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CHANGING TIMES
IN
HISPANIC CULTURE

EDITED BY
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ISBN: 0 9524101 3 3

Printed by Central Services, University of Aberdeen
Published by Centre for the Study of the Hispanic Avant-Garde
University of Aberdeen
Old Aberdeen AB9 2UB
Scotland

March 1996

1. A. Tàpies, *Memòria personal* (Barcelona, 1993), 161. Subsequent references to this source will be bracketed in the text with the abbreviation MP.
2. 'In order to make an accurate measurement of position it is necessary to use light of short wavelength, ... But light of short wavelength consists of photons with correspondingly high momentum, and, when photons of high momentum are used to observe an electron, the electron necessarily recoils from the impact, carrying off some fraction of the photon's momentum. Thus the more accurately we try to measure the position of an electron, the less we know after the measurement about the electron's momentum.' Steven Weinberg, *Dreams of a Final Theory* (London, 1993), 57.
3. Weinberg, 61.
4. Weinberg, 61.
5. A. Tàpies, *L'art modern i el nou esperit científic, Valor de l'art* (Barcelona, 1993), 100.
6. A. Tàpies, *La dialèctica científica, Per un art modern i progressista* (Barcelona, 1985), 58.
7. E. Naegli, ed., *Nueva visión del mundo* (Buenos Aires, [1951?]).
8. A. Tàpies, *La pintura i el buit, La realitat com a art* (Barcelona, 1982), 102.
9. A. Tàpies, *Comunicació sobre el mur, La pràctica de l'art* (Barcelona, 1970), 125. Subsequent references will be bracketed in the text with the abbreviation CM.
10. A. Tàpies, *Pintades i grafiti, Per un art modern i progressista*, 13. Subsequent references will be bracketed in the text with the abbreviation PG.

PROTEAN PROSE: FLUIDITY OF CHARACTER AND GENRE IN ESTHER TUSQUETS'S SIETE MIRADAS EN UN MISMO PAISAJE

Siete miradas en un mismo paisaje is a challenging text even though what looks problematic at first glance - Tusquets's style, which Paul Julian Smith succinctly characterizes with reference to another work (*El mismo mar de todos los veranos*) as 'fluid syntax and fragmented exposition' - turns out to be surprisingly accessible, perhaps due to what Smith goes on to call 'the naturalistic register and plot devices of narrative realism'.¹ What makes *Siete miradas* both exciting and troubling to read is its consistent refusal to confine itself within pre-existing boundaries of genre and gender. Both of these words are translated by the single Spanish word *género* and it is my contention that Tusquets exploits this dual meaning so that *género* in the textual sense and *género* in the sexual sense are not only problematized separately but are actually melted into one another. The interplay of textuality with sexuality is not Tusquets's invention - it can be dated back to before the Christian era² - but perhaps more significant for present purposes is its presence as a device in the Spanish New Novel, such as the fiction post-1966 of Juan Goytisolo.³ Tusquets's style generally aligns her with the new novelists, but what sets her apart from them is her identity as a woman writer and in consequence, her different attitude to gender. Where she does break new ground is in the combination of the techniques of the new novel with questions of gender as these may be construed from a woman's position.⁴

Boundaries of all kinds have long been of psychological importance to us. They are enshrined, for example, in the Old Testament commandments still observed by Jews today. Many of the Biblical laws can be understood as having the drawing of boundaries at their heart. Milk must be kept separate from meat (Deuteronomy 14.21), for instance, but there are numerous other laws that seem analogous in design: wool must not be woven with linen (Deuteronomy 22.11) and in Deuteronomy 22.5 a gender boundary is unequivocally established in like fashion: 'The woman shall not wear that which pertaineth unto a man, neither shall a man put on a woman's garment'.⁵ Sir James George Frazer's *The Golden Bough* records many similarly boundary-based taboos in tribal societies and Mary Douglas forges a suggestive link between such traditions and our own behaviour in twentieth-century secular society:

if we send the men to the downstairs lavatory and the women upstairs, we are essentially doing the same thing as the Bushman wife [who sticks a rod in the

ground to divide the home into male and female quarters].... They fear that if a man sits on the female side his male virility will be weakened. We fear pathogenicity transmitted through micro-organisms. Often our justification of our own avoidances through hygiene is sheer fantasy.⁶

Boundaries of this kind divide men from women, contributing to the social construction of gender and *Siete miradas* looks critically at them, as we shall see. However, at least as important in this work is the related set of issues surrounding the division between heterosexual and homosexual and in particular, lesbian versus straight woman and within the lesbian typology, divisions between butch-femme and passionate friendship configurations. The birth of the male homosexual is fairly recent, as Foucault and others point out: 1870, according to him; 1860 according to another scholar, Martin Danneker.⁷ Prior to this, male homosexual behaviour was of course known, but men were not separated and considered a distinct subspecies for indulging in it. On the other hand, the status of the lesbian as a subspecies of woman is harder to trace back to a precise birth-date, since lesbianism has always been a more diffuse, less visible, definable phenomenon. The early nineteenth century (excepting a handful of curiosities of earlier date) has been cited by one scholar for the first appearance of the mannish lesbian who cross-dressed and was studied later that century and at the beginning of this one by sexologists as an identified deviant. Other types include the *femme damnée* (also with an early nineteenth-century birth-date and the partners within passionate friendships (dating back to the eighteenth century at least)).⁸

It is worth noting that a present-day authority like Monique Wittig is happy to pigeon-hole lesbians, albeit positively: 'lesbian is the only concept beyond the categories of sex (woman and man)'.⁹ Ironically enough, she is here enclosing the lesbian within boundaries established on the basis of the lesbian's refusal to fit into other categories. This tendency to create new - and by implication, equally limiting - categories for something that defies inclusion elsewhere, rather than allowing and enjoying liminality, is prevalent in the textual domain of *g nero* as well as the sexual one and particularly relevant to a study of *Siete miradas*, the generic status of which sits on the line between short story collection and novel. Indeed, boundary-drawing seems to be an almost irresistible psychological temptation, a point highlighted and implicitly attacked in Tusquets's writing.

There seems to be no critical consensus on what *Siete miradas* *en un mismo paisaje* constitutes: a collection of seven free-standing short stories, or a fragmentary, elliptical novel, or something in between. Most surprisingly of all, however, many usually astute critics do not problemat-

ics this genre ambiguity, still less consider the suggestive parallel between genre and gender. For example, Mirella Servodidio characterizes *Siete miradas* thus: 'The seven stories...., chart the crucial milestones in the life of a female protagonist, Sara, from the time she is nine until she is eighteen'.¹⁰ Janet P rez takes a similar line. The work, she says is 'a collection of short stories grouped around the personality of Sara and portraying significant events in her life from the age of nine to the age of eighteen'.¹¹ Nina Molinaro, on the other hand, does recognize the problem and spends time looking at the text in light of it. She positions it 'on the genre line between novel and short story' and sees the effect of this position as a way of 'undermin[ing] the normalizing process of genre'.¹² Molinaro goes on to use Timothy C. Alderman's notion of short story collections being classifiable into 'integrated' or 'unintegrated', whereby the unintegrated collection contains wholly autonomous narrative and the integrated one allows some degree of cross-fertilization between stories. But she points out - and here the parallel with what Wittig does with her notion of the lesbian is striking - that such ideas only create new categories with their respective boundaries, rather than allowing a text to be in the psychologically troubling liminal position between two genres.

What makes critics like P rez and Servodidio take so easily for granted that the protagonist is the same character throughout *Siete miradas* is plain to see: she has the same name: Sara; she has the same upper-middle-class identity; the stories are told in the same type of introspective, stream-of-consciousness interior monologue, and rehearse the same type of preoccupations, insecurities, and fears about the protagonist's identity. Moreover, there are certain recurrent traits; these are not necessarily to be found in all of the narratives, but they provide noticeable echoes when they do occur. Thus, for example, the idea of Sara as having been over-indulged ('consentida') is mentioned in both *En la ciudad sin mar* (91) and *He besado tu boca, Yokana n* (159).

This would not seem sufficient grounds for assuming a single identity for Sara, given the weight of the counter-evidence. We find no cross-referencing to what are treated as major traumatic experiences in Sara's life. Would it not be likely that when Sara, aged eighteen, has a lesbian relationship with Roxana in *En la ciudad sin mar*, she would think back to her infatuation with the ballerina who had danced the part of Giselle just two years previously, recounted in the narrative that bears her name? The style of the discourse, with its dense and intense interior monologue, as well as Esther Tusquets's very effective use elsewhere of repetitive patterns of thought would lend themselves especially well to just

this type of interlinkage.¹³ Most conclusive of all, though, is the matter of Sara's siblings or lack of them. In *Giselle* and *Exiliados*, she is an only child (7 and 140); in *Los primos*, she has a younger sister (35), and in *En la ciudad sin mar*, she has 'hermanos mayores' (81).

It seems clear that Sara cannot be the same character throughout in any realist sense of the notion. However, the common features shared by all the Saras suggest that it would be highly implausible to treat the protagonist(s) as seven wholly separate characters.¹⁴ This usage of characterization is a constant reminder that these are textual, not human beings, rather than trying to make us forget this fact, as conventional realist fiction does. Like other Spanish new novels of recent decades, *Siete miradas* rejects the ancient idea of art holding up a mirror to nature, preferring to exploit the literary text's freedom from natural law.¹⁵ Tusquets puts the device to different use, not by emphasizing the unreliability of narration, as Marsé does, nor by pouring scorn on realist convention as Goytisolo does; Tusquets's Sara invites a palimpsestic reading of the text with the reader sensing that a character is being created and re-created, written and over-written, that creative options are being explored by the author. This interpretation is reinforced by the title of the work: the *mismo paisaje* could be understood metaphorically as the type of person Sara is and all the Saras are, as well as the type of textual, stylistic landscape in which she exists, in addition to the more obvious reference to the sameness of the sort of social world she inhabits. The *siete miradas* would then relate to the different ways of utilizing this foundation: seven explorations of the numberless permutations. Now, if the text is regarded as palimpsestic, then its seven narratives are more akin to geological strata than a linear succession of stories or the linear development associated with the novel form. The advantages of reading *Siete miradas en un mismo paisaje* in this way are several: first it resolves the logical problems mentioned above concerning the single or multiple identity of the protagonist. Second, it offers a textual realization of what the title proposes, enabling the seven component parts to occupy the same textual space and so exclude the well-worn journey metaphor for narrative. There is no destination reached at the end of the text, no definitive tying of the different narrative threads, no sense of journey's end with the satisfaction and repose that this evokes. This restless inconclusiveness marries well with the protagonist's own lack of psychological closure and satisfaction; by the end of the text, she seems no farther forward in establishing her identity than she was at the start. Thus, form and content blur indistinguishably into one another. Thirdly, and with specific reference to the question of *género* in the text, a palimpsestic

reading forges a link between the sexual and textual connotations of the Spanish term, portraying Sara's sexuality as always subject to revision, always liable to be partially erased and reinvented, just as the narratives themselves seem to keep over-writing themselves.

Sexual fluidity overlaps with the textual fluidity discussed above because one of the key aspects of Sara's protean character is her sexual identity. One reason why her sexuality is uncertain is that her whole self is so radically unsettled, to the extent that she is not even sure of her separateness as an individual. This can be simultaneously understood on two levels: in a realist mode, she is an insecure child and adolescent trying to establish her own identity. But at the same time we are reminded of her identity as a palimpsestic textual being who has every reason to doubt her selfhood and her separateness from others.

Let us consider three examples of this sexual/textual fluidity in Sara's characterization: the first relates to the man-woman and self-other divide, the second and third to aspects of the hetero-/homosexual one.

Exiliados contains a father who insists his son must cut his long hair and publicly display daring (he forces him to dive from a very high board). This is depicted as cruel to the boy as well as senseless, but perhaps more importantly, it upsets the protagonist, Sara, in a way that adults consider disproportionate to the event (she cries inconsolably all afternoon). The narrator interprets her distress as deriving from emotional fusion with the boy: 'de repente ella fue él' and the associated sudden sense of continuity with all of creation this triggers is called 'un descubrimiento aterrador', which indeed it is, for it amounts to a loss of Sara's belief in her own separateness as a person, to a dissolution in other words of the boundaries separating self from other.¹⁶ So here is an attack on conventions of masculinity and, more disturbingly, the suggestion that that most basic division between self and other may be perceived as uncertain, questionable and, given Sara's sympathetic treatment, perhaps unnecessary, even undesirable. Another reading of Sara's experience is also possible, and Jacques Lacan's understanding of the significance of the mirror stage in human development is pertinent here. Malcolm Bowie explains: when 'the young child... beholds its mirror image... this is the moment at which the child seems suddenly... to be able to formulate... the propositions "I am that" and "That is me"'. But as Bowie then observes: 'The identification of oneself with another being [presumably, the mirror image] is the very process by which a continuing sense of selfhood becomes possible.' In the light of this one might argue that Sara perceives the boy as akin to a new reflection of herself, differing from the image with which she had iden-

tified since infancy. It is this realization of the radical instability of self-image which could be understood as the source of her anguish.¹⁷

The second example is from *En la ciudad sin mar*. Sara and her boyfriend Eduardo break up temporarily and during this interim, or liminal, period, Sara has a lesbian affair with a woman called Roxana. When Eduardo returns to reclaim Sara - and it is depicted in this masculine/active, feminine/passive way - she tells him about the experience with Roxana and he breaks down. She finds his tears especially moving and more so than Roxana's, which she recognizes are equally sincere, precisely because they transgress gender-based social convention; indeed this is what clinches her return to him entirely on his terms, which include the betrayal of a promise to Roxana never to leave without saying good-bye. Here Tusquets implicitly questions the validity of two clichés of conventional attitudes: real men do not cry (so when they do, it is especially pathetic and meaningful) and homosexuality is morally wrong. Sara, though uncomfortable with these ideas, cannot help but endorse them by her behaviour, which opens an ironical gap between her mind-set and the contrary position the narrative itself invites us to adopt. As far as boundaries are concerned, there are two ways in which *En la ciudad sin mar* erases them in the domain of lesbian sexuality. First, Sara's relationship with Roxana is depicted as one experience amongst many, positioning her between the hetero-/homosexual divide. She does not fit into any classic pattern: she is not the straight woman 'turned into' a lesbian by a confirmed one, for she returns to Eduardo; she is not a woman who thinks she is a lesbian until a 'real man' comes along and sweeps her off her feet, for she has already experienced a successful relationship with Eduardo prior to her acquaintance with Roxana. Roxana is equally resistant to categorization, being a mixture of elements from different set types of lesbian. The classic character who seduces the hitherto heterosexual woman is usually described as masculine in style whereas Roxana, although tall, partial to wearing trousers and no make-up (93-94), has a body defined in the language of traditional images of feminine beauty: 'un cuerpo fino y largo y liso, como de porcelana o de cristal' (96, my emphasis), she acts in a motherly way towards Sara, and trembles and weeps, taking her some distance from the mannish lesbian who would play her role in the classic configuration.¹⁸ Where two feminine types of lesbian have a relationship traditionally, is in the passionate friendship pattern, but Sara and Roxana do not fit this mould either, because it normally implies a certain equality between partners, undermined by the clearly active role played by Roxana and the passive one played by Sara in *En la ciudad sin mar*. Thus,

Tusquets critically highlights conventions of behaviour for women and men, rejects the hetero/homosexual boundary, and refuses to conform to sub-categories of lesbian types and the relationships they seek.

The third example - this one optimistic - comes from *Giselle*. Here the social taboo of homosexuality is not physically transgressed because Sara, the sixteen-year-old protagonist, bisects her adoration for a ballerina into an ethereal type of idolatry of the woman herself and a sexual relationship with the dancer's husband. The sexual contact between Sara and the husband and above all, the pleasure - rather than offence - that it gives Sara, shocks the reader. On seeking an answer to the question of why this should be so, one might argue that the shock is attributable to the fact that the turn of events is tantamount to a dissolution of boundaries between characters: Giselle and her husband are melted into a disturbingly androgynous entity. For Sara, Giselle's husband seems to represent part of Giselle herself, a part to which Sara can relate sexually and through which she can express her love for the ballerina. Simultaneously, the sexual contact with the husband realizes a fantasy for Sara of assuming the ballerina's identity, which melts away the further boundaries separating Sara from her idol. In sum, the episode emblemizes the pleasure of bisexual, three-way merging of selves, beyond the twin binarisms of homo-/heterosexual (Sara being in love with a woman but expressing this through sexual contact with a man) and self/other (Sara merging with Giselle by taking her place as the sexual object of her husband). It may be to this erasing of boundaries that the air of optimism pervading the episode is attributable:

[Sara] se sentía ahora relajada y liberada, y tan cómoda, y advertía oscuramente que lo ocurrido aquí estaba de modo confuso pero cierto relacionado con su amor por la bailarina...; con su deseo tan vehementemente de ser ella misma Giselle.... Todo andaba extrañamente junto y mal revuelto, y estaba en definitiva bien que fuera así (32).¹⁹

It is important to acknowledge that social, political and in particular, class boundaries are also treated in *Siete miradas en un mismo paisaje*, having a central position in four of the seven narratives, *Los primos*, *He besado tu boca*, *Yokanaán*, *La casa oscura*, and *Orquesta de verano*. Of these, the most interesting from the point of view of how these intersect with the genre/gender question is *He besado tu boca*, *Yokanaán*, in which Sara has an affair with a man called Ernesto, who is beneath her in class and from a left-wing family, unlike her own. In a euphoric state after losing her virginity to him, she reflects on the class barrier that she believes she has destroyed in the process. However, it will become clear later in the story that this was a woefully unrealistic belief. Thus, the narrative looks at

the sociopolitical implications - or, more precisely, the lack of them - of sexual conduct and love, coldly observing that a personal sense of solidarity or oneness, no matter how important this may be emotionally and psychologically to the individual concerned, is very unlikely to be matched by any real-life change to the status quo. And the other narratives that deal with social class or political colour reinforce this message: low-class Ricardo's love for upper-class Cecilia goes nowhere in *La casa oscura*; the political guif between fascist Gabi and socialist Bruno in *Los primos* cannot be bridged by Sara's love for both of them; and class differences prevent all but the briefest of holiday friendships between Sara and the musician's family she loves in *Orquesta de verano*.

So it is that on a thematic level, Tusquets's narrator - in contrast to the naïve Sara - gives worldly wise, even pessimistic recognition to the destructibility of sociopolitical boundaries, as well as culture-based gender divisions, but at the same time, the intensely introspective angle of the discourse, looking out at the world from Sara's innermost self, allows the author to show the terrible discrepancy between inner and outer realities: from the point of view of Sara's psychology, social, political, and gender-based boundaries are not merely unimportant, but actively cruel, violent and disconnected from her own understanding of herself and others.²⁰

The unforgettable image of Sara and Ricardo naked in the midnight sea (from *La casa oscura*) lyrically illustrates and summarizes the idea of flux in gender and genre: the traditionally feminine sea-water principle and the naked boy next to her excite Sara in a way that cannot be separated out into homo-or heterosexual desire, into self-gratificatory or reciprocal pleasure-giving or seeking and the image of the waves washing and re-washing over the beach as well as the characters provides an arresting image for the palimpsestic nature of the text and its protagonist:

se dormían por la noche escuchando el sucederse de las olas sobre la arena...y una noche en que estaban solos los dos... saltaron desnudos y enloquecidos en el agua negrísima, que les golpeaba el pecho y se les escurría entre las ingles y les cortaba el aliento de puro y recién aprendido placer (219).

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NOTES

1. *Laws of Desire: Questions of Homosexuality in Spanish Writing and Film 1960-1990* (Oxford, 1992), 95.
2. E. R. Curtius traces the sexualization of language and in particular the use of grammatical terms in obscene puns, back to Lucilius Gaius (c. 180-102 BC). *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages* (London, 1979), 414.
3. For further discussion of the sexualization of language in Goytisolo, see A. Lee Six, 'Sterne's Legacy to Juan Goytisolo: A Shandhyian Reading of *Juan sin tierra*', *Modern Language Review*, 84 (1989), 351-57.
4. This point is made in a slightly different form by M. Servodidio, 'Esther Tusquets's Fiction: The Spinning of a Narrative Web', in *Women Writers in Contemporary Spain: Exiles in the Homeland*, ed. J. L. Brown, (Associated University Presses, 1991), 159-78 (160).
5. The Authorized King James version is quoted here.
6. *The Golden Bough: A Study in Magic and Religion*, 3rd. ed., 12 vols (London, 1955), II: *Taboo and the Perils of the Soul*, M. Douglas, *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of Concepts of Pollution and Taboo* (London, 1966), 68-69.
7. M. Foucault, *Histoire de la sexualité. 1: La Volonté de savoir* (Paris, 1976), 59.
8. M. Dannecker, *Theories of Homosexuality* (London, 1981), 109.
9. M. Vicinus, "'They Wonder to Which Sex I Belong': The Historical Roots of the Modern Lesbian Identity", in *The Lesbian and Gay Studies Reader*, ed. H. Abelow, M. Barale, and D. M. Halperin (London, 1993), 432-52 (440).
10. 'One Is Not Born a Woman', in *The Lesbian and Gay Studies Reader*, 103-09 (108). By contrast, T. de Lauretis asserts that Gertrude Stein's 'sograms' strove to obliterate the boundaries of gender identity' and a further point of contact between Stein and Tusquets emerges in the claim that sexuality and textuality fuse in these works by Stein. 'Sexual Indifference and Lesbian Representation' in *The Lesbian and Gay Studies Reader*, 141-58 (144-45).
11. J. Pérez, *Contemporary Women Writers of Spain* (Boston, 1988), 161.
12. N. L. Molinaro, *Foucault, Feminism, and Power: Reading Esther Tusquets* (Associated University Presses, 1991), 24.
13. Another example is from *La casa oscura* and *Orquesta de verano*, when Sara is thirteen and eleven respectively. In both stories, she is forced to confront the inequities of the class system and yet the former does not call to mind her experience in the latter.
14. Tusquets does something similar in her trilogy of novels with the recurring names Elia and Clara. P. J. Smith regards this as a 'feminist subversion of identity' (*Laws of Desire*, 92). However, since we are dealing with three full-length novels there, rather than seven short narratives as here, the effect is less overwhelming in the trilogy, though no less significant. The simultaneously singular and plural protagonist[s] will henceforth be referred to as Sara to avoid the unwieldiness of giving singular and plural alternatives at every mention.

15. Similar experimentation with overlapping characters is found, to a lesser extent, in Juan Marsé's *Si te dicen que caí*. Juan Goytisolo parodies realist characterization through his chameleonic Vosk personaje in *Juan sin tierra*.

16. Esther Tusquets, *Siete miradas en un mismo paisaje* [1981] (Barcelona, 1993), 152. Page references in parenthesis after quotations refer to this edition.

17. M. Bowie, *Lacan* (London, 1991), 21-22 and 30-31, respectively.

18. M. Vicinus, "They Wonder to which Sex I Belong", especially 436-38 and 441.

19. A link with mystical union is perhaps worth noting here and may contribute to our understanding of the positive value attributed to the experience in the narrative. In his discussion of Irigaray with reference to St Teresa of Avila, P. J. Smith explains: "The mystic transgresses [...] the identity which has framed her. [...] it is an experience of [...] dissolution of differences." *Representing the Other: Race, Text, and Gender in Spanish and Spanish American Narrative* (Oxford, 1992), 105-06. This complements J. Singer's observation that a sense of merging together is associated with orgasm: "all boundaries are lost and the one and the other forget who they are as individuals." *Androgyny: The Opposites Within*, 2nd ed. (Boston, 1989), 83. These views go some way towards underpinning Sara's experience here, but do not cover the third element in the merging process suggested by the narrative, namely Sara's sense of fusion with the dancer. They also fail to account for the non-ecstatic, non-sexual experience of merging undergone by the Sara of *Exiliados* discussed above.

20. There is one exception to this, in *Los primos*, when at an early age she records her sense of differentness from and repugnance towards the poor. Nevertheless, it is at the end of this narrative that she chooses to take the side of her poor cousin Bruno, against her rich cousin, Gabi.

SAN FRANCISCO'S 'EL TEATRO DE LA ESPERANZA': FROM AGIT PROP TO AVANT-GARDE

Chicano theatre, the bilingual theatre of Mexicans resident in the United States, as a whole has had an uneasy relationship with American avant-garde theatre. Although 'the base root of all avant garde theatre is an uncompromising rejection of contemporary civilization and existing social structures',¹ the assumption of many Chicano theatre practitioners until recently was that avant-garde theatre was itself in fact a manifestation of the very bourgeois spirit of Western culture which it set out to destroy. Like Lukacs, they regarded it as synonymous with cultural decadence, although, like avant-garde theatres of the 1960s, such as the Living Theatre and the San Francisco Mime Troupe, they shared the rejection of middle-class 'white' American values. So, while avant-garde theatre groups 'are linked by a specific attitude to Western society, a particular aesthetic approach, and the aim of transforming the nature of theatrical performance, all of which add up to a distinctive ideology',² Chicano theatre rejects one of the fundamental tenets of the theatrical avant-garde in the United States, the assumption that 'individual spiritual change is the precondition for meaningful exterior political change'.³ Chicano theatre opted for a road to social change through collective social action and sought to provoke activism in their audiences through the kind of theatrical fare they offered on stage. For example, collective protagonists often featured and local barrio issues were studied.⁴

Chicano theatre - the theatre of politicised people of Mexican origin in the United States, particularly in California - owes its traditional roots to the *teatro de género chico* and the *carpa* of Mexican tradition.⁵ Fundamentally theatre for the lower middle class and burgeoning working class, the Mexican *carpa* bequeathed to the Chicano theatre of the 1960s and early 1970s the aesthetic of the *rasquachi*. This was basically a combination of presentational spontaneity, subversive, satirical intent, and minimal, shoddy props. This first became its hallmark through the now very successful Teatro Campesino and is the Chicano equivalent of the avant-garde promotion of the carnivalesque found in United States theatres in the 1960s. Rendered more scientific and Marxist by the formal incorporation of Brechtian elements to its presentational foundation, Chicano theatre doubled its efforts to create theatre of, and for, the working class person of Mexican origin and, mirrored socially by an upswell in militancy in itself characteristic of the decade in American society, used theatre to