“Chicano Theater as an Avenue for a Transnational Working-Class Analysis: A review of plays produced by Teatro Campesino and Teatro de las Chicanas”

by

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Abstract

In the 1960s and 70s, community theater troupes Teatro Campesino and Teatro de las Chicanas rose out of the Chicana/o Movement (CCM) and shared its mission to address the needs of Chicana/o communities in the American Southwest. Scholars have written about Chicano Theater's contributions to the cultural and artistic renaissance during CCM—this research adds to that scholarship by highlighting these two theater troupes' contributions to a transnational, working-class, anti-imperialist, and feminist political analysis. Influenced by Brechtian theater, commedia dell'arte, Mexican *teatro de carpa*, and mid-twentieth-century transnational cultural and political social movements, Teatro Campesino and Teatro de las Chicanas used theater and Chicana/o culture to educate their community socially and politically in rural and urban settings. By addressing the Vietnam War in the 1960s, Teatro Campesino linked the oppression of Mexican-descent agricultural workers in the U.S. and the oppression of the Vietnamese as part of the same U.S. imperialist project. Likewise, Teatro de las Chicanas addressed U.S. political and military intervention in El Salvador in the 1980s—expanding the scope of Chicano Theater's political analysis to incorporate other Spanish-speaking communities beyond those of Mexican descent.

Like previous generations of activists, the participants of the Chicana/o Movement (CCM) during the late 1960s and 1970s continued the struggle for better economic, political, and social conditions in the United States. An important distinction between CCM activists and previous generations, was the strategies they employed to combat their oppression. Activists of the Mexican American Generation (MAG) most commonly used court cases, electoral politics, and assimilationist politics to successfully and incrementally better the conditions of Mexican-descent communities in the U.S., particularly in the Southwest.[1] Conversely, CCM activists used direct action and cultural nationalism as strategies to address historically oppressive institutions. These included systems of labor, health, education, political participation, law enforcement, and others.

The CCM had both a domestic and transnational scope, often linking their struggles with those of other oppressed communities throughout the U.S. and around the world. Influenced by international leftist, anti-imperialist, labor, student, and human rights movements, the CCM both continued and advanced the twentieth century struggle against oppression by Mexican-descent communities in the United States. Of particular influence were the Black Civil Rights movement in the U.S., the Cuban Revolution of 1959, and the Mexican Student Movement of the 1960s. Much of the imagery, rhetoric, and transnational scope of the CCM came from these influences and direct interactions with participants of these concurrent movements. CCM activists often formed formal and informal coalitions with activists of other movements in the same arena. Chicana/o student groups, for instance, while organizing in colleges and universities, often organized in coalition with their Black, Asian, Native American, working class, and immigrant counterparts to achieve common goals.[2]

The CCM had a structure that allowed it to address several issues at once. This structure also allowed for specific organizations to contribute to more than one cause or make impact on more than one front. Using various political and cultural methodologies, CCM organizations addressed concerns in the areas of labor, education, health, and political representation. The Crusade for Justice, for instance, while well known for its contributions to the definition of Chicano cultural nationalism, also had successes in education. This paper analyzes of the contributions of Chicano Theater to a political, transnational, working-class analysis. I analyze the histories, influences, and theatrical philosophies and practices of Teatro Campesino from Delano, California and Teatro de las Chicanas from San Diego, California. This, in order to demonstrate that in addition to their contributions to the Chicano Theater and Chicano Art movements—which were a part of the larger CCM—Teatro Campesino and Teatro de las Chicanas also contributed to a

transnational analysis through their plays. Through the writing, producing, and performing of plays and interaction with their audiences, the teatro groups provided viewers with a transnational, critical, and informative analysis about the oppression of working-class people of color at the hands of the U.S. nation-state at home and abroad.

During CCM, one of the primary concerns for activists was the war in Vietnam. White youth in the U.S. at the time largely opposed the war on an ideological basis. That is, the anti-war movement opposed the war with the belief that war was fundamentally wrong. While CCM activists shared this view, they more importantly opposed the war through an anti-imperialist lens. CCM activists, like other oppressed people, recognized the war in Vietnam as an extension of the U.S. historical colonial expansion and imperialist intervention. CCM opposed the war for two primary reasons. The first was the disproportionate deaths of Chicanos in the war. CCM activists questioned why Chicanos should fight and die for the imperialist efforts of a country which had historically oppressed them.

Due to their historical racial oppression, Chicanos did not have the societal, political, or economic advantages available to many of their Anglo counterparts. When drafted into the military, Chicanos had little recourse but to join the war whereas societal privileges at times aided Anglos in circumventing military service. The disposability of bodies of color by the U.S. government and society also made invisible the large number of Chicano deaths in Vietnam.

Second, Chicana/o activists opposed the war in Vietnam in solidarity with the Vietnamese rural agricultural and working-class population. CCM activists made the connection between their own socio-economic status and that of the Vietnamese. Additionally, CCM activsts recognized the oppression of the Vietnamese people as the work of the same apparatus that oppressed them—U.S. imperialist, white-supremacist political expansion. Again, CCM anti-war

activists questioned why Chicanas/os should help the U.S. oppress a population not unlike their own—the Vietnamese—with whom they identified more commonalities than with mainstream Anglo society. CCM activists added this transnational analysis to the war in Vietnam because they understood the reach of the U.S. imperialist interventions encompassed temporal and geographic parameters that included themselves, the Vietnamese people, and others. They also understood the connections of working-class people across and beyond borders. The dissemination of these ideas, then, to the Chicana/o community and others, was an important part of solidifying the analysis.

Teatro Campesino played an important role in communicating the transnational working-class analysis of the Vietnam War. In addition to being a part of the artistic renaissance of the CCM, the plays produced by Teatro Campesino contributed to the political side of the movement. Its theater productions acted as an avenue by which the community could learn, in this case about the war in Vietnam and its connection to the Chicana/o community. Two plays produced in the early era of Teatro Campesino (1965-1970), "Vietnam Campesino" and "Soldado Razo" serve this purpose.

Teatro de las Chicanas likewise contributed to the artistic expression, political practice, and transnational analysis of the CCM. Several things separate Teatro de las Chicanas from Teatro Campesino, however. Primarily, Teatro de las Chicanas employed a critique of gender oppression within the Chicana/o community and CCM. Additionally, Teatro de las Chicanas, unlike Teatro Campesino, regularly featured female lead or essential characters. Teatro de las Chicanas was also part of the genealogy of Chicana feminism. The troupe addressed topics important to Chicana feminist scholars and activists including misogyny in the CCM, women's contributions to the history, culture, and politics of the Chicana/o community, reproductive

rights, and access to education. In their analysis of transnational working-class connections, Teatro de las Chicanas also went beyond the scope of CCM and Teatro Campesino. Their play "Archie Bunker Goes to El Salvador" is exemplary of the troupe's ability to make the transnational connection between working-class people beyond the Vietnam War and into Central America.

Teatro de las Chicanas made a connection between the oppression of Chicanas/os in the U.S. and the U.S.'s imperialist intervention in El Salvador. In the late 1970s and early 1980s, working-class people in El Salvador, like in other countries in the region, attempted to overthrow the repressive oligarch and military government. This led to a civil war with a coalition of guerillas, known as the Frente Farabundo Martí de la Liberación Nacional (FMLN), fighting against a military *junta* which first promised to secure fair elections but ultimately became more repressive than the previous regime. Fearing the revolutionary movement in El Salvador would lead to communism amidst the Cold War, the U.S. supported the *junta* with monetary aid and military training. This support by the U.S. government and military of a repressive government that murdered and disappeared thousands is what Teatro de las Chicanas aimed to communicate to their audiences. By doing so, they provided a transnational analysis, through a women of color feminist lens, of U.S. oppression of Spanish-speaking working-class people in the Western hemisphere.

Chicano Theater, as an artistic movement, was part of the larger Chicana/o Art Movement that ran concurrently and in coalition with the CCM. The Chicana/o Art Movement included visual, musical, performative, and literary arts. Like the CCM as a whole, participants of the Chicana/o Art Movement were inspired by the ongoing political and cultural movements, as well as the artistic movements, both domestically and internationally. Chicana/o visual and

performative artists were heavily influenced by Mexican artists of the early and mid-twentieth century. With these influences, Chicana/o artists developed an artistic arm to the CCM that engaged with, advanced, challenged, and helped solidify the political and cultural concerns of the CCM. They did so by creating art that was both artistically expressive and educational for the community.[3]

Chicano Theater developed within the Chicana/o Art Movement. Like other CCM-era artistic and political expressions, theater developed through the bringing together of different transnational influences into what we identify as Chicano Theater. This included both theater influences and political/cultural influences. Two strands of theater influences are of note. First, the European theater practices like agitprop theater, commedia dell'arte, and Brechtian theater. Second, and the most influential, the Mexican *teatro de carpa* and *rasquache* theater practices, both working-class public performance traditions.[4] Additionally, Chicano theater was influenced by the political and cultural activism of the CCM, particularly the goals to create a uniquely Chicano culture and educate the community. Putting together these influences, Chicano Theater created a tradition of their own. The Chicano Theater tradition took from these influences and positioned theater as an artistic expression and a political tool for disseminating ideas about transnational activism, U.S. imperialism, cultural identity, and feminism.

Much of the scholarship on Chicano Theater centers the story of Teatro Campesino, identifying the establishment of the troupe as the beginning of the Chicano Theater movement as a whole. Likewise, Luis Valdez's personal story is intertwined with the troupe's history, at times written as if they were one and the same. Valdez is identified as Teatro Campesino's and Chicano Theater's primary and most important leader and contributor. Broyles-Gonzalez, however, asks us to look beyond the Valdez's story and reveals the communal workings of

Teatro Campesino.[5] In her work, Broyles-Gonzalez demonstrates that Teatro Campesino had influences that went beyond those contributed by Valdez. This included the Mexican theater and other performative traditions that the early farmworker/theater participants contributed to the troupe. Valdez, in his role as spoke person for the troupe, regularly talked about the Mexican influences of Teatro Campesino. This included teatro de carpa and rasquachismo. Broyles-Gonzalez demonstrates how those influences were not just brought to the troupe by Valdez, but other Teatro Campesino members. Her analysis strengthens our understanding of Teatro Campesino as a truly collaborative endeavor in which lesser-known members of the troupe had just as much to do with the troupe's development of Chicano Theater.

Taking the analysis of Chicano Theater a step further, it is not enough to talk about only Teatro Campesino. A narrative of that kind would still center only one theater troupe, of which there were many during the CCM. That is why, to this analysis I add the work of Teatro de las Chicanas. In addition to providing a different side of Chicano Theater's story, and one outside of the Teatro Campesino-focused narrative, Teatro de las Chicanas exemplifies a different style for teatro altogether. Teatro de las Chicanas demonstrated that there was a different possibility in focus, philosophy, scope, and practice for Chicano Theater. The troupe's impact on the CCM and its members was also unique. Unlike Teatro Campesino, Teatro de las Chicanas was established by an all-women's collective, many of whom were college students and non-professional actors. Their scope was different too. The troupe began by addressing gender oppression, educational discrimination, and the CCM. Later they addressed working-class issues and supported anti-imperialism more broadly—beyond the parameters of the early CCM to include the war in El Salvador. This is a scope that Teatro Campesino did not reach.

By looking at both Teatro Campesino and Teatro de las Chicanas, this project contributes to the scholarship on Chicano Theater, its influences, and contributions in a transnational context. Broyles-Gonzalez's work on Teatro Campesino moves away from an analysis focused on European theater influences on the troupe. Instead, she focuses her analysis on the Mexican theater influences. Here, I aim to highlight both strands of influences. Although European theater's influence on Teatro Campesino has been extensively studied by scholars, the same is not true for its influence on Teatro de las Chicanas. Teatro de las Chicanas identified, both, Brechtian theater and commedia dell'arte as influences. To fully understand the contributions of both teatro troupes, it is important to acknowledge the transnational theater influences from all origins.

More importantly, both teatro groups also share the influences of Mexican working-class performative traditions—teatro de carpa and rasquachismo—and CCM political and cultural innovation. Teatro Campesino had its roots performing as the artistic side of the UFW's labor organizing, staging its early plays in the fields and picket lines. The troupe later reached audiences outside of labor organizing by performing in colleges, community spaces, and renowned performative spaces domestically and abroad. Teatro Campesino also eventually produced longer plays and thematically addressed broader CCM politics and culture.[6] Teatro de las Chicanas also began by engaging Chicana identity, politics, and culture. Members first performed their plays for their mothers, and later for other audiences at San Diego State University. Although with limited resources, time, and at times actors, the troupe nonetheless expanded its *actos* (skits) into longer plays with different themes. Teatro de las Chicanas, too, reached community with their performances at community spaces, schools, backyards, and parks.[7] Both Teatro Campesino and Teatro de las Chicanas incorporated songs, short skits,

longer plays, and speeches into their performances. With all of these influences and practices Teatro Campesino and Teatro de las Chicanas defined Chicano Theater for themselves and their audiences and contributed to the definition of the art form as a whole.

Both troupes most commonly referred to their work as *actos*, especially the shorter plays or skits in their repertoire. These plays addressed a wide scope of themes and developed into longer and more elaborate plays as time passed. Teatro Campesino's early actos focused on portraying the reality of farmworkers in the California Central Valley and encouraging their first audiences—campesinos—to join the United Farm Workers and their strike in the mid-1960s. Later work covered topics related to the history of Mexican populations in the U.S., the CCM, the Vietnam War, and education. Teatro de las Chicanas, on the other hand, began with plays about education, calling special attention to the experiences of Chicanas in higher education. Their early plays also explicitly exposed and critiqued gender oppression in U.S. society and within the Chicana/o community. As time went on, and as the troupe grew, Teatro de las Chicanas produced plays that addressed issues of culture, patriarchy, the CCM, the Vietnam War, and the civil war in El Salvador.

In this paper I analyze the plays produced by Teatro Campesino and Teatro de las Chicanas which addressed U.S. oppression through a transnational lens. Teatro Campesino's plays on the Vietnam war, "Vietnam Campesino" and "Soldado Razo," and Teatro de las Chicanas' play "Archie Bunker goes to El Salvador" all speak to the effects of U.S. imperialism on communities of color in the U.S. and abroad. One of the major organizing efforts of the CCM was in relation to the Vietnam war, namely the disproportionate number of Chicanos drafted and killed in the war effort. Chicanas/os also made the argument that they had more in common with the Vietnamese people as they were similarly being oppressed by the U.S. nation.[8] Teatro

Campesino's plays on the subject reflect this CCM-era sentiment. The play by Teatro de las Chicanas, "Archie Bunker goes to El Salvador," also critiques the U.S.'s imperialist interventions, this time in El Salvador. They too see a similarity between the historical oppression of Mexican-descent people in the U.S. and the Salvadorean people at the hands of U.S.-backed state oppression in El Salvador. This is an example of Teatro de las Chicanas' difference in political scope and application of Chicano Theater practices on different topics. While Teatro Campesino reflects the anti-Vietnam war politics of the 1960s and CCM in particular, Teatro de las Chicanas address the larger issue of U.S. imperialism and its effect on working class people. Importantly, Teatro de las Chicanas' play does not center the experiences of Chicanas/os, but that of Salvadoran people.

In "Vietnam Campesino," Teatro Campesino made the connection for the audience between the farmworker labor movement and the anti-war movement. In the opening scene, Butt Anglo, a grower—that is the owner of a large industrial farm—has an interaction with some protesters. These protesters are using anti-Vietnam War chants and pickets and directing them at Butt Anglo. He's surprised by this, and asks why they are protesting him, "a poor grower," about the Vietnam War. The picketers, through a series of questions, make the connection between agribusiness and the war effort. They ask Butt about his federal subsidies, the use of pesticides—to point out an analogy made at the time about the use of chemicals on people of color domestically and abroad—and proclaim that the war has everything to do with the labor movement, especially "Since the Grape Strike." That last statement made in reference to the first major farmworker labor strike organized by the United Farm Workers (UFW) between 1965–1970.[9]

To drive the connection between the anti-war movement and the labor movement further, the interaction between Butt and the picketers is followed by a similar interaction between the protesters and the character General Defense. General Defense, as the name implies, represents the U.S. military. When General enters the stage, he is followed by a different group of picketers chanting "Huelga! (Strike!)," the popular chant popularized in the U.S. by the UFW during the 1960s. He too questions why the picketers are protesting him with farm labor strike chants when he is a general, not a grower. The picketers, again through questions, make the connection between their labor organizing and the anti-Vietnam war movement. They ask General, "How many Chicanos are dying in Vietnam?" and "How many scab grapes did the Pentagon buy from Delano?"[10] The first question reflects the direct connection that many CCM anti-war activists highlighted, which was the disproportionate deaths of Chicanos in Vietnam. By putting to question the military and police state repression and violence against picketers, the picketers are making the connection to their labor movement by implicating the U.S. military as part of the infrastructure that opposes the UFW and farmworker labor movement and Vietnamese farmworkers.

Furthermore, the play makes the connection between the repression of working-class farmworker populations at the hands of the capitalist and imperialist U.S. government both in the United States and in Vietnam. The mention of chemical warfare, in particular, is a reference to both the use of chemical weapons on the Vietnamese and the use of pesticides in the fields where Mexican farmworkers labor. While not in the same context, the deliberate use of chemicals on human beings when aware of the damage they do is a clear form of violent repression. Teatro Campesino, like other CCM activists, made the connection between the violation of human rights in Vietnam and in the U.S.

Teatro Campesino also condemned the use of force to repress what they saw as working-class people's attempt to end their oppression. In the context of social revolutions around the world and the domestic civil rights movements by communities of color, the plight of the Vietnamese people resonated with CCM activists who themselves aimed to end their historical oppression. UFW strikers, like other CCM activists, were often met with police violence. Motivated by capitalist or racist motives, local police met largely peaceful protests with force. CCM activists made the connection between this repression of their own movement and the U.S. military interference in Vietnam as part of the same larger political and imperialist project.

In light of all this, CCM activists were unwilling to participate in the war effort or support the U.S.'s involvement in Vietnam. While others in the U.S. opposed the war, Chicanas/os, like other Black, Indigenous, and People of Color, opposed it with a working-class transnational analysis of imperialist oppression. Organizations like Teatro Campesino reflected that sentiment and used plays like "Vietnam Campesino" to get that message across to the community.

Through "Vietnam Campesino," Teatro Campesino provided a transnational analysis for the audience about the connection between the anti-Vietnam war movement and the labor movement. Those who might have been familiar with the broader anti-Vietnam war movement in the U.S. or the one within the CCM, might have recognized the argument for anti-war based on the disproportionate negative effect on the Chicana/o community. However, Teatro Campesino took it a step further by connecting the war effort and the U.S. military to the opposition of farm labor organizing in Delano, California and elsewhere. The play teaches the audience how the U.S. state and military played a role in aiding the growers that the UFW strike and boycott struggled against. In the end, the scenes described above show the extent of U.S. imperialism and

its role in the oppression of people in both Vietnam and in the U.S. The play goes on to also depict the connection that Chicano organizers and Vietnamese farmer workers make between their oppression at the hands of the U.S. state.

On a more personal and emotional note, Teatro Campesino's play "Soldado Razo" depicts the effects of the Vietnam War on the Chicana/o community at home. "Soldado Razo" is the story of Johnny, a Chicano drafted for the Vietnam War. The play depicts his interactions with his loved ones before his departure. Johnny is at first excited about his upcoming military service, seeing it as a way to prove his manliness and patriotism. After seeing the effect that his going to fight in Vietnam will have on his family, he is not so sure he wants to go but realizes he has no choice.

Another character, Muerte (Death), reveals for the audience Johnny's fate from the beginning of the play. Muerte tells the audience that Johnny will die in Vietnam. While the play is going on, Muerte begins to prepare Johnny for his inevitable death by progressively painting Johnny's face white. Johnny's death in Vietnam is never in question, it is a given, and Muerte knows it. At one point in the play, some of the characters become aware of Muerte's presence—essentially, they see death and believe it is a sign of Johnny's fate. First, Johnny's mother accidentally sees Muerte while he's distracted talking to the audience. Muerte tries to hide, but the mother knows she's seen him. When Johnny is at the train station to depart, it is Muerte who sells him his ticket. Johnny also seems to recognize Muerte at the train station but ignores his premonition. Muerte's presence foreshadows Johnny's fate but also communicates to the audience that this is the most likely outcome for Chicano soldiers. Despite the characters' attempts to be positive about Johnny's military service, Muerte makes it clear that his outcome will be death.

In the end, Johnny's experience in Vietnam gives him a consciousness about the U.S.'s intervention in Vietnam, and the relationship between the Vietnamese people and Chicanas/os in the U.S. Johnny writes a letter to his mother at the end of the play, where he first describes the atrocities committed by the U.S. military in Vietnam, including the indiscriminate killings of Vietnamese civilians. He then describes a dream in which he attacked a Vietnamese household. In the dream, after killing the inhabitants, he realizes that they are actually his mother, father, and brother. As he's about to ask his mother to warn his friends about the realities of war and to help prevent them from serving in Vietnam, Muerte shoots Johnny.[11]

Johnny's character arch in "Soldado Razo" reflects the historical relationship between Mexican men and the U.S. military. At the turn of the century and after U.S. takeover of the current U.S. Southwest, gaining cultural citizenship—that is, being accepted into the cultural makeup of the nation-state—became a priority to some Mexican-descent communities. Military service became an avenue to attain that goal. Participation in the U.S. military, then, culturally became a sign of social status, if not possible economic upper mobility. During the Vietnam War, more than in previous generations, Chicanos rejected military service, viewing it as participation in the U.S.'s imperialist project.

At the beginning of the play, Johnny is proud to be going to war. While he is fearful of the prospect of death, he enjoys the cultural status that his draft into the military brings him. His father, mother, and brother all look to him in admiration. This feeling clashes with their own fears of Johnny's possible, perhaps inevitable, fate in the war. "Soldado Razo" forces the audience to contend with these opposing feelings with the inclusion of the character of Muerte.

Throughout the play, Muerte foreshadows Johnny's death. In fact, the audience is aware from the beginning that Johnny will die in Vietnam. Johnny and the other characters in the play

have premonitions that this is true but ignore them. In his letter to his mother, Johnny recognizes this. But it is through his personal experience in Vietnam that he realizes that military service is not what he thought it was. Witnessing the atrocities that the U.S. military commits in Vietnam gives Johnny a political consciousness that he was unable to attain while at home. His dream about his family being the Vietnamese people he kills drives home the fact that Johnny is aware of the connection between the oppression of Chicanas/os in the United States and Vietnamese.

As Johnny is about to warn his friends about the realities of war, Muerte kills him. Teatro Campesino's message here is another meant to raise consciousness in the audience. Not only does the U.S. military want Chicanos to join the military and surely die in the war, but it wants them to stay ignorant about the realities of the war in Vietnam so that they will continue to do so.

With both "Vietnam Campesino" and "Soldado Razo" Teatro Campesino presents important information to the community about the Vietnam War. In addition to depicting the experiences of Chicanas/os in relation to the war, Teatro Campesino adds an anti-imperialist, international working-class, and transnational analysis. By making the connection between the oppression of the Vietnamese and that of the Chicana/o community, Teatro Campesino links the experiences of the two communities and counters the narrative of the U.S. military that the Vietnamese people are the enemy of Americans. This analysis was one that anti-war CCM activists made. The plays by Teatro Campesino, however, add information that they feel is important for the audience to learn. That is, that the U.S. military has invested interest in the mechanism that is oppressing Mexican-descent farmworkers as well as drafting them for military service despite the large number of deaths. Here Teatro Campesino displays their ability to present a transnational analysis to their audiences. CCM activists made the arguments about the connection between the Vietnamese and Chicana/o communities but did so in the political arena

in the form of protests. Teatro Campesino had the ability to educate the community on the subject.

Teatro de las Chicanas also provided for their audiences important information, while adding critical analysis, about the civil war in El Salvador with their play "Archie Bunker Goes to El Salvador." In the play, the characters Archie and Gloria, based on the popular TV show *All In The Family*, play a role in the war in El Salvador. Archie, in his well-known conservative and xenophobic fashion, believes the revolutionary factions in El Salvador are God-less communists, as the U.S. government and many Americans believed at the time. His daughter, Gloria, on the other hand is more progressive politically and a journalist interested in depicting the realities of the war. In the play, Archie is sent to el Salvador as a U.S. military advisor to the Junta, the government/military system in place which the revolutionaries are fighting against.[12]

Through the dialogue, Teatro de las Chicanas educate the audience on the U.S.'s imperialist intervention in El Salvador and the goals of the revolutionaries. Archie reveals the U.S. view of the revolutionaries, as mentioned above, and also the U.S.'s reasons for intervening. At one point, to argue for intervention, Archie says "The U.S. has a lot of investments there, sees, and they've got to be protected."[13] He also declares, "we're going over there to teach their military junta how to make them people respect theirs God and country right or wrong, in the good ole traditional American way."[14] At one point Archie's wife Edith points out that the language Archie is using to talk about El Salvador reminds her of his description of the Vietnam War. The dialogue is meant to be both essential to the story, informative to the audience, and to provide critical analysis of the war and the U.S.'s intervention.

Another character, the Newscaster, provides another opportunity to give the audience context and analysis of the war. In one scene, when Archie is watching TV, the Newscaster talks about the war in El Salvador in the following way:

> The people of El Salvador have risen against hunger, illiteracy, repression, and disease. There are rumors that the military's response has been murder and violation of basic human rights. In the 1930s 30,000 peasants were massacred by the government troops. Since 1980 over 20,000 people have met their death in the streets and in the jungles of El Salvador.[15]

This passage demonstrates that Teatro de las Chicanas found it important to not only comment on the ongoing war in the 1980s, but also to provide the historical context pertinent to understanding the situation. The Newscaster goes on to say, "The Salvadorian government's actions and the U.S. military interference are clear signs of capitalists' true interests."[16] Teatro de las Chicanas presented a critical analysis of the U.S.'s involvement in the war, marking it as a role driven by capitalist interests instead of democratic ones.

In addition to revealing the reasons for U.S. intervention, "Archie Bunker Goes to El Salvador" also gives the reasons for the civil war from the perspective of the revolutionaries. Giving voice to the revolutionaries themselves, Gloria interviews civilians and guerrilla fighters in El Salvador's urban and rural settings. It is established early in the play that Gloria knows Spanish well. This allows for the play to present the interviewees' answers to Gloria's questions in Spanish, with Gloria translating them for the audience.

When interviewed, the revolutionaries talk to Gloria about the reasons why they are fighting against the government. One character, the City Worker, also comments on the view of the U.S.'s intervention saying that they in El Salvador expected U.S. intervention to make things better for them, but they realized later the outcome was the opposite. In one scene, the revolutionaries also comment on the murder of Archbishop Romero, a supporter and martyr of the revolutionaries in the war in El Salvador.

Teatro de las Chicanas aimed to inform their audiences about the war in El Salvador through the story in "Archie Bunker Goes to El Salvador." This included providing historical and contemporary context to an issue that the audience might not have been familiar with. It also revealed, with information rather than standard popular slogans, the nuances of a war in which the U.S. intervened, and the reasons why the U.S. backed an oppressive government. Finally, "Archie Bunker Goes to El Salvador" gave voice to the revolutionaries in El Salvador—their experience in some ways a parallel to that of Chicana/os in the U.S., particularly the role of the U.S. state in their oppression.

The Teatro Campesino plays "Vietnam Campesino" and "Soldado Razo" as well as the Teatro de las Chicanas play "Archie Bunker Goes to El Salvador" are examples of the theater troupes using their artistic medium to provide a transnational analysis. The common theme in these plays is that they intend to give the audience information, context, and critical analysis of an international political situation. In addition, they make connections to the oppressed in the narrative—the Vietnamese and Salvadorean people—and the history of oppression of Chicana/os in the U.S. While it is impossible to know how much previous knowledge the audience had of the topic covered by the plays, the theater troupes make the information accessible to all. Character dialogue is used

primarily to deliver information, context, or analysis. Finally, the plays end when the message has been delivered.

Teatro Campesino and Teatro de las Chicanas are part of the history of Chicano theater, Chicano art, and the Chicana/o Movement of the 1960s and 1970s. Both teatro troupes contributed to the artistic expression of the CCM and to the discussion on identity, politics, and culture. Part of that discussion centered on the transnational connection between the plight of Chicanas/os in the U.S. and that of other working-class populations around the world. Teatro Campesino, like other CCM organizations at the time, made that connection in the context of the Vietnam War. With their plays, the two troupes served the role of educators, disseminating social and political consciousness about the war. While simultaneously making political, labor, cultural, and personal analogies, "Vietnam Campesino" and "Soldado Razo" showed the Teatro Campesino audience that the oppression of Chicanas/os in the United States and that of the Vietnamese were part of the same imperialist infrastructure. On the other hand, Teatro de las Chicanas went beyond the parameters of the typical Chicana/o theater subjects and addressed the U.S.'s imperialist intervention in El Salvador. Proving that the political practice that CCM and Chicano Theater developed could be applied to other situations, like the war in El Salvador, "Archie Bunker Goes to El Salvador" builds on the transnational working-class analysis.

[1] For more on the Mexican American Generation, see Mario T. García, *Mexican Americans: Leadership, Ideology, and Identity, 1930–1960* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1989); and Cynthia E. Orozco, *No Mexicans, Women, or Dogs Allowed: The Rise of the Mexican American Civil Rights Movement* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2009); Orozco demonstrates that the activism most identified with what García calls the Mexican American Generation began in the 1920s and 1930s. The quintessential era for this generation, in which many of their successes and impact occurred was the 1940s and 1950s.

[2] For more on the Chicana/o Movement see Juan Gómez-Quiñones and Irene Vásquez, *Making Aztlán: Ideology and Culture of the Chicana and Chicano Movement, 1966-1977* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2014)
[3] Alicia Gaspar de Alba, *Chicano Art: Inside/Outside the Master's House* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1998).
[4] Broyles-Gonzalez, *Teatro Campesino*; Jorge A. Huerta, *Chicano Theater: Themes and Forms* (Ypsilanti, Mich.: Bilingual Press, 1982); and Nicolás Kanellos, "Two Centuries of Hispanic Theatre in the Southwest," in *Mexican American Theatre: Then and Now*, Nicolás Kanellos, ed. (Houston, Tex.: Arte Públic Press, 1989).
[5] Broyles-Gonzalez, *Teatro Campesino*.
[6] Broyles-Gonzalez, *Teatro Campesino*.
[7] Laura E. Garcia, Sandra M. Gutierrez, and Felicitas Nuñes, *Teatro Chicana: A Collective Memoir and Selected Plays* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2008).
[8] For the history of anti-Vietnam War activism during the Chicana/o Movement see, Lorena Oropeza, *Raza Sí! Guerra No!: Chicano Protest and Patriotism During the Viet Nam War Era* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005).
[9] Valdez and El *Teatro Campesino*, *Early Works*, 98–99.
[10] Valdez and El *Teatro Campesino*, *Early Works*, 100.
[11] Luis Valdez and El *Teatro Campesino*, *Early Works*, 121–33.
[12] Garcia, Gutierrez, and Nuńez, *Teatro Chicana*.
[13] Garcia, Gutierrez, and Nuńez, *Teatro Chicana*, 247.
[14] Garcia, Gutierrez, and Nuńez, *Teatro Chicana*, 247.
[15] Garcia, Gutierrez, and Nuńez, *Teatro Chicana*, 249.
[16] Garcia, Gutierrez, and Nuńez, *Teatro Chicana*, 249.