and not on the members of the armed forces.

42. McWilliams (1948, 230) describes these young men as hardworking and responsible to negate their description as "gang members." Henry Leyvas, twenty years old, worked at his father's ranch. Chepe Ruiz, eighteen, was an amateur athlete and boxer. Roberto Telles, eighteen, worked at a defense plant and was also a great cartoonist who entertained his friends during the trial by drawing the racist judge as a cartoon character. Manuel Reyes, seventeen, and Jack Meléndez, twenty-one, had enlisted in the U.S. Navy and were awaiting orders when the arrests occurred. Angel Padilla (who was the most brutally beaten by the police) and Gus
Zamora, twenty-one, worked making furniture. Henry Hinostroza, eighteen, was married, had a one-year-old daughter, and had helped support his mother and two sisters financially since the age of fifteen. Manuel Delgado, nineteen, was a carpenter, married with two children. Victor Rodean Thompson, twenty-one, was the only white man arrested. According to McWilliams, Thompson was "Mexicanized." Finally, John Matuz, twenty, had worked in Alaska with U.S. engineers.

43. LaRue McCormick, a member of the Communist Party, proposed to create this group that was led by McWilliams. Ibid., 231. Finally, after two years, on October 24, 1944, the charges were dropped. McWilliams indicates that for the first time in the history of Los Angeles the Mexican community had triumphed against the racist legal system (231). Another famous member of this committee, due to Zoot Suit, was Alice Greenfield McGrath. In this play she is represented as a Jewish character with whom Hank, the protagonist, falls in love. Valdez has been criticized for not finding material that he considered dramatic enough in other committee members of Latin American descent, like Luisa Moreno. McGrath indicated in a 2003 lecture that she was only the committee's secretary and does not consider herself as important as other female members to have been given such fame in the play.

44. McWilliams 1948, 227.

45. Ibid., 206.

46. Ibid., 207.

47. In the McGrath Collection 1490, box 5, folder 2.

48. During spring 2001, Vicki Ruiz gave a lecture on the topic of rural schools in the 1950s where the majority of Mexican children attended, and she mentioned these same types of exams. Although the historical time referenced is before this decade, I still consider the information to be relevant. The video entitled The Lemon Grove Incident (1985, directed by Frank Christopher) also covers this topic.

49. McWilliams 1948, 213.

50. The police blamed and the court sentenced the young men in People vs. Zamora for crimes on January 14, 1943, in the following way: nine were found guilty of second-degree murder and were sent to San Quentin; five were found guilty of assault and sent to the county jail, along with the rest, who were found guilty of smaller crimes. McWilliams 1948, 231, 239.

51. In ibid., 234, emphasis in original.

52. Ibid., 238.

53. Ibid.

54. Ibid., 243.


56. McWilliams 1948, 243.

57. Ibid.

58. Kelley (1994) states that African Americans danced the Lindy hop (also known as the jitterbug). These and other types of dances invented by African Amer-
icans were practiced by Mexican American youth, who also danced Latin American styles such as the mambo, the rumba, the guaracha, the botecito, and the danzón. In his play Valdez showcases boogie and swing, especially sung in Spanish by Lalo Guerrero.

59. Along with Kelley, McWilliams highlights the connections among men of color when he claims that during the riots in Los Angeles the sailors and other Anglo soldiers got on the trolleys and brutally beat youth of color including African Americans, Filipinos, and Chicanos. The white soldiers also went to the outskirts of some black neighborhoods but retreated when they saw African American youth prepared to fight them; instead, they went to Mexican barrios (1948, 248).

60. Kelley 1994, 162.

61. Ibid., 169.


64. Macías 2001, 68.


66. Although critics contend that the men in the armed forces and the pachucada were very distinct groups, there were also some pachucos who joined the war. Barker indicates that some Chicanos returned to their communities after the war and dressed as pachucos. He states that “the only difference in their style was that in place of ‘drapes’ they now wore parts of their old army uniform” (1975, 192).

67. The following are some of the headlines: “Zooters Planning to Attack More Servicemen” (Daily News); “Would jab broken bottles in the faces of their victims . . . Beating sailors’ brains out with hammers also on the program”; and “Zooters . . . would mass 500 strong” (Herald Express). In McWilliams 1948, 248.

68. Ibid., 247.

69. Ibid., 246.

70. “Fue debido a las gestiones del Consulado que se activó la intervención de las autoridades de policía pues todavía cuando la expedición llegó a la calle Primera y Rowan, en Belvedere, los agentes se habían reducido a hacer el papel de meros espectadores y como dato curioso, debe mencionarse el hecho que detrás de la comitiva de automóviles que conducía a los marineros, iba un auto del Departamento de Policía de Los Ángeles a manera de cabús o de retaguardia.” La Opinión, June 3, 1943, 1. Translations of this and all subsequent quotes from La Opinión are mine.

71. McGrath Oral History, UCLA Department of Special Collections 300/269, 123.

72. “Se supone que estos ataques han sido en represalia por los que algunos marinos han sufrido y los cuales han sido amplificados por la prensa local como ejemplos de faltas de respecto a las fuerzas armadas de parte de la juventud mexicana, de hecho sin fundamento.” In La Opinión, June 9, 1943, 8.

73. “El alcalde . . . al admitir que la situación es por lo más seria, criticó a los periódicos americanos que según él han estado usando un lenguaje sensacional al informar sobre los motines recientes.” La Opinión, June 10, 1943, 1.
74. "[E]sta situación está provocando antagonismo racial . . . [Por lo tanto] suplicamos la inmediata intervención de la Oficina de Información Bélica para que modere la actitud de la prensa local que, abiertamente, ha aprobado estos motines y está tratando el asunto de manera que es decididamente inflamatoria." *La Opinión*, June 10, 1943, 1.

75. "Nuestros archivos demuestran que no se deben a diferencias raciales o religiosas los motines entre 'Pachucos' y marineros que se han registrado aquí durante los últimos días." *In La Opinión*, June 9, 1943, 1.

76. In the first two versions of *Zoot Suit*, Valdez developed a Sinarquist character, Benjamín Villarreal, to include this sensationalist idea by the press. However, this character did not survive. McGrath Collection 1490, box 4, folder 1, Department of Special Collections, UCLA.


78. "[Ella] se refirió al problema de los pachucos en su conferencia de prensa . . . y dijo que [éste] no se limita a cuestiones de trajes más o menos exóticos, sino que tiene sus raíces en la discriminación que se ha ejercido contra los mexicanos, no solamente en California, sino en otros estados de la frontera mexico-americana. [Dijo también] que ha sido uno de sus principales preocupaciones esa discriminación en contra de la población mexicana y que debe buscarse remedio al mal en sus mismas raíces." *La Opinión*, June 17, 1943, 8.


81. This committee had distinguished members like the writer Salvador Novo. The original reads: "En nombre del comité . . . una vez más, me permito felicitar a usted y a todas las personas que, con su noble labor, lograron la liberación y revindicación de los 21 jóvenes mexico-americanos, víctimas de la fobia racial antimexicana en California." McGrath Collection 1490, box 2, folder 5, UCLA.

82. The tarzanes were also called "cinturitas" and were represented as delinquents, especially in films of the time. Lucha Reyes, one of the most famous bravio or ranchera-style Mexican singers, sang about the tarzanes, praising them: "¡Qué rechulo es mi tarzán!/ ¡Ay mamá!/ Cuando me paseo con él/ ¡Ay! se mira tan re-mono/ Con esos tirantes rojos/ esos pantalones flojos/ ¡Ay! con esa caída de ojos/ Su pelo muy ondulado/ Muy bien envaselado/ ¡Mamá yo muero por él!" (How handsome is my tarzan/ Oh mama/ When I go out for a walk with him/ Oh! He looks so fine/ with those red suspenders/ those baggy pants/ Oh! with those dreamy eyes/ his wavy and greased hair/ Mama I die for him!) In the biographical film entitled *La reina de la noche* (Queen of the Night), Reyes begins to sing this song on stage at a bar, and a rich client threatens and yells at her to stop singing that song about "maricones" (faggots). This is to say that the pachucos or tarzanes were also discriminated against in Mexico. Pagán indicates that in Mexico City two pachucos were beaten for dressing as such when they were walking in downtown (2003, 193).
86. Ibid., 191.
88. R. Sánchez 1994, 128.
89. Ibid., 128.
90. Ibid., 134.
91. Rosaura Sánchez writes that although the zoot suit was not only worn by African Americans and Chicanas/os, it “became an identity symbol for ghetto and barrio dwellers . . . since minority groups in this country have always lived side by side in slums and other areas of low-cost housing, Chicano males were also able to incorporate numerous lexical items from Black English” (1983, 129).
92. For a more detailed study of marijuana as related to the Mexican community at that time, see Curtis Marez’s Drug Wars. Barker states that “the jargon goes back at least to the early 1930s . . . [T]wo informants have suggested that the jargon originated among ‘grifos,’ or marijuana smokers and dope peddlers, in the El Paso underworld” (1975, 190).
94. Ibid., 316.
95. Richard Griego described in an email to me in April 2002 a genealogy of the term in relation to zincaló as a Gypsy language.
96. There are several versions of the story about Valdés’s birthplace. It is believed that he could have been born in Yucatán or in Ciudad Juárez. From www.eureka.com.mx/ecca/ga/tintan/3chiva.htm.
97. Carlos Monsiváis (1992, 8) relates the anecdote as Tin Tan told it to him: “Mi primer trabajo . . . fue pegar etiquetas engomadas en cada disco de una radiodifusora, pero yo, para ahorrar saliva, conseguí un perro callejero: le enseñé a sacar la lengua y ahí humedecía las etiquetas” (My first job . . . was to stick labels on records at a radio station, but I, to save saliva, got a street dog, taught him to stick its tongue out, and that’s how I would wet the labels).
98. Ibid.
99. “[L]e compré un traje de esos que los negros de Chicago llamaban Zoot Suit . . . un absurdo atuendo en el que todo es enormemente amplio y largo; el saco, los pantalones, la corbata, el sombrero luciendo una descomunal pluma, los zapatos y la cadena que describe un anchísimo arco sobre el lado derecho del pantalón.” From www.eureka.com.mx/ecca/ga/tintan/4pachuco.htm, accessed April 2003.
100. “Cuando me inicié como cómico no me llamaba Tin Tan, sino Tapillo Ta-pas. En el mismo año de 1943 anduve de gira por el interior de la república con el empresario Jorge Maulmer . . . [quien] me dijo . . . no te preocúpes por el nombre. Voy a pensar uno que suene bien. En Aguascalientes te voy a dar la sorpresa.” Ibid.
101. “Cuando vi en un cartel el nuevo nombre casi me fui de espaldas. No me gustó nada. Lo peor fue cuando todos mis compañeros me miraron muertos de
risa. ¡Tin Tan! ¡Hasta las campanas me parecían odiosas cuando me lo recordaban!" 

Ibid.

102. In *El hijo desobediente* Tin Tan has a conversation with his father in Caló: "¿Qué habla jefito? ¿Cómo le babea?" (What's up old man, how you doing?). "Ya te dije que me hables en cristiano" (“I told you to speak to me properly," responds his father."Ta' suave jefe, ta' suave. Nomás no se me esponje. ¿Cómo se ha centigrado?" (OK, OK, old man, don't get upset, how have you been feeling?). "Bastante mal. Con sólo verte con ese traje de foliador, siento que se me cae la cara de vergüenza" (Really bad. Just seeing you in that suit embarrasses me). "I'm sorry, jefe. ¿Sabe? Cuando usted me mandó para los Estados para estudiar la carretera de ingeniero, pues hice lo que pude, pero yo ya me convenci de que mi racket es otro: la cantadita" (I'm sorry old man. You know, when you sent me to the States to study engineering I gave it a try, but now I'm convinced that my racket is different: singing). In *Aviña* 2001, 51.

103. “Los cuarentas anunció y denunció otro fenómeno, el pochismo, el cruce, la transición del comparativamente débil afrancesamiento a la vigorosa norteamericización de las costumbres. Tin Tan es el primer gran representante del hispaninglés, un idioma que, como el francés en París, se ha vuelto ya de uso corriente. *What sumara con la daga. Run pa’cá. Run pa’llá. El hispaninglés holló en Tin Tan el vocero perfecto y aprovechó su origen, (el terrible barrio de los títeres en Ciudad Juárez) y su vestimenta (la del pachuco total), para dar mayor consistencia a su actividad." De los Reyes 1987, 175.

104. The quotations are taken from *Parra* 1990 and are my translations. 

105. This title is taken from the first verse of the song "El Pachuco Alegre" (The Happy Pachuco). Monsiváis (1992) uses "el sujeto singular" from the lyrics in the title of his article on Tin Tan.

106. For further details regarding the partnership between Valdés and Chávez see *Somos Uno*, which offers a detailed biography of Marcelo Chávez.

107. The characters Valdés and Chávez play—Germán Rico and Marcelo Fortuna—have the same first names but different last names than the artists.

108. The topic of hunger is important because, as discussed in chapter 1, it is related to the picaro/peladito characters who always find a way to eat something, usually by tricking others.

109. Socorro is sad to fall in love with Tin Tan, who supposedly is a millionaire, because she is poor. When everything is cleared up at the end of the film, they openly begin an amorous relationship, and she is accepted by Tin Tan’s father even when she speaks a few words in Caló.

110. At the end of his supposed singing, there is the sound of applause, but the viewer finds out that it is recorded and that Tin Tan is not really singing live in front of a big audience. This adds to the comic aspect of the opening scene.


112. Monsiváis (1992, 7) indicates that the lyrics of this song are slightly different: "Es el pachuco un sujeto singular/ pero que nunca debiera camellar,/ y que a
las jainas las debe dominar/ para que se sientan veri fain para bailar. Toda carnala
que quiera ser feliz/ con un padrino que tenga su desliz,/ vaya a su chante y agarre
su veliz/ y luego camellar pa' mantener al infeliz" (The pachuco is a special subject/
who] never wants to work,/ and dominates women/ to teach them how to dance./
Any woman who wants to be happy/ with a pachuco she should hook up/ should go
home and pack up her bags/ and then work to keep him as a gigolo).

113. Pachuco Boogie, which is a primary source, contains a booklet along with a
compact disk that has the lyrics for the song entitled “El pachuco alegre” (25–26).

114. Pacho Boogie also has a song titled “Los pachucos,” sung by the Mendoza
Sisters, highlighting the negative topic of pachucos being lazy gigolos: “Pido per-
miso señores/ para empezar a cantar/ tocate a esos Pachucos/ que no quieren tra-
bajar. Hay cuervos tan elegantes/ de tirante y pantalón/ que no saben trabajar/ pero
le hacen al talón. Unos tirantes de a cuarta/ el saco estilo levita/ la corbatita no
falta/ pa' engañar a su chavita. Todos esos pachuquitos/ en la esquina se hacen bola/
so no andan pidiendo frajos/ siempre andan pidiendo trolas” (I ask permission sirs/
to begin singing/ about the pachucos/ who do not want to work. There are some el-
egant ravens/ wearing suspenders and pants/ [who] don't know how to work/ but
manage to have fun. Their suspenders are small/ their coats are long/ [and they]
wear a bow tie/ to mislead the young women. All those little pachucos/ huddle up at
the corner/ always asking for cigarettes or drinks). It is important to highlight that
this song calls them “cuervos,” ravens, similarly to Suarez's story (1947/1992) that re-ers to the protagonist as “zopilote,” vulture.

115. This version was published in Literatura chicana: texto y contexto, Castañeda
Shular, Ybarra-Frausto, and Sommers 1972, 179. The text indicates that this version
is anonymous and was compiled and published by Barker in 1950.

116. This ballad is usually sung by popular musical groups up to this verse, but
I found another version that has the following extra verses: “El caballo colorado/
que hace un año que naci/ ahí se lo dejo a mi padre/ por la crianza que me dio. De
tres caballos que tengo:/ ahí se los dejo a los pobres,/ para que siquiera digan:/ “Fel-
ipe, Dios te perdone.” Bajaron al toro prieto/ que nunca lo habían bajado,/ pero
ahora sí ya bajó/ revuelto con el ganado. Y a ese mentado Felipe/ la maldición lo al-
canzó/ y en las trancas del corral/ el toro se lo llevó. Ya con esta me despido,/ con la
estrella del oriente/ esto le pude pasar/ a un hijo desobediente” (The red horse/ was
born a year ago/ I leave it for my father/ for the way he raised me. I leave my three
horses/ to the poor/ so that they may say/ “God forgive you, Felipe.” The dark bull
was brought down/ For the first time/ but along with the rest of the cattle. And
Felipe/ was cursed/ for the bull caught him. And now I say my “goodbyes”/ with
the Orient's star/ this may happen to a disobedient son). At www.tochtli.fisica.uson
.mx/fcm_cd.htm#hijo.


118. “[Estábamos acostumbrados a ver a] Palillo, Mantequilla, Schillinski y en
el cine, porque ya estaba el cine, [a] Cantinflas ... Y llega este cuate [Tin Tan] que
iba vestido, lleva saco, corbata ... va de pachuco y lleva el sombrero con su pluma y
su carnal Marcelo, pues también iba vestido. Y además eran pochos, lo cual era lo peor de lo peor. Ser pocho en México en aquella época, imagínate lo que era. O sea que era un poco ambigua la reacción. Si nos caía bien, el tipo, pero era pocho y eso de que era pocho era grave. Pero eso del lenguaje, eso [a los jóvenes] nos gustaba.”


120. The lyrics are quoted from G. Hernández 1978. I am also indebted to Mark Guerrero (Lalo Guerrero’s youngest son) for sharing personal recordings of eleven of his father’s songs on the pachucada.


123. This transnational connection through the music that the pachucada listened to can be seen in Valdez’s 1981 Zoot Suit film. See also Macías 2001.

124. Edmundo Martínez Tostado was born in a barrio in El Paso, Texas, where he used to listen to the Caló that Valdés spoke in his radio shows from Ciudad Juárez, Mexico. Macías 2001, 155. Tostado, given the racism of the times, decided to change his name to Don Tosti so that it sounded Italian instead of Mexican. At the age of nine he played the violin in the El Paso Symphony. Later his family moved to Los Angeles, where he had a successful career as a jazz musician. In 1948 he recorded the song “Pachuco Boogie,” which brought him much success. See Macías 2001, 117, for a detailed explanation of his musical career.


128. Ibid., 12.

129. Ibid., 15, 195.


134. Ibid., 50.

135. Ibid., xii–xiii.

136. See her chapter entitled “Toward a Revision of Chicana/o Theater History: The Roles of Women in El Teatro Campesino.”

137. See Broyles-González’s (1994) chapter “Theater of the Sphere: Toward a

138. Broyles-Gonzélez (1994) offers an extensive study of the group’s contribution and research to create this play. She also criticizes Valdez’s individualism in accepting the perceived role of single “genius” behind the play. See her chapter “El Teatro Campesino: From Alternative Theater to Mainstream.”

139. From Luis Valdez’s article entitled “From a Pamphlet to a Play,” included in the program during Zoot Suit’s presentation at the Mark Taper Forum in 1978.

140. Valdez 1978.
142. In The Bronze Screen: 1oo Years of Latino Images in Hollywood, produced in 2002 by Susan Bracho, Nancy de los Santos, and Alberto Dominguez.
143. J. A. Huerta 1982, 64.
144. Huerta indicates that Luna “is dressed as a 1940’s zoot suiter, smoking a marijuana cigarette” (ibid., 196–197). After this play the pachuco is represented using marijuana as a recreational drug.
145. Huerta states that “to some observers this might seem a simplistic technique, hardly necessary if the audience is paying attention to the dialogue, but the deliberate pointing is never overdone and has an impact” (ibid., 93).
146. Valdez changes the real names of the young people involved in the trial to similar pseudonyms.
148. Ibid., 185–186.
150. Sergeant Smith says, “All right it’s just you and me now. I hear you Pachucos wear these monkey suits as a kind of armor. Is that right? How’s it work? This is what you zooters need—a little old-fashioned discipline.” Valdez 1992, 32.
151. See newspapers such as La Opinión, the Examiner, and the Los Angeles Times especially during the riots of 1943.
154. Ibid.
155. Daniel Valdez, aside from playing the character of Hank Reyna, was the musical director and wrote the Zoot Suit theme song, which was based on a song in Spanish by Lalo Guerrero. Broyles-Gonzélez (1994) states that music is a main characteristic of the work of El Teatro Campesino, but she criticizes its use in this play because it often takes precedence over dialogue, demonstrating that “Chicanas/os would appear almost to live at dance halls” (182, 211).
156. Jorge Huerta has established that the film “Zoot Suit” (translated as “Fiebre Latina”) was very successful in Mexico City, along with “Saturday Night Fever.” Conversation with Huerta, April 2004.
157. This is an example of a Mexican corrido used in the text that was also part of an acto with the same title. Regarding Dolores, she says, “I almost wish he was
going back to jail and not to war," foreshadowing Hank’s jail sentence. Enrique, his father, is very proud of Hank’s patriotism and the U.S. armed forces “making a man out of him.”

158. For a description of dances like the rumba, guaracha, botecito, and danzón, see Macías 2001, especially the chapter entitled “Latin Los Angeles.”

159. One of Guerrero’s fortés was to create musical medleys melding many songs into one. He did this for one of his first famous songs, “La canción mexicana” (The Mexican Song), recorded by him and other famous Mexican singers like Lucha Reyes. This song incorporates pieces of several of the most famous Mexican songs of the time, like “Cielito lindo” (Beautiful Sky or Beautiful Woman).

160. Broyles-González states that the pachuco is Hank’s “doppelgänger or cuate” (1994, 197).

161. From the music provided to me by Mark and Dan Guerrero. My transcription of the lyrics.

162. Lyrics accessed at http://cancionero.cibermancia.com/canciones/la_borrachita.php. Ignacio Fernández Esperón (“Tata Nacho,” 1894–1968) was born in Mexico City on February 14, 1894. In 1937 he debuted his music on the most famous radio station there, XEW. In 1947 he created the radio program Así es mi tierra (This Is My Country). In 1952 he became the director of the musical group Orquesta Típica in Mexico City. When he died he was the president of the Sociedad de Autores y Compositores de Música, the Mexican Society of Songwriters. http://cancionero.cibermancia.com/autores/fernandezignacio.php.

163. Ibid., 15.
164. Ibid.
165. Ibid., 21–22.
166. Ibid.

167. In the film El corrido de Jesús Pelado Rasquachi, produced by El Teatro Campesino, there is a similar event in which the protagonist, who is also a bracero, marries a Chicana (not a pachuca), and even though he does not speak much English and she does not speak much Spanish, they still get married.

170. Ibid., 68–69.

173. See chapter 4 for more detailed examples of pachucas as related to the work of María Elena Gaitán.

174. This play was produced in San Juan Bautista in 2002 and 2003, and for its twenty-fifth anniversary it toured nationally, especially throughout the U.S. Southwest.

175. Maldita Vecindad released its compact disc El circo in 1992; it contains a song entitled “Pachuco” that makes reference to the Mexican pachucos of the 1940s, who were also rebellious young people. This song opens with a short dialogue by Tin
Tan that is taken from one of his films. Café Tacuba also released songs that make reference to pachucos and "chicos banda" (rebellious youth) from Mexico City.

176. In this film the cartoonish character that Carrey represents wears a zoot suit and dances to a song entitled "Hey Pachuco" by the band Royal Crown Revue.

CHAPTER 4

1. Nicolás Kanellos (1990, i) states that as early as 1789, there were theatrical productions in Spanish in Monterey, California.

2. María Teresa Marrero quotes an article from the 1998–1999 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 minuscule 1.8 percent were written by playwrights with Hispanic surnames" (2000, 149).

3. According to Yvonne Yarbro-Bejarano in her 1989 study of teatro poesía in the Bay Area, writings by Lucha Corpi, Lorna Dee Cervantes, Sandra Cisneros, Alma Villanueva, Gloria Anzaldúa, Cherrie Moraga, María Moreno, and Ana Castillo, among others, were primarily responsible for opening up Latina feminist spaces on and off the stage.


5. Rebolledo (1995) uses other terms 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 "Mujeres Andariegas: Good Girls and Bad."

6. Ibid., 183.

7. Gloria E. Anzaldúa in Borderlands/La Frontera argues that women, especially those of color, must not fear being called "sell-outs" 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 . . . So 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 . . . And 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" (1987, 21–22).

8. Broyles-González 2003, 92, 94.


10. Anzaldúa 1987, 79.

11. Sandoval, 11.


13. Sufrida is also known as "Chola con Cello" because that is her name as a protagonist. The name Sufrida is used sarcastically by Gaitán because her character is not a victim at all. It also criticizes the stereotype of Mexican women as "mujeres sufridas," women who suffer. In addition, this makes a comedic reference to the Frida Kahlo (a physically tortured artist) mania of that time.
14. Gaitán has created other performance-art pieces. *De Jarocha a Pocha* (1995), created in collaboration with a group of musicians and artists from Veracruz, follows a woman from that state who immigrates to the United States without legal documents and joins in the fight for workers' rights. Another performance is *Aztlán Africa: Songs of Affinity* (1998), in which the Mexican African Diaspora is researched and celebrated. *The Teta Show* (2003) was commissioned by Las Isabelañas, a group of Latinas who are cancer survivors. Recently she has been working on another performance entitled *The Sugar Trail*, in which she examines the history of sugar in relationship to slavery, genocide, and diabetes as a disease that affects a great percentage of the black and Latina/o communities. On April 30, 2004, she presented *Chola con Cello on the Road* at Antioch University Los Angeles.


16. Rebolledo states that "these women are not new arrivals as images in Mexican/Chicano literature. They emerge as early as Nahuatl literature and stand out throughout the centuries as our brash, rasquaché peladas, malcriadas, and pachucas." She also states that in the text entitled *Historia general de las cosas de Nueva España* (A General History of Things Pertaining to New Spain, the Florentine Codex), we see the image of the abuianas, or las alegradoras, the happiness givers (pre-Columbian prostitutes) . . . [o]ne who lives from pleasure" (1995, 184).

17. Rebolledo writes about the Chicana literary texts that deal with other types of female rebelliousness and examines themes of queer and heterosexual sexualities. See her chapter "Mujeres andariegas" (1995) for more details on these texts and their authors.

18. Ibid., 183.


22. Ibid., 118.

23. Ibid., 116.


25. From the music provided to me by Lalo Guerrero’s sons Mark and Dan Guerrero. I transcribed the lyrics.

26. Vicki Ruiz indicates that there were other songs that criticize these women for wearing too much makeup and looking like “piñatas” (1993, 116).

27. In *Zoot Suit*, as mentioned in chapter 3, Lupe is called a “puta” instead of a “pachuca” by her own mother because she’s wearing a miniskirt.


29. See chapter 1.


31. For a detailed explanation of the carpas see Broyles-González 1994.

32. Again, see chapter 1 for a further discussion of Ybarra-Frausto’s work on the carpa and the peladita.

34. See chapter 3 for the sociohistorical context of the riots.
35. C. Ramírez 2000. Ramírez's book entitled The Woman in the Zoot Suit (2009) is the only full-length study of pachucas as of this writing.
36. C. Ramírez 2000, 45.
39. Alicia Venegas was a twenty-two-year-old woman from East Los Angeles (C. Ramírez 2000, 45).
40. Escobedo 2007, 133-134.
41. C. Ramírez 2000, 92.
42. Ibid., 102.
43. Ibid., 187.
44. This detail is captured by Catherine Ramírez (2000, 188); the photograph of the art piece does not show this detail.
45. I refer throughout this discussion to the 1986 edition of Moraga's Giving up the Ghost.
46. 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 to incorporate lesbian identity issues in the Chicana/o cultural context. Moraga cites Swallows as an example for her in spite of the play's homophobic treatment of lesbians.
47. The monologues in the play are written and organized as if they were poems, thus [space] signifies a regular or long pause.
49. Ibid.
51. Gaitán decided to transform her character into a pachuca so she would not offend the cholas in the audience at a performance in a detention center.
52. See E. Ramírez 2000, 141, for more details on the PRTT.
53. See Broyles-González's (1994) chapter on the participation of women in ETC entitled “Toward a Re-Vision of Chicana/o Theater History: The Roles of Women in el Teatro Campesino.”
55. Teatro Chicana's collection of plays was recently published. García et al. 2008.

64. All three writers' works are readily available, as they are three of the most famous, and their plays and performances are frequently produced.


66. Ibid., 142.

67. See Carrillo and González.


69. For a more in-depth discussion of all the writers mentioned in this paragraph, see Elizabeth Ramírez's (2000) chapter entitled "The Emerging Chicana Playwright: A Political Act of Writing Women."

70. See Alberto Sandoval-Sánchez and Nancy Saporta Sternbach's *Stages of Life* (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 their work.


72. Ibid., 95.

73. Ibid., 96.

74. Troyano 2000, 28, emphasis in original.


77. This word can be spelled with a "c" or a "q," and I maintain the spelling as each author uses it. Ybarra-Frausto explains that "propriety and keeping up appearances—el que dirán—are the codes shattered by the attitude of rasquachismo. This outsider viewpoint stems from a funky, irreverent stance that debunks convention and spoofs protocol. To be rasquache is to posit a bawdy, spunky consciousness, to seek to subvert and turn ruling paradigms upside down. It is a witty, irreverent, and impertinent posture that recodes and moves outside established boundaries" (1990, 355).

78. Broyles-González 2003, 94.

79. Ibid.

80. All the personal information presented here is taken from my interview with Gaitán on March 4, 2004.

81. Ibid.

82. "Tú mezclas inglés y español con una naturalidad y uno ya no se fija porque realmente uno está operando a muchos niveles a la misma vez. Las mezclas pues no son ni buenas ni malas, solamente son. Pero es un español diferente, no es el español de España ni es el de Sudamérica, es el español de Aztlán." From the film *Lenguas en Contacto* (Languages in Contact) created by BBC/Open University, 1999. Provided to the author by Gaitán.

83. "Aquí hablamos una mezcla a veces como se acostumbra en las fronteras."
Muchas personas lo ven con un poco de desdén pero al fin y al cabo es un idioma que vive y nosotros somos una parte de esto." Ibid.

85. Ibid.
86. Ibid.
88. "En lo de la pelada... ¿qué te puedo decir? My mother was a schoolteacher, también usaba palabrotas. 'Huerca cabrona' was my middle name." Gaitán interview, 2004.
89. This tattoo of a single tear alludes to the perpetual suffering (crying) representing her lost years while in jail or prison or for the loss of a loved one while in "la vida loca."
90. In 1998 anti-immigrant and racist groups created two propositions: 227, which, when passed, helped to dismantle bilingual education; and 209, which helped to end affirmative action. Broyles-González 2003, 91.
91. From Gaitán's personal copy of the video Chola con Cello, October 29, 1993.
92. Gaitán does a great job of translating, although not literally, so I do not consider it necessary to translate every word.
95. When relating the history of her ancestors, Connie alludes to a great-great-grandmother who was a revolutionary and a lesbian, and she shows a picture of two women dressed as revolutionary soldiers and presents them as "my great-great-grandmother Lupe Chancla and her best friend Darlene."
96. Broyles-González 2003, 94.
97. R. Sánchez 1990, 22.
98. This term is used by Alcalá (2001) and by Broyles-González (2003).
100. There are many published works by Chicana feminists that rescue the figure of Malinche. See for example Rebolledo and Rivero, Infinite Divisions (1993); Moraga, Loving in the War Years (1983); and Moraga and Anzaldúa, This Bridge Called My Back (1981).
101. "¿Y cuándo te casas, Gloria? Se te va a pasar el tren y yo les digo, 'Pos si me caso, no va a ser con un hombre.' Se quedan calladitas. Sí, soy hija de la Chingada. I've always been her daughter. No 'tés chingando." Anzaldúa 1987, 17, my emphasis.
103. Ibid.
104. During the presentation at Highways, Gaitán includes her small dog Oscar. It comes onto the stage wearing a red cape that says "Yo quiero" on one side and "Human Rights" on the other.


108. “Por medio de la comedia, como un personaje-instrumento para sacar la voz, para informar. Luego, con la música y el texto trato de abrir corazones y dejo caer ‘el golpe’ de lo que yo quiero decir.” Ibid.

CHAPTER 5

1. In this chapter I use the term *Chicana/o* to refer to subjects of Mexican descent specifically. *Latina/o* is used for subjects with other Latin American ancestry. *Latina/o*, sometimes, will also encompass *Chicana/o* when used in general terms. Dan Guerrero uses the term *Latino* to refer to a general group that encompasses all peoples of Mexican and Latin American ancestry in the United States.


3. Ibid., 100.

4. Pratt, 6.


7. Anzaldúa and Moraga use the term *jotería* to make reference to Chicana/o and, here I add, U.S. Latina/o queers. This term has been reclaimed by these communities in a similar way that the term “queer” has been reclaimed by the gay and lesbian liberation movement of the 1990s. Moraga and Anzaldúa 1981, 22.

8. Anzaldúa 1987, 21. Sandoval-Sánchez, when writing on the subject of Puerto Rican queer identity and AIDS within the context of nationalism, echoes Anzaldúa’s words regarding home: “I do not need any nationalist and patriotic dogma telling me how to live my life, where to die and be buried. . . . For a fact, I know, that I am not ‘home-less.’ Home is where I am, within me. For me, to ‘cruzar el charco’ meant once and for all that home was going to be portable, on the other side, at a crossroads, in the borderlands” (1997, 205).


10. Ibid., 22.


13. Ibid., 350, 355.

14. From a personal conversation with Luis Alfaro during his visit to the University of California, Riverside, in 1994.

15. From ¡*Gaytino!* The website www.gaytino.com was accessed December 1, 2005.

16. Eduardo “Lalo” Guerrero was born in Tucson, Arizona, in 1916 and lived most of his life in California. He performed up to a few months before his death (March 16, 2005) and was an important songwriter/musician, as evidenced by his
vast repertoire of songs in English, Spanish, and Caló. He was consecrated as the Father of Chicano Music and was one of the first to write songs about the pachucada in the 1940s. His first pachuca/o songs were entitled “La pachuquilla,” “El pachuco,” and “El pachuco y el tarzán.” A few years later, he wrote the songs that were made famous by the play Zoot Suit: “Marihuana boogie,” “Los chucos suaves,” “Vamos a bailar,” and “Chicaspatas boogie.” Although most people are familiar with his parodies, pachuca/o songs, and Mexican music, he was also known in the 1970s and 1980s in the Spanish-speaking world for his children’s songs, with “Las ardillitas de Lalo Guerrero” (Chipmunk-style children’s music). In 1997 Guerrero received the National Medal of Arts for his outstanding contributions. See Sheryl Meece Mentes’s book, co-authored with the musician, about his life (2002). See also my dissertation (2004), especially the second chapter, on Lalo Guerrero.

Carlos Almaraz was born in Mexico City in 1941 and moved with his family to the United States when he was still an infant. He grew up in Chicago and Los Angeles. When he was young, he used to go by the anglicized version of his name, Charles, and this is how Guerrero refers to him throughout most of his performance. He studied art in several colleges and universities in California but finally completed his master of fine arts degree in 1974 at Otis Art Institute in the same state. During the 1960s and 1970s Almaraz joined the Chicano movement as an artist who worked with the United Farm Workers Union and El Teatro Campesino. He died of AIDS complications in 1989. His Echo Park art series is one of the most famous internationally. He was also a member of a muralist group called Los Four that is credited with initiating the Chicana/o muralist movement. See Margarita Nieto’s interview for more information.

17. In order to differentiate between the author and the protagonist, I will use Guerrero for the first and Dan or Danny for the latter.
19. Ibid.
20. Ibid.
22. Ibid.
23. Ibid.
24. In regard to the ethnic pride of musicians like Lalo Guerrero during the 1940s through the 1960s, see my dissertation (2004) and Reyes and Waldman 1998.
26. Ibid., 5.
27. Muñoz indicates that “disidentification is meant to negotiate a phobic majoritarian public sphere that continuously elides or punishes the existence of subjects who do not conform to the phantasm of normative citizenship” (1999, 4).
28. Ibid., 8.
29. Rivera has been the best-known Latina on Broadway for several decades. In the 2006 musical Chita Rivera: The Dancer’s Life, Rivera’s career was center-staged, recognizing her contributions to performance culture.
31. Ibid., 8.
35. In Hunger of Memory, Richard Rodriguez’s infamous autobiography, he similarly silences his queer subjectivity, concentrating and privileging only the racial and ethnic aspects of his identity. Rodriguez’s trauma and rejection go even further, to the point of trying to shave his dark skin with a razor blade when he was young.
37. Ibid., 11.
38. Ibid., 12.
39. Ibid., 5, 20.
40. Ibid., 13.
41. Ibid., 12.
44. Ibid.
45. Ibid., 15.
48. Ibid., 20.
49. Eventually, Richard becomes Dan’s partner of twenty-seven years and is welcomed into the Guerrero family. The moment this happens, Dan completely inhabits the Chicana/o queer zone of comfort and is able to be open about all aspects of his identity.
50. Guerrero represented actors for many famous Broadway and television shows. He represented Fran Drescher and Sarah Jessica Parker (when she was only nine years old). Later in his career, when he began working with the Latina/o community, he worked with artists like Vikki Carr, José Feliciano, Carlos Santana, Quincy Jones, Stephen Sondheim, Linda Ronstadt, Chita Rivera, and Rita Moreno.
52. Ibid., 20.
53. There are other examples of Chicana/o queers who chose to create their own zones of comfort even when they were not necessarily economically independent. At times, however, the price to pay for this comfort and freedom is too high. Anzaldúa, for example, unfortunately died in 2004 of diabetes complications and without any medical insurance.
55. See Broyles-González 1994 on the reasons for this play’s failure on Broadway.
57. Ibid.
58. Ibid., 23.
59. Ibid.
60. Ibid., emphasis added.
62. The same week in November 2005 when ¡Gaytino! premiered at the Esperanza Peace and Justice Center in San Antonio, Sandoval-Sánchez presented his testimonial as a survivor of AIDS at Trinity University. His presentation, entitled “It’s a Broken Record / Ese disco se rayó: An AIDS Testimonial,” was a success, and the San Antonio Express-News featured a story on him announcing the event. These two performances are examples of interventions that remind the community of the importance of the work that needs to be done regarding this epidemic.
63. Sandoval-Sánchez 2002, 309, emphasis added.
64. Rivera-Servera 1999.
66. Ibid.
67. Ibid.
68. Ibid.
69. Ibid., 26.
70. Broyles-González (1994) discusses the marginalization of Chicanas in El Teatro Campesino. In a patriarchal society, women feminists are usually the ones to fight to create a space for other women and re-inscribe them into history. In Guerrero’s case, in the creation of his alliances, women remain on the margins. We only hear about his relationship with his mother very briefly, and she does not fit into the “hero” category for him. Similarly, Linda Ronstadt in Canciones de mi padre leaves the figure of the mother out of the performance space.
72. “Yo soy Chicano señores/ naci al lado Americano/ Para México soy pocho/ no me aceptan mis hermanos/ Los güéros me discriminan/ como si fuera extranjero/ a pesar de que esta tierra/ fue de México primero/ Por mi educación bilingüe/ hablo chicano y gabacho/ ya se despide este pocho/ hasta luego y hay los wa-cho.” Ibid., 26–27.
73. Palacios 2000, 115.
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“Adroitly shifting from social reality to cultural artifact, the author explores the semi-dependent relationship of artistic text to sociocultural context. . . . The book opens a window to Latina/o creativity in the performing arts.”

—Tomas Ybarra Frausto, former Associate Director for Creativity and Culture, Rockefeller Foundation

Tracing the configuration of the slapstick, destitute Peladita/Peladito and the Pachuca/Pachucos (depicted in flashy zoot suits) from 1928 to 2004, Wild Tongues is an ambitious, extensive examination of social order in Mexican and Chicana/o cultural productions in literature, theater, film, music, and performance art.

From the use of the Peladita and the Peladito as stock characters who criticized various aspects of the Mexican government in the 1920s and 1930s to contemporary performance art by María Elena Gaitán and Dan Guerrero, which yields a feminist and queer-studies interpretation, Rita Urquijo-Ruiz emphasizes the transnational capitalism at play in these comic voices. Her study encompasses both sides of the border, including the use of the Pachuca and the Pachuco as anti-establishment, marginal figures in the United States. The result is a historically grounded, interdisciplinary approach that reimagines the limitations of nation-centered thinking and reading.

Beginning with Daniel Venegas’s 1928 novel, Las aventuras de don Chipote o Cuando los pericos amen, Rita Urquijo-Ruiz’s Wild Tongues demonstrates early uses of the Peladito to call attention to the brutal physical demands placed on the undocumented Mexican laborer. It explores Teatro de Carpa (tent theater) in-depth as well, bringing to light the experience of Mexican Peladita Amelia Wilhelmy, whose “La Willy” was famous for portraying a cross-dressing male soldier who criticizes the failed Revolution. In numerous other explorations such as these, the political, economic, and social power of creativity continually takes center stage.

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