A Critical Analysis of Guillermo Gomez-Pena's Performance Art: A Study in the Cultural Borderlands with Implications for Art Education

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A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF GUILLERMO GOMEZ-PENA’S
PERFORMANCE ART: A STUDY IN THE CULTURAL BORDERLANDS
WITH IMPLICATIONS FOR ART EDUCATION

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ABSTRACT

A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF GUILLERMO GÓMEZ-Peña’S PERFORMANCE ART: A STUDY IN THE CULTURAL BORDERLANDS WITH IMPLICATIONS FOR ART EDUCATION

The purpose of this study was to critically investigate artist Guillermo Gómez-Peña’s performance piece, Brownout: Border Pulp Stories in context for the meaning it holds with implications for art education. The guiding question was what does Gómez-Peña say about identity construction particularly of Mexican Americans and what are the possible implications for art education theory and practice. To answer the question, I conducted a literature review to understand the context in which performance art has developed in the twentieth century and where Gómez-Peña fits and to frame initial themes for analysis of Gómez-Peña’s performance. I then used ethnographic techniques combined with critical analysis to analyze a performance Brownout: Border Pulp Stories. The primary research strategy developed by Anderson (2000) consists of immersion, description, analysis, interpretation, and thematics. As a supporting strategy I conducted personal interviews (Seidman, 1998) with the artist.

The findings point to the significance of Gómez-Peña’s work in chronicling significant issues that can contribute to identify characteristics of identity construction in particular of Mexican Americans. These findings offer a better understanding of diversity for educators that are interested in providing instruction across boundaries of race and class. In addition, the study examines the possibilities of postmodern performance art as critical multicultural art praxis that has the potential to cross-cultural and aesthetic boundaries, as well as borders between the arts and other academic subject, promoting interdisciplinary critical thinking toward a goal of overcoming structural barriers in society, and preparing students to participate in a democratic global society. Finally, suggestions are made for incorporating both the issues and the strategies of Gómez-Peña’s performance pieces in art education theory and practice.
CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Performance art is a field that has gained significance in art education in recent years. West (1996) in *Bullfinches Guide to Art* defines performance art as an event that may include music, poetry, and dance, as well as visual arts of painting, sculpture, film, and video. The context is usually theatrical in the sense that the performance takes place in front of an audience, but most performance artists will insist that it is not the theatre but event in which the ‘action’ takes place in ‘real’ time and with ‘real’ content.

Many times, artists in postmodern performances take it upon themselves to raise awareness of social problems in radical ways of which Guillermo Gómez-Peña’s work is a useful example. The biographical nature of his work reflects the context he has encountered throughout his professional life. His writings reflect the challenges of an immigrant artist faced with issues of cultural identity.

Gómez-Peña performs in diverse venues like theatres, museums, malls, and public plazas; this adaptability has made a new aesthetic accessible to larger and diverse audiences with a dynamic interaction across languages and across cultural and racial barriers.

Purpose of the Study and Guiding Research Questions

The purpose of this study is to investigate the nature of performance artist Guillermo Gómez-Peña’s work through examining a particular performance, the monologue *Brownout: Border Pulp Stories*, in detail and in context and determine implications for art education. The guiding question for this study is: What does Guillermo Gómez-Peña’s performance piece *Brownout: Border Pulp Stories* say about identity construction, particularly of Mexican Americans, and what are the implications of that for art education? To answer this question other supporting questions must be addressed.

First, what does Gómez-Peña do in his performances?
Second, what meaning do those performances have for him?
Finally, how can performances such as Gómez-Peña’s be utilized and integrated as an aspect of contemporary art education theory and practice?

I am interested in understanding the meaning Gómez-Peña has constructed from his perspective, and how he makes sense of his world and the experiences he has had. And, I am intrigued in how that plays out in a public context. A key to this process is the interaction among artist, art form, and audience in the performance space. Part of the study required an analysis and interpretation of the video of the performance. My observation of this contact has been enhanced by a personal interview with Gómez-Peña. Finally, in what
follows, I am interested in drawing conclusions and arriving at the possible implications of Gómez-Peña’s work for the field of art education.

Procedures Framed as Objectives for the Study

The objectives for the study are:

1. Conduct a review of the literature and use it to establish a theoretical foundation for the study.
2. Observe, record, analyze and interpret Gómez-Peña’s performance *Brownout: Border Pulp Stories*, performed at Florida State University on March 24, 2000, to identify its construction and implications for art education.
3. Interview the artist to clarify meanings derived from his work.
4. Present and synthesize the findings and draw implications for art education theory and practice.

Overview and Scope of the Study

To answer the questions of the nature of Gómez-Peña’s work, I borrowed from ethnographic techniques combined with critical analysis to conduct a literature review and collect data. To comprehend the work of Gómez-Peña, I filmed the performance and conducted an in-depth analysis of the video of the solo performance *Brownout: Border Pulp Stories*. The performance text is included in Appendix A. I provide a rich description of the emerging characteristics of the performance in Chapter 4. Merriam (1998) asserts that the ethnography should be written so the case is brought to life, making the readers feel they that understand the context. This statement guided my research method to strive to arrive at a rich description of the performance and enhance the experience further.

I critically analyzed the digital film from the performance piece using Art Criticism Strategies in Ethnographic Research (Andersons, 2000), which includes The First Stage: Immersion and Response, The Second Stage: Description, the Third Stage of Interpretation, followed by the final stage of Evaluation: Achieving the Ring of Truth. From the information I obtained, I made connections that are viable in the art education field concerning why and how art educators can gain knowledge from Guillermo Gómez-Peña’s experiences.

As a supporting strategy, I interviewed Gomez-Peña as to meaning of *Brownout: Border Pulp Stories*. Seidman (1998) argues that interviewing is the best strategy to get at the stories--the narratives--that people use as the primary means of making sense of their lives. The point of interviewing people, says Anderson (2000), is to understand their experience and thus something of life beyond the confines of our own immediate and personal knowledge and horizons. In this context, I feel the story of a performance artist is of unique importance for the reader interested in issues of “border crossing” (Garber, 1995). Gómez-Peña’s interview can reveal more directly and intimately what he does and why he has the commitment he has to his work. As a foundation for this study, I conducted a series of three in-depth interviews with the artist while he was a Master Artist in Residency at the Atlantic Center for the Arts in New Smyrna, Florida, in 1998. My goal was to gain an understanding of why he does what he does, how his work is important on its own, and how his principles, his approach, and his passion can inform other artists, teachers in art education, language teachers, and students.
Limitations of the Study

The main limitation of this study is that a single case study of one performance piece in a purposeful setting does not often provide results that can be transferable to any other situation (Eisner, 1998). Generalization is not a characteristic of this study. Frankel and Wallen (1993) say, “ethnographic research is highly dependent on the particular researcher’s observation, and since numerical data are rarely provided, there is usually no way to check the validity of the researcher's conclusions” (p. 393). Frankel and Wallen (1993) continue to say that, observer bias is almost impossible to eliminate. Since usually only a single situation such as one classroom or one school is observed, generalizability is almost nonexistent” (p. 393). I am thus aware of the limitations of an ethnographic case study. However, meaning does not lie only in the objective world or in the subjective self but in the interaction between them (Eisner, 1998). This interaction comprises the interpretation of the facts and the emotions that are interwoven with the facts. This study, then, relies on my interpretative abilities.

Bias

My familiarity with the issues in the cultural, social, and political context that arise through the study allowed me to develop a solid conceptual framework for understanding what I saw and heard. As Bogdan and Biklen (1998) asserted, “being a clean slate is neither possible nor desirable” (p. 34). Janesik (1994) adds, “As we try to make sense of our social worlds and give meaning to what we do as researchers, we continually raise awareness of our own biases” (p. 212). My goal through the study is to become reflexive and conscious of how I can enrich my interpretation, for, as Dewey (1934) asserted:

Every critic believes like every artist, has a bias, a predilection that is bound up with the very existence of individuality. It is his [or her] task to convert it into an organ of sensitive perception and of intelligent insight, and to do so without surrendering the instinctive preferences from which are derived direction and sincerity. (p. 324)

From the multiphasetic aspects of postmodern performance art in content and in context, it is my task as a critic to interpret and inform the reader about the narrative of Gómez-Peña’s monologue Brownout: Border Pulp Stories.

Definition of Terms

I have included an eclectic compilation of terms to facilitate the comprehension of the text. Some terms are academic and others are non-academic. Some words are hybrids between French and English, Spanish and Nahuatl; some are Latin, and others are the result of Gómez-Peña’s brilliant imagination. In Gómez-Peña’s The New World Border (1996) he says of his Glossary of Borderismos, “the end of the book contains some conceptual clues that might help when traveling across my performance continent” (p. ii). I have referred to this source where it is appropriate.

My objective in providing this list of terms is to present sufficient information to make this dissertation a more comprehensive text incorporating different languages and conceptual sets. I would like to make clear that all definitions are my interpretations of Gómez-Peña’s meanings unless otherwise noted.
alien: A term used by opportunistic politicians and sleazy reporters to describe any legal or illegal immigrant, people with heavy accents or exotic clothes, and people who exhibit eccentric social, sexual, or aesthetic behavior.

Aztlán: ‘the original land in Aztec mythology. According to Chicano poets, it was located in what now is the U.S. Southwest” (Gómez-Peña, 1996, p. 240).

borderólogo: he who studies issues of the border.

border pedagogy: is attentive to developing a democratic public philosophy that respects the notion of difference as part of a common struggle to extend the quality of public life (Giroux, 1993, p. 28).

Brownout: Border Pulp Stories Performance: Guillermo Gómez-Peña (2000) says it is a palimpsestual performance, overlapping and juxtaposing radio commentaries for Public Radio, duets with Roberto Sifuentes, notes from performance diaries, and combining key notes presented as a monologue. A palimpsest is a parchment form in which writing has been partially or completely erased to make room for another.

Cabaret Babylon Aztlán: the name of the nightclub where Gómez-Peña worked in Tijuana.

Califas: Gómez-Peña’s conceptual home.

capiscas: to comprehend something.


chicano: an American of Mexican descent (Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary).

chingo: (first definition) slang for a large amount of something.

chingo: (second definition) slang fantastic, cool (chingado).

critical multiculturalism: a methodology that encourages students to challenge inequality and to promote cultural diversity. But educators need to go beyond critique, to the systematic inclusion of new narratives in the curriculum. African American, Native American, and Latino narratives all have different stories. These narratives need to be juxtaposed with the mainstream narrative of progress: so that students can recognize experiences different from their own, and learn to take the perspective of others. “Exposing students to the multiplicity of narratives that comprise U.S. society and teaching them about the contested nature of our history encourages them to challenge inequalities and to promote cultural diversity.” (Banks, J. & Banks, C.A. (Eds.), 2001, p. 141)


critical pedagogy: movement, “an amalgam of educational philosophies that first gained wide public recognition in the 1960s through the writings of Brazilian expatriate Paulo Freire. At the heart of this philosophy lies a belief in the centrality of education in determining political and social relations” (Trend, 1992, p. 149).

CyberVato: “Roberto Sifuentes' personae as a robo-gang member consumed by technogadgetry, including a computer keyboard which Roberto used to communicate with Internet users during live performances” (Gómez-Peña, 2000, p. 46).

educational equity: an extension of educational opportunity, “educational equity is based on fairness and promotes the real possibility of equality of outcomes for a broader range of students” (Nieto, 1996, p. 390).
esperanto: an artificial international language based as far as possible on words common to the chief European languages (Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary).
franglè: a hybrid of French and English languages.
ganga: from the English word ‘gang,’ “a term used by police department in the U.S. to describe all people of color under the age of eighteen” (Gómez-Peña, 1996, p. 242).
gringo: a foreigner in Spain or Latin America especially when of English or American origin; broadly: a non-Hispanic person (Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary).
gringolandia: from the words gringo and land: the United States of America.
Gringostroika: (second definition) “a continental grassroots movement that advocates the complete economic and cultural reform of U.S. anarchocapitalism” (Gómez-Peña, 1993, p. 22). In a parallel perestroika The Russian word for restructuring and subtitle of Kushner’s Angles in America Part II.
guey: slang for dude.
Hispanic: from Hispania Iberian Peninsula. Of relating to, or being a person of Latin American descent living in the U.S.; especially one of Cuban, Mexican, or Puerto Rican origin. (Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary).
il corpo pecaminoso: sinful body.
Judiciales: of the administration of justice; police.
machin: macho; characterized by machismo.
menage a trade: from the French ménage a trois (meaning sexual threesome), synonymous with NAFTA.
Mestizo: of mixed heritage; usually referring to Native American and Spanish blood.
migra: Immigration Naturalization Service, Border Patrol.
minorities: for the distinctions made between different kinds of minorities by John Ogbu, see “The Consequences of the American Caste System in The School Achievement of Minority Children: New Perspectives, edited by Ulric Neisser (Hillsdale, MJ: Erlbaum, 1986). Castelike or involuntary minorities: those incorporated into a society against their will. In the United States, this term generally refers to American Indians, African Americans, Mexican Americans, and Puerto Ricans, all of whose ancestors were either conquered or enslaved. Voluntary or immigrant minorities: those who have chosen freely to emigrate from one society to another” (Nieto, 1996, p. 391).
multicultural: (first definition) of, relating to, reflecting, or adapted to diverse cultures (a multicultural society, multicultural education) (Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary).
multicultural: (second definition) “multiculturalism is the hip word of the late 1980s. It is an ambiguous term. It can mean a cultural pluralism in which the various ethnic groups collaborate and dialogue with one another without having to sacrifice their particular identities to the Big Blob. But it can also mean a kind of Esperantic Disney World, a tutti-frutti cocktail of cultures, languages, and art forms in which everything becomes everything else and nothing is really indispensable. This is a dangerous notion that strongly
resembles the bankrupt concept of the melting pot with its familiar connotations of integration, homogenization, and neutralization” (Gómez-Peña, 1993, p. 52).

**multicultural education**: a process of comprehensive and basic education for all students. “Multicultural education challenges and rejects racism and other forms of discrimination in schools and society and accepts and affirms the pluralism (ethnic, racial linguistic, religious, economic, and gender, among others) that students, their communities, and teachers represent. Multicultural education permeates the curriculum and instructional strategies used in schools, as well as the interactions among teacher, students, and parents, and the very way that schools conceptualize the nature of teaching and learning. Because it uses critical pedagogy as its underlying philosophy and focuses on knowledge, reflections, and action (praxis) as the basis for social change, multicultural education promotes the democratic principles of social justice” (Nieto, 1996, p. 391).

**NAFTA**: an acronym for North American Free Trade Agreement.

**Nahuatl**: a group of closely related Uto-Aztecan languages (an American Indian linguistic stock) that includes the speech of several peoples (such as the Aztecs) of central and southern Mexico and Central America (Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary).

**Nahuatlan**: Nahuatl in all its dialects often taken as a group of languages, spoken in large areas of central Mexico and El Salvador and various small, widely dispersed areas through southern Mexico and Central America (Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary).

**neta**: clear and well defined.

**pocho**: “s/he who bastardizes the Spanish language and Mexican aesthetics” (Gómez-Peña, 1996, p. 243).

**pintas**: Gómez-Peña (1993) says they are “impromptu murals inspired by urban pop culture and oppositional politics” (p. 19). This word is also used in reference to tattoos.


**Que hueva**: an expression of fatigue.

**racism**: a belief that race is the primary determinant of human traits and capacities and that radical differences produce an inherent superiority of a particular race (Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary).

**radical performance**: in the post-modern [era], performance which has a genuinely radical and democratic edge. “What is actually important is how radical performance can actually produce such freedoms, or at least a sense of them, for both performers and spectators” (Kershaw, 1999, p. 19).

**raza**: (first definition) popular Spanish word to identify people of the same group, and race.

**raza**: (second definition) a reference to the brotherhood in the Latino culture.

**reverse the gaze**: a term used by Gómez-Peña in his performance scripts and as a strategy in the performance set to alienate mainstream audience, effectively setting up Latinos or Hispanics as the mainstream culture.

**Replicante #3678573**: name and number Gómez-Peña uses to introduce himself in Brownout: Border Pup Border Stories.
reverse anthropologist: Gómez-Peña presents some of his hybrid personae as reverse anthropologists; reversing the gaze.
sui generis: constituting a class alone (Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary).
verbigratia: from the Latin verbum, word as an example.
xenophobia: one unduly fearful of what is foreign and especially of people of foreign origin. xenophobic: adjective (Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary)

Conclusion

I am relying on my own sensitivity and insight to guide my research as a critic through a comprehensive examination of the significance of performance artist Gómez-Peña’s work, Brownout: Border Pulp Stories. The findings of this study may generate an understanding of performance art pedagogy as a multicultural strategy for art education. Following the conclusions, recommendations will be made for further studies in art education.
CHAPTER 2
LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction to History of Performance Art

Performance artist and educator Charles Garoian (1999) believes that meaningful educational experiences can be developed through an approach to performance art pedagogy that represents the embodied expression of culture as aesthetic experience. Meaningful education can result in enhanced academic skills and higher learning objectives. Performance art pedagogy promotes progressive alliances between artistic and pedagogical fields, which can transform education and challenge the status quo toward a more egalitarian praxis.

Performance art branches out from the visual arts tradition, moving away from the static work of art and providing an important impetus for the general shift in modern artistic interest from product to process, turning even painters and sculptors into performance artists (Carlson, 1996, p. 89). Traditional theatre and performance art differ in that performance triggers a conscious or unconscious analysis of the piece presented that goes further than the theatre space.

The emerging characteristics of multicultural performance make this developing aesthetic complex, provocative, and enlightening. Garoian (1999) says, from the riotous actions of the Dadaist during World War I, to the “Happenings” of Allan Kaprow in the 1960s, to Guillermo Gómez-Peña’s current exploration of border issues, cross-cultural identity, and U.S. -Latino cultural relations, performance artists have worked to open the discourse on art and to expose its social and political underpinnings. (p. 28)

Understanding the history of performance art is vital to place the work of multicultural performance artist Guillermo Gómez-Peña in context and to develop the conceptual framework for this study. To this effect, this chapter will undertake to briefly describe the history of performance as a radical theatrical expression. Garoian, (1996) says, performance art has its roots in the experimental and interdisciplinary explorations of twentieth-century [European] art movements like Futurism, Constructivism, Dadaism, Surrealism, the Bauhaus, Pop, and Postminimalism. (p. 40)

Nonetheless, interdisciplinary artist and cultural theorist Coco Fusco (1995) argues that performance art in America began much earlier than in Europe. Performance in the West did not begin with Dadaist “events” but rather with the people from the conquered world who were taken to Europe for aesthetic contemplation, scientific analysis, and entertainment. Verséyni (1996) believes that it is meaningful to go back to pre-Columbian
times to revisit the relationship between religion, politics, and theatre in Native American society. Fusco and Verséyni take the dynamic interactions of performance back five hundred years to autochthonous cultures in America. These influences are evident in the work of performance artist Gómez-Peña through his use of the Nahuatl language, pre-Columbian dress, musical instruments, props, miming, and numerous references to his mestizo heritage. Garoian (1999) points out that “in more recent times, performance art has been the genre of choice of artists of marginalized cultures who have found the strategy of radical critique necessary to aestheticize the issues surrounding ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender race, and class distinction” (p. 19).

**European Performance Art**

European performance in the late nineteenth century and in the early twentieth century evolved in content and in context reflecting the conditions of a particular time and place. Performance identified as radical, says Kershaw (1999), will be deeply rooted in the conditions of the contemporary. Therefore, radical performance always partakes from the most critical cultural, social, and political tensions of its time. The following survey of art movements shows how the work of individual artists contributed to the development of radical performance art from the late nineteenth century to the twentieth century. As Dewey (1934) argued, “art itself denotes a quality of action and of things done; every authentic new work of art in some degree is the birth of a new art” (p. 229). Performance art gave conceptual artists a forum for a new and growing aesthetic addressing issues important to a particular time and place. The futurist movement is my point of departure for European performance art from the first publication of *Performance Art: From Futurism to the Present*, 1970, by Rose Lee Goldberg.

**Futurism**

The early twentieth-century saw new art movements like never before. Futurism was born in 1909, after the Italian poet Filippo Marinetti published the *Manifesto of Futurist Painters* in the Parisian newspaper *Le Figaro* (Goldberg, 1988). In that same year, several important theatrical presentations appeared, provoking the public’s interest in the Futurist movement. At the premier of *Le Roi Bombance* (1909), a political satire was presented at the *Theatre de L’Oevre*, the same theatre where Alfred Jarry’s controversial *Ubu Roi* (1896) had caused a riot. The Futurist play was presented on only two occasions before being censored for using provocative language. The impact of Futurist thought was very visible, and people at all levels of society were interested in the Futurist agenda.

Futurism, says Taylor (1974), emerged as a uniquely twentieth century phenomenon, bound to a concrete political intention. Marinetti advocated the renovation of public attitudes which had traditionally been conservative and supported traditional views in art. According to Bowness (1972), the Futurists wanted to get rid of the stultifying weight of the Italian past and celebrate modern urban existence, evidence of the shift of European interest to everything that was new and in motion. For example, *The Art of Noises* (1913), *Piedigrotta Parole in Liberta* (Words in Freedom) (1912), *Zang Tumb Tumb* (1913) in Russia, and *Mechanical Dances* (1923) in Zurich were amongst the *nouvelle* performances. The influence of the Impressionist motifs and their fascination with the possibilities of movement, sound, and the qualities of light are evident. Sayre
(1989) says that “similar to collage, montage and assemblage, performance art consisted of lifting found ideas, images materials, actions and sifted from their respective contexts” (p. 20). This metaphor of the different media and components in the visual arts to performance art offers great insight into how twentieth-century performance developed.

The Futurist milieu made no separation between poets, writers, painters, or performers. Futurists welcomed all artists and made them participants in the on-going publication of manifestos and performances. The artists consistently advocated doing away with the past and called for the destruction of museums, libraries, and institutions that perpetuated the past like mausoleums.

Variety theatre emerged as the ultimate inventive theatre, with no tradition, no story line, and no dogma. Its mixture of film and acrobatics, song and dance, clowning, and possibilities of improvisation made it an ideal venue for Futurist performance presentations. Moreover, says Goldberg (1979), variety theatre coerced the audience into collaboration, liberating them from their passive roles as “stupid voyeurs.”

“Another aspect of this cabaret form which appealed to Marinetti was that it was anti-academic, primitive, and naïve consequently in the flow of Marinetti’s logic variety theatre destroys the Solemn, the Sacred, the Serious, and the Sublime in Art with a capital “A” (Goldberg, 1979, p. 10). Adherents of Futurism began publishing manifestos for literary movements incorporated into the visual arts, cinema, theater, music, and architecture.

Contemporary performance has used numerous strategies initiated by the Futurists, such as contributing essays to literary magazines, publishing political manifestoes, performing in spaces other than theaters, and actively participating in public demonstrations, as was happening in Russia.

**Constructivism**

Russian artists had their own interpretation of Futurism. They refused to align with the Italians, since they seem to have had different concerns. The Constructivists’ commitments were to establishing a revolutionary culture. They called for “production of art in real space and with real materials: towards a socially useful art” (Goldberg, 1988, p. 8). The revolutionary performances were fed with tremendous energy; they favored the propaganda machine, for it made the new ideology of the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917 coherent (Goldberg, 1988). Like the Italians, Russian artists were dissatisfied with their historical past; the avant-garde was in search of a new art for the ‘new man.’ The performances reached a grand scale in the form of mass demonstrations, installations, revolutionary theatre and revolutionary circus in the struggle to reconstruct society. The Constructivists and Dadaists, says Gale (1997), broadly shared political beliefs in the imminent triumph of the proletariat over the decayed bourgeoisie societies of the West.

The art movements of the twentieth century took art from the galleries out to the streets. The eclectic mélange of ideas and styles allowed the working class a democratic participation in the arts as never before. One of the most spectacular events was Mayakovsky’s political satire to commemorate the twenty-fifth anniversary of the tragic “Bloody Sunday,” when workers were shot during a demonstration in front of the Winter Palace in Saint Petersburg (Gale, 1997). The Society Central Agency of State Circuses commissioned the grand performance *Moscow is Burning*. This production was a
pantomime with all the possibilities the circus program could offer, with five hundred performers participating in the spectacle, including circus artists, students from the drama and circus schools, and cavalry units.

The mid-twenties presented spectacular performances like *The Magnificent Cuckold* (1922), Tairov’s *The Hairy Ape* (1926) and Vakhtangov’s *Princess Turandot* (1922). However, a decade later in 1934, at the Writers Congress in Moscow, Zhadanov, the party spokesman for matters affecting the arts, delivered the first definitive statement on socialist realism, outlining the official and enforceable code for cultural activity. This regulation marked the end of an experimental era in Russia, the end of propaganda, Variety theater, and grand public demonstrations (Goldberg, 1979). Nevertheless, the strategies of the Russian performances became established in the anti-bourgeoisie international movements for grand presentations in public spaces for the masses to participate in and become part of the dialectic process.

**Dadaism**

Long before the Dada movement, Cabaret was popular in Germany. Munich was famous for its bars, cafes, and the Expressionist Blaue Reiter theatre performances. Munich was the focal point for bohemian artists, poets, writers, and actors, many of whom had a connection with the Cabaret Voltaire, which, founded in 1916, was the gathering place for the Zurich Dada (Gale, 1997). The name Voltaire, after the French philosopher, was significant in German-speaking Switzerland.

Gale (1997) says Hugo Ball’s June 1916 list of the contributors to Dada included poet and writer Apollinaire, the painter Kandinsky, and the poet and writer Marinetti, “confirming the polyglot nature of the enterprise” (p. 42). In 1919, Tzara initiated contact with a literary magazine *Literature* to circulate Dada ideas. Some contributors to this magazine were André Breton, Paul Eluard, Philippe Soupault, Louis Aragon, Pierre Reverdy, and Jeane Cocteau. By refusing to be national representatives, the artists became self-styled internationalists. Tristan Tzara in his Dada Manifesto of 1918 stated: Dada does not mean anything. According to various art historians Dada were the only words that could be pronounced in many different languages.

Dada represented the destruction of established order; artists were allowed to be eclectic, anti-establishment and anti-tradition in their artistic process. Munich-based artists Paul Klee and Alfred Kubin explored the fusion of myth and dreams in painting, poems, and philosophy. In Paris, Kandinsky and Mondrian were attracted by mystical doctrines of the Theosophical Society. They believed “that initiates could perceive colored auras or ‘thought forms’ that reflected states of mind, [and] these theories offered an anti-materialistic counterpart to European positivism” (Gale, 1997, p. 27). The anti-materialistic counterpart of the intelligentsia found liberating outlets in new theories, philosophies, and artistic expressions that were more honest than the formal academic appreciation of art. For some artists, the influence of surrealism showed through an interest in the unconscious. Kandinsky and Mondrian followed the philosophic quest throughout their lives in search of the synaesthetic aspects of the mysticism of Theosophy and related systems encouraged aspirations toward a morally and socially responsible art (p. 28). The sensitivity and clarity of the mystical interest of the artists was evident from their theory and practice in the arts. It was that historical moment which allowed them to be creative and free and provided venues in which they
could interact and express their mystical theories and experiences through literature and art.

In a different expression, Ball invented the “sound poems.” These wordless poems were influenced by Marinetti’s free verse. Garoian (1984) says Marinetti freed words from the significance that was expected; Ball had drawn a parallel with sound. These strategies broke with the concepts that existed previous to this time in verse or sound and continued to appear in performance art up to the present day.

The first Dada gallery opened in 1917. The exhibitions were an extension of the cabaret idea; artists worked very hard to gather new materials and develop from spontaneous performances to a more organized didactic program. The gallery had three missions, says Gale (1997): during the day it educated school-age youth and ladies; during the evening it promoted candlelight esoteric lectures and; at certain times, it offered soirees such as Zurich had never experienced: “absolute dance, absolute poetry, and absolute art, or art that gives a minimum of impressions, enough to evoke bizarre images” (p. 66). The Dada activities looked for different routes to view art and expose anti-art feeling while still allowing for improvised expressions of politics and social actions.

Little by little, Dada melded into Surrealism; in America and Europe, new artists joined the movement. Francis Picabia, who was born in Cuba and lived in New York, Paris, and Barcelona where he was well known for his machine paintings, is one example. In 1916, Duchamp had abandoned traditional media and embarked in his invention of the “ready made.” The term itself was coined in America (it was taken from the innovation of ready-made-as opposed to tailor made clothes), but “Duchamp had in fact, made this revolutionary leap in Paris three years earlier, when he turned a Bicycle Wheel (1913)” (Gale, 1997, p. 97) fixed on a stool into an art object. In the independent exhibition of 1917, Duchamp exhibited his Fountain (1917), a urinal signed with the pseudonym “Mutt.” The “ready mades” were aesthetic objects free from potential aesthetic value, as Gale (1997) says, “in order to guard against conventional notions of beauty” (p.100). Gale further says that “Duchamp was challenging the foundation of art, the traditional the value of art object for its uniqueness and skill were disputable” (p. 100). This breaking down of conventions presented a critique to collectors and museums since the role of the artist was being redefined. Garoian (1999) asserted that Duchamp called attention not to the product of an artist and how much work goes into it, but to the process and idea of the artist. This perception was new at the time, initiating an evaluation of the conceptual departure point of the artist’s work.

Picabia, also known as the anti-painter, published poems and drawings for Dadaist activities in Barcelona. Picabia was often referred to as a provocateur and philanderer, displaying works that were a combination of mechanical and erotic imagery. His writings were combative and mocking of artistic conventions (Gale, 1997). The work of Picabia and Duchamp was multifaceted; they were avant-garde artists who moved through the major movements of contemporary art with witty sensibility, giving new meaning to art, bringing Dada from Europe to America.

Dadaism ended in Zurich with a final soirée in 1919 produced by Serna and Tzara. The performance ended in a violent confrontation as so many of the performances that intended to be provocative tested the limits of the audience.

Cabaret Voltaire closed its doors only five months after opening, but made a definite mark in performance history. In a similar way, The Galleries Dada lasted only
eleven weeks. The well-planned soirées, demonstrations, exhibitions, and education programs did not have an opportunity to establish themselves as aesthetic institutions. The iconoclastic nature of Dada turned against the movement, and it became frail. Goldberg (1988) argued “it became necessary to find fresh ground for Dada’s anarchy if it was to remain at all effective” (p. 74).

Parallels with the Dada movement emerged in Mexico. The poet Manuel Maples Arce launched the Estridentismo movement in 1921. “Taking into account the approaches developed by Cubism, Futurism, and Dada, Arce favored a ‘quintessential synthesis’ in his manifesto Actual” (Gale, 1997, p. 108). The group was composed of writers, poets, visual artists, and music composers: Leopoldo Mendez, Fermin Revueltas, Alva de la Canal, German Cueto, Silvestre Revueltas Arqueles Vela, and German Arzubide. Diego Rivera and Jean Charlot, recently returned from Paris, became supporters of the movement in Mexico City. Estridentismo offered an anti-bourgeois sentiment, a rejection of academic art, and a strong nationalistic political commitment that was very appealing to the artists and intellectuals in Mexico at this time. The group had their own publishing house, Estridentistas Editions. They called out for the Mexican intelligentsia to “unite and form a society of artists to witness the transformation of the world” (Grove Art, 2000). This was an attempt by local artists to connect with international movements, making the necessary adaptations to the national reality. Along with its regionalist agenda, the group looked to Spain and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics for inspiration, publishing manifestos which frequently used the prints of Jose Guadalupe Posada, who conveyed satirical imagery along with radical texts.

The group also held public meetings and casual exhibitions at the Café Nadie in Mexico City (Grove Art, 2000). The iconoclastic movement professed the radical concept of making art public and accessible to the masses. With a strong emphasis in national identity and cultural reform, the ideas concurred with the beginning of the Mexican Renaissance that initiated a didactic movement in art. These movements presented images of the elegant Mexican mariachis; in opposition, the decorated skulls by Posada served as a reminder of that most democratic institution, death. This imagery is frequently used by Gómez-Peña in his performances. It plays a double meaning: on one hand, they are the stereotypical representation of the Mexican, but from a postmodern perspective, they re-direct the images to represent the ‘other’ in a different context.

Surrealism

The Surrealism Manifesto (1925) marked the official foundation of the movement by André Breton (Goldberg, 1988). Breton’s early definition was “Surrealism: noun masc., pure psychic automatism, by which an attempt is made to express, either verbally, in writing or in any other manner the true functioning of thought” (Goldberg, 1988, p. 89). After meeting Sigmund Freud in Vienna, Breton became obsessed with the examination of the unconscious. Breton had discovered Freud’s theories during his medical studies, but his interest in psychoanalysis had grown because of his adoption of associational techniques for automatic writing. This was encouraged between 1921 and 1923 by the first French translations of Freud’s major works, including The Interpretation of Dreams (Gale, 1997). The Freudian base of Surrealism led to the representation of the sexually repressed in art and attempts at liberation from rationalism.
Central to the Surreal movement was the notion of automatism. Breton and Soupault wrote the first “automatic” Surrealist poem, *Les Champs Magnétiques* (1921). Performance actions followed the Dada principles and the surreal dream notions. Other examples were Tzara’s *Mouchoir des Nuages* (1924), and Aragon’s *The Mirror Wardrobe* (1923). A number of performances were directly based on Surrealist notions of irrationality. The collaborators in the productions were artists of extraordinary importance: Pablo Picasso and Sonia Delaunay designed costumes, Robert Delauney printed posters, and Man Ray produced films. Also collaborating was Duchamp, accompanied along with music by Milhaud and Stravinsky. The fantastic collaboration of these artists represented a search for new art forms in different artistic media.

**Surrealism in Latin America**

Throughout Latin America, *indigenista* (indigenous) trends proposed locally rooted cultural renewal. Concerns with indigenous culture independent of European traditions were instrumental in the transformation of Surrealism when it came into contact with America. Surrealists’ enthusiasm for Mexico as a cultural and political haven had already been generated by two visits by avant-garde dramaturge Antonin Artaud. Artaud had lived with the Tarahumara indigenous people from 1935 to 1936. His theatrical experience with the *Theatre of Cruelty*, the successor to the Theatre Alfred Jarry, made him especially interested in native ceremonies and rituals.

Artaud exerted an enormous influence in 1960s and 1970s performance through his earlier theoretical writings. He argued in *The Theater and Its Double* (1958) that “the traditional theater had lost contact with the deeper and more significant realms of human life through its emphasis on plot, language, and intellectual and psychological concerns. The subjugation of the theatre to the written text must be ended, to be replaced by a spectacle of direct physical and objective action” (Carlson, 1998, p. 91). The physical actions and surprising effects, which Artaud found important, have made a strong contribution to performance as theatre in action. Garoian (1999) asserts that Artaud’s use of spectacle transforms the closed system of traditional Western theatre into an open site, one in which the proscenium barrier is eliminated and the audience is no longer passive but is presented with the possibility of being directly involved in the creation of the performance (p. 58). Artaud was deeply interested in transforming the viewer into an active participant.

In the visual arts, Mexico hosted its first International Exhibition of Surrealism in 1940 (Gale, 1997). The main organizers of the show were Wolfgang Paalen, Cesar Moro, and Diego Rivera. European artists like Jean Arp, Max Ernst, André Masson, Joan Miró, Salvador Dalí, Victor Brauner, Paul Delvaux, and Roberto Matta traveled to Mexico, exhibiting along with Mexican artists like Roberto Montenegro, Carlos Merida, Guillermo Meza, Manuel Alvarez Bravo, and Frida Kahlo. There was a strong contrast between the Mexican artwork rooted in native traditions and the European Surrealism. The cultural context definitely informed the art production. For example, most of the work of Latin American artists was a mirror to the social reality of the working class people and their traditions.

Another group of Surrealists exiled in Mexico by the civil war in Spain and other fascist governments in Europe included activist Benjamin Peret, and painters like Remedios Varo, and Leonora Carrington (Gale, 1997). Both artists produced a body of work from a woman’s perspective, which was almost mystical. Carrington explored her
childhood images, while Varo’s work alluded to fantasy and alchemical transformations. Mexico was the gate for many artists to journey through South America; numerous painters, poets, and writers, like Alejo Carpentier, Juan Bráa and Mary Low, and film producers like Luis Buñuel, lived and produced artworks in Mexico. Also participating in the cultural movement of the time were Pablo Neruda, in Santiago de Chile; the notable poet in Buenos Aires; Aldo Pellegrini and Nobel Prize winner Jorge Luis Borges. These notable artists participated in the South American Surrealist movement, contributing to the prolific cross-pollination of ideas and sensibilities. The work of these artists provide an integrated Latin American context addressing issues of class, race, ethnicity, gender, and culture in the American continent and provide a context for Guillermo Gómez-Peña and his work.

Gómez-Peña has described the significance of the “inner search” that led his generation to investigate witchcraft, ritual drugs, Yaqui and Huichol philosophy, \textit{conchero} dance (a traditional ritual dance), Zen, and a combination of largely misinterpreted teachings by Castañeda, Ouspensky, Gurdieff, and Krishnamurti (Gómez-Peña, 1993). The esoteric search of Gómez-Peña led him to a greater realization of his identity as a syncretic blend of “Amerindian and European cultures, of pre-industrial traditions and imported technologies-immersed in the past but always welcoming the new, the other the foreign, no matter how dangerous it is” (Gómez-Peña, 1993, p. 18). The depth of Gómez-Peña’s inner search exposes the issues of identity that he addresses in a number of his performance texts. The hybridity of cultures, in addition to the imported technologies of industrialized nations, has had a strong impact on the identity of the overall Latin American public.

\textbf{Bauhaus}

The Bauhaus was the most influential Germany school of architecture, design, and art in 1920s. In a short period of time the artistic community of the school achieved significant reforms in art education. The result of a merger between the Weimar School of Arts and Crafts and the Academy of Fine Arts, the Bauhaus underwent different phases and physical locations. Whitford (1984) says the teaching program aimed to develop the student’s personality as well as provide technical skills. In this way, the reform would not only be in art education but also in society itself.

Extraordinary artists and craftsmen were responsible for the workshops at the Bauhaus, with people such as Paul Klee, Ida Kerkovious, Johannes Itten, Gunta Stolzl, Wassily Kandinsky, Oskar Schlemmer, Lyonel Feininger, Alma Bucher, Marcel Breuer, and Lázló Moholy-Nagy. Students like Herbert Bayer and Joseph Albers later became prominent teachers. The Bauhaus was first headed by architect Walter Gropius, then by Hannes Mayer, and, in the final years, by architect Mies van der Rohe.

The Bauhaus was the first art school to provide a specific course in performance art (Whitford, 1984). The theatre performance workshop started in 1921 as part of an interdisciplinary curriculum. At this time, performance was emerging as a medium in its own right, and performance activities and documentation on the subject became available to the public for the first time. Painter and sculptor Oscar Schlemmer was appointed by Walter Gropius to head the theatre workshop. He was not interested in classical theater or conventional plays; rather, he aspired to a renewal of the medium through ritualistic performance and ballet that was highly stylized in its movements and
costume design. Evidence of the compositional possibilities are the stage designs of the human body in space in Schlemmer’s favorite production: the Triadic Ballet: Concerning the Marionette Theatre (1926).

Performance in the Bauhaus community was essentially a formal and pictographic concept. Schawinsky wrote in 1924 “that it was a visual theater, a realization of paintings and constructions in motion, ideas in color, form, and space in their dramatic interaction” (Goldberg, 1979, p. 71). Schlemmer obsessively analyzed the problem of theory and practice in his paintings; as in his theatrical experiments, the constant investigation was on space. Theatre provided a place in which to experience space. In many of his drawings of the stage design, and in the diary that Schlemmer kept, the intersection of formal elements in art and the influence of mechanization are evident like, in The Circus (1924), Pantomime Truppenwitz (1926-7), Dance in Space (Delineation of Space with Figure) (1927), and Metal Dance (1929). The Bauhaus stage had firmly established its significance in the history of performance. Performance had been a means of extending the Bauhaus’ principle of the “total art work” which resulted in meticulously designed and choreographed productions on stage (Goldberg, 2001).

Bauhausparticipant, Lázló Moholy-Nagy rejected the traditional concept of the performer as an interpreter of an already-existing literary text in favor of the performer as creator of an action (Carlson, 1998), calling for a new “theater of totality.” Equally important was the breaking down of traditional boundaries between the plastic and performing arts of theater, ballet, music, and painting, in addition to that taking place between the high arts and popular forms such as circus, vaudeville, and variety theatre.

By 1929, the Bauhaus school was recognized nationally and internationally as a successful art institution. Perhaps the most significant contribution of the Bauhaus was the liberation of ideas of creativity in general and the development of a modern language in architecture and design. According to Whitford (1984), “Germany had become an economic power, and internationally the phrase “Made in Germany” became synonymous with excellence and reliability” (p. 190). It was apparent that the architecture and interior design workshops took a dominant role in the school. Schlemmer and other professors who were interested in performance felt they were no longer needed and looked for positions elsewhere. Schlemmer moved to the Breslau Academy, and Meyer opted to close the theatre workshop. Due to internal politics, Meyer was replaced by the architect Mies van der Rohe. However soon after in 1933, the Bauhaus was declared anti-German, since it was modernist, international in its approach to art, and the majority of its staff and students were Jews. The director was forced to announce that the Bauhaus was closing due to the difficult economic situation of the institute (Whitford, 1984).

Bauhaus in America

The Bauhaus ideas reached the United States in the late 1930s with the arrival of European exiles in New York. Moholy-Nagy founded a new Bauhaus in Chicago while Gropius continued his-work at Harvard; and Albers at both Black Mountain College and Yale (Whitford, 1984). Josef and Anni Albers became active members of the Black Mountain College in North Carolina. Great personalities were attracted to the college like New York musician John Cage and the dancer Merce Cunningham, who were invited to join the summer program.
Cage and Cunningham organized various performances, among them *The Ruse of the Medusa* (1948) by Eric Satie. Wilhelm de Kooning designed the set, Buckminster Fuller played Baron Méduse, Cunningham the mechanical monkey, and the leading lady was Elaine de Kooning. It was an eccentric, experimental musical. Goldberg (1988) wrote that “in 1952 Cage took his experimental performances further, arriving at his famous silent work *4'33’*, a piece in three movements during which no sounds are intentionally produced” (p. 126).

Goldberg (2001) says such theories and attitudes reflected Cage’s deeply-felt sympathy for Zen Buddhism and oriental philosophies in general and found parallels in the work of Merce Cunningham (p. 125). In Zen Buddhism, “nothing is either good or bad. Or ugly or beautiful . . . Art should not be different [from] life but an action within life” (Goldberg, 2001, p. 108).

Throughout various movements in the twentieth century art is described as very close to life, or as life. The distance between the everyday and the artistic was fading away. “The art world provided the license for artists to think about a particular discipline in ways that have nothing to do with traditional training in that field, resulting in a John Cage concert where no instrument was played” (Carlos, 1998, p. 13). Cage and Cunningham, along with Robert Rauchenberg and others, produced an untitled event that has been cited as the model for the happenings and related performances in the 60s. In many ways, this event recapitulated many of the motifs of the earlier avant-garde.

In 1959, an article in *Art News* “proclaimed that what counts is no longer the painting but the process of creation” (Carlson, 1996, p. 95) and this should be the focus of the audience’s attention. Perhaps for some artists, the audience’s attention was the principal objective of their work; however, for many others it was the materialization of conceptual art.

**Pop Art**

Pop Art is an American phenomenon that departs from the cliché of [the] big, bold, raw American. Pop Art became current when Abstract Expressionism triumphed internationally. The Pop Art movement was born twice: once in England and then again, independently, in New York (Lippard, 1966). Pop is a term that refers to the artist’s interest in images of mass media, advertising, comics, and consumer products. In the visual arts, Pop art represented color, festive imagery, grand scale, and a sense of non-refinement. It is also referred to as the period of a “new humanism,” known as the ‘New Image of Man’ in America and ‘New Figuration’ in Europe (Lippard, 1966). England after World War II experienced a period of consumer boom. Artists such as Eduardo Paolozzi, Jasper Johns, Robert Rauchenberg, Claes Oldenburg, Richard Hamilton, David Hockney, Andy Warhol, Christo Javacheff, and others are representative of this period.

Significant for Gómez-Peña’s work is his use of kitsch, or objects that apparently have no practical purpose but are simply mass-produced and disposable as well as his immersion in popular culture. Kitsch items were first used during Pop Art; however, from a postmodern perspective, these objects can be transformed and redirected into a fetish with some power or significance through the performance piece. Arnowitz (1992) says “shamans, medicine men, priest- are not only the first intellectuals but also the nascent ruling class” (p.17). In many of his performance pieces Gómez-Peña is a shaman and vehicle to transmit and transform.
Happenings

Conceptual art was an American avant-garde trend that asserted that art lay in the artist’s idea rather than in its final expression (Goldberg, 1979). Alan Kaprow named performances ‘happenings’ because he wanted to describe the activity as a spontaneous event, something that just happens to happen. In 1958, Kaprow presented *18 Happenings in 6 Parts* at the Ruben Gallery in New York City. The events were participatory and engaging. Goldberg (1979) quotes Kaprow as saying, “I simply gave up the whole idea of making pictures as figurative metaphors for extension in time and space” (p. 83) Goldberg goes on to say that Kaprow “shifted from being an action painter to an action artist” (p. 83). However, action did not make these events totally spontaneous, as the happenings were carefully rehearsed and performers memorized their parts (Goldberg, 1979). Kaprow believed in the art of action-creating works in which the audience was confronted by the physical presence of the artist in real-time and in an art form which was ephemeral. The performance actions were most often provocative and ironic, and evolved into a reaction to the social and political actions of the time, such as the student movements, confrontations at various university campuses, The Civil Rights movement, the Cold War and Anti-Vietnam War Movements, the scare of the atom bomb, the affirmation of feminism and the sexual revolution of the 60s. In content, the common elements of happenings came from the theater of investigation into the social and political arena.

In the early 60s Yves Klein, Piero Manzoni, Carolee Schneeman, Yoko Ono, and Shigeko Kugota, among other performance artists, utilized the body as the main focus of ideas about art. Goldberg (1984) asserts, “body art was a laboratory for all kinds of studies, from the psychoanalytical to the behavioral to the spatial and perceptual”. These artists were the Fluxus. The term Fluxus was introduced by George Maciunas in 1961. It represented a group of international artists, musicians, writers, and poets who focused their work on single actions. Their work was more theatrical than the happenings. The intention was to open Fluxus to non-artists as well.

German artist Joseph Beuys was an important part of this group; he was a sculptor, mystic, and political activist. The fundamental concept in all of Beuys’ activities was the creative nature of humanity (De Domizio, 1997). Beuys strongly believed that there was no separation between art and life; during his seven years of teaching in the Dusseldorf Academy of Art, Beuys insisted on opening his classes to all students, art and non-art majors, since he believed everyone had the potential to be an artist. One of his most notable performances, *How to Explain Pictures to a Dead Hare* (1965), was an ironical comment on the complexity of communicating through art. Joseph Beuys prophesied that, in the 1970s, art would become politics and politics would become art (Gómez-Peña, 1993). Performance artists mixed experimental art with political action, which became more evident in a further performance by Beuys, *Coyote: I Love America, America Loves Me* (1974). For Beuys, this performance was a metaphor for the annihilation of Native Americans; he wanted to isolate himself and exchange roles with the coyote. In *7000 Oaks* (1982-87) Beuys expressed a firm belief art had the capacity to transform people in the social, spiritual, and intellectual level. Planting the trees was a collaborative action towards reforestation in Dusseldorf. Beuys was instrumental in the founding of the Free International University for Creativity in Ireland and the Green
Party in Germany. Garoian (1999) describes Beuys’ performances as pedagogical rituals. Beuys’ actions reflected the moving events in his youth that made enduring marks in his conceptual work, from the use of the felt hat he usually wore, to wrapping himself in woolen blankets, but above all in his concept of art, life and politics as one. Gómez-Peña (1993) has discussed the ritual performances of Beuys as a shamanic contribution to his artistic formation.

Garoian (1984) argued that the basic aim of avant-garde performance was to avoid the traditional assumptions of visual art in order to experience, without the interference of those assumptions, the radical changes in twentieth-century life and to create from those contemporary experiences works of art that were relevant to the artists’ lives of the performance groups that have been discussed in this paper. Although their aim in using performance art was a common one, each of the groups had a different objective which can serve as a role model for performance art teaching (p. 174). Many of the performance artists matured through different movements throughout their lives.

Postmodernism and Performance Art

Postmodernism addresses the time period after modernism. Efland, Freedman, and Stuhr (1996) assert that “postmodernism is a term used as an umbrella term for the larger cultural shifts of a postindustrial society” (p. 11). Bogdan & Biklen (1998) argue from the viewpoint of the postmodernist “that the foundations that were in place since the enlightenment are no longer in place” (p. 20). The world is not “directly knowable,” and all social relations are influenced by power relations that must be accounted for by the informants’ interpretation of her own situation (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998). This conception is important since the work of Gómez-Peña is aesthetically and conceptually conceived with postmodern materials and needs to be understood in from a postmodern perspective. The fundamental reason for teaching art in this perspective is to enable students to understand the social and cultural worlds they inhabit (Efland, Freedman, Stuhr, 1996, p. 37).

In many instances “postmodern art often involves the use of imagery and objects in ways that point to the cultural collapse of the world and remind us that images continually become appropriated and recycled” (Efland, Freedman, Stuhr, 1996, p. 37). Appropriation and eclecticism are used to initiate a dialogue, “such as in Gómez-Peña and Coco Fusco’s exhibition of The Year of the White Bear, which includes a series of photographs of the artists dressed in several combinations of clothes and arrangements of artifacts from various cultures and times. The visual and textual commentary is about colonization and the appropriation of land, spirit, and people” (Efland, Freedman, Stuhr, 1996, p. 37).

Goldberg (2001) adds that “Gómez-Peña in Two Undiscovered Amerindians (1992-94), also a collaboration with Cuban American writer Coco Fusco, was a ‘living diorama’ in which the two artists--dressed in feather headdresses, grass skirts, Aztec-style breastplates and cuffs--exhibited themselves in a cage, a reference to the nineteenth-century practice of exhibiting indigenous people from Africa or the Americas” (p. 212). This performance piece according to Goldberg is one of the most significant performances of our time. The impact of the juxtaposition of visual images, and the decentralization of the artists from being outsiders to a central stage, exemplifies cultural hybridity, in addition to the international trajectory of this piece; it
appeared in Madrid, London, Sydney, Buenos Aires, and nationally in venues like the Field Museum in Chicago, the Whitney Museum of American Art in New York, and the Smithsonian Institute in Washington. In addition, the interplay of performer and public was captured on video, as Carlson (1996) describes *Two Undiscovered Amerindians* (1992) as also the subject of a fascinating video. He continues to say, performance historians now recognize that during the mid to late 1960s many types of political demonstrations consciously included performative elements but were not associated with performance art when it developed because of the original emphasis upon non-discursive activity. These performances were more often called “guerilla theatre,” a term coined by R.G. Davis to describe popular performances using material from popular theater and public spaces to bring political messages to a broader audience. (p. 118)

Other companies like Bread and Puppet Theatre, San Francisco Mime Troop and *Teatro Campesino* directed their strategies of performance to political and social concerns. These groups used similar strategies and utilized visual displays, borrowing from folk and popular performances from vaudeville, circus acts, and puppet shows to present their work in non traditional performance spaces. Carlson (1996) says performance also moved into political activity directly within disadvantaged communities, inspired in part by the American and European tradition of political performance and in part by specific community-oriented reformers such as Stuart Brisley, Joan Littlewood, Welfare State in England, Armand Gatti in France, and particularly Augusto Boal in Latin America ...John Malpede of Los Angeles Poverty Department (LAPD). (p. 120)

This was a performance group addressing the needs of downtown Los Angeles which utilized performance to help that population understand, cope with, and, it is hoped, improve their living conditions.

Social and political concerns became central to performance in the 1990s, there is no doubt that the possibilities to address issues of ecological, social, economic, and political concerns are compatible with the many performance strategies.

In the post-Surrealist phase, autobiographical performance became a significant investigation of the liminal in performance in its own process. Artists like Laurie Anderson, Hanna Wilke, Carol Schneeman, Adrian Piper, Ana Mendieta, Coco Fusco, Suzanne Lazy, Leslie Labowitz, and others have participated in the biographical nature of performance to address multicultural, multiethnic and feminist issues. I find Goldberg’s (2001) views on multiculturalism informative, since views performance art as an American development:

Though the term ‘multiculturalism’ was worn uneasily by some artists, it took an important intellectual dimension in the writings of the African-American intelligentsia, including high-profile academics such as Cornel West or Henry Gates Jr. Artists were increasingly using performance to examine their cultural roots. (p. 210)

The contributions of African American intellectuals to multiculturalism is very significant; Cornel West’s research concentrates on social research for women, the third world, race and postcolonialism. Lucy Lippard (1990) points out that artists and writers of color are creating the most substantial art being made today. The fusion of
ethnicities and the production of cultural work have created a richer representation of multicultural art in the United States of America at present. Goldberg (2001) continues to say that among the artists that address ethnicity in the United States is Mexican-born Guillermo Gómez-Peña, who “provocatively personified what came to be called ‘the other’ in fashionable critical theory; with the dark moustache and flowing black locks of a Mexican [Spanish] conquistador, he performed his satirical depictions of the view from the ‘other’ side.” (p. 212)

Groups of North American performer artists are in constant dialogue with Latin American performers discussing social, political, economic, ethnic and racial concerns, much like the communication between the European performers and the American avant-garde during the Dada and the Surreal movements and a few years later with Japanese artists through the happenings and the Fluxus movements. “The identity of ‘otherness’ also provides a voice for marginalized groups such as gays, lesbians, sex-workers, and the chronically ill or disabled” (Goldberg, 2001, p. 212). In many recent publications of postmodern performances I can see the inclusion of Latin American performance artists, extending to a wider audience, addressing additional concerns like post-colonialism, displacement, and border-crossing.

Pre-Columbian and Traditional Mexican Performance and Contemporary Understanding of their Use

Guillermo Gómez-Peña’s performances often use elements of pre-Columbian traditions, such as the creative use of Nahuatl and the costumes and accessories of feathers, bandanas, or mariachi hats that represent different periods of Mexican history. Some of the images in the performance action carry a stereotypical connotation of the superfluous knowledge of the Mexican culture when, in actual reality, it is being redirected to the audience with a critical content.

A brief introduction of the conquest of Mexico is also necessary to comprehend characteristics of the performance texts and the use of costumes and paraphernalia in Gómez-Peña’s presentations. “Although, postcolonial artists are usually blamed for reproducing stereotypical notion[s] of the primitive and the exotic” (Fusco, 2001, p. xv). Adam Versényi (1996) points out in his study of the theatre in Latin America the importance of going back to the pre-Colombian times to revisit the relationships between religion, politics, and theater in the Indian society. It is important to re-examine the major events in order to identify reoccurring issues in Gómez-Peña’s performance texts. Verséyni (1993) gives a useful overview:

In 1519, Hernán Cortés landed on the Mexican mainland. By 1522 he had conquered the Aztec capital and converted it into the captaincy general of Nueva España, the headquarters from which he was to launch his conquest of the rest of Central America. In the spring of 1524, the twelve Franciscan friars requested by Cortés to take charge of the Indians’ religious instruction arrived in Mexico City-Tenochtitlán. When Cortés was told of their approach he went to greet them on the outskirts of the city. Accompanied by most of his Spanish soldiers and a long procession of Indian leaders, Cortés knelt and kissed each friar’s hands. His soldiers did the same and the Indians followed suit. Bound together in this one historical incident are three interwoven threads that have characterized
Latin American history both prior to the Conquest and until the present day. (p. 1)

Performance in Mexico is represented during the conquest using powerful images of the dominant class, particularly in the use of Franciscan missionaries by the Spanish conquistadors to convert the indigenous people. The experience of Christianizing the Moors in Granada, Spain, served to set the well-staged performances in Latin America.

In contrast to conservative Catholic dogma, Liberation Theology freed oppressed populations from the traditional doctrine of resignation to progress towards a participatory action in Liberation Theater. Paolo Freire’s ideas, says Versényi (1996), have had great impact in the theatre practices such as theology. “Many theatre professionals have searched Freire’s liberation methodologies for a way to create a theater that will establish communication with the Latin-American public and a method that will allow audience members to express themselves through dramatic performance” (p. 234).

Guillermo Gómez-Peña has been explicit about his dedication to explore what he calls “vernacular postmodernism, a kind of popular postmodernity related to the syncretic nature of Latin American culture” (Fusco, 1995, p. 154). The role of performance in Mexico and Latin America takes on an additional layer of complexity when identifying issues that rest in the collective memory of many of the audience members; legends of subjugation, objectification, and domination by a white minority are present in the Latin American culture.

Postcolonial discourses represent a space in which to re-theorize, locate, and address the possibilities for a new politics based on the construction of new identities, zones of cultural differences, and forms of ethical address that allow cultural workers and educators alike to transform the languages, social practices, and histories that are part of the colonial inheritance (Giroux, 1992, p. 28). As an example of the politics of construction of new identities, I can mention the Mexican Minister of Education, José Vazconcelos, author of La Raza Cosmica (1925), who wrote about the new hybrid race. The concept of la raza cosmica (cosmic race) served as a unifying force amongst the Mexicans and was rooted in a strong sense of nationalism, culminating with strong images of native people portrayed in many of the murals of the Mexican Renaissance artists like Diego Rivera. As a further note, Elizabeth Garber (1995) asserts that part of chicanoism has been a celebration of the mestizo/a as a race and an understanding of Mestizo as a cosmic race (which is implicit in the term “la raza”), not a sub or lesser race (p. 226). The concept of the la raza has been a unifying force for many Mexican and Mexican-American groups of people. The sense of belonging to the same ethnos bring unification in post colonial America after four hundred years of lost identity.

With this contextual information in mind, in the next section I compile Gómez-Peña’s life and accomplishments. I focus both on his personal circumstances and on his work.

Guillermo Gómez-Peña

Guillermo Gómez-Peña was born in Mexico City. An interdisciplinary artist and writer, Gómez-Peña came to the United States in 1978 to study at the California Institute of Arts. Since his early performances in the United States he has been exploring cross-cultural issues and what he calls North-South relations through a variety of media that includes performance, bilingual poetry, journalism, video, radio, and
Gómez-Peña has collaborated in a series of interactive performances and performance installation dealing with cross-cultural issues, border culture, and immigration. These projects have been chronicled in the book *Warriors for Gringostroika* (1993). Gómez-Peña was a founding member of the Border Art Workshop/Taller de Arte Fronterizo and the editor of the experimental art magazine *The Broken Line/La Linea Quebrada*. He has been contributor to the National Public Radio magazine, *Crossroads*, and the radio program *Latino USA*, as well as a contributing editor to *High Performance Magazine* and *The Drama Review*. He was awarded a MacArthur Fellowship in 1991. Gómez-Peña has collaborated with artist Coco Fusco, James Luna, Daniel Salazar, and Roberto Sifuentes in various performance and video projects (La Pocha Nostra, 1993).

Gómez-Peña has been a prolific writer and performer. Along with Roberto Sifuentes he co-authored, *Temple of Confessions* (1996) and *The New World Border* (1996) and was the sole author of *Dangerous Border Crossers: The Artist Talks Back* (2000) and *El Mexterminator: Antropologia Inversa de un Performancero Postmexicano* [The Mexterminator: Inverse Anthropology of a Postmexican Performance] (2002), this last being published in Mexico City in Spanish. Gómez-Peña’s work has been intellectual; in many instances it can reflect images or sounds that are ordinary but there is a great care of detail and thought to bring all the elements together that will take the audience from the perceptual to the conceptual realm. Writer and activist Lucy Lippard (1990) says “Gómez-Peña’s work differs from that of his Chicano colleagues in its full blown and confident Mexicanismo, which offers a welcome antidote to the media images of downtrodden peasants, and directly confronts the art establishment on its own postmodern turf” (p. 223). The political nature of Gómez-Peña’s work can be humorous, satirical, and didactic. It allows participation from a diverse audience, from rural farm workers to urban museum patrons who leave the performance space and continue the thought process that was initiated in the performance.

Gómez-Peña’s multidisciplinary work has been described by various authorities in the field of performance art and pedagogy as a significant representation of the multicultural debate in the art world (Carr, 1993, Carlson 1996; Fusco, 1995; Garber, 1995; Garoian, 1999). Cynthia Carr (1993) critic of performance art, cites Gómez-Peña as saying,

*Depending on the context I am Chicano, Mexican, Latin American, or American in the wider sense of the term. The Mexican Other and the Chicano Other are constantly fighting to appropriate me or reject me. But I think my work might be useful to both sides because I’m an interpreter, an intercultural interpreter.* (p. 196)

Gómez-Peña’s work is central to the discourse in postmodern art, cultural diversity, and social, political, and economic concerns in contemporary society in the United States. His work is characterized by a chaotic multiplicity of representations of visual appreciation; he is of baroque complexity in his performance pieces, for example, *Borderama* (1995), *The Two Undiscovered Amerindians* (1992-94), *Temple of Confessions* (1994 ), and *The Mexterminator 2* (1994). Carlson (1998) argues that “multiplicity is particularly important in the case of a performer seeking to articulate the experience of ethnic minorities, since the pressure of otherness and of cultural are so central to their experience and so inextricably intertwined with the exploration of ethnic
identity” (p. 184). Gómez Peña’s investigation of multiculturalism has been extensively documented in his book *Warrior for Gringostroika* (1993). In an excerpt from his performance diaries, he addresses in a splendid narrative what it is to be Mexican in the United States,

I wake up as a Mexican in U.S. territory. With my Mexican psyche, my Mexican heart, and my Mexican body, I have to make intelligible art for American audiences who know very little about my culture. This is my daily dilemma. I have to force myself to cross a border, and there is very little reciprocity from the people from the other side . . . [He relates where he spends his time in California and in Mexico, as a Mexican and a Chicano, and continues to say:] I cross the border in my dreams and in my friendships. When I’m on the Mexican side I have a strong artistic connection to Latin American urban pop culture and ritual traditions that are centuries old. When I am on the U.S. side I have access to high technology and specialized information. (p. 15)

The reflections the reader encounters create a rich picture of the contrasting cultural contexts Gómez-Peña meets crossing borders between the first and in the third worlds. According to Gómez-Peña (1996), it is important to continue creating “ephemeral communities that bring artists together to work intensely on common goals” (p. 109).

Gómez-Peña (1996) has said that in the future he foresees “first, to continue my performative exploration of intercultural relations and reverse anthropology both in art spaces and in the more populist venues where no specialized audiences can be exposed to socially conscious, experimental art. Second, Roberto and I have already begun to incorporate some of the new technologies (an Internet component, a Web page, and a CD-ROM) into our performance work” (p. 108).

Gómez-Peña’s work bridges diverse genres in literature, multi-media, and performance art, extending toward an interdisciplinary approach in the arts and academic subjects addressing issues of significance to the Latino community in the U.S. like immigration, race, ethnicity, culture, politics, and language. In the next section I establish how this may be significant for art education.

**The Potential of Performance Art in Art Education**

What is the potential significance of Gómez-Peña’s work for the art education community? The connection can be made through the increasingly racial, ethnic and linguistic diversity within the United States that presents challenges and opportunities for educators. To be able to respond effectively, administrators and teachers need to have a better understanding of what the problems are and how to address them creatively using the pedagogical knowledge and skills needed to work with students from diverse cultures, languages, and socio-economic groups.

Performance offers the opportunity to extend towards an interdisciplinary approach to the arts (Garoian, 1999). Progressive alliances within the artistic field into the education field can be formed to develop educational practices towards a democratic and egalitarian education. Performance art offers unlimited possibilities; it can be an amalgamation of drama, comedy, music, dance, visual arts, architecture, video,
photography and others. Disciplines can be crossed to create a condition where art imitates life.

The interdisciplinary and intercultural aspect of performance art has functioned throughout this century as a complex delivery system, a pedagogical strategy by which to identify and connect disparate disciplines, technologies, and cultures (Garoian, 1999, p. 29). In the context of art education, the intention of an interdisciplinary program in performance art is to enhance creativity in art production and in writing. Words play a central part not only in the development of thought but also in the historical growth of consciousness as a whole. “A word is a microcosm of human consciousness” (Vygotsky, 1962, p. 153). The interdisciplinary significance of the arts as an academic subject is enhanced with the study of linguistic development and semantics.

Of equal importance are the exercise of democratic education and the development of critical thinking skills. As examples, Agusto Boal’s notable work, *Theatre of the Oppressed* (1985), which borrows from Paulo Freire’s ideas in *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1997), and Charles Garoian praxis in *Performance Pedagogy* (1999), develops a democratic pedagogical approach through performance art to the art education field to empower students to be all they have the potential to be.

Eisner (1994) points out that “art education, (these scholars believe), can help people in racist America understand and appreciate cultural differences in ways that are specific to art and of extraordinary importance” (p. 188). Educators must find respectful ways for members of one group to participate in the cultural practices of another group. For many this process has been called bordercrossing (Anzaldúa, 1987; Garber, 1995; Garoian, 1999, Giroux, 1992; Gómez-Peña, 1996). Bordercrossing can be social, cultural, economic, political, geographical, and liminal to central. Bordercrossing can direct educators to many different ways of thinking and doing in the art education field.

Elizabeth Garber (1995) in her academic studies of Mexican-American culture finds it important to develop new knowledge and ways of thinking. Garber recommends, “that teachers acquire greater information through literature, have contact with the way individuals from other cultures think, and consider the context and nuances of cultural facts” (p. 229). Wasson, Stuhr and Petrovich-Mwaniki (1990) add that teachers must “engage in a commitment to significant transcultural experiences” (p. 236). Such experiences can be achieved through what bell hooks (1994) calls teaching as a performative act where there can be a space for change, invention, and spontaneous shifts. bell hooks (1994) adds that what teachers need to do is “to be self actualized in diverse areas …increasingly, students are making complaints because they want a democratic unbiased liberal arts education” (p. 44) where students can become active participators in teaching and learning.

Gómez-Peña (1993) believes “we must learn each other’s language, history, art, literature, and political ideas. We must travel south and east, with frequency and humility, not as cultural tourists but as civilian ambassadors” (p. 48). The greater understanding art educators and students have of other realities, the more tools they have to dismantle stereotypes, and the more prepared they are to face new challenges. As Gómez-Peña (1986) says, the border is not the limit of two countries but it is the intersection of many realities, where there can be cultural understanding and equal exchange of ideas. This border can be better understood through art and literature to appreciate how other people think and experience their cultural context.
Multicultural Art Education

There is a growing realization by educational leaders in the United States that the ethnic and racial texture of the nation’s population is changing significantly. To enter the twenty-first century as a strong, democratic, and pluralistic nation, the United States must close the gap between the 85 percent of the population that is relatively affluent and the 15 percent that is desperately poor (Banks, 1992). Additionally, students of color will make up about 46 percent of the nation’s student population by 2020 (Pallas, Natriello, and McDill, 1989). Finally, the U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1994, indicates that “14 percent of school age youth live in homes in which English is not the first language” (Stephan, 1999, p. ix). The statistical data indicates that average classrooms across the nations will represent diversity to a greater degree than ever before therefore, which presents a challenge to educators to provide quality instruction across boundaries of race and class.

These variables point to the need for educators to research and address issues concerning minorities to better educate all students in a multicultural society. Some of these issues of concern in education include controversial approaches to bilingual education programs and a lack of a supportive environment that can affect teaching and learning (Hernandez-Gante, Phelps, Jones and Holub, 1995). “The culture of the students and their communities must be understood, children of different backgrounds are educated differently by our schools” (Nieto, 1996, p. 33). Instructional material and most curricula are designed to be used with Anglo populations; in addition, minorities encounter structural barriers and discrimination that can affect their school performance. The minority status needs to be identified as either voluntary or involuntary to better understand the challenges and the strategies that need to be used. Moreover, teacher education programs are not meeting the needs of students with regard to culture of the different ethnic minorities (Ogbu, 1998), and, finally, many of the books used in the classrooms do not give concrete information about different cultural groups and provide authentic voices on the dilemma of coming of age and the connections between ethnicity, culture, gender, and class, as Nieto (1996) points out.

In this context, “the cross-cultural study of art can be a rich avenue for helping students enlarge their cultural perspectives, become more aware of their primary culture in relation to others, and see art as central to the socio-cultural as well as aesthetic life of people” (McFee, 1995, p. 190). From the literature review, it is evident that there is a growing need in research in the art field of performance and cultural diversity to respond more effectively to students’ potential holistic education.

Art educators such as McFee (1966), McFee and Degge (1977), and Chalmers (1978, 1981, 1995) have long advocated for the multicultural approach to all aspects of art education. “Art is taught as it is experienced in life, as part of a social and cultural context” (Stuhr, 1994, p. 174). Ronald Neperud (1995) argues that issues of race, class, gender, sexual orientation, and multiculturalism are being discussed as essential to postmodern art education discourse. For many years art educators have been working on the development of curriculum and instruction of minorities; however, more needs to be done.

Today educators are likely to have students of diverse ethnic, cultural, and racial groups in their classrooms. However, Ogbu (1989) notes that “it is important to keep in
mind that most curriculum design and instructional materials are Eurocentric. As such they reflect middle class Anglo experiences, perspectives and values” (p. 177). Garber (1995) says, “many educators have worked diligently to expand the cultural basis of their curricula beyond the Eurocentric traditions that have, in most cases, dominated their own education and content of the curricula they teach” (p. 218). However, it is possible, Garber (1995) asserts, that without understanding the complexities of culture, these efforts can be misrepresented or oversimplified. I would agree that the superficial images and multiple definitions do not acknowledge the essence of multicultural education, which includes the social action, and transformation. In addition, McGee Banks (1996) says, a number of educators do not have a clear understanding of multicultural education, it is mostly discussed as the study of heroes and holidays and the participation of students in superficial cultural activities such as singing, eating and dancing.

Krug and Cohen-Evron (2000) suggest that, “a way to develop critical thinking dimensions in the classroom is to channel aesthetic issues as a life centered approach to curriculum organization [that] infuses the arts with other subject areas to conduct inquiry about personal and socially relevant ideas. Classroom endeavors can include direct experiences, reflections, critical thinking, collaboration and personal voices as means of providing meaningful educational experiences” (p. 269). Meaningful educational experiences can be described as experiences that can take the students to higher order of thinking, providing solutions to problems. Vygotsky (1962) asserts that:

the relation of thought to word is not a thing but a process, a continual movement back and forth from relation of thought to word [that] undergoes change which themselves may be regarded as development in the functional sense. Thought is not merely expressed in words; it comes into existence through them. Every thought tends to connect something with something else, to establish a relationship between things. Every thought moves, grows and develops, fulfills a function, solves a problem. This flow of thought occurs as an inner movement through a series of planes. (p. 125)

Every sentence we say in real life has some kind of subtext, a thought hidden behind it. The meaningful aspect of speech and the semantics aspect point to the importance of thought that turns in to speech. Vygotsky (1962) argues that verbal expressions cannot emerge fully-formed but must develop gradually. This complex process of transition from sound to meaning must itself be developed and perfected. Writing can be an expression of the conscious mind, and just as one sentence may express different thoughts, one thought may be expressed in different sentences. The importance of creative writing needs to be stressed as a strategy to improve education in general and to pay attention to groups that have not been able to express themselves previously to contribute to development of identity in particular.

I feel it is necessary to address discriminatory practices concerning diverse students to be able to improve educational programs. I agree with McLaren (1994) who says that “educators need to develop a more effective theory for understanding pedagogy in relation to the workings of powers in the larger context of race, class, and gender articulation” (p. 213). When we include multicultural practices in the classroom we are acknowledging the social and political realities of other cultural groups and including them in out teaching and learning practices.
Paulo Freire (1999) asserts that a true democratic education is fundamental to empower minorities and keep a continuous transformation of reality through a liberating education. Sonia Nieto (1996) argues that “the societal inequities, the structure of schools and the culture of students and their communities must be understood, children of different backgrounds are educated differently by our schools” (p. 33). The opportunity for students to engage in writing in connection to art education and performance art is a sound strategy for developing issues of importance to students like race, class, and gender. The opportunity for students to voice and expand on the issues of concern can be revealing for many who have not had previous opportunities to do it in a creative multidisciplinary approach, using visuals as well as the body to accompany their thoughts. Garoian (1999) describes a performance in Los Altos High School art history class as an example of interdisciplinary ‘re-writing’of the text of culture by a student named Lesley, who interprets modern art through different examples of existential literature, personal experience, and sculptures by Giacometti. The student constructed meaning from her cultural perspective. From this example I can see the possibility of writing performance texts, developing a monologues, and incorporating visual images accompanied with actions of the body. Performance action can cross language, culture, gender, and class barriers.

Henry Giroux (1992) asserts that as “a pedagogical process intent on challenging existing boundaries of knowledge and creating new ones, border pedagogy offers the opportunity for students to engage the multiple references that constitute different cultural codes, experiences, and languages. This means educating students to both read these codes historically and critically while simultaneously learning the limits of such codes, including the ones they use to construct their own narratives and histories” (p. 29). The pedagogical process takes place the moment students develop new ways of thinking, find new ways of expressing their stories, and develop into what they desire to become.

Giroux (1992) continues to assert that “within this discourse, students should engage knowledge as border-crossers, as people moving in and out of borders constructed around coordinates of difference and power” (p. 29). I advocate an approach to education that stresses the vital connection between students’ lives inside and outside of school within a framework of social and historical analysis. This approach not only encourages students to speak from their own positions and to represent themselves, but also encourages them to critique their environment and confront social issues through art in theory and practice.

I believe the increasingly racial, ethnic and linguistic diversity within the United States presents challenges and opportunities for educators. To be able to respond effectively, administrators and teachers need to have a better understanding of what the problems are and how to address them creatively using the pedagogical knowledge and skills that can work with students from diverse cultures, languages, and socio-economic groups. Drake (1996) believes that “we need a critical practice that recognizes the inadequacy of Eurocentric analyses of postmodern literatures and cultures. We need a critical practice adequate to a contemporary art that Guillermo Gómez-Peña describes as an art of fusion and displacement...an art that promotes a new internationalism, an art that is characterized by the epistemology of multiplicity and border semiotics...a ferocious critique of the dominant culture... a proposal for new creative languages” (p. 20). In a
parallel view Giroux (1995), calls on educators “to create public sites…in which teachers, students and others learn to think and imagine otherwise in order to act otherwise” (p.110).

A number of English educators are reading the performance texts of Gómez-Peña in various English courses in community colleges universities across the country. As an example of the significance of performance art in contemporary art education, Charles Garoian organized the Performance Art, Culture, and Pedagogy symposium (1996) at Pennsylvania State University to address the importance of contemporary performance art. “It quickly became apparent that although performance art is not recognized by most educators as standard instructional content, this contemporary art form permeates the national curricula suggesting the presence of hidden curricula” (Green, 1999, p. 9). Throughout the conference there were workshops, panels, and presentations offered by performance artists. A number of contemporary artists participated, including Guillermo Gómez-Peña and Roberto Sifuentes, James Luna, Rachel Rosenthal, Karen Findley, Roger Shimomura, and students from Pennsylvania State University.

A review of the performance symposium by Wolford (1998), suggested that the symposium had allowed for more opportunities for discussion of applied critical pedagogy in performance art, and more dialogue around basic questions of how to address highly charged issues in the classroom. Nevertheless, Wolford (1998) argues, “radical performance reaches only a relative small and select audience” (p. 12) without the hope of extending the reach of activist performance to a larger student population. Her reflection was, as Giroux (2002) observes, that educators need to be involved in a “cultural practice engaged in production of knowledge, identities and desires” (p. 13).

“Performance art as a pedagogical practice enables students to analyze curricular and pedagogical stereotypes and to challenge the assumptions of the world and those of culture in general” (Garoian, 1999, p. 29). The writing of performance texts by students allows for authentic stories to be told, it can invite previously silenced minorities to participate and share their narratives. The study of performance theory and practice allows for a total physical response to a story, to bring into play the use of different intelligences, to make multidisciplinary connections, in addition, the interaction between students allows them to cross cultural boundaries towards developing collaborative relations amongst diverse groups. In addition, students can have an active role in their education, contributing to the development of the curriculum at large.

Having established a contextual and critical foundation for Gómez-Peña’s performance art, and a reasonable connection for examining it given the interest of art education, in the next section I describe the methodology for examining, analyzing, interpreting, and evaluating his performance piece, Brownout: Border Pulp Stories with implications for art education.
CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

To investigate the nature of performance artist Guillermo Gómez-Peña’s work I examined what a particular performance, the monologue, *Brownout: Border Pulp Stories*, says about the identity construction of Mexican Americans and the implications of that for art education. To answer this question other supporting questions must be addressed. First, what does Gómez-Peña do in his performances? Second, what meaning do those performances have for him? And third, how can performances such as Gómez-Peña’s be utilized and integrated as aspects of contemporary art education theory and practice?

To answer these questions:

1. Conducted a review of the literature and used it to establish a theoretical foundation for the study.
2. Observed, recorded, analyzed and interpreted Gómez Peña’s performance *Brownout: Border Pulp Stories* at Florida State University on March 24, 2000, to identify meanings and arrive at implications for art education.
3. Interviewed the artist to clarify meanings derived from his work.
4. Presented and synthesized the findings and drew implications for art education theory and practice.

Theoretical Foundation for the Research Method

Denzin & Lincoln (1994) describe qualitative research as an umbrella concept that covers various types of methods and involves an interpretive, naturalistic approach to its subject matter. Qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them. According to Denzin & Lincoln (1994), “qualitative research involves the studied use and collection of a variety of empirical materials—case study, personal experience, introspection, life story, interview, observation, and historical, interactional, and visual texts—that describe routine and problematic moments and meanings in individual’s lives” (p. 2). Typically, qualitative “researchers use ethnographic strategies to collect data about the social order, setting, or situation being investigated. Common techniques for data gathering are interviewing, conducting documentary analysis, examining life histories, creating investigator diaries, and observing participants” (Merriam, 1996, p. 14).

Anthropologists have usually used ethnography as their preferred method because it constructs narratives of human meaning. As evidence of this approach, Clifford and Marcus (1986) have called their collection on the poetics and politics of ethnography *Writing Culture*, in addition Clifford (1992) “has described his own work as an attempt to multiply the hands and discourses involved in writing of culture” that
can take place across and in between cultures” (p. 251). Anderson (2000) says “both anthropologists and art critics construct narratives related to human meanings they believe to be embedded in that which they examine” (p. 80), therefore meaning will depend on the outcome of interpretation and the experience. An ethnographic critical analysis on a case study is the most adequate method for this study since it is a singular case of one individual in a specific context. I agree with Eisner (1998), who says “description should enable the reader to participate vicariously in the events” (p. 89). For a performance piece the participation of the reader as if he/she was present is very significant. The results would be limited to understanding and describing the event.

To arrive at the final analysis of Gómez-Peña’s performance I used Anderson’s (2000) Art Criticism Strategies in Ethnographic Research. This structure is made up of four stages. The first stage is Immersion and Response, the second stage is Description; the final stage is Interpretation and Thematics, and the fourth is Evaluation: Achieving the Ring of Truth.

In the Immersion and Response stage I followed my insights and initial impressions of the performance piece to find meaning. In the Description Stage I looked for every detail in the descriptive process that could provide evidence for my initial reaction and then for relationships among those things described. Anderson (2000) says, “that in social situations, as in works of art, relationships have meaning both in association with each other and as expressive components of the whole” (p. 84). It is evident in Gomez-Peña’s performances seem to draw a parallel to what Carlson (1996) describes as the ideas of the actors who piece ideas as patchwork: social constructionism thus hypothesizes that patterns of the social performance are not given in the world or pre-scripted by the culture, but are constantly constructed, negotiated, reformed, fashion and organized from scraps of recipe knowledge, a pragmatic piecing-together of pre-existing scraps of material recalling the process French theorists have called bricolage. (p. 49)

The spirit of Gómez-Peña’s work is rooted in the social and historical context it is produced. However, like in a collage there is a rich eclectic mélange that is constantly pieced together to create an ongoing work of art. This participation should enhance understanding and the emotional dimensions in hope that the reader will know and feel what is taking place, toward the end of making meaning.

Anderson (2000) says that “interpretation is an act of creative synthesis” (p. 84) of what is found. Throughout the observation of the video I was aware of the cross-cultural differences; due to my understanding of the Mexican culture I could identify and interpret what was being presented in the performance. The meanings, therefore, that I was most interested in and the emerged in the foreground were those related to what Garber (1995) calls border crossing—that is that exist on the border between cultures—particularly in the Mexicans and the United States culture.

Anderson (2000) says, “ethnographic critics consciously select themes that arise in the course of the observation and analysis” (p. 85). As I tried to make sense of the situation I selected the themes that were more evident to me to find meaning either because of the experiences I shared with them or with the historical context they describe. The final evaluation points to the accuracy of the interpretation. Anderson (2000) says critics with an educational orientation want to know (or determine) the value of the
activity that is being observed, in this case the performance piece and what is the potential contribution to education theory and practice. These potential contributions are identified in relation to the observations I made of Gómez-Peña’s performance and the research I conducted. Following this framework, my analysis of Brownout: Border Pulp Stories identified recurring themes for each section of the performance narrative.

Sample

The data collection in case study research usually involves interviewing, observing, and analyzing documents (Merriam, 1998). The sample from which the documents were drawn was the performance Brownout: Border Pulp Stories. Supporting documentation was drawn from interview and literature related to the performance as they shed light on the themes that emerged. The center of this study was the solo performance by Guillermo Gómez-Peña, the monologue Brownout: Border Pulp Stories, performed at Moore Auditorium, Florida State University, Tallahassee, Florida, on March 24th, 2000. The university setting is confirmation of the interest the academic community has in the issues Gómez-Peña addresses in his work. I organized the performance with the assistance of Mr. Dimas Madriz, a colleague in the Arts Administration Department, an effort that complemented my research role. As Frankel and Wallen (1993) assert, “studying a single unique case can reveal nuances and subtleties the other methodologies miss” (p. 394) and a combination of description and interpretation can lead me closer to answering the research questions. The results of the case study can be found in Chapter 4 followed by the conclusions and implications for art education.

Analyzing the Primary Documents

The primary event that centered this study, the performance by Gómez-Peña, was documented on videotape and transferred to CD-Rom. This CD is what was described, analyzed, interpreted, and evaluated as central to the study.

This study required writing out the text from the CD and then reviewing the CD to identify themes. I completely immersed myself in the CD during the three viewings. I stopped the CD whenever I found something of significance and made notes of it. After three viewings finally I felt I had responded to, described, interpreted, and evaluated the important themes of the performance. I identified the recurring issues and developed a chart to mark how frequently these issues appeared in each performance segment.

In the following pages I present the performance text, and interview followed by the thematic presentation, immersion and response, description, interpretation of each segment.

Conducting and Analyzing the Interviews

It has been argued that interviewing is the best strategy to discover the stories—the narratives—that people use as the primary means of making sense of their lives (Seidman, 1998). The intention of interviewing Gómez-Peña was to understand why he does what he does and to gain insight into the stories of his life particularly in reference to the performance in question. I chose a three-interview structure to manage and overcome the initial distrust that can be present in interviewing. The three parts consisted, as Seidman suggested: 1. stage setting and demographics (to establish trust and provide a context for
further questions); 2. description of events of central interest, and finally, 3. the interviewee’s interpretation of the meaning and significance of those events.

Since an open-ended questionnaire establishes territory to be explored when it focuses more on the subject’s experience (Seidman, 1998), I used an open-ended question format in the interview. Merriam (1998) says verbatim transcript of the recorded interviews provides the most reliable data for analysis. The most practical and accurate way to conduct an interview is to tape record the interview and take notes of non-verbal behavior, which I did. I also transcribed the interviews and noted my reactions before and after the interviews. Finally I examined the interview record in light of my concerns related to Gómez-Peña and his performance Brownout Border Pulp Stories.

“If interviewers are fluent in the participant’s mother tongue and interview in that language, they will subsequently face the complexity of translation for readers unfamiliar with the language. The issue of finding the right word in English, or any other language, to represent the full sense of the word the participants speak in their native language is demanding and requires a great deal of care” (Vygotsky, 1987, p. 88). The thinking of both the participants and the interviewer are intertwined with the language they are using (Vygotsky, 1987). The interviews were conducted in Spanish, Gómez-Peña’s and my native language as well as English. I was the translator from Spanish to English for this account. Gómez-Peña and I are balanced bilinguals, with the ability to also comprehend the Spanish (caló) argot used in Mexico. In the three different interviews I conducted, it was very comforting to know we could switch back and forth to the language that was most descriptive for the topic. Recognizing the importance of the verbal and non-verbal communication across languages and culture is essential for this particular research study.

The Use of Video and Audio Recording

The performance was first recorded on videotape. In some ways videotape has an explicit quality to represent situations above other media. The viewer is situated in the content in a direct way. Eisner (1998) noted that “as we become increasingly aware of the way in which humans process, store, and retrieve information and as we increasingly appreciate the contributions of different forms of representation to the meaning we make, the use of photographs, video, and film will, I feel confident, be increasingly exploited in the future” (p. 188). To discover the significance of Gómez-Peña’s work, I felt a videotape analysis along with an interpretative text was the most appropriate strategy.

In a theater, each performance piece is unique; lights, sound and the monologue make the performance an ephemeral work of art unless it is captured on video. Since the videotape allows me to interpret, describe, analyze, and evaluate the work of Gómez-Peña, I transferred the performance video to a CD-ROM, more easily stopped to pinpoint issues in order to study the multiple layers of meaning. Anderson (2000) says specifically looking at what, how, and why people do what they do in social context, when captured on videotape along with the interpretation of thought and language, reflects reality in a way different from that of perception; this is the key to the nature of human consciousness. It is my hope that the ultimate effect of the collection of data and the literature review will be to construct a holistic understanding of the case within its own world and the meaning of Gómez-Peña’s work.
The perception and interpretation from the videotape in a private study permits me to capture elements of the performance that would otherwise be ephemeral. Viewing the video allows for immersion and response, description, interpretation, and evaluation. In addition, the tone of voice of Gómez-Peña is deep, with a singular enunciation and pronunciation through the narrative that needs to be examined, sometimes respectfully, for understanding. The creative nature of his performance work makes videotape, CD-ROM, a useful way to capture a performance piece for this study.

Eisner (1991) says the narrative of an event is not an iconic image or mirror of reality but a poetic expressive form that is reconstructural or reconstitutional of the experience from which it originates. The critic describes, interprets, and appraises the narrative, storied mode of re-presenting the ‘connoisseur’s’ experience, which is in particular significant because it points to the importance of an aesthetic (versus scientific or propositional) form of knowing in human inquiry (p. 53). The videotape extends the aesthetic perception of the performance piece, grasping the datum in every instance through the duration of the presentation from a particular perspective-that of the camera.

**Presentation and Analysis of Salient Aspects of the Performance Brownout: Border Pulp Stories**

Anderson (2000) says “ethnographic critics ultimately want to know the meaning and value of that which is observed in relation to real experience” (p. 86). I strove towards the interpretation of data to construct a holistic understanding of the case within its own world and meaning of Gómez-Peña’s work. I believe the meaning will be in presenting the unique characteristics that constitute who Gómez-Peña is and how these characteristics extend to a larger cultural group of Mexican Americans in the United States in relation to *Brownout: Border Pulp Stories*.

The physical qualities are presented as the emergent characteristics through the study that were identified while looking at the video *Brownout: Border Pulp Stories*. The formulation of themes emerged from the video analysis. They are as follows:

1. Autobiographical Issues
2. Cyberspace Issues
3. Empowerment of Minorities Issues
4. Gender and Sexuality Issues
5. Multicultural and Multilingual Issues
6. Performance Issues
7. Political and Economic Issues
8. Power and Position Issues
9. Social and Cultural Issues
10. Xenophobic Issues

These ten topics were the reoccurring themes that emerged in the course of the analysis of *Brownout: Border Pulp Stories*. In the narrative of the performance piece presented by Gómez-Peña, these are consistent through the analysis and supported by the literature review. Anderson (2000) says “it is important for the ethnographic critic to be sensitive to key events. So a key to description in ethnographic criticism is to think of situations observed as a composition and to look at elements (usually,
people), transitions, and relationships in that light” (p. 83). As a work of art, a performance piece should be interpreted by its parts and perhaps as Anderson (2000) says,

significance in a situation is frequently found at the point where the rhythm changes, or the proportions are extreme, or the colors clash or other elements point to a place of focus. It is valuable for the critic to use unusual juxtapositions or unusual contexts to stimulate insight. (p. 84)

Each performance script has a number and title, which was transcribed from the original manuscript that Gómez-Peña used during the presentation of the performance, that he kindly left for me in appreciation for setting up the performance. I will present the performance text in two different formats; some are stories, which I will present as narrative texts, and some are poems, which I will present with line breaks. In four of the narratives an introductory paragraph has been moved under the title to keep consistent with the organization. The text has been kept in its original form for the sake of authenticity with some minor modifications I have taken the liberty to do for the purpose of clarification. Throughout the performance text there will be cues to indicate when Gómez-Peña speaks in tongues. Italics will be used for words in Spanish, Latin, and French. The initial analysis and interpretation of the data and contextual examination are presented in Chapter 4, followed by conclusions and implications for art education in Chapter 5. The full performance text of Brownout: Border Pulp Stories can be found in Appendix A. In Chapter 4 I will present thirty selected pieces of the script Brownout: Border Pulp Stories and an initial analysis and interpretation of the data, and a contextual examination.
CHAPTER 4

PRESENTATION OF THE DATA

The Script of Brownout: Border Pulp Stories. An Initial Analysis and Interpretation of the Data, and a Contextual Examination of the Above

The atmosphere of a performance space has unique characteristics. In the lobby of the Moore Auditorium at Florida State University, the audience enters while the music of the alternative rock group Café Tacuba played in the background. As the audience walks into the theatre space the contrast of dark and bright lights is striking. A podium and a table with an eclectic display of props on the stage contributed to a distinctive aesthetic experience.

Figure 1. Gómez-Peña. *Introduction to Brownout: Border Pulp Stories*
Guillermo Gómez-Peña walks on to a dark stage and suddenly from above a cobalt blue spotlight illuminates him. Gómez-Peña is wearing a black Mariachi jacket with white ribbon appliqué forming geometric designs. His long hair is parted in the middle and two long braids fell on the sides of his shoulders. The opened jacket let us see the fine design of the tattoos on his chest, partially covered by a heavy silver necklace. The black leather pants shine with the reflection of the lights, and his black cowboy boots complete the outfit. He walks up to the podium, looks at his script, and turns around to the table where his props are placed. Then he picks up a megaphone with his hand fitted with fingerless black gloves with silver spikes sparkling on the tips of the knuckles. Gómez-Peña begins to subvocalize, making indistinguishable sounds while looking intensely at the audience and at the same time nodding his head slowly. When he proceeds to speak it is a combination of actual words and made-up words that I will describe as tongues.

SCENE ONE: INTRODUCTION


(Audience laughs. He mimics as if to talk into the megaphone, he nods his head, and puts the megaphone aside. And then he talks into the microphone.)

Not tonight.

“It is a pleasure to be here in Tallahassee, Florida.”

Tonight I will attempt to occupy a space equidistant from performance, activism, shamanism and pedagogy.

I cannot guarantee you I will succeed, but I’ll give it a try.

I am a performance artist, which means I experience a permanent identity crisis (Audience laughs)

and I politely ask you to give me an extra break tonight cause tonight, I feel a bit confused.

From my multiple repertoires of hybrid identities, I have chose to come as The Traveling Medicine Vato, Replicante número 3678573.

(Gómez-Peña puts on a black hat and glasses.)

So, Dear Audience:

welcome to my conceptual set

welcome to my performance universe

welcome to my borderzone

welcome to the cities and jungles of my language las del Ingles y las del Español ...

Sorry, Sorry! I’m getting ahead of myself. First I should introduce myself properly.

(Gómez-Peña takes off his glasses and holds a cigarette between his fingers. End scene one.)
Initial Themes, Immersion and Response, Description, and Interpretation for Scene One

The emergent themes here are autobiographical, empowerment of minorities, multilingual and multicultural, political and economic, power and position, and social and cultural issues. The performance script follows a humorous drama, mentioning recognizable figures in politics. Gómez-Peña uses his diplomatic and polite manners to continue with his introductions. He describes his occupation as having qualities of performance, activism, shamanism, and pedagogy.

Gómez-Peña politely welcomed the audience to his conceptual world, his performance universe, to his world of languages of English and Spanish; he created a calm mood for a bilingual performance, a hybrid of language and metaphor. The multicultural and multiracial audience giggled and laughed. He walked onto the stage and spoke in creative tongues, making sounds that resemble pre-Columbian languages, naming government agencies and political figures. His reference to the Smithsonian Institution is to one of the most principal museums and research institute of great importance in the United States where he has previously performed, prepared the set for a friendly, relaxed atmosphere.

Gómez-Peña has a very sui generis presence, accompanied by a powerful voice. In an unassuming, modest manner he described his occupation as performance artist, activist, and shaman as synonymous with experiencing an identity crisis. I feel this crisis is a response to multiple personae, languages, and cultures. Gómez-Peña had expressed in various texts that from his hybrid persona he has chosen to be The Traveling Medicine Vato, transformed from the Traveling Medicine Man. I recall the traveling medicine man who is described as a persuasive Vato, which is the caló Spanish word for brother, perhaps a connection to a brother, a friend, or the street vendor. Gómez-Peña identified his Traveling Medicine Man as a replicante shaman brother number 3678573 which implies there are many traveling medicine men around. It can also allude to some artificiality: a artificial social construction of identity.

SCENE TWO: CRIMINAL IDENTITY PROFILE (HIGHLY CLASSIFIED/NOT FOR PUBLICATION)

(Gómez-Peña announces the title he speaks into the microphone.)

COMPLETE NAME: Guillermo Lino Gómez-Peña
ENGLISH TRANSLATION: Guermo, Chiguermo, Guiliermou Comes-Penis or Piña
(Audience laughs)
NATIONALITY: Since 1999, dual: Mexican and USian
SELF IDENTITY: Mexican in process of Chicanoization
RACE: Mestizo
LANGUAGES SPOKEN FLUENTLY: Spanish, English, Spanglish, Gringoñol, Franaglé, Robo-Esperanto and fake Nahuatl. (Audience laughs.)
DISTINGUISHING FEATURES: Performance scars on arms, stomach and right knee; pinto tattoos on chest, right arms and left shoulder; hyper-Mexican mustache; loungy sideburns; melancholic gaze.
OCCUPATION (IN ORDER OF IMPORTANCE): Performance artist, writer, videoasta, journalist, activist, borderlógo, reverse anthropologist, experimental linguist, media pirate, bad actor, Latino consumer service representative of the U.S. Art World and understudy for
Mr. Antonio Banderas.  (Audience laughs and applauds.  End of scene two.)


WEAPONS USED TO FIGHT BACK: Language (spoken and written), live performance, radio, the internet, theatricalized madness, humor, strategic silence, a “Mexican survival kit” contents: fake press cards, assorted chiles, hangover relief medicine, makeup, shamanic artifacts of sorts, a mariachi hat to look “friendly” (Audience laughs.) and as a last recourse, my fists.

Initial Themes, Immersion and Response, Description, and Interpretation for Scene Two

The emergent themes are autobiographical, empowerment of minorities, multilingual and multicultural, performance, power and position, social and cultural issues. Gómez-Peña used irony and sarcasm to say all the different ways his name is pronounced in the English language. It is interesting to note how one culture can make conscious or errors when pronouncing a foreign personal name like Guillermo Gómez-Peña. I see the ethnocentric perspective of one culture potentially subjugating or devaluing the other when incorrectly saying the name of a person. I think it reflects lack of respect not to learn how the name is pronounced in the country of origin. It reflects a double standard, in my opinion; mainstream culture is very insistent in the correct pronunciation of their proper names. However, this does not apply when pronouncing other proper names, in particular if they are of people from underdeveloped countries.

Gómez-Peña described his identity as a Mexican in process of chicanoization. Once more he used the reverse of the mainstream. He was born in Mexico City, though he has been a resident of the U.S. for over twenty years. Gómez-Peña is still in process of becoming a Chicano, one of those people whose origin is Mexican but who are born or raised in the United States. Gómez-Peña (1993) said “chicanismo provided me with the intellectual, political, and artistic means to begin my process of reterritorialization and to eventually regain my lost citizenship” (p. 22).

Gómez-Peña identified himself as a Mestizo, which is the mix of Spanish and Indian heritage. The majority of Mexicans will describe themselves as Mestizos. In public schools in Mexico the official report of the Mexican race is Mestizo. The creative languages that he used are Spanish, English, Spanglish, Gringoñol (a hybrid word from gringo from English and ñol from Spanish), Franglé (a hybrid word from French and English), Robo-Esperanto (Robo- from robotic, a hybrid word using Esperanto, the artificial international language based as far as possible on words common to the chief European languages, according to the Merriam Webster College Dictionary (1998), and fake Nahuatl (a Mexican pre-Hispanic language still used today. The distinguishing features of Gómez-Peña’s physical appearance are performance scars on arms, stomach and right knee; pinto tattoos on chest, right arms and left shoulder; hyper-Mexican mustache; loungy side burns; melancholic gaze. His physical characteristics are very common of Mexican or Spanish nationals. Gómez-Peña stresses these physical stereotypical characteristics to represent himself. He emphasizes the generic look of a Mexican macho and then talks back with intellectual brilliance. Engaging in an intellectual analysis of marginalized populations in the United States.
He described his occupations in order of importance as performance artist, writer, *videoasta* (video artist), journalist, and activist. His work represents his views and some of the Latino community’s on social, political, and economic concerns as well as affairs of the *borderolólogo*, which refers to a person who is an experienced border citizen. He also uses the term reverse anthropologist to describe his reverse study of the other, the outsider. An experimental linguist, he described his creative approach to languages; as a reality, language is evolving in every community as the different ethnic groups come together and exercise creatively the assimilated colloquial languages. Gómez-Peña called himself a media pirate, for his use of technology to reach a larger audience make him adopt an undercover personality. In calling himself a bad actor, Gómez-Peña assumes a humble presence. As a self-described Latino consumer service representative he is just one more player in the U.S. Art World, and to add a bit of humor, Gómez-Peña called himself a substitute for the Spanish actor, Mr. Antonio Banderas. Yet, he and the audience both know this is not true. He consciously turns stereotypes upon themselves.

From his multiple personae in his performances he mentioned his different stage names from his main performances: Mister Misterio; *El Existentialist Mojado*, related to *Supermojado*, a border hero, conceptual *carnal* of *Superbarrio*, champion of undocumented worker’s rights, and archenemy of Migraferatu and *Pito* (Pete) Wilson. *Border Brujo* is a ritual, linguistic, and performative journey across the United States/Mexico border performances presented from 1988-89. *El Warrior for Gringostroika* is a recompilation of essays, performance texts and poetry published in 1993, and it recalls the continental grassroots movement that advocates the complete economic and cultural reform of U. S. anarcho-capitalism (Gómez-Peña, 1996, p. 242).

“Other identities are that of *El Untranslatable Vato*, *El Mariachi Liberachi*, and *El Aztec High-Tec* poses as a performance artist. He goes by the dubious names of The Warrior for Gringostroika, *El Naftazteca* and *El Quebradito*” (Gómez-Peña, 1996, p. 240), *El Naftazteca*, *El Mad Mex*, *El Mexterminator*, Information Superhighway *Bandido*, and most recently *El Web-back*. The disclosure of all the names is noteworthy to give meaning to his work in creative languages and semantics.

The significance of his work is in language, written, performance, radio, the Internet, theatre, the creativity with props, and the shamanic artifacts (that could belong to a priest or magician), which all are the weapons to fight back; and, as he said, as a last recourse he can use his fists. This last piece of information confirms that he will physically fight back if needed. Or, is it the construction of machismo? Would he really fight? He is an intellectual that would prefer to use the intellectual tools like pen and paper to fight back. These artifacts have been fabricated to defend himself from the media, from the cult against American individualism and the cult of celebrity, and from the materialistic life in the U.S. Gómez-Peña describes himself as being an articulate artist, one intellectually capable of talking about issues that have not been usually dealt with in public venues; he is a bordercrosser, one who crosses genres, mediums, performance spaces, ideas, and indeed languages, races, cultures, cities, and countries.
SCENE THREE: PERFORMANCE MEMORY
(Gómez-Peña takes a drink from a plastic heart and then puts it down on the podium top, he is wearing a black hat.)
Tijuana, 1994
I sit naked on a wheel chair
wearing a NAFTA wrestling mask
my chest is covered with pintas
shit like…
“los chucos también aman”
“me dicen el jalapeño pusher”
“Aztlan es pura genitalia”
“The bells are ringing in Baghdad”
“greetings from Ocosingo”
“too blessed to be stressed”
“don’t worry; be Hopi”
“burritos unidos hasta la muerte”
(Audience laughs)
“no one can like a Mexican” (Audience laughs)
“la ganga no morirá”
“New Orleans ain’t my barrio”
“Selena, forever reina”
“to die is to perform the last strip-tease”
“mwan vit u creve . . “.
enigmatic pintas, may I say
say, say, say…
I can barely speak tonight.
Dear audience:
ease my pain
lick my chest, my sweat, my blood
500 years of bleeding…
from head to toes
and all the way down to the root
I bleed from Alaska to Patagonia
y me pesa un chingo decirlo
pero sangro de inflación, dolor y dólar
sangro
de inflamación existencial
y Mexicanidad insatisfecha
sangro
de tanto vivir en los United
sangro
de tanto luchar contra la migra
de tanto y tanto crossing borders
sangro, luego existo
parto, luego soy
sóy
sóy porque somos
we are fuckin’ chingo
the transient generation acá
from Los Angeles to the Bronx and far beyond
--including Canada for protocol reasons
we, the mega “WE,”
we cry
and then, we begin to imagine . . .” (End of scene three.)
Initial Themes, Description, Analysis, and Interpretation for Scene Three

The emergent themes are autobiographical, empowerment of minorities, multicultural and multilingual, performance, power and position, and social and cultural issues.

The memories of Tijuana are significant since Gómez-Peña lived and worked in this border city for several years. Tijuana is the border zone, the meeting point of two countries, the U.S. and Mexico, the border town where anything can occur; the geographical crossing point, where multicultural and multilingual people meet; where the first world of abundance meets the third world that lacks basic market goods.

The wheelchair represents his aging persona, maturing in his performance process.
The much talked-about NAFTA (the North American Free Trade Agreement) is an issue hotly debated from a political and economical perspective. The success or failure of the treaty is constantly being evaluated; for the north, it appears to be a success, and for the south, a failure, since it has not improved the standard of living of the laborers who work for the transnational factories in the border cities such as Tijuana. The wrestling mask represents the hidden power of the Mexican wrestlers like El Santo. Gómez-Peña uses a performance mask, following the tradition of Mexican wrestlers, the one of the Warriors for Gringostroika. The name Gringostroika is composed of the word Gringo and stroika from the Russian word Perestroika pertaining to the revisionist era. The Cabaret Babylon Aztlan is the name of the nightclub where Gómez-Peña worked in Tijuana. In the Aztec mythology Aztlan is the cradle of the Aztec civilization. The Chicanos often make reference to Aztlan as the ancestral land. “The bells are ringing in Baghdad," could be Babylon, addressing the cradle of Western Civilization, and Ocosingo is the city in the state of Puebla, Mexico, from which so many migrant workers come. We are so many, Gómez-Peña says, the migratory generation that go across the U.S. and Canada for protocol reasons; this expression of politeness is in reference to the free trade agreement. But, he says he would prefer to see a Free Art Agreement.

“We cry, and then we begin to imagine;” this is the magic of performance, the possibilities of imagination and creativity that go beyond the written and spoken word. It is an invitation to the public to buy a ticket to his/her conscious/unconsciousness.

As Bergaus (1993) says that at the end of the performance a trace remains. In Brownout: Border Pulp Stories Gómez-Peña invites the audience to go back five hundred years and revisits the first catastrophic event in Mexican history; Colonialism. He addressed the pain of being a country that suffered under the Spanish rule. And, following the war of independence, foreign powers were paying attention in the natural resources of the country and as a result they exercised political and economic influence at all levels of society that hinder identity construction. The piece also talks about the adverse forces in the U.S. like the INS, that poses a constant threat of being deported back to the country one loves, but where a person who earns a minimum wage can not survive in humane conditions. There is a feeling of pain, like the feeling of rupture, of being uprooted, of bleeding in a similar way to the Catholic cathartic bleeding saints. As an additional piece of penitence Gómez-Peña talks about crossing borders. Gómez-Peña stressed the brotherhood of Latin American countries, which have had familiar colonial past and a tragic present, betrayed by military regimes, corrupt governments, and stagnating bureaucratic institutions incapable of creating a dignified standard of living for their citizens.
SCENE FOUR: THE SELF-DEPORTATION PROJECT

What if H.G. Wells had been Chicano? Imagine one of the possible immediate futures in a typical U.S. city, that is to say, a city full of immigrants, people of color, and people who speak other languages…like Spanish. You perceive yourself as an angry white male, but no one knows about it. Not even your beautiful “Hispanic” wife or your interracial kids. So close your eyes and just imagine:

America 2001. You wake up one day and go to work. You need to stop for gas, but the gas station is closed. You don’t know that all the attendants went back to Old Mexico the day before. You drive around looking for an open gas station until you run out of gas. You call a cab, but there are no cabs because the drivers, mainly Latino, quit the day before.

Somehow you make it to the office to find your colleagues watching TV in total disbelief. Nervous president Clinton is pleading for all unemployed Anglos and African Americans to show up immediately to the closest emergency labor recruitment center. The country is paralyzed. Total Brown-Out! The disappeared Latino labor force must be replaced overnight.

At lunchtime you discover that most restaurants are closed, duh! Someone explains to you that the chefs and the waiters were all part of an epic self-deportation program. Since you are fairly apolitical, you still don’t quite get it. Many stores and hotels are closed -for obvious reasons- and the banks are going crazy. All across the country, millions of Mexicans, with their suitcases in hand, are lining up at bank counters to withdraw their accounts, on their way back to their homelands.
You begin to worry about your family. You decide to go home, walking of course because remember, your car is parked somewhere in the other side of town without gas. Your Hispanic wife is devastated. Most of her relatives chose to go back to the old country. She is also furious because Juan, the gardener, and Maria, the babysitter, is [sic] nowhere to be found. She explains she had to stay home to take care of the kids, and missed all her work appointments. She even had to take the kids to do the shopping, which Maria normally does. They stood in an eternal line at the supermarket only to find that there was no fresh produce. According to the supermarket manager, there were no Mexican truckers to deliver it.

Now your kids are crying because they miss Maria! You go to bed in total perplexity, and you dream...in Spanish. Or better said, you have a nightmare in Spanish: You see yourself picking fruit under a criminal sun for ten hours a day. Your hands [are] covered with a monstrous skin disease produced by pesticides. You wake up sweating. Next morning, you turn on the TV. A panicked President delivers the bad news: Very few people responded to his desperate call for workers. The unemployed ‘citizens’ were clearly not inspired by the idea of working for minimum wage and no benefits. The nation’s tourist, construction, garment and food industries are all in disarray. San Diego, Los Angeles, Santa Fe, Santa Barbara, San Jose, Fresno, San Francisco, Phoenix, Tucson, Albuquerque, Denver, San Antonio, Houston, Chicago and a myriad other smaller cities have declared bankruptcy. And so have many national banks. And if this weren’t enough - the President concludes - within days, crops across the country will begin to rot because there’s simply no one to pick them. Luckily Mexico has offered to send some emergency food supplies, humanitarian aid, and maybe even some Mexicans. In very broken Spanglish or rather gringoñol, a desperate president Clinton proceeds to beg the remaining Mexicans to stay "Queridous amigos: querremos que ustedes recapaciten y no abonadounen sus trajyos mas, les subiremos el salary y les dareimos muchious benefits y su terjeita, verdi, instantánea. Por favour."

Now, you take a deep breath and slowly come back to the present. Nativist politicos and citizen groups across the country are doing everything they can to stop illegal immigration, and to take away the few rights left for immigrants, including access to education and medical services. They conveniently make no distinction between "illegal” and “legal”. They blame all immigrants for crime, drugs and especially the lack of jobs. Their inflammatory rhetoric appeals to your fear of an uncertain future but not your intelligence. You feel manipulated, and angry. If you could ask one question to the political class, what would that question be? “Are you guys truly, truly aware of the logical consequences of your anti-immigrant politics?”

Now, you cool down. It’s been a hard day que no? You sip your delicious coffee from Chiapas, and put on your Buena Vista Social Club CD.

Thank you. (End of scene four.)

Initial Themes, Description, Analysis, and Interpretation for Scene Four

The emergent themes are empowerment of minorities, political and economic, power and position, social and cultural issues. This story describes a dramatic episode in couple’s life. He happens to be Anglo, the wife is Hispanic, and the children of mixed blood.

This humorous story describes an extreme case in which millions of Latino/Hispanic workers go back to their country. The significance of this piece is how through
a story the reader can become aware of the repercussion of the importance of the workers that do menial jobs. The sudden absence of these workers could paralyze a city; the consequences are catastrophic. If the workers, the housekeepers, the farm workers, the truck drivers, and many others are gone, who will substitute for them? Imagine what it would be like. The irony of the story is that Mexico offers to send food supplies, humanitarian aid, and even Mexicans when traditionally it has been the opposite: the U.S. sends help to other countries that are in need. The story Gómez-Peña told probably takes place in Los Angeles, Chicago or any other city that depends on migrant workers and Latino labor to maintain its economy. The lack of analysis on immigration issues and the alarming news puts the general public against immigrants. However, the media does not openly acknowledge the minimum wage jobs Latinos/Hispanics take many times with no benefits. The mysticism that surrounds the green card, the card to economic freedom, the mysticism of unlimited possibilities to the person that obtains a green card is addressed in this piece. And, last when he refers to drinking your coffee from the state of Chiapas, Mexico, and playing a Buena Vista Social Club CD, he describes the influence of music between the Mexican, Cuban, and North American culture. This story stresses the inherent interconnectedness of both social and economic cultures cross culturally. There is an emphasis on how we accept the artistic, cultural expressions and products from Third World countries with out an in-depth analysis of the dialectic process involved. Where does it come from? Who does the work? Who gets exploited?

SCENE FIVE: RRROOMANTIC MEXICOU
(Gómez-Peña keeps the rhythm of the text with his right hand; takes sips from a bottle.)

Ten… Gómez-Peña rewind… nine… go back to your early border days …eight…
It’s 1987…. seven… you are Border Brujo performing at the Cabaret Babylon Aztlan…
six… Your audience is composed of drunk tourists and marines, hipsters, judiciales and prostitutes… five… I see you all out there… four… Still young, locote and unknown … three … a local DJ calls me “the strangest spoken word poeta in planet downtown TJ” …two… pues sí!, one.
today, the sun came out in English
the world spins around en Inglés
and life is just a melancholic tune
in a foreign tongue, like this one (shows his tongue to the audience)
ay México, rroooommmmmantic México
“Amigou Country” para el gringo desvelado
Tijuana Caliente, la “O”
Mexicali Rose para el gabacho deshuaciado
El Pasou y Juarréz
ciudades para encontrar el amor
amor que nunca existió
ay México, rroooommmmmantic México
paraiso en fragmentación
mariachis desempleados
concheros desnutridos
bandidous alegris
beautiful señoritas
mafioso politicians
federalis que bailan el mambou
el rónchero, la cumbía, la zambía
en-tropical skyline sprayed on the wall
“dare to cross the Tequila border”
“dare to cross the line without your Coppertone”
transcorporate breeze sponsored by Turismo
crunchy nachos to appease the hunger
Tostada Supreme para aliviar las penas
enchiladas y Mac Fajita
peso little-eat so grandi!
where else but in Mexico. (End of scene five.)

Initial Themes, Immersion and Response Description, and Interpretation for Scene Five

The emergent themes are autobiographical, multicultural and multilingual, performance, political and economic, power and position, social and cultural issues.

Once again in downtown Tijuana, Gómez-Peña in 1987 is performing poetry as Border Brujo at the Cabaret Babylon Aztlán. The audience are American marines, hipsters, judiciales (police) and prostitutes. This is a bilingual poem that presents an eclectic group of images from people to food from the border towns like Tijuana, El Paso, and Juarez. An eclectic group of feelings are also addressed from love to pain to melancholy and ecstasy. A hybrid vocabulary is used describing cultural signs, images and events in the border. The typical Mexican drinks Tequila, which is a synonym of intoxication. Along with the lively dancing styles of Ranchero, Cumbia, Mambo, Samba, Coppertone, Mac Fajita, Mariachi, concheros a combination of styles from the different Latin American countries all represented along with sun tan lotion and American fast food. The juxtaposition of images point to the juxtaposition of two cultures in a Marty Gras scenario of fun and games, perhaps in a fantasy world of superficiality.

The cultural specific language and contexts of this piece excludes those people who have a limited knowledge of English, Spanish and Tex-Mex. Anderson (personal communication, on March 25, 2000) said he felt left out in the places where he did not understand what Gómez-Peña was saying in Spanish, speaking so rapidly during the performance, he felt how immigrants feel when they can not understand English- they are left out, disenfranchised. An important strategy Gómez-Peña uses is turning the looking glass around to look at the dominant culture in this shifting of power the use of language.

SCENE SIX: BORDERISMOS
(In a very solemn tone of voice, with his black hat on.)

You know, some people are still experiencing the happy hour of multiculturalism, but I’m already suffering the hangover…but that’s my trip and I hate to involve my audience in my personal crisis, so let’s continue with our journey across Mexamerica, but before, I’d like to share with you some borderismos to help you cross my border checkpoints:

Alien: A term used by opportunistic politicians to describe any legal or illegal immigrant, people with heavy accents or exotic clothes, and people who exhibit eccentric social, sexual, or aesthetic behavior.
Chicanadians: Second generation Mexicans living in Canada and/or children of Mexican and Canadian parents living in the U.S. Do not confuse this term with "Can-aliens," which refers to any undocumented Canadian, inside or outside Canada.

Menage a Trade: Synonymous with NAFTA. (Audience laughs)
Mexkimo: A polar Mexican. Mexkimo settlements are found in what used to be Iowa, Minnesota, Illinois, and British Columbia.
Mex-truation: A demographic hemorrhage currently spilling into the U.S. and historically contained by the Texas Rangers. (Audience laughs)
Pene-trading: The act of trading with a smaller and weaker country. A surgical procedure via which two males get to exchange their genitalia.

Now, what should I do next? A performance text or a story?
A story? OK. (End of scene six.)

Initial Themes, Description, Analysis, and Interpretation for Scene Six

The emergent themes are empowerment of minorities, multicultural and multilingual, performance, political economic, power and position, social and cultural, and xenophobic issues.

Gómez-Peña has talked about how he sees multiculturalism. In several of his essays he says that multicultural is the hip word of the late 1980s. This is an ambiguous term; everybody agrees it is politically correct, but few people know what it really means. It can mean cultural pluralism in which the various ethnic groups collaborate and dialogue with one another without having to sacrifice particular identities to the Big Blob. But it can also mean a kind of Espernatic Disney World, a tutti-frutti cocktail of cultures, languages, and art forms in which everything becomes everything else and nothing is really indispensable.

The concept of multiculturalism has been used for idealized scenarios, created into a Disney or Benetton commercial adventure not as a realistic improvement for the living and working conditions of minorities in the U.S., and Gómez-Peña is exhausted by such a worthless word. In Warriors for Gringostroika (1993) Gómez-Peña voices his disappointment with regard to multiculturalism. I agree that multiculturalism frequently has been used more for commercial uses than for discussing issues of equity, power, and social position sincerely. It is important when encountering this word to understand the context of its use.

"Theorists such as Sleeter and McLaren are reconstructing and rethinking multicultural education so that it will deal more directly with issues of power, racism, and economic inequality. They call their work “critical multiculturalism.”(as cited in Banks, 2002, p. 100). If we desire to transform education it is imperative that we advocate for a democratic system in schools not a reproducative system that perpetuates the status quo.

However, Banks (1992) continues to say, practitioners and writers do not have a clear understanding of the nature of multicultural education, its background, and its emerging scholarship [that] tend to essentialize multicultural education as the study of ethnic heroes and holidays and the participation of students in superficial activities such as ethnic singing, eating, and dancing. (p. 57)
Hillis (1996) says that our goal should be to create a nation that actualized the concept of of *e pluribus unum* (out of many one). Throughout history the U.S. has tried to create one culture out of many by attempting to eradicate ethnic diversity and to induce all citizens to become assimilated into an idealized Anglo-Saxon Protestant culture.

It is evident that the lack of understanding of the real problems point to a need for further studies in the area of multiculturalism. As educators we need to address multiculturalism in academic environments and in aesthetic expressions in order to eventually make multiculturalism part of the mainstream culture. This will be further discussed in the final chapter.

*Borderismos*, the term border used as a grammatical ism, means border or fringe. The metaphor is used to describe the bleeding issues of the border towns. There is a feeling that is being described of Mexico trading with the U.S. and in that Mexicans being treated as an underclass. It has been historically seen that trade between industrialized nations and nations that supply resources are to be found at a disadvantage. The brief definitions of the *borderismos* are very descriptive of how Gómez-Peña feels about many consequential issues and in their interpretation. There is a consistency in semantics to show power relations. Gómez-Peña juxtaposes and reverses definition from dominant to the dominated as privileged. Perhaps the tossed salad metaphor is a better analogy to multiculturalism, as a mix of rich ingredients that give color and flavor to the salad. Gómez-Peña reflects this image in his description of new identities in the new hybrid races. In addition, Gómez-Peña exhibits a play on words that is synonymous with NAFTA; the words are made up freely as he transits through countries, through cultures, and through concepts to compose words to describe alien, violation, and bleeding, as those *pene* trading partners.

SCENE SEVEN: RETURNING TO AMERICA AFTER BLACK TUESDAY

The following is a clumsy attempt at story telling.

I fly back to the U.S.,
a few days after “black Tuesday”
the sad April first of 96
when the new anti-immigration legislation came into effect.
its Thursday night at a hectic Los Angeles Airport
as I wait for my luggage
I am sniffed by two humongous police dogs
a border guard approaches me,
no big deal
I always get stopped ‘cause I’ve been told
I just have this archetypal “suspicious” look
a cross between a border dandy,
and a generic Latino outlaw
“excuse me sir, where are you coming from?”
“Mexico City,” I reply
“Why?”—he asks
“What do you mean?
Why Mexico City as opposed to Hong Kong? Or why am I coming back?
Cause since I live in California, I am condemned to always come back.”
He finds no humor in my logic
“What do you do?” he asks.
“I’m a performance artist…and an occasional commentator for NPR.”
“No, I am – asking you…what do you do?” he insists.
“You mean, you want me to describe my aesthetics and cosmology?
or you are simply implying I am lying to you?”
-he is now visibly upset and demands to see an ID
I show him an Art press card
“what do you write about?”
“crossing borders, U.S. / Mexico relations,
immigrations, situations like this one…”
He paused and then continues more aggressively:
“so what do you think about your country’s government being so involved
with those big-time drug dealers from Juárez?”
“It’s bad,” I say. “But what about the fact that there is evidence to suspect that
the drugs coming from the Contras a decade ago
were introduced to communities of color via the Los Angeles Police Department?”
he takes a step back.
“where did you get that crap?”
“It was international news last year,”-I reply.
“But, but nowadays the drugs are mainly going from Mexico.”
his insistence in demonizing Mexico really sets me off:
“sure,” I answer, “precisely because there is a market here in America;
or are you so naïve as to think that the production of drugs creates the market?”
he doesn’t get my point. Neither do I. (Audience laughs)
instead he writes a mysterious note
and sends me to secondary inspection
where I spend the next two hours watching a bored customs agent inspecting
every inch of my suitcases,
including toiletries, props, costumes,
performance scripts, my phone agenda,
and all because of my big mouth…and my thick mustache. (End of scene seven.)

Initial Themes, Immersion and Response Description, and Interpretation for Scene Seven

The emergent themes are autobiographical, empowerment of minorities, multi-
cultural and multilingual, political and economic, power and position, social and cultural,
and xenophobic issues.

The significance of this is Gómez-Peña’s concern about stereotyping, prejudice,
and anti-immigration laws; this is a central part of his work. Journey departure, émigré,
migrant, immigrant, and alien form a bizarre eclectic combination of terms to describe
people crossing borders. Many people, like him, are condemned to come back and forth
from California and other border states that once were Spanish/Mexican territory. Lintz,
Mehan, Ikamoto and Willis (2001) point out,
Mexican peasant labors began entering the United States in the
1818s largely because of the rural poverty they faced at home.
A situation that culmination in the 1910 with the Mexican
Revolution. Landless and increasingly unable to produce or
purchase the basic necessities of life, these men and women were
forced to migrate to known work sites…no physical barriers other than the easily forded Rio Grande separated to Mexico. (p. 207)

Due to the harsh economic recession that Mexico is experiencing, Mexican working people cross the border in hope of finding jobs. Knowing they are risking their lives when they go across the Rio Grande into the deserts and unfriendly border towns. The significance of this passage is that Gómez-Peña describes the reality of people who must cross borders. Pointing to the instances of archetype, clichés, and stereotyping by authorities to incriminate Mexican-looking individuals who, with the physical description of a Latino between a dandy and an outlaw fall into this stereotypical perception. The significance of this part of the story is the negative press Mexican immigrants receive and once more the stereotyping of Mexicans as drug dealers who stigmatize border towns.

Gómez-Peña references the Contras in Nicaragua supported by the U.S. The INS says, “Where did you get that shit from?” The INS, being one of the most discussed public offices from a border-crossing perspective, doubts the well-known public facts.

Figure 4. Gómez-Peña. Border Interrogation
It is interesting to note the lack of analysis and reality from the INS officer who is obstinately keeping to his one-sided arguments. Ironically, the INS has now changed to Department of Homeland Securities. Can this change of name be revealing on the intentions of this office instead of handling issues of immigration the office is trying to keep immigrants from coming in or when possible sending the migrants back? Could it be that new comers can be a threat to national security, or a threat to the American standard of living, or the way of life?

SCENE NINE: BORDER INTERROGATION

(Gómez-Peña takes his hat off and grabs the megaphone and begins speaking through it.)

Dear foreign audience: I’d like to ask you some basic questions which are at the core of American identity. I’ve been asking myself each of these questions at least one hundred times. No big deal, may I?

How many of you consider yourselves “people of color”? (Some people in the audience raise their hands)

Are there any illegal immigrants in the audience? (Audience laughs)

People who once were illegal perhaps?

What about people who married an “illegal alien”? (Audience laughs)

To help them get a green card, perhaps

hey, that’s transnational solidarity!

Any people who have hired undocumented immigrants for domestic, or artistic purposes?

To do what exactly Ma’am? (Audience reply: to perform)

To perform? How much did you pay them?

You don’t want to say it? (Audience reply: no)

Well thanks for your sincerity ma’am

now, let’s get a bit more personal

people who have had sex with an illegal alien? (Audience laughs)

I want to see those hands!

Can you please describe their genitals in detail? (Audience laughs)

I’m kidding, I’m kidding.

Now on a different subject matter, secret intercultural fetishes, who’s got a collection of stolen indigenous artifacts at home?

what about racist figurines?

Any collectors of Mexicanabilia, Negrobilia, sleepy Mexicans, “little black sambos,” “red skin savages”? Some ethno-porn? (Audience laughs)

Come on, we all have them. (Audience laughs)

Would you like to donate one piece to my traveling medicine show in order to purge your cultural sins?

If so, don’t say yes right now, just contact Marva no questions asked.” (He puts down the megaphone)

But back to the performance, have any of you ever fantasized about being from another race or culture? Which one? (Audience reply: Mexican) Who else? Black, Indian, Mexican, French, European--

I want to hear more fantasies?
You were a Gypsy in a past life? Orale!
One more, you would like to be Scottish?
Thanks for your candor and sincerity
Now, let’s reverse the gaze.
Would anyone like to ask me a question, any question,
as irreverent or indiscreet as it may be?
Come on this is your chance, eh.
Bueno, (opening his jacket showing his chest) aquí tengo un pacific rain vato loco, aquí tengo la muerte y en la espalda tengo otros pero esos no te los platico. (Audience laughs)
Blackout, blackout chingado, conceptual blackout (puts on his hat), here I go again, attempt at story telling, this time in reverse racism, agarrense.
(Gómez-Peña puts on a Zorro mask to prepare for the next piece. End of scene nine.)

Initial Themes, Immersion and Response Description, and Interpretation for Scene Nine
The emergent themes are autobiographical, empowerment of minorities, multicultural and multilingual, political and economic, power and position, social and cultural, and xenophobic issues.
This is a wonderful, interactive, fun, monologue in which Gómez-Peña addresses issues of race, and ethnicity with a great sense of humor. Gómez-Peña ‘reverses the gaze’ and the audience is the foreigner being questioned. In this bilingual dialogue with the audience Gómez-Peña asks about racial fetishes, racial issues, issues of ethnicity, about sexual relations with a foreigner, of hiring an illegal alien, and due to the setting being a University theatre, the subjects and the dialogue were very engaging. The audience, composed of students of diverse races and cultures, were interacting and expressing their views about sex, race and culture. It is not common to have Latinos, blacks, and Anglos talking about sex, race or culture. The racial, cultural and Christian moral blend into an expression of repressed archetypal memories that I feel are exposed. The audience is confronted with their real demons: their own bigotry. Most people in the audience seemed to be having fun in a natural way hearing unusual language and some might have been a little nervous or uncomfortable for being exposed to a multicultural performance for the first time.

SCENE ELEVEN: MORE BORDERISMOs

Jalapeño pusher: A petty criminal who sells chilies on the streets to intoxicate innocent American children. (Audience laughs)  
Ganga: From the English word “gang.” A term coined by the U.S. Police Department to describe all people of color under the age of eighteen. (Audience laughs)  
Last minute e-mail on cultural difference: I just received this e-mail. An armed Anglo is a NRA supporter; an armed Chicano is...a criminal. Another one: more than two Anglos in a car are carpooling; more than two Chicanos in a car are...gang banging. (Audience laughs) Another e-mail fresh from my lap top today, intra-Latino joke: What is a Cuban-American?...A Puerto Rican with a yacht. (Audience laughs)  
Signed: ‘El vernacular anthropólogo you met in Texas Gómez-Peña.’ I truly don’t remember this guy but he keeps sending me these bad ethnic jokes, dozens per week. You meet all kinds of locos on the road, verbigratia… (End of scene eleven.)

Initial Themes, Immersion and Response Description, and Interpretation for Scene Eleven

The emergent themes are cyberspace, multicultural and multilingual, performance, power and position, and social and cultural issues. There is evidence of racial jokes among Latinos and Hispanics. I believe that in most cases, prejudice amongst Latinos is economic. The social strata will be determined by economic status in general. Inter-racial tension among Latinos and Hispanics goes back to our colonial past. People who consider themselves Hispanics still have an allegiance to Spain. But in Mexico, there is an official tendency not to have any connection to Spain since the war of Independence in 1810. Spain represented for many Mexicans of the working class colonialism, slavery, repression, racism, and corruption. The elite would view this context from a different perspective aligned with Spain or France as a connection to education, culture, and “pure” white blood.

I feel inter-racial tension is present when people of different races are gathered. Many Anglos, from my viewpoint, have had a supremacist attitude towards most minorities, reflected in patronizing these groups and making them invisible to the mainstream culture. As a reverse strategy, the Anglos are treated in a chauvinistic manner by the performance script only at times by Gómez-Peña. I feel there has not been a
successful integration of races in the U.S. It is clearly evident that there is more emphasis placed on those characteristics that mark differences than on characteristics that unifies us. In addition to, it does not improve the situation having to constantly fill out affirmative action surveys for statistical purposes. It is a constant reminder that we are classified into different racial and economic categories.

Gómez-Peña brings into play the Internet to communicate with other artists and interacts with a broad international audience. Perhaps this communication can promote integration of colorblind society in cyberspace. In cyberspace you can communicate with someone in the other side of the world with whom you have tremendous similarities and there are no racial interferences that block this flow in the relation. Gómez-Peña continuously sends up dates of his work in progress to colleagues and friends. However, a large part of Gómez-Peña’s visual work, for example the non-verbal messages in body language and cultural postures are lacking from cyber communiqués. So I can say that cyber communiqués can be efficient at a certain level only. His work can not be totally comprehended without being actually present in a performance-lecture or performance piece.

SCENE TWELVE: THE MEXICAN COMMUNITY CENTER IN FORTH COLLINGS

It’s 10:00 at night in the lonely streets of Forth Collings, an extremely racist part of Colorado, not that far away from the headquarters of “Soldier of Fortune” magazine. Roberto, my performance partner, and I just arrived driving from Boulder in a rented van. We are back to perform at the local university. An old truck full of rowdy locals begins to follow us, blinking their lights and honking at us. We stop, not knowing exactly why perhaps, out of fear. Our hearts beat real fast. The passengers look as if they just drove non-stop for two days straight from Deliverance. They ask us the obvious question: “are we lost?” We reply we are looking for the university campus. The driver, a rural hippy with a nasal voice, says he does not know how to get to campus but he certainly knows the way “to the ‘Meskin’ cultural center.” I cannot believe my ears: a Mexican Cultural Center in Forth Collings? He volunteers to guide us. We follow respectfully, from a certain distance. Three blocks later they turn left. I follow him. We suddenly find ourselves in the parking lot of a Taco Bell. (Audience laughs) The driver screams from the truck’s window, ‘hey buddies, welcome to the Meskin’s cultural center.’ They crack up all theatrically and drive away singing “La Cucarcha,” la cucaracha… Roberto and I look at one another with a combination of embarrassment, anger and a desire to laugh: Ease, we gotta give it to those racists. They are funny, he tells me.” (Audience laughs)

We continue to drive randomly in search of the campus and wishing we had been faster and funnier than them. It’s one of those cases in which reality is much more interesting… and edgier than performance. (End of scene twelve.)

Initial Themes, Immersion and Response, Description, and Interpretation for Scene Twelve

The emergent themes are autobiographical, multicultural and multilingual, performance, power and position, social and cultural, and xenophobic issues. The significance of this piece is the encounter with racism in Forth Collings, Colorado. The hipsters make a parody of the locals taking Gómez-Peña and Roberto to the ‘Mexican’ Cultural Center. Once again the inconsiderate use of language when pronouncing Spanish words, they reflect the lack of interest of the racists Gómez-Peña and Sifuentes
encountered in Forth Collings. This incident is described with a great sense of humor to make it entertaining but once again there is evidence of racist behaviors from the hippy resident of Forth Collings who guided them to the Taco Bell. Adding a bit more of humor, towards the end the locals sing *La Cucaracha* as they drive away. This was their encounter with bigots; yet, Gómez-Peña turned this piece around and made it ironic, intelligent, and entertaining. Giroux (2000) affirms that “if American society is to move away from its increasing defensiveness about cultural differences, it will have to advocate a view on national identity that regards bigotry and intolerance as the enemy of democracy, and cultural differences as one if its strengths.” (p. 82)

**SCENE THIRTEEN: ON FEAR OF THE OTHER**

Fear…America is the land of irrational fear. We are all suffused in a culture of fear, fear of cultural otherness, of differences; and yet, we love it. This is perhaps what separates us from the rest of the world, but then, to bridge this gap, we import cultural fear to the rest of the world. Nowadays, even Russians are afraid of Mexicans. It’s…sweet. wait, do you hear the police sirens? Beautiful, *que no*?” Ammmmeeeeeerica, what a beautifully scary place to be but then living in fear is normal for us? we are all scared shitless of the immediate future. the 21st century, *que trip, que fucking’ chorizo* man, by the way, are you scared of me? of my accent, my strange intelligence my obnoxious capability to articulate your fears? an articulate Mexican can be scarier than a gang member can, *que no*? My colleagues and I get pulled over by the cops after the show; cause we are still wearing our Mexterminator regalia (*Audience laughs*)
tell me officer, what exactly are you scared of? my accent? my unpredictable behavior? my poetic tarantula? my acid politics? my criminal tendencies? my tropical diseases? my alleged ancient wisdom? (Gómez-Peña speaks in tongues.) my shamanic ability to exorcise the evil out of white people, yes or no, *que si que no; que tu que yo* ‘cause I am scared of you.’ Of your silence *pinche mustio,* your silence makes you really scary! And the distance between you and I, the distance makes it even worse we spent the night in jail. (*Audience laughs*) Brownout!!!

(*The lights go out. End of scene thirteen.*)
Initial Themes, Immersion and Response Description, and Interpretation for Scene Thirteen

The emergent themes are autobiographical, empowerment of minorities, multicultural and multilingual, performance, political and economic, power and position, social and cultural, and xenophobic issues. The significance of this piece is the dichotomy of the safe American city where people are afraid of each other and some Americans seem to love it. The media covers over and over news on how citizens have arsenals of weapons in their home as collection items.

Gómez-Peña questions his strange intelligence that is voiced through his eloquent speech. His obnoxious capability to voice the fears of others, since many times Mexican or minority artists are stereotyped as not being intelligent, nor are they dealt with the respect as equals.

What he describes as the encounter with the police sounds like a case of racial profiling. There is a strong fear of the other, the person who speaks English with an accent; a person who acts different is seen as a threat. And even more perplexing is a person who is a foreigner who is eloquent, brilliant and coordinated in his vocabulary.

There is an additional feeling of fear, the proximal distances between one and the “other.” The cultural and existential differences are reflected in a physical and

Figure 6. Gómez-Peña. Campaigning for the Brown House
intellectual way. In some countries the people from the northern regions looks down at
the people from the southern region. For example there are some Mexican people from
the north who look down at Mexicans from the south, Mexicans from the south who look
down at Mexicans from the east etc…and within these regional areas the different racial
compositions of mulattos, mestizos, criollos, sambos, etc. Gómez-Peña points to these
sterotypes to make them surface and examines them in a humorous ways.

SCENE FOURTEEN:  EL PRESIDENTE CAMPAIGNING FOR THE BROWN HOUSE
(Gómez-Peña puts on a bandana around his head and dark glasses.)
Dear Chicano and honorary chicanos, y todos los demás
You know, the historical mission of the U.S. is to put the world at risk and then to save it
from the very risks they created; (Audience laughs)
for example, to arm other countries
and then to save them for being armed; (Audience laughs)
to provide weapons and drugs to the youth of color
and then to imprison them for using them; (Audience laughs)
to endanger species and then to raise consciousness
and create programs to save them; (Audience laughs)
to throw the working class into the streets a
and then to punish them for living on the streets
to turn women and people of color into freaks
and then laugh at us for acting out our freakiness
The historical mission of the U.S. is very, very peculiar.
Democrats call it “the best democracy on earth,”
Republicans see it as a “divine mission; a historical mandate.”
what do you think?
Dear Audience:
If I were a politician, would you vote for me?
despite my outlaw looks, my obvious voices?
despite my lack of theatrical training?
would you vote for me? If this was a presidential campaign and not a performance art
piece what would I say? what should I say? (End of scene fourteen.)

Initial Themes, Immersion and Response Description, and Interpretation for Scene
Fourteen

The emergent themes are autobiographical, empowerment of minorities,
multicultural and multilingual, performance, political and economic, power and position,
and social and cultural issues. The significance of this poem is its contradictions of the
political class. This piece talks about the insincerity of politicians who want to get elected
and usually in their speeches demagogues say what people want to hear rather than the
truth. But, perhaps we as citizens we prefer to hear good things about ourselves even if
they are not the truth. In international news - the U.S. has done this play several times in
recent history; the U.S. has an international image of being the bully of the world. The
significance of this part is the commitment of Gómez-Peña’s work in politics, social and
economic concerns and to show the paternal role the U.S. takes with respect to the rest of
the world as the best democracy on earth. It is my personal opinion that the U.S. has been
guided by philosophical approaches the legitimize their expansionist ideology like “the
idea of Manifest Destiny in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. This justifies U.S.
imperialistic takeovers, the assertion that social science could solve any social problem
and the assumption that technological development was always an improvement over the
past” (Efland, Freeman, Stuhr, 1996, p. 38). The idea of progress was materialized in the
geographically, ideologically, and economically expansion. In some third world
countries they call this imperialism.

SCENE FIFTEEN: IMAGINARY POLITICAL SPEECH NUMBER FIVE
(Gómez-Peña announces the title, and uses megaphone to speak.)
Dear American People:
we are now faced with a very serious dilemma:
we have now entered the post-democratic phase of advanced capitalism
no return
in this era of savage globalization
Orale I’m rolling across borders
(Audience laughs)
in this era of savage globalization
we politicians on both parties have total disregard for human pain
for the homeless, the newly arrived immigrants, the elders,
our children and teens, the artists, the infirm, the crazy ones like you
we have gotten used to living without seeing, without sharing
for the moment all we share is…the moment
no, no, no, that’s a bad phrase, I’m sorry
for the moment
The only thing we share is time!
Hey what time it is by the way?
Que horas son carbon? (someone in the audience replies: siete cinco) shit!
Yes, we are citizens of the millennial barrio (Audience laughs)
and now, owing a gun is not a human right
no, no, no there is no way out of this sentence
Americans really love their weapons
I’ll try imaginary political speech number seven,
Ay coño!
Dear Orphans of the Nation/State:
we now live
where do we fucking’live ese?
we now live in a fully borderized and fragmented world
composed of virtual nations, transnational pop cultures and hybrid races.
hey that’s a great line que no?
and all we share is fear and vertigo,
fear of the future, of love, of disease, of loneliness,
of total disenfranchisement
and vertigo
the feeling of standing on the edge of a new millennium
yessss!!
pure horror vacui Y2K y que,
Apocalypse Mañana!
we feel it in our crotch and it goes up out spine and into our throat
and out of our nostrils and eyes and it’s fucking unbearable!
Ay, I’m overdoing it, I know, (Audience laughs)
but I just see no other way to make my point
wait, there might be another way . . . (End of scene five)

Initial Themes, Immersion and Response Description, and Interpretation for Scene Five

The emergent themes are autobiographical, empowerment of minorities,
performance, political and economic, power and position, social and cultural issues. The
significance of this poem is a dramatic narrative on how a sector of the Americans have
developed a love for feeling threatened and need for weapons to protect themselves.
Gómez-Peña imagines we live in a fully borderized and fragmented world composed of
virtual nations, transnational pop cultures and hybrid races. Gómez-Peña says all we
share is fear: fear of the future, of love, of disease, of loneliness, of total
disenfranchisement and vertigo, the feeling of standing on the edge of a new millennium.
SCENE SEVENTEEN: ON CENSORSHIP

True story, Chicago TV station, September of 1999. I’m doing this PBS millennial special with Phillip Glass, you know the composer. It’s one of those corny corporate humanism programs. The topic: the state of creativity in America. Phillip and I decide to surprise the producer; we’re drinking rum back stage jiving. Cameras 1 & 2 rolling, I’m coughing too much! (Gómez-Peña puts on a pair of glasses.)

Imagine a U.S. of America controlled by far right, Christian fundamentalists. They believe that “the liberal media” and experimental art have thoroughly destroyed our social fabric, our moral and family values; and they are determined to restore them at any cost. As part of their great project of ‘moral restoration’ they have decided to carefully scrutinize everything that goes on radio, TV and printed journalism, performance art, including this (beep). So from (beep) to sitcoms and from new (beep) to (beep) programming, they have digital censors which can detect key words that trigger ideological or cultural differences. Since it is practically impossible to monitor everything, they have devised a mechanism via which (beep) the syntactic and conceptual coherence of a thought is (beep) especially when dealing with conflicting opinion (beep). So, when it comes to say sexuality, most explicit words have been (beep). And I mean, just words, such as (beep). Or (beep) or (beep) or (beep). Now, in politics things are not that different. In order to ensure that ideologically tend(ee) information does not pollute the minds of true American patriots like you, they have (longer beep) forbidding the use of terminology, innocent terminology like (beep) or co (beep) or even a term like (beep). In a world such as this, content would be restricted to (beep) and the possibility to make intelligent civic choices would be affecting our funda(beep). Imagine what kind of a world this would be. (End of scene seventeen.)

Initial Themes, Immersion and Response Description, and Interpretation for Scene Seventeen

The emergent themes are empowerment of minorities, gender and sexuality, multicultural and multilingual, performance, political and economic, power and position, social and cultural, and xenophobic issues. The significance of this speech is to imagine what kind of a world this would be if there were greater freedoms than the ones we enjoy: for instance, freedom of syntactic and conceptual thought. This is what Paulo Freire (1997) calls conscientizacão, or awakening of critical consciousness. This is a questioning of the status quo; so people can express what they think freely without being censured. Sexuality is mentioned but no further description is given. I think it is implied in this piece that we don’t have the freedoms we would like to have although we strive and conceptualize so deeply into what it signifies. Gómez-Peña has said performance tests the limits of society and pushes outwards to test those limits. I think that at the same time these freedoms that are exhibited in the performance scenario are models for people who are attracted to that representation to replicate.

SCENE EIGHTEEN: LATE NIGHT PHONE CALL

(Gómez-Peña takes off his glasses and with a soft voice says:)

“Let’s go back to social reality.

You know someone called me last night at the Holiday Inn, here in town,

I arrived at 3:00 in the morning from Califas

he said he was going to smash my greasy head and hung up sounded as if he was serious
I somehow have a reason to believe he is here right now waiting for the performance to be over to smash my greasy head are you here carnal? I can see you can you please stand up and identify yourself? are you willing to discuss it or are you ready to shoot me? do you wish to exchange places for a little while before you shoot me? wouldn’t you love to be here, right here on this stage? right in the center of the wound? in the epicenter of the Great American earthquake? don’t you wish to be Mexican for a few minutes? cause … I don’t, or the moment hate it it’s a huge burden 3,000 years of history in my throat 10,000 years old genes, que hueva I rather be … French So, imagine a French anthropologist, Jacques Fromage du Merde, (Gómez-Peña turns around and gets a fan from the props table and begins fanning himself) que calor chingado! from la Sorbonne, he’s attempting to explain the racial eccentricity of America to his colleagues back home. (Audience laughs. End of scene eighteen.)

Initial Themes, Immersion and Response Description, and Interpretation for Scene Eighteen

The emergent themes are empowerment of minority, multicultural and multilingual, performance, political and economic, power and position, social and cultural, and xenophobic issues. This piece talks about fear and about cultural identity. For Gómez-Peña (1993) fear is the sign of the times. “To them (Anglo Americans), we are a whole package that includes an indistinct Spanish language, weird art, a sexual threat, gang activity, drugs, and illegal aliens. They don’t realize that their fear has been implanted as a form of politic control; that this fear is the very source of the endemic violence that has been affecting this society since its foundation” (p. 47). This comment points to the lack of understanding and analysis of the general population towards Spanish speaking people.

Gómez-Peña describes the weight the Mexican cultural heritage carries, the years of history with an entrenched sense of nationalism and despair when he talks about the French. In an indirect way the references to France are deeper than what they appear to be. For many Mexicans the memory of French science and culture are still present. Mexico and France had a historical merger when in 1864 Napoleon III supported the Austrian prince Ferdinand Maximilian von Hapsburg to establish a Mexican Empire. For over a century after this failed attempt to establish a monarchy in Mexico, the Mexican élite has looked up to France for role models in education and culture. Gómez-Peña (1993) says, “France was a plague that afflicted the high cultural scene. Until the 1970s, young Mexican writers had to: a). learn French, b). read European writers, and c). one day go to
Paris to be initiated. I chose not to do any of the three” (p. 17). Although Gómez-Peña chose not to follow the French models, the influence of the France language is present in many of his performance scripts. With a humorous approach Gómez-Peña mocks the French anthropologist, Jacques Fromage du Merde. In the same way, Marinetti presented radical performances with coarse language that people where attracted to for the eclectic combination of themes. This piece carries strong nostalgia in the sense of melancholic, gloomy images from the recollection of memories, dreams, and the desire of a different identity just for a few seconds of his life.

SCENE NINETEEN: THE NEW HYBRID TRIBES
(Gómez-Peña takes a fan from the prop table and fans himself.)

This new society is characterized by mass migrations and bizarre interracial relations. As a result, new hybrid identities are emerging. All Mexican citizens have turned into Chicanos or Mexkimos and all Canadians have become Chicanadians.

Everyone is now a borderígena, meaning a native of the greater border region. According to Transnational Geographic Magazine, 70% of the population in New World Border is undocumented, and up to 90% can be technically considered mesti-mulata, that is the product of at least four racial mixtures. Such is the case of the crazy Chicarriucas, who are the products of Puertorican-mulatto and Chicano-mestizo parents; and also the innumerable Germanchurians who descend from the union of West Germans and Manchurian Chinese. When a Chicarriuca marries a Hasidic Jew their child is called Hasidic vato loco. And when a displaced Belgian marries a Chicano, the offspring is called Belga-chica, which loosely translates a “little winnie.”(Audience laughs.) Among the other significantly large half-breed groups are the Anglomalans, the Afro-Croatians and the Jap-italians, many of whom I see here tonight. It’s lovely and very, very Post-Colombian, Culombians, ma I say, say…melting plot. We’ve replaced the bankrupt notion of the melting plot with a model that is more germane to the times, that of the menudo chowder. According to this model, most of the ingredients do melt, but some stubborn chunks are condemned merely to float…

(End scene nineteen.)

Initial Themes, Immersion and Response Description, and Interpretation for Scene Nineteen

The emergent themes are empowerment of minorities, multicultural and multilingual, performance, social and cultural, power and position, and xenophobic issues. This is a very witty, whimsical text on ethnicity and race. The hybrid cultures and a play of words make it very imaginative. Gómez-Peña mocks the “bankrupt” concept of the melting pot that has evolved in academia to a salad mix but he finally calls it a menudo, meaning mess chowder. Gómez-Peña (1993) says “we (Latinos in the United States) don’t want to be a mere ingredient of the melting pot. What we want is to participate actively in a humanistic, pluralistic, and politicized dialogue, continues and not sporadic, and we want this to occur between equals who enjoy the same power of negotiation” (p. 41).

This creative language is explained and expanded upon in Gringostroika (1993) where Gómez-Peña says that “when writing about hybrid identity it means to develop new models to interpret the world-in-crisis, the only world we know” (p. 43).
SCENE TWENTY: MORE DEFINITION
(Gómez-Peña takes off his black hat.)
Culti-multiculturalism: An Esperantic Disney world view in which all cultures, races and sexes live happily together.
Free Taco Agreement: an innovative economic initiative designed by The Chicano Secret Service. Its main objective is the production and distribution of free tacos to the starving and deterritorialized gringo minority. *En Español “Tratado de Libre Comerse.” Favor de no confundirlo con el intraducible “Tratado de libre Cogerse”* (Audience laughs.) translation please?
Thank you. (End of scene twenty.)
Initial Themes, Immersion and Response Description, and Interpretation for Scene Twenty
The emergent themes are empowerment of minorities, multicultural and multilingual, power and position, and social and cultural issues. These definitions inform us on how Gómez-Peña dramatizes the concept of multiculturalism. In the Disney approach he describes a utopia of diverse cultures, races and sexes living happily together. As Gómez-Peña (1993) says “the word multicultural hasn’t been defined. Due to the lack of an accumulative memory that codifies public debate in America, it seems that every year we have to restate the discussion from zero, therefore we still can’t agree on a basic definition” (p. 57). It is very clear that the word multicultural means different things to different people. *Tratado de Libre Comercio* is misspelled to read *Tratado de Libre Comerse*, (Free Eatery Treaty); the literal translation to English does not have the same significance in Spanish. Gómez-Peña displays his humorous and ironic abilities in this text.

SCENE TWENTY-ONE: SELF-REFLEXIVE PAUSE
(Gómez-Peña puts on dark glasses.)
You know tonight, I’m feeling a bit insecure and introspective
I wonder if I’m still asking the right questions
or am I merely repeating myself?
Am I going far enough, or should I go further? And how?
Should I alter my identity through body enhancements, laser surgery, and prosthetics? Become a Ricky Martin with brains? (Audience laughs)
Hey that’s a strange thought *que no?*
Should I go even further? Towards which direction?
North? The North does not exist, you know
South? Should I go back to Mexico for good?
But the Mexican nation/state is collapsing
so, *stricto sensu*, Mexico no longer exists
Maybe I should just shut up and get a job, cause and effect *que no?
Can anyone give me a job?* (Audience laughs)
Come on; you don’t have to pay me union wages, I’m Mexican
but the question is doing what?
directing Shakespeare in Spanglish for the local Rep?
performing as the sidekick of Antonio Banderas? (Audience laughs)
No, they’ve got enough generic Latinos on call. what about conducting self-realization seminars “come to terms with your inner Chihuahua”? or find your inner pito or the pito within? (Audience laughs)
It’s tough to find a useful task for a performance artist in the year 2000 I mean after Howard Stern, Jerry Springer, cunnilingus in the White House, six year old killers, what else is there to transgress in America? who can we shock? you?
Are you listening? Are they listening? Does content matter anyway? Do ideas matter?
(End scene twenty-one.)
Initial Themes, Immersion and Response Description, and Interpretation for Scene Twenty-One

The emergent themes are autobiographical, performance, political and economical, power and position, social and cultural issues. The significance of this text is exposing the lack of critical analysis from the community in general. Gómez-Peña questions the role of the performance artists in the year 2000. Artists in Hollywood and politicians are amusing and shocking the public at the same time displaying outrageous behaviors. Gómez-Peña reflects and asked if content matters, if ideas matter? What matters? He offered criticism on the breakdown of ideas. Gómez-Peña addressed the salary issue because many Mexican migrant workers are paid below minimum wage and have no benefits. In a parallel way, many Latino artists are paid and treated in a substandard manner when compared to other national artists. Gómez-Peña’s representative has made contributions to the better conditions and action towards Hispanic/Latino artists, Gómez-Peña’s reps are very professional and assertive on what is expected from the venue that is inviting him to present lectures and performances to be up to part to any other national or international artist

SCENE TWENTY-TWO: ON LANGUAGE AS MY PASSPORT
(Gómez-Peña brushes his face with a very thick brush.)
I step on the map of my America. I walk from Puerto Rico to Cuba, to Florida, And then across Texas and the Southwest back into Mexico, while talking…
I speak therefore I continue to be . . . (Gómez-Peña snapping his fingers, marking the rhythm of the poem.)
language, my passport to your country
language, my journey to your arms
language, my most effective weapon
language, my two-way ticket to the past
language, my abracadabra
a memory per line
a thread of life per sentence
ten dollars a poem
postcard included
life in Gringolandia
a cheesy TV talk show
a Spanglish Infomercial. (End of scene twenty-two.)

Initial Themes, Immersion and Response Description, and Interpretation for Scene Twenty-Two

The emergent themes are autobiographical, empowerment of minority, multicultural and multilingual, performance, political and economic, power and position, and social and cultural issues. This exquisite poem is significant because it specifically talks about language, how it can bring you in or keep you out; as the most powerful and substantial weapon to use. A memory per line, he says a thread of life per sentence. The poem is very accurate in the descriptions and the cultural connections are very direct. The versatility lies in how he uses language, for example a poem of life in *Gringolandia*, a U.S. TV talk show, a Spanglish infomercial. This poem could have been written with automatic writing approach using flash back of memories, like a Surrealist poem. Gómez-Peña has used the map of America in several performances; it is very familiar to him to walk or draw the American continent, as he walks or reaches out to address what he needs to say moving through the cartography.

SCENE TWENTY-FOUR: LECCION DE GEOGRAFIA FINISECULAR EN ESPANOL PARA ANGLOSAJONES MONOLINGUES

(Gómez-Peña takes off the black hat.)

You know the very same politicians who forced us into globalization and free trade across borders, paradoxically don’t want us to be bilingual. I wonder if one can be a monolingual member of a multicultural community? *Acaso alguien me pude constestar en Español?*  (Audience reply: no)

“I truly believe that people in the U.S. know much more Spanish than they think they do or than they are willing to accept. And I wish to prove my point with a poem right now.

Dear Perplexed Audience Members:

Repeat with me out loud:  (Audience repeats after him)

Mexico es California  (Audience laughs)
Marruecos es Madrid
Pakistan es Londres
Argelia es Paris
Cambodia es San Fransisco
Turquia es Frankfurt
Puerto Rico es Nueva York
Centroamerica es Los Angeles
Honduras es Nuevo Orlean
Argentina es Paris
Beijing es San Francisco
Haiti es Miami
Nicaragua es Miami
Chiapas es Irlanda

your house is also mine  (Audience laughs)
your language mine as well
and your heart will be ours
one of these nights
es la fuerza del sur
el Sur en el Norte
el Norte se desangra
el Norte se evapora
por los siglos de los siglos
and suddenly you’re homeless
you’ve lost your land again
estimado anti-paisano
your present dilemma is to wander
in a transient geography de locos
without a flashlight, without a clue
sin visa, ni flota,

joder. (End of scene twenty-five.)

Initial Themes, Immersion and Response Description, and Interpretation for Scene Twenty-Five

The emergent themes are autobiographical, empowerment of minorities multicultural and multilingual, performance, political and economic, power and position, and social and cultural. This is a great rhyming poem that brought the audience together; they enjoyed participating in the repetition of each line. The significance of this poem is the migration of different nationalities in the different cities of the world that are mentioned.

Instead of taking a progressive step to work with the realities of the country like Gutierrez (2001) says to respond to the challenges and opportunities posed by the rise of global corporations and major regional trading blocks, the hemispheric relationship among Mexico, Canada and the United States is being renegotiated. Perhaps in the not too distant future physical border will cease to exist in North America and workers will move about freely without constant, pushed and pulled by market forces rather than the forces of state repression.” (as cited in Banks)

The issues of immigration that are discussed in the evening news in the United States have many similarities in many places around the world. In some first world countries a significant part of the work force are migrant workers who come from third world countries. In an ironic way this results in embracing a part of the third world in the first world. To add a bit of humor Gómez-Peña makes use of the courtesy phrase that is common in Latino/Hispanic etiquette: my house is your house. In a parallel way he says my language is your language, and your hearts will be ours one of these nights. And, back to the existential dilemma: to wonder, with nowhere to go to. I believe that in many instances migrant people who have left their home lands sold their homes, their land, and everything they owned that gave them a sense of belonging to where they came from. This material loss or rupture with their roots contributes to loss of identity in a foreign land like in the U.S. The issues of immigration are significant to study from a postmodern perspective since Efland, Freeman, and Stuhr, (1996) say, “rather than being viewed as peripheral to the formal and expressionistic aspects of art, social and cultural issues are viewed as fundamental to any discussion of aesthetics. For the reason that art is a commentary on and embedded within culture, the postmodern critic engages in a form of cultural critique” (p. 38). The cultural critique is important form immigrants and non-immigrants since it is an existential analysis of who we are and where we are going. It is
about mobilization, how we can be in one place one day and in a totally different place another, it can even extend to being lost, and homeless.

SCENE TWENTY-SIX: TECHNO-PLACA
(Gómez-Peña puts around his head an Indian band with feathers hanging on both sides.)
“Final scene, Hollywood Indian.
Today, I’m tired of ex/changing identities in the net.
In the past eight hours, I’ve been a man, a woman, and a he/she; I’ve even been black, Asian, Mixteco, German and a multi-hybrid replicant.
I’ve been ten years old, twenty, forty two, sixty five
I’ve visited twenty-two meaningless chat rooms
I’ve spoken seven broken languages
(Gómez-Peña speaks in tongues)
As you can see, I need a break real bad;
I just want to be my self for a few minutes.” (End of scene twenty-six.)

Initial Themes, Immersion and Response Description, and Interpretation for Scene Twenty-Six
The emergent themes are autobiographical, cyberspace, multicultural and multilingual performance, power and position, and social and cultural. The significance of this piece is how he describes issues of race, nationality, identity and the anonymity of the Internet. He is reflective in that issues, race and ethnicity that can be described as significant. Though cyberspace the users have no picture of the other person, there can be a relation developed in a closer way than in a traditional encounter between two people, face to face. Roberto Sifuentes and Gómez-Peña (2000) “tried to explore other possibilities by infiltrating space as “cyber-immigrants” (Web-backs) and smuggling subversive ideas conceptual coyotes (human smugglers)” (p. 46).

SCENE TWENTY-SEVEN: A NEW POST-COLONIAL ROBO-LANGUAGE
(Gómez-Peña still wears a band around his head with feathers hanging on one side.)
Performance is about exercising our radical imagination on stage; so imagine, a post-colonial syncretic robo-language made out of English, Spanish, French, Latin and Nahuatl; one of the possible languages of the future, our future what would it sound like? It would sound like:

Yes que la neta escueta?
plus o moi
aqui o alla
ceci, cela
questo que aqueloo
ici/laba
que te que yo, I mean
not really not really wanting to decide yet
‘cause for the moment machin’
aujourd’hui
tlancanácatl el mio
Il Corpo Pecaminos
Hurts un chingo o
Specially me feet
Ikichitl
Pero tambieém otras partes del cuerp-po-po-ca
capiscas guey?
temepantly tinemi
Y es que la pisca existencial esta ka..ka.
So drop your fusca mujer
et fiche moa le pe
y hagamos la paz
con la lengua
easy babe, I mean, ici
dans la sacre rrranfla
my toyota flmaiger toyeo-tl
la salle du sex transculturelle
my low rider sanctuary
tlotoni
I say
ja`ne rian a declarer, donc
ponte chango y observa
las normas de la convivencia mortal
en el Barrio...Universal, apunta:
jamás de never meterse con las chavas de los cuates
jámais, jámais,
jamás aburrir a tu público
jámais, jámais,
never look back in the crossfire
y solo chupar bajo techo
cho, yo, jai, suis
titlahuancapo
El gran borracho intergalactico
so have a drink monsieur
que El tepo one states:
porque aquí
ici, one more
se reinventan todos los significados
and all the nasty words
they reinvent themselves
by talking, los cabrones
los que nos robaron la lengua
cest arreversible
no, I don’t speak Spanish
( Audience laughs)
oui, je parlais francaise...
an peu pe pendejo
per omina saecula saeculero
espes de pork a la mans
( Audience laughs)
tu chinga’a Malitzin te malpario
pardon e moi
me, yo me retracato
back to the very beginning.

These texts have gotten me into serious trouble with all kinds of people who felt implicated in one way or another: neo-nazi skinheads, undercover back lashers, humorless academicians, Chicano essentialist, high art critics, you name it...but there is one particular text who has almost gotten me lynched by a wide spectrum of people and I wonder if I should end my show tonight? Should I? OK, first let me put it in context.” (He goes on to the next scene.)

SCENE TWENTY-EIGHT: *EL PHONY SHAMAN*

I always get invited to places where no other Chicano gets invited. So, this time I am in Germany at a weekend ‘Indian retreat,’ ten miles east of Hamburg. The phony shaman is addressing a group of naked Indian wannabe Germans and a few vice-versas and in-betweenkies, and I get inspired to write this irreverent “49er” on the culture of transnational spirituality.

Figure 7. Gómez-Peña. *El Phoney Shaman*
(Gómez-Peña makes the sign of the cross and blesses himself several times)

*per ipsum ecu nipsis, eti nipsis*

*et T-Video Pati Omni-impotent*

*per omnia saecula saeculeros (Gómez-Peña sings)*

(Audience laughs)

Hare Krishna, Krisnahuatl

Hare grandma, hairy *nalga* (Audience laughs)

(Gómez-Peña speaks in tongues)

Ommmmmmmmmm

Christian girls, Christian girls,

Christian girls, Christian Girl Oh how I love, oh how I love, oh how I love those

Christian girls, Oh how I love, oh how I love, oh how I love those Christian girls

ahhh…New age girls new age girls, new age girls, new age girls

Oh how I love, oh how I love, oh how I love those new age girls, ahhh

skinhead girls, skinhead girls, skin head girl

Oh how I love, oh how I love, oh how I love those skin head girls, ahhh…

*macho, macho, mucho, macho.*

(Audience laughs)

(Gómez-Peña speaks in tongues) Tezcatlipunk

(... ) Funkahukatl

(... ) Khrishnahutl

(... ) Chichicolgatzin

(... ) Chili con Carni (Audience laughs)

(... ) Taco Bell Chihahua

(... ) Changó

(... ) Chingo

(... ) *Santa* Frida

(... ) *Santa* Selena

(... ) *Santa* Pochanotas

(... ) *Santa* Shakira

(... ) *Virgen* Tatuada

(... ) Salma Hayek

(... ) *Virgen de Nafta*

*Nafta*, Viagra, Melatonin, (Audience laughs)

*Nafta*, Viagra, Melatonin,

“melatonin”

now everybody take your pill

Gingseng, Ginko, *Guacamole*,

Gingseng, Ginko, *Guacamole*, (Audience laughs)

“*Guacamole*”

now everybody, take a dip

Kava, ecstasy, chili beans,

Kava, ecstasy, chili beans,

*Rosarito, Rosarito!*

Now everybody, take a shit. (Audience laughs)

“You know my Indian and Chicano friends are cracking up. But my new age colleagues are worried. They see my work as self-deprecating humor. They wish to protect me from myself. So I light up another cigarette in front of them as a prop (Audience laughs) and I
tell them that it is my obligation as a performance artist to test the outer limits of culture.
(End of scene twenty-eight.)

Initial Themes, Immersion and Response, Description, and Interpretation for Scene Twenty-Eight

The emergent themes are cyberspace, empowerment of minorities, gender and sexuality, multicultural and multilingual, performance, power and position, and social and cultural issues. This piece is presented in different tones of voice, and many different languages which makes this piece very dynamic. It is a narrative of a myriad of different groups of girls, Christian girls, New Age girls, and other groups of girls and it reads with a catchy rhythm. The importance this poem is to imagining all these eclectic groups of people described in a kind of culture of transnational spirituality. Each group is loved by Gómez-Peña followed by a poetic narrative in creative tongues including such pop idols as Frida, Selena, Shakira, and Salma Hayek. Gómez-Peña (1993) says, “they [mainstream Americans] don’t want the real thing, they want microwave tamales and Frida Kahlo T-shirts” (p. 51). This includes the fast food chain Taco Bell who at one time used a Chihuahua dog in TV commercials. The use of a dog caused negative reactions amongst many Latino/Hispanic groups since it implies a stereotypical connection to a bitch. Gómez-Peña becomes an iconoclast in this piece making irreverent comments of popular icons and holy representations.

Gómez-Peña defines performance as exercising his radical imagination on stage. A goal would be a common international language for the future, created from other languages, drawing a parallel with Esperanto. This combination of languages--English, Spanish, French, and Nahuatl--are interlaced to develop this poem. It keeps me alert, since it is mixed with many identifiable words that do mark experiences that are remarkable on how he combines foreign and hybrid words. Some are religious references; others make suggestions to sexual encounters. There are also descriptions of friendship, implying a romantic exchange.

La pisca is a Spanish word for picking the crops. These crops can refer to the popular saying ‘that you harvest what you sow.’ Gómez-Peña addresses existentialism and more than once he has questions about identity. He says that the conventional social behaviors are guided by our language, the language that was taken from us, and it can be the indigenous language, like the Nahuatl that survived the Spanish conquest and is still spoken in the state of Mexico.

SCENE TWENTY-NINE: THE SOURCE OF THEIR HATRED

but they still hate me for talking like this
they hate me for knowing exactly who I am
for being so openly fragile and direct
for putting my dirty finger in their ancient wounds
for not ever wanting to go back
or not knowing exactly where to go back
and when I write in tongues
they hate me even more . . .
(Gómez-Peña speaks in tongues)
I write like this
por que mi lengua esta partida. . .
(Gómez-Peña speaks in tongues)
esta partida...
my very last departure
partiture de merde
hacia el otro lado de la niebla
1955-2000
un mito mas
un Mexicano menos
frito, finito
SOS
es puro pedo.
I make a final desperate attempt to recapture my clarity, even if only for the duration of a
poem, a fairly traditional poem I wrote in the sprit of Neruda and Ginsberg.” (End of
scene twenty-nine.)
Initial Themes, Immersion and Response, Description, and Interpretation for Scene
Twenty-nine
The emergent themes are autobiographical, empowerment of minorities, multicutural and multilingual, performance, power and position, social and cultural, and xenophobic issues. This is a passionate performance piece in which he talks about himself. The significance of this poem is the hatred he feels from so called friends and for testing the outer limits of culture, for trying to find out who he is, for being so openly fragile and direct, for writing in tongues (in creative languages). As an analogy to his split tongue he marks the years from 1955 to 2000, from the year he was born to the year of the performance talking about painful issues. For putting his finger in their ancient wounds, Gómez-Peña draws a parallel with a comment Arlene Raven made when she once said: “in order to heal the wound, we first have to open it” (Gómez-Peña, 1993, p. 47). I think the meaning of this comment is that you need to engage in analytical discussions of all kinds of issues even if it means to reopen the painful wound and let it bleed in order to heal. Otherwise, as it has happened the wound remains as an internal maladie. The greatest tragedy of this piece is not the indecision of wether to go back, but the uncertainty of not knowing exactly where to go back to or to what. I believe there are so many powerful issues on migration, race, and ethnicity that need to be talked about and explored further. This poem is evidence--of how painful this may be.
SCENE THIRTY: FREEFALLING TOWARD A BORDERLESS FUTURE

(Gómez-Peña lights up a cigarette.)
I see . . . I see
I see a whole generation
free falling toward a borderless future
incredible mixtures beyond science fiction
cholo-punks, cyber-Mayans
Irish concheros, Benneton Zapatistas,
Gringofarians, Buttho rappers, Hopi rockers . . .
I see them all
wandering around
a continent without a name,
the forgotten paisano
howling corridos in Selma and Amarillo
the Mixteco pilgrims heading North toward British Columbia
the Australian surfers waiting for the big wave at Valparaiso
the polyglot Papagos waiting for the sign to return
the Salvadorians coming North to forget
the New Yorkers going South to remember
the stubborn Europeans still in search of the last island
Zumpango, Cozumel, Martinique
I see them all
wondering around
a continent without a name
the TJ transvestite translating Nuyorican versus in Univision
the howling L.A. junkie bashing NAFTA with a bullhorn
El Warrior for *Gringostroika* scolding the first World on MTV
Cholo warriors pointing their camcorders at the cops
Aids warrior reminding us all of the true priorities in life
Lacandonian shamans exorcising multi-nationals at dawn
yuppie tribes paralyzed by guilt and fear
grunge *rockeros* on the edge of a cliff
all passing through *Califas*, California
en-route to other selves
and other geographies
(Gómez-Peña speaks in tongues)
standing on the map of my political desires
I toast to a borderless future with
our Alaskan hair
our Canadian head
our U.S. torso
our Mexican genitalia
our Central American *cojones*  (Audience laughs)
our Caribbean vulva  (Audience laughs)
our South American legs
our Patagonian feet
our Antarctic nails
jumping borders at ease
jumping borders with pleasure
amen, hey man. (End of scene thirty.)

Initial Themes, Immersion and Response, Description, and Interpretation for Scene Thirty

The emergent themes are autobiographical, empowerment of minorities, gender and sexuality, multicultural and multilingual, performance, political and economic, power and position, and social and cultural issues. This emotional poem is about at the end of the twentieth-century, the solidarity of America, seeing a whole generation free falling toward a borderless future, a great concept of a continent without physical and geographical borders. The maladies of the end of the century—AIDS, NAFTA, and an eclectic combination of topics are being addressed—are like the stubborn European in search of the island. This is a fantastic reflection of the post-impressionist search for that native island, for the primitive and exotic. He implies an extraordinary racial mixture that goes beyond science fiction. Gómez-Peña stands on the map of political desires and toasts to a borderless future, creating a metaphor between the American countries to represent parts of the human body, from head to toe, from north to south. The rhythm and
The intonation of how he calls the names of the countries adds rhythm to the poem and depends on collaboration from the audience. The performance ends here. Gómez-Peña walks towards the audience and takes a bow, ending with a formal thank you. He expresses his gratitude for the participation of the audience and invites the audience to take a break and come back and participate in an informal talk. Many people retuned to participate in an intimate dialogue with the artist, and issues of race, and cultural identity were discussed. Due to an agreement with Gómez-Peña the chat section will not be incorporated in this dissertation or discussed further.

Personal Interview with Guillermo Gómez-Peña

I conducted this interview while Gomez-Peña and Roberto Sifuentes and Sara Shelton-Mann were artists in residency at the Atlantic Center for the Arts, New Smyrna, Florida on March 25, 2000. As part of the residency the artists conducted a performance workshop and prepared for several a performance pieces for farm worker communities in the area. The environment was very energetic with genera of artists who were apprentices at the workshop, taking position of their personae dancing, singing, playing musical instruments and performing through the studio space where I first met Gómez-Peña. We walked towards a private area and we talked.

Marva Lopez: Tell me Guillermo where were you born?
Guillermo Gómez-Peña: I was born in September of 1955
ML: Tell me about your education Guillermo?
GGP: I went to the CUM with the Maristas, I also studies with the Jesuitas in Polanco. I entered university in 1973. La Facultad de Filosofía y Letras in the UNAM. Then to Los Angeles to study post studio art at the California Institute of the Arts.
ML: Why do you do political performance artist?
GGP: If I hadn't become performance artists I would have ended up in jail or dead.
ML: What other jobs have you had?
GGP: Well I've had many jobs, founding member of the Border Arts Workshop/Taller de Arte Fronterizo. I am a contributor to the national radio program Crossroad, writer for newspapers and magazines in the US and Mexico, contributing editor the Drama Review. I have been editor of the experimental arts magazine The Broken Line/La Linea Quebrada, regular contributor to National Radio newsmagazine Latino USA, collaborator of various film, video, and radio projects.
ML: What's your salary?
GGP: I don't like that question, let’s put it this way, I make money but I redistribute it all. I put up productions that are very costly, like the bilingual opera we just did I had twenty people on stage it was a very costly project.
ML: What is the most rewarding thing about being a performance artist? What is the most frustrating thing?
GGP: The most rewarding thing are… the most rewarding aspect of performance artists are like accepted iconoclasts in every society has a space for the accepted provocateur, in kind of like post modern societies the Luan, the shaman the loco that extremoso, no? The one who is allowed to raise the question that no one is willingly to raise. The one who is willing to engage in radical political aesthetic, social, sexual, behaviors, to not end up in jail or killed. I'm testing the limits of my freedom all the time and I'm pushing them and
that people can express vicariously through the performance artist freedom that society has denied them—eso es una cosa muy importante (that is very important), and (pauses thinks for a few seconds) the most frustrating is that we live on the road perhaps that is not the case of all other performer artists. But my colleagues and I have chosen to be migrant performer artists, to be travelers to be troublemakers on the road. The most frustrating and sad aspect is that we are away from our loved ones, the frustration of not being with my son, being away from my mother, being away from your beloved ones. They suffer as I suffer as well, the distance there is a lack of sense of home that can be heavy at times, you know although we have been blessed with wonderful friends like you; we have friends where ever we go, we don't have family but we have friends who take care of us and make us feel at home, then you leave, you constantly leave. It’s a sense of permanent loss that is also very frustrating.

ML: Describe a typical day in as much detail as possible when preparing for a performance?
GGP: My house in San Francisco is a huge loft that is set up to be a production space editing capabilities, computers etc. So when we are in production I turn my house in a production space, we move the furniture against the wall which is great but it also has its problems, but of course. One wakes up in the morning the people begin to arrive, the other collaborators start arriving and we begin discussing issues, images, ideas, and strategies. Around twelve we break for lunch, after that we begin brain storming, you saw like in the rehearsal (at Atlantic Center) you know what I mean. Those are exercises that help engage; we are constantly sharing authority between the members of the group. It also depends on the people in that session. One steps out of the rehearsal process for a period of time and other becomes the director and that way we all have like a third eye you know that goes on until four or five, then we do have like a wrap up session and then we go the bar….This of course is an ideal day because most of the time we have all kinds of civic activities that constantly are intertwined with the rehearsal process; we have speaking engagements, press conferences, recording time at the studio, and activities that are intrinsic part of the work. I don't see ourselves as just artists: we are activists, journalists, organizers, we are always trying to figure out ways to intertwine the civic realm and the artistic realm in an organic way and both realms overlap with each other, you know, so our artistic ideas end up transferring. In a very good example all the public work we do in the public territory inevitably informs our artistic work, like now. In Atlantic Center the artists were together for three weeks preparing for this performance piece; they had breakfast lunch and dinner together. They went out sometimes on weekends as a group, whoever wanted to excuse themselves, it was ok. Any problems or decisions that needed to be taken with regard work or recreation was decided on a petite comité. I never work with people I don't like. I love my work and I need to feel agusto (comfortable).

ML: Do you have contact with other performance artists in a regular basis?
GGP: We are in contact all the time, they inform me on what they are doing and I inform them of what I'm doing.

ML: How important is art in society and in life?
GGP: Art is my life, it is everything for me.

ML: How do you see performance as a contributor to social change?
GGP: People see in us actions and living our freedom in a way that perhaps they have not allowed themselves to have and we are exposing them to the possibilities. Performance give rise to many questions, for example the Guatinagui piece how does a parent explain to his child the historical reference that goes with that performance? All those questions from the children that need to be answered contribute to social consciousness.

ML: Would you become a performance artist if given the opportunity to start all over again?

GGP: (replying immediately) Yes, I would.

(As he puts off his cigarette, I say): muchas gracias, hasta luego, we'll meet again soon.

Initial Themes, Immersion and Response, Description, and Interpretation of Personal Interview.

The emergent themes are autobiographical, empowerment of minorities, cyberspace, empowerment of minority, multicultural and multilingual, performance, political and economic, power and position, and social and cultural issues.

Gómez-Peña asked me to supplement the information from the interview with the information in Warrior for Gringostroika (1993). This interview compliments the analysis of the performance in that some of the data is corroborated like his personal story that documents his performances.

The autobiographical issues speak to who he is and what he does. This has been explained in full in Chapter 2. The affirmation of his artistic career and his passion for performance are a validation of what he does and why he does what he does. The theme of empowerment of minority issues applies to his personal experience of crossing the border and being an art student in California in complete intellectual isolation so close to the Mexican border. And, for the first time the confrontation with the ‘other.’ The Loneliness of the Immigrant, 1979 was a ritual performance in Los Angeles, marks the birth of Gómez-Peña, (1993) in the U.S., a text on the wall of the elevator where he performed read:

Moving to another country hurts more than moving to another house, another face, another lover… In one way or another we are or will be immigrants. Surely one day we will be able to crack this shell open, this unbearable loneliness, and develop a transcontinental identity. (p. 125)

The experience of being an immigrant and the alienating sensibility started to be constructed in Gómez-Peña’s performance répertoire, identifying issues that distinguished him in his social context.

From the information obtained through the interview of the most significant moments is when Gómez-Peña reflects and says: “If I hadn't become a performance artists I would have ended up in jail or dead.” The freedom that performance art allowed Gómez–Peña to raise questions, to engage in political actions, to express himself through creative and aesthetic outlets in creative writing and performance actions rescued him from isolation and destruction. When Gómez-Peña says he is testing the limits of his freedom and pushing the limits at all times in his work, so people can express vicariously through the performance the freedom that society has denied them. The significance of this statement is very powerful. I can see how the representation of freedom in the art form can empower his audience to question and overcome structural barriers in society. As an educator I aspire for students is to question the inequalities of society, the status quo and engage in critical multiculturalism to initiate social change.
Eisner (1994) says power in society will remain with a relatively small elite who, through privilege of social class and economic advantage, live off the labor of the working poor” (p. 14). To understand the cause of poverty, the rewards of education need to be stressed. From an educational perspective Eisner (1994) says the task then is to transform ideas into practice and to test these ideas in schools and classrooms. These ideas can be tested first in the curriculum: the program of activities and opportunities in the classroom and second in teaching.
When I initiated this study, I was looking for formal definitions and I strove to reach a final conclusion that would make a contribution to the field of art education regarding the work of Guillermo Gómez-Peña. As I went further into the research I found myself immersed in a literature review that instead of clarifying the meaning of this research, on the contrary expanded further into other areas of study, reaching a greater level of complexity. Dewey (1934) reminds us that “the exact limits of the efficiency of any medium cannot be determined by any a priori rule, and that every great initiator in art breaks down some barriers that have been previously been supposed to be inherent” (p. 226). This is true with the work of Gómez-Peña.

Some initial insights were confirmed early through this study; as Carlson (1996) points out, “performance becomes not only a subject to study but also an interpretative grid laid upon the process of study itself” (p. 190). I continued to discover that I could not draw a line between eras and movements because, as Kershaw (1999) said about contemporary movements, “the great paradigms of post-modernism and modernism are not so much locked in logical opposition, but instead are intertwined like the lines of an unfinished mandala” (p. 7). From the early twentieth century performance art developed strategies, vocabularies, and relationships with cultural identity for much of the postmodern era. Carlson (1996) says, “performance concerns are an awareness of the constructedness of much human activity and of its implication in rhetoric and in social and cultural encoding, and a particular interest in liminal territory, in boundaries and borders” (p. 191). These concerns correspond to the nature of performance artist Gómez-Peña’s performance work, which chronicles the issues that speak to identity construction in particular for Mexican Americans in the United States. The issues that emerged were identified in the performance piece Brownout: Border Pulp Stories and have been described in the previous chapter. These issues are significant in identity construction for Mexican Americans. A summary of these issues follows.

Contextual Thematic Examination

The formulation of the following themes emerged from the videotape analysis. Eisner (1998) asserts, “the formulation of themes within an educational criticism means identifying the recurring messages that pervade the situation about which the critic writes. Themes are the dominant features of the situation or person; those qualities of place, person, or object define or describe identity” (p. 104). They are as follows:

1. Autobiographical Issues. In this theme I identified autobiographical information from Gómez-Peña’s life in Mexico and later in the United States. There are a range of feelings from melancholy, displacement, a search of identity, and hostility to humor,
which are voiced in this theme. I identified aliases personae like the shaman and the reverse anthropologist, as expression of cultural representations to work with in some instances as authority figures and at other times as mocking their representation. The sarcasm used through the reverse anthropologist and the shamans are significant in that the audience can effortlessly perceive the deconstruction of the character’s attributes. Clifford (1988) says that “when intervening in an interconnected world, one is always, to varying degrees, inauthentic: caught between cultures, implicated in others” (p. 11). The implication in ‘others’ is what Gómez-Peña (1993) describes as a kaleidoscope; a multiplicity of voices each speaking from different parts of himself. Growing up in Mexico City, Gómez-Peña was trying to solidify a hybrid Mexican identity, at the same time struggling to break away from the intellectual alliances with archaic French models in addition to experiencing the popular cultural influence of modern American society. The intersection of American music, consumer goods and liberal philosophies where juxtaposed to Mexican romantic music, limited basic consumer goods and conservative philosophies that marked the implication of ‘others’ in Gómez-Peña’s identity: perhaps not only in him but also in many others. Gómez-Peña (1993) says, “far from being mere postmodern theory, this multiplicity is a quintessential feature of the Latino experience in the United States” (p. 21). This information helps clarify the eclectic use of imagery, personae, and conceptual representations in texts, which many times transports the reader to encounter the genera of magical realism in highly charged, pastiche in the performance pieces.

2. Cyberspace Issues. This theme emerged as I identified multiple references to Internet communication and cyber names. Gómez-Peña says he exchanges identities in cyberspace and calls himself a media pirate, a techno-artist and an information superhighway bandido. Many of these names are related to his performances, but what is interesting to note is that Gómez-Peña spends many hours on the road and his computer has become a companion, and source of international communication, and an archive of his writings. Gómez-Peña (2000) says that by 1990 he named his aesthetic practice “Aztec high-tech art.” Later on when he started collaborating with Roberto Sifuentes they approached the new media from a Chicano perspective and “defined it as a new aesthetic that fuses performance art, epic rap poetry, interactive television, experimental radio and computer art” (p. 252). Gómez-Peña (2000) says of his computer “my lowrider laptop is decorated with a 3-D decal of the Virgin of Guadalupe, the spiritual queen of Spanish speaking America. It’s like a traveling altar, an office and a literary bank all in one” (p. 248). The Virgin of Guadalupe is a multilayered representation of the Mestizo devotee. The image of the brown skinned Virgin of Guadalupe is an archetype in the Mexican culture. Miguel Hidalgo y Costilla in 1810 used her image in the banner that lead the Mexican people in the War of Independence. In the postmodern era there are artists like the Yolanda Lopez who painted a series of Virgins of Guadalupe with a new meaning. Lopez redirected the iconography to served as a vehicle to empower people towards emancipation from a Chicano and feminist perspective. This same image grounds Gómez-Peña’s computer as a-altar or sacred space.

The transformation of a computer into an altar speaks to the affirmation of archetypical identity and creative imagination of Gómez-Peña. In addition, Kincheloe and McLaren (1994) suggest that electronic transmissions generate new formations of cultural space and redefine experiences of time (p. 143). This new digital technology has
created a new art form to be used in dioramas, incorporating computer screens, a new techno vocabulary and contextual information obtained from cyber communiqués. Gómez-Peña not only enjoys this, he helps to define it.

3. Empowerment of Minorities Issues. This theme emerged from identifying the voice Gómez-Peña gives to the ‘others,’ a forum for those minorities whose stories have not been told. Cornel West says minorities have lacked the power “to represent themselves to themselves and others as complex human beings” (as cited in Denzin & Lincoln, 1994). Gómez-Peña would agree since he feels he can talk not only from his experiences but also for many who have not had the opportunity dare to talk back. Gómez-Peña (2000) says, “we want to engage thoroughly in the local cultural and political life” (p. 15). Gómez-Peña (2000) often meets before and after performances with local teachers, artists, and activists of the communities he is in to discuss social and political concerns who go as far as to ask him for advice. His commitment to be involved in the civic realm is also evident from articles in the newspaper following his presentations, and from my personal experience of over five performances and lectures that I have been in the audience. The informal conversations, book signing, and cocktail gatherings is where he exchanges ideas with his audience is a notable part of his work. In these cases and as represented throughout hi performance Brownout: Border Pulp Stories Gómez-Peña shows evidence of speaking for those who are marginalized especially the Mexican-American population. This example serves people to become activists in their communities and search for more efficient strategies for teachers, artists and people in general for teaching and learning.

4. Gender and Sexuality Issues. This theme is less developed through the performance piece, and through this study, but it appears with force when he is addressing the different kinds of women he prefers. Perhaps, a macho representation exercising his ability to chose from a different type of females in a very superficial manner. The melodramatic representation many times destroys peoples’ sense of normality. In photographs, videos and on stage Gómez-Peña juxtaposes images pointing so firmly to the nature of a stereotype that as an audience member my immediate reaction is to react to the absurdity and reflect on the meaning for an extended period of time.

Gómez-Peña uses interesting gestures, attire, and creative words to address macho behaviors or people of different alternative sexual preferences like ‘inbetweenkies.’ In other performances like Borderama, 1995 there is stronger evidence of the clashing of cultural and cross-gender dressing.

5. Multicultural and Multilingual Issues. These themes emerged during the entire performance piece. I identified the concerns of cultural diversity, race, and bilingualism. Cultural and racial diversity such as mestizo, black, white, cholo, creole, mestí-mulata, and others racial groups who are addressed through creative names. In this performance, Gómez-Peña was a master of breaking down cultural stereotypes thorough humor, odd juxtapositions and irony. The multilingual descriptor identifies English, Spanish, Esperanto, Franglé, Nahuatl, Tex-Mex, pocho, and creative languages. The value of identifying what these issues can contribute to schools becoming institutions where forms of knowledge, values, and social relations are taught for the purpose of educating young people for empowerment rather than subjugation. An examination of performances such as Gómez-Peña’s can give students and their teachers a wealth of information to consider.
6. Performance Issues. I developed this theme to identify the performative strategies implemented during the performance. Performance has the potential to strip away all the conventions that the audience has and may take them to a different level of comprehension and perception. There may be a highly charged cognitive and aesthetic experience being created through the development of a performance piece. In the cognitive realm, decoding the multicultural information that is being presented in performance can facilitate new insights. The kinesthetic and multi-sensory sensibility that is in play during a performance piece embraces different styles of learners. In the aesthetic realm the use of the body in relation to space is a strategy used in theatre from ancient times. The colors that are reflected by the lights and the intensity of the lights sets the atmosphere for the performance piece. The different voices or the silent moments Gómez-Peña uses in his performance are a play on the personae he is representing, creating a humorous representation and give additional support to the piece.

Thi Minh-Ha Trinh, says “performance is no longer created by someone for someone, but is the plurivocal world of communicating bodies, where differences, conceived of not as divisive element, but as a source of interactions; object and subject are neither in opposition nor merged with each other” (as cited in Carlson, 1999). There is a constant decoding and analyzing of the material and interpretation.

As mentioned earlier in this manuscript, the difference between theatre and performance is the interaction and further decoding, analysis, and interpretation of issues from the performance script. Gómez-Peña in Brownout: Borders Pulp Stories, exhibits a masterful understanding of performance, seamlessly bringing the audience along with him on his journey through the borderlands.

7. Political and Economic Issues. This theme is identified by the political and economic challenges that a large population of migrant workers from Latin American countries encounter in the United States as represented in Gómez-Peña’s performance. The concerns are most reflected through the performance text when addressing issues that are related to the Mexican American border. From a postmodernism perspective the individual and the social, historical, political, and environmental forces are all intertwined. As an example Gómez-Peña talks about the transnational companies, the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS), the polleros, the coyotes, the mojados, the aliens, and the wetbacks. For example the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) which was envisioned in the planning stage as an utopia to exchange goods across the borders with equitable reciprocity from north to south and from south to north, is not a benign when represented through the eyes of a Mexican or Mexican America. As with other issue, Gómez-Peña presents us with an alternative vision.

8. Power and Position Issues. This theme identifies class and hierarchy throughout the performance pieces. Gómez-Peña has written about his constant clashes with the authorities and included them in his performances. There seems to be a power struggle in most relations he talks about, in particular in the artistic field, in the social milieu, in the political and in economic context. Power and position are forces immigrants are faced with continuously in their migration across the U.S. Anzaldúa (1987) says, “the borderlands are physically present wherever two or more culture edge each other, where people of different races occupy the same territory where under, lower, middle and upper classes touch” (preface no page number, Anzaldúa, 1987). It seems that as long as we have to continue to
identify ourselves by race and by economic strata the differences will continue to grow. Aronowitz (1992) says,

class retains its dominance as a structuring relation. Within the paradigm, identities that may be motivated political mobilization such as gender, race, and ethnicity and even nationality are named displacements of class relation and are ascribed to the unevenness of capital development or the specific conjunction of the social formation which, typically, produces caste and stratification within those classes that structure the system (p. 16).

There seems to be a historical precedence of class struggle that determines those social classes and power relations that he been identified through history and that continue to exist. Gómez-Peña addresses this in *Brownout: Border Pulp Stories* when he talks about the Latino labor force that went back to Mexico, he mentioned a large number of workers in the agriculture and service industries.

9. Social and Cultural Issues. The social and cultural issues emerged time after time throughout the performance piece. Kincheloe and McLaren (1994) argue that “all though fundamentally mediated by power relations that are social and historically constituted; that fact can be never isolated from the domain of values or removed from the ideological inscription” (p. 139) there are some groups in most societies that have retained privilege over others. Power and control are forces to maintain a dominant class in power. Throughout the work of Gómez-Peña I can feel the pain of those people who are looking to be part of the ‘American Dream’ and do not seem to find it. In many instances immigrants cross the border with a superficial understanding of what life in North America is. But soon after crossing the border the harsh reality surfaces. Anzaldúa (1987) speaks about “the U.S. Mexican border es una herida abierta [an opened wound] where the third world grates against the first and bleeds. And before a scab forms it hemorrhages again, the lifeblood of two world merging to form a third country-a border culture” (p. 3). The alienation and the pain immigrants feel is narrated in many of Gómez-Peña’s performance scripts, for example

The social and cultural manifestations are what keep the Latino people together, the affirmation of diversity, and the expression of the Mexican culture rooted in the communities, the partaking in the same celebrations sharing the same food, enjoying traditional music, speaking the same language and laughing at the same stories. These are significant identity conditions that many Mexicans and Mexican Americans share in the United States.

10. Xenophobic Issues. These issues are identified directly through the stereotypes that are exhibited played with and reconstruct in some parts of the narratives. Many of the dramatic stories exhibit xenophobic attitudes toward Mexicans by mainstream culture like, the anti-immigration sentiment of some people along the borders, and the INS at the airports Aronowitz (1992) says “race invariably signifies exclusion, ethnicity signifies subculture” (p. 53). In performance there is a space provided to deconstruct stereotypes, particularly when the audience is invited to participate and raise questions and ask questions of Gómez-Peña, at the end of the performance. It is also an opportunity acknowledge the different manifestations xenophobia in different performance settings. Gómez-Peña deals with xenophobia directly when in the performance Fear Of The Other he described being pulled over by the cops after a show and he questions what was it that made him suspicious, weather it was his clothing, his accent, his behavior? Or, when
Gómez-Peña described a nightmare in Spanish in which he talked seeing yourself picking fruit under a criminal sun and suddenly your hands are covered by a skin disease produced by poisonous pesticides!

Summary

In the performance piece Brownout Border Pulp Stories Gómez-Peña deals with at least ten themes. I have identified issues that are autobiographical, cyberspace, empowerment of minorities, gender and sexuality, multicultural and multilingual, performance, political and economic, power and position, social and cultural, and xenophobic. Gómez-Peña uses subtle performance stories, humor, and sexual presence, to bring the audience along to new understanding points of view that may not previously have held. His point in all of his in not simply entertainment but education and in that light represents an excellent source for art educators concerned with issues of cross-cultural and multicultural concerns in North America.

Implications for Further Research

I recommend further qualitative and quantitative studies in curriculum design and development for Mexican-American students. I suggest further studies incorporating Paulo Freire’s theories on pedagogy of freedom and Agusto Boal’s performance practices into art education. I propose ethnographic studies in the future performances of Gómez-Peña in the United States and in Mexico including interviews with the audience. The future performances can be studies from a perspective of modern linguistics, in particular from the perspective of understanding with English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) students and for limited English proficiency (LEP) students. I would also recommend further studies of Spanish speaking artists in drama/performance and psychology. I would suggest the use of ethnographic strategies with critical analysis to connect to real stories. The research can be enhanced with the use of DVD, CD-Rom, videotape and audio recording. Further research can also be done in the realm of performance at in all its aspects, particularly for multisensory insights it my provide in our multisensory world.

Implications for Art Education Theory and Practice

Garoian (1999) in Performing Pedagogy: Toward an Art of Politics speaks of performance art as a postmodern pedagogical discourse and practice. Garoian’s experience as an artist and teacher is informed in content and context from his cultural perspective as an Armenian-American. I read his book with great delight since his study broke new ground in the field of art education, validating the subject of performance art and art pedagogy for my study.

This ethnographic research study on Brownout: Border Pulp Stories points to a relationship between performance art and cultural praxis. Efland, Freedman, and Stuhr (1996) say that an important message of postmodernism for general education and art education is that teachers should make their students aware of the many
layers of interpretation that exists, that continual flux influences and shapes understanding, and that this flexibility of knowledge is vital because it enables creative thought. Irony, metaphor and double coding, given attention in postmodernism, could not exist without the wealth of possible interpretations that language and other forms of communication provide. (p. 46)

Performances such as Gómez-Peña’s can be utilized and integrated in producing pedagogical discourse and practice. That is, in engaging in critical pedagogy through performance text, we can explore social cultural and personal identity, identify stereotypes in performance and visual arts, identify areas that deal with hermeneutics, and learn what kinds of knowledge are displayed when performance becomes a way of knowing or a method of critical inquiry. The significance of the emergent issues displayed in Gómez-Peña’s work and social consciousness are highly politicized and aware of the power struggle in society. The ingenious representations like parody, metaphor and satire are present in many of his scripts as a model to learn from for education in general. Sarup (1993) says the study of metaphor is becoming important as it is being realized that language does not simply reflect reality but helps to constitute it.

Thus performance allows a creative opportunity to express freedom from any existing boundary, freedom to create unimaginable forms of association and action. Kershaw (1999) says “radical performance is made problematic by cultural praxis, in that it [performance] invites an ideological investment that it cannot itself determine. In that sense, it is always a creative opportunity to change the world for better or worse, a performative process in need of direction” (p. 20). In this sense, a performance piece can either have tremendous resonance for the audience or fall into a vacuum, depending upon the limitation of the analysis from the spectators. The potential of performance to produce and represent freedom in a personal an aesthetic domain is an important contribution to art education theory and practice.

Multicultural art education, implies bordercrossing. In the following example, Giroux (1992) describes the relationships between border pedagogy as an attempt to develop a public philosophy.

First, the categories of border signals are recognition of those epistemological, political, cultural, and social margins that structure the language of history, power and difference. The category of border also prefigures cultural criticism and pedagogical processes as a form of border crossing. That is, it signals forms of transgression in which existing borders forged in domination can be challenged and redefined. Second, it [border pedagogy] also speaks to the need to create pedagogical conditions in which students become border crossers in order to understand otherness in its own terms, and to further create borderlands in which diverse cultural resources allow for the fashioning of new identities within existing configurations of power. Third, border pedagogy makes visible the historically and socially-constructed strengths and limitations of those places and borders we inherit and that frame our discourse and social relations. (p. 28)

These three powerful points speak to the praxis of transformation for liberation. The theory and practice of some of the progressive educators who have made contributions to the field are Freire (1999), Boal (1971), Giroux (1992), and Garoian (1999), all discussed earlier. To strive to extend a public philosophy of diversity, the
results of the following study are cited to reinforce my point on the importance of in multicultural art education in performance art.

A significant study was conducted in Florida by to acknowledge the growing multicultural population and to find more efficient ways to serve this population in the public schools. *The Multicultural Arts Education: Guidelines, Instructional Units Resources for Art, Dance, Music and Theatre Grades K-12* was a curriculum development and renewal project developed by the Center for Music Research and the Department of Art Education at the Florida State University for the Division of Public Schools. The following five recommendations were the focal points of the project according to the Recommendation of the Multicultural Education Review Task Force (1993), Tallahassee, Florida.

1. There must be specific state, district, and school policies, guidelines and initiatives, which require a multicultural approach to instruction, instructional and assessment materials and non-instructional service.

2. Accurate demographic data must be provided in planning to meet the educational needs of all children, including current demographics in terms of more specific cultures (i.e., Colombians vs. Hispanics, Haitians vs. blacks, Seminole vs. Native American, biracial, etc.).

3. The perspectives, contributions and impacts of cultural groups must be infused throughout the curriculum, correcting errors and omissions relating to the experiences of all cultural groups and their contribution to American and global society. Further, instructional and other educational strategies must address the varying behavioral patterns and learning styles of district culturally diverse groups.

4. Adequate multicultural instructional resources must be made available to teachers and students.

5. A compendium of best practices in multicultural education must be developed and distributed to Florida educators. (p.175)

These five items support and elaborate on the need for multicultural art education in Florida in theory and in practice. First, there should be a greater emphasis should be placed in multicultural instruction, in curricular material and assessment in schools and colleges for all students. Curricular material should be designed with multicultural students in mind. In this context the concerns Gómez-Peña addresses in his work are departure points to consider and research further as described in the conclusions and implications for further research. Second, an adequate understanding of the data on demographics and specific cultures should be provided by every state and it is essential for adequate understanding by the teachers in art education. Third, the impact of the immigrant cultural groups should be taught. The contribution in the social and economic levels should be discussed openly as they are discussed in the performance piece. Fourth, adequate resources should be obtainable at all levels of art education for performance art. And, fifth a compilation of the best art education performance art practices should be made available to all teachers. Gómez-Peña’s work in poetry, performance scripts, and performance on CD-Rom can be used for teaching and learning about multicultural art education in performance art. These narratives are the authentic voice of an artist who provides a cultural diverse, and liminal perspectives for study in high school and college levels.
Gómez-Peña’s work has the potential to inspire students to communicate across cultures, overcome structural barriers, and to participate in this global society. The role of the teacher, the curriculum, and the participation of the students in transforming schooling into a critical multicultural practice using performance art can be initiated and informed by the multiple layers of understanding of what identity construction is reflected in the work of artists like Gómez-Peña.
APPENDIX A

BROWNOUT: BORDER PULP STORES

On March 24, 2000 in the Moore Auditorium at Florida State University, Tallahassee. The performance Brownout: Border Pulp Stories was presented by Guillermo Gómez-Peña. In the background music from the Mexican band, Café Tacuba is playing, it is turned off as Professor Virgil Suárez walks on stage and introduces himself as being a professor in Creative Writer Program or a creative writer in the English Department. He continues to say:

“It’s a great honor to be here and to have you come out for this wonderful occasion. We’ve been working I think for about two, three years to bring Mr. Guillermo Gómez-Peña out to you, so it finally happened I’m just thrilled. I was just back there having a good time. I’m going to read you the formal biography; it’s very brief so that you know exactly who he is. And, all I can tell you is even though there is not one Florida in the state of Florida there is only one Guillermo Gómez-Peña so you keep that in mind.” Professor Suárez reads:

Guillermo Gómez-Peña was born in 1955 and raised in Mexico City; Guillermo Gómez-Peña came to the United States in 1978. In his work, which includes performance art, video, audio, installations, poetry, journalism, critical writings, and cultural theory, he explores cross-cultural issues and North/South relations. He uses his art and writing to reveal the labyrinths of identity and the principles of nationality.

Gómez-Peña has embarked on a long-term project: to make relentlessly experimental yet accessible art; to work in politically and emotionally charged sites, and for diverse audiences; and to collaborate across racial, gender, and age boundaries as a gesture of citizen-diplomacy. Chronicles and scripts of his large-scale projects can be found in three of his books: Mexican Beasts and Living Santos from Power House, The New World Border, who won the book award and Warrior for Gringostroika, Graywolf.

Gómez-Peña was a founding member of the binational arts collective Border Arts Workshop/Taller de Arte Fronterizo 1985-1990, which was featured in the 1990 Venice Bienale, a contributor to the national radio program Crossroads, and editor of the experimental arts magazine The Broken Line/La Linea Quebrada 1985-1990. In addition to his artistic activities, he is a regular contributor to the national radio news magazine All Things Considered, a writer for newspapers and magazines in the U.S. and Mexico and contributing editor to The Drama Review, and La Pus Moderna magazine in Mexico City.

Among numerous fellowships and prizes, Gómez-Peña was a recipient of the Prix de la Parole at the 1989 International Theatre Festival of the Americas in Montreal, the
1989 New York Bessie Award, and Los Angeles Music Center’s 1993 Viva Los Artistas Award. In 1991, Gómez-Peña became the first Chicano/Mexicano artist to receive a MacArthur Fellowship in 1995; he was included in The Utne Reader’s List of 100 Visionaries. Tonight we are happy to have him here; he’s going to be performing Brown Out: Border Pulp Stories. In this new Spanglish performance, Gómez-Peña is back as a spoken word brujo poeta to explore the fear of immigration, the dark side effects of globalization, censorship, and interracial sexuality. The artist uses multi-lingualism, humor, and hybrid literary genres as subversive strategies. Continually developing multicentric narratives from a border perspective, Gómez-Peña creates what critics have termed “Chicano Cyber-Punk Performances.” Cultural borders have moved to the center while the alleged mainstream is pushed to the margins and treated as exotic and unfamiliar, placing the audience member in the position of “the foreigner.” And, I am here to tell you in for a big treat please help me welcome Guillermo Gómez-Peña.

Guillermo Gómez-Peña walks on stage and stands in front of the podium. The artist grabs a megaphone; he subvocalized while looking at various audience members steadily he begins to say:

SCENE ONE: INTRODUCTION
1. User friendly, (Gómez-Peña speaks in tongues), “control center,” (in tongues),
5. Not tonight
6. “It is a pleasure to be here in Tallahassee, Florida.”
7. Tonight I will attempt to occupy a space equidistant from Performance,
8. activism, shamanism, and pedagogy.
9. I cannot guarantee you I will succeed, but I’ll give it a try.
10. I am a performance artist, which means
11. I experience a permanent identity crisis
12. and I politely ask you o give me an extra break tonight
13. cause tonight, I feel a bit confused
14. From my multiple repertoires of hybrid personas,
15. I have chose to come as The Traveling Medicine Vato
16. as El Traveling Medicine Vato, Replicante número 3678573
17. so, dear audience:
18. welcome to my conceptual set
19. welcome to my performance universe
20. welcome to my borderzone
21. welcome to the cities and jungles of my language
22. las del Ingles y las de Español kick back,
23. light up your conceptual cigarette
24. … just a prop don’t panic
25. and breath in, breath out,
26. breath in, (a cell phone rings in the theatre) apaga tu pinche teléfono, carajo!
27. breath out
28. coño,
29. relax, relax now, reach over,
30. grab the crotch of your neighbor
31. and massage, massage, come on this is basic exercise of Chicano Tantra.
32. Sorry, sorry! I’m getting ahead of myself.
33. First I should introduce myself properly.

SCENE TWO: CRIMINAL IDENTITY PROFILE (HIGHLY CLASSIFIED/NOT FOR PUBLICATION)

1. COMPLETE NAME: Guillermo Lino Gómez-Peña
2. ENGLISH TRANSLATION: Guermo, Yigermo, Guiliermou…Comes-Penis or Piña
3. NATIONALITY: Since 1999, dual: Mexican and Usian
4. SELF IDENTITY: Mexican in process of Chicanoization
5. RACE: Mestizo
6. LANGUAGES SPOKEN FLUENTLY: Spanish, English, Spanglish, Gringoñol, Franaglé, Robo-esperanto and fake Nahuatl
7. DISTINGUISHED FEATURES: Performance scars on arms, stomach and right knee; pinto tattoos on chest, right arms and left shoulder; hyper-Mexican mustache; loungy side burns; melancholic gaze.
8. OCCUPATIONS (IN ORDER OF IMPORTANCE) Performance artist, writer, videoasta, journalist, activist borderlógo, reverse anthropologist, experimental linguist, media pirate, bad actor, Latino consumer service representative of the U.S. Art World and understudy for Mr. Antonio Banderas.
9. Main performances aliases: Mister Misterio, El Existentialist Mojado, Brujo, El Warrior for Gringostroika, El Untranslatable Vato, El Mariachi Liberachi, El Aztec High-Tech, El Naftazteca, El Mad Mex, El Mexterminator, Information Superhighway Bandido, and most recently El Web-back. Weapons used to fight back in order of importance: Language (spoken and written), live performance, radio, the internet, theatricalized madness, humor, strategic silence and a “Mexican survival kit” contents: fake press cards, assorted chilies, hangover relief medicine, make-up, shamanic artifacts of sorts, a Mariachi hat to look “friendly,” and as a last recourse, my fist.

SCENE THREE: PERFORMANCE MEMORY
1. Tijuana, 1994
2. I sit naked on a wheel chair
3. wearing a NAFTA wrestling mask
4. my chest is covered with pintas
5. shit like…
6. “los chucos también aman”
7. “me dicen el jalapeño pusher”
8. “Aztlan es pure genitalia”
9. “The bells are ringing in Baghdad”
10. “greetings from Ocosingo”
11. “to blessed to be stressed”
12. “don’t worry; be Hopi”
13. “burritos unidos hasta la muerte”
14. “no one can like a Mexican”
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15. “la ganga no morirá”
16. “New Orleans ain’t my barrio”
17. “Selena, forever reina”
18. “to die is to perform the last strip-tease”
19. “mwan vit u creve”
20. enigmatic pintas, may I say
21. say, say, say
22. I can barely speak tonight:
23. Dear audience ease my pain
24. lick my chest, my sweat, my blood
25. 500 years of bleeding...
26. From head to toes
27. and all the way down to the root
28. I bleed
29. From Alaska to Patagonia
30. Y me pesa un chingo decirlo
31. Pero sangro de inflacion, dolor y dólar
32. sangro
33. de inflamación existencial
34. y mexicanidad insatisfecha
35. sangro
36. de tanto vivir en los United
37. sangro
38. de tanto luchar contra la migra
39. de tanto y tanto crossing borders
40. sangro, luego existo
41. parto, luego soy
42. soy
43. soy porque somos
44. we are fuckin’ chingo
45. the transient generation acá
46. from Los Angeles to the Bronx and far beyond
47. --including Canada for protocol reasons
48. we, the mega “WE,”
49. we cry
50. and then, we begin to imagine

SCENE FOUR: THE SELF-DEPORTATION PROJECT
1. What if HG Wells had been Chicano? Imagine one of the possible immediate
2. futures in a typical US city, that is to say, a city full of immigrants, people of color,
3. and people who speak other languages…like Spanish. You perceive yourself as an
4. angry White male, but one knows about it. Not even your beautiful Hispanic wife
5. or your interracial kids. Close your eyes and imagine:
6. America 2001. You wake up one day and go to work You need to stop for gas,
7. but the gas station is closed. You don’t know that all the attendants went back to
8. Old Mexico the day before. You drive around looking for an open gas station until you
9. run out of gas. You call a cab, but there are no cabs because the drivers, mainly
10. Latino, quit the day before.
11. Somehow you make it to the office to find your colleagues watching TV in total
disbelief. Nervous president Clinton is pleading for all unemployed Anglos and
African Americans to show up immediately to the closest emergency labor
recruitment center. The country is paralyzed. Total Brown-Out!
12. The disappeared Latino labor force must be replaced overnight.
13. At lunch time you discover that most restaurants are closed, dugh!
14. Someone explains to you that the chefs and the waiter were all part of an epic self-
deportation program. Since you are fairly a political, you still don’t quite get it.
15. Many stores and hotels are closed—obvious reason—and the banks are going
crazy. All across the country, millions of Mexicans with their suit cases in hand,
are lining up at bank counters to withdraw their accounts, on their way back to their
homelands. You begin to worry about your family. You decide to go home, walking
course cause remember, your car is parked somewhere in the other side of town
Without gas. Your Hispanic wife is devastated. Most of her relatives chose top go
back to the old country. She is also furious because Juan, the gardener and Maria,
the baby sitter is nowhere to be found. She explains she had to stay home to take
care of the kids, and missed all her work appointments. She even had to take the
kids to do the shopping, which Maria normally does. They stood in an eternal line
at the supermarket only to find that there was no fresh produce. According
to the supermarket manager, “there were no Mexican truckers to deliver it,”
Now your kids are crying because they miss Maria! You go to bed in total
perplexity, and you dream…in Spanish. Or better said, you have a nightmare in
Spanish: You see yourself picking fruit under criminal sun for 10 hours a day.
Your hands covered with a monstrous skin disease produced by pesticides.
16. You wake up sweating.
17. Next morning, you turn on the TV. A panicked president delivers the bad news:
Very few people responded to his desperate call for workers. The unemployed
“citizens” were clearly not inspired by the idea of working for minimum wage and
no benefits. The nation’s tourist, construction, garment and food industries are all is
disarray. San Diego. Los Angeles, Santa Fe, Santa Barbara, San Jose, Fresno,
San Francisco, Phoenix, Tucson, Albuquerque, Denver, San Antonio, Houston,
Chicago and a myriad other smaller cities have declared bankruptcy. And so have
many national banks. And if this weren’t enough,—the president concludes—within
days, crops across the country will begin to rot because there’s simply no one to
pick them. Luckily Mexico has offered to send some emergency food supplies,
humanitarian aid, and maybe even some Mexicans.” In very broken Spanglish or
rather gringoñol, a desperate president Clinton, proceeds to beg the remaining
Mexicans to stay: “Queridos amigos: querremos que ustedis recapaciten y no
abonadounen sus trajyos mas, les subiremos el salary y les dareimos muchious
benefits y su terjeita verdi instantánea. Por favour.”
18. Now, you take a deep breath and slowly come back to the present. Nativist politicos
and citizen groups across the country are doing everything they can to stop illegal
immigration, and tot take away the few rights left for immigrants, including access
to education and medical services. The conveniently make no distinction between
illegal” and “legal”. They blame all immigrants for crime, drugs and especially, the
lack of jobs. Their inflammatory rhetoric appeals to your fear of an uncertain future but not to your intelligence. You feel manipulated, and angry. If you could ask one question to the political class, what would that question be? Are you guys truly, truly aware of the logical consequences of your anti-immigrant politics? Now, you cool down. It’s been a hard day que no? You sip your delicious coffee from Chiapas, and put your Buena Vista Social Club CD.

Thank you

SCENE FIVE: RRROOMANTIC MEXICOU
1. Ten Gómez-Peña rewind… nine… go back to your early borer days… eight…
2. It’s 1987...You are Border Brujo performing at the Cabaret Babylon Aztlan...
3. six… Your audience is composed of drunk tourists and marines, hipsters, judiciales and prostitutes… five … I see you all out there… four… Still young, locote and unknown… three… a local DJ calls me, “the strangest spoken word poeta in planet downtown TJ”… two… pues si!...one.
7. today, the sun came out in English
8. the world spines around en Inglés
9. and life is just a melancholic tune
10. in a foreign tongue, like this one. (shows his tongue)
11. ay México, rrooommmmantic México
12. “Amigou Country” para el gringo desvelado
13. Tijuana Caliente, la “O”
14. Mexicali Rose para el gabacho deshuaciado
15. El Pasou y Juarréz
16. ciudades para encontrar el amor
17. amor que nunca existio
18. ay México, rrooommmmantic México
19. paraiso en framgmentación
20. mariachis desempleados
21. concheros desnutridos
22. bandidous alegirs
23. beautiful señoritas
24. mafioso politicians
25. federalis que bailan el mambou
26. el rónchero, la cumbia, la zambía
27. en-tropical skyline sprayed on the wall
28. “dare to cross the Tequila border”
29. “dare to cross the line without your Coppertone”
30. transcorporate breeze sponsored by Turismo
31. crunchy nachos to appease the hunger
32. Tostada Supreme para aliviar las penas
33. enchiladas y Mac Fajita
34. peso little-eat so grandi!
35. where else but in Mexico

SCENE SIX: DEFINITIONS:
1. You know, some people are still experiencing the happy hour of Multiculturalism,
2. but I’m already suffering the hangover…but that’s my trip and
3. I hate to involve my audience in my personal crisis, so let’s continue with
4. our journey across Mexamerica, but before, I’d like to share with you some
5. useful borderismos to help you cross my border checkpoints:
6. Alien- A term used by opportunistic politicians to describe any legal or illegal
7. immigrants, people with heavy accents or exotic clothes, and people who exhibit
8. eccentric social, sexual, or aesthetic behavior.
9. Chicanadians- Second generation Mexicans living in Canada and/or children of
10. Mexican and Canadian parents living in the U.S. Do not confuse this term with
11."Can-aliens,” which refer to any undocumented Canadian, inside or outside Canada.
12. Menage a Trade- Synonymous with NAFTA
13. Mexkimo- A polar Mexican, Mexkimo settlements are found in what used to be
15. Mex-truation- A demographic hemorrhage currently spilling into the U.S.,
16. historically contained by the co-Texas Rangers.
17. Pene-trading- The act of trading with a smaller and weaker country. A surgical
18. procedure via which two males get to exchange their genitalia.

SCENE SEVEN: RETURNING TO AMERICA AFTER BLACK TUESDAY
1. The following is a clumsy attempt at story telling.
2. I fly back to the U.S.
3. A few days after “black Tuesday”
4. The sad April first of 1996
5. when the new anti-immigration legislation came into effect,
6. its Thursday night at a hectic Los Angeles Airport
7. as I wait for my luggage
8. I am sniffed by two humongous police dogs
9. A border guard approaches me,
10. no big deal
11. -I always get stopped ‘cause I’ve been told
12. I just have this archetypal “suspicious” look
13. a cross between a border dandy,
14. and a generic Latino outlaw.
15. Excuse me sir, where are you coming from?
16. “Mexico City” I reply
17. “Why?” he asks
18. “What do you mean?
19. Why Mexico City as opposed to Hong Kong? Or why am I coming back?
20. Cause since I live in California, I am condemned to always come back.”
21. He finds no humor in my logic.
22. “What do you do?” he asks
23. “I’m a performance artist…and an occasional commentator for NPR”
24. “No, I-am -asking-you…what do you do?” he insists
25. “You mean, you want me to describe my aesthetics and cosmology?
26. Or you are simply implying I am lying to you?”
27. -he is now visibly upset and demands to see an ID
28. I show him an Art press card
“what do you write about?”
“crossing borders, US/Mexico relations,
immigrations, situations like this one…”
He paused and then continues more aggressively:
“so what do you think about your country’s government being so involved
with those big-time drug dealers from Juáréz?”
“It’s bad–I say. But what about the fact that there is evidence to suspect that
the drugs coming from the Contras a decade ago
were introduced to communities of color via the LAPD”
he takes a step back:
“where did you get that carp?”
“It was international news last year”–I reply
“but, but nowadays the drugs are mainly going from Mexico”
his insistence in demonizing Mexico really sets me off:
“sure,–I answer–precisely because there is a market here in America;
or are you so naïve as to think that the production of drugs creates the market?”
he doesn’t get my point. Neither do I.
Instead he writes a mysterious note
And sends me to secondary inspection
where I spend the next two hours watching a bored customs agent inspecting
every inch of my suitcases,
including toiletries, props, costumes
performance scripts, my phone agenda,
and all because my big mouth…and my thick mustache.

cene Eight: El Rey Del Cruce

1. Una yerba en el camino
2. me enseño que mi destino
3. era cruzar y cruzar
4. por ahí me dijo un troquero
5. no hay que cruzar primero
6. pero hay que saber cruzar

Scene Nine: Border Interrogation
1. Dear foreign audience I’d like to ask you some basic questions, which are at
the core of American identity. I’ve been asking myself each of these questions
at least one hundred times. No big deal, may I?
2. How many of you consider yourselves “people of color”?
3. Are there any illegal immigrants in the audience
4. people who once were illegal perhaps?
5. What about people who married an “illegal alien”?
6. To help them get their green card, perhaps
9. hey, that’s transnational solidarity
10. Any people who have hired undocumented immigrant
11. for domestic, or artistic purposes?
12. to do what exactly Ma’am? you pay them?
13. You don’t want to say it?
14. well thanks for your sincerity ma’am

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now, let’s get a bit more personal
people who have had sex with an “illegal alien”? 
I want to see those hands!
Can you please describe their genitals in detail?
I’m kidding, I’m kidding
Now on a different subject matter, secret intercultural fetishes,
who’s got a collection of stolen indigenous artifacts at home?
what about racist figurines?
any collectors of Mexicanibilia, negrobilia, sleepy Mexicans,
“little black zambos,” red skin” savages? Some ethno-porn?
Come on, we all have them.
Would you like to donate one piece to m travelling medicine show
in order to purge your cultural sins?
If so, don’t say yes right now,
just contact Marva no questions asked.
But back tot he performance,
have any of you ever fantasized about being from another race
or culture? Which one? Who else?
Black Indian, Mexican, French, European
I want to hear more fantasies?
You were a Gypsy in a past life? Orale!
One more, you would like to be Scottish?
Thanks for your candor and sincerity
Now, let’s reverse the gaze
Would anyone like to ask me a question, any question,
as irreverent or indiscrete as it may be?
Come on this is your chance, eh,
Bueno, aquí tengo un pacific rain vato loco, aquí tengo la muerte
y en la espalda tengo otros pero esos no te los platico.

SCENE TEN: THE PSYCHO IN THE LOBBY OF THE THEATER
Black out, black out chingado, conceptual black out.
Intercut. So here I go again. Second fail attempt at story telling; this time
on reverse racism. Agárrense!
I’m rehearsing at the theater somewhere in the Midwest. This psychotic-looking
man in a wrinkled suit has been waiting for me in the lobby since 10:00 a.m. The
teckies are flipping out and can’t concentrate on the briefcase on his lap. It’s
spooky? I tend to attract all kinds of locos. But since I’ve learned that the best
way to deal with them is through poetic confrontation, I take a deep breath, go
to the lobby and approach him with my full intensity:
“are you waiting for someone sir?” He looks at me in silence.
“waiting, merely waiting eh? Waiting for what exactly?” He doesn’t answer me.
“waiting for your children to leave home and for all the immigrants to leave your
country? Waiting for got to come back from India or speak to you on Cable TV?
Waiting for the next hysterical talk show to address your most sincere concerns?
“He still does not answer. I get increasingly exasperated.
“Waiting for the next bestseller on how to improve the quality of your
17. loneliness? It’s lonely out there, *que no?* Total silence
18. “Come on, you gotta answer me! What the fuck are you waiting for?
19. *El cabron esta paralizado.* Waiting for the next cheap vacation to Mazatlan?
20. For more vouchers and coupons?
21. For a random bullet perhaps? Waiting insomniac in you underwear to hear from
22. your drinking buddies, while you pick another fight with your desperate wife?
23. Hey, by now, I am totally worked up.
24. “Come on, answer me!” Incommensurable silence
25. “No Mister, it’s pointless to keep waiting. This is the year of the barking
26. dog…and I’m afraid your fears are much bigger than your wishes” He stands up;
27. his eyes wide open like a fish. I shake his hand.
28. “You might be wondering who the hell I am?” The man is now visibly scared
29. and still unable to reply or comment on my monologue.
30. “I am your worst fear *caballero;* an unpredictable *Mariachi* with a huge mouth,
31. three chips on my shoulder and extra-hot sauce on my cobra tongue.” I begin to
32. bark [barks] he finally breaks his silence:
33. “It’s a pleasure to meet you. Mr. Gómez My name is Mario López. I just came
34. to fix the Xerox machine.”
35. I go back to rehearsal feeling utterly embarrassed.
36. The night I tell the story
37. to my audience. They crack up. The helpless victim of my poetic chamber of
38. tortures, Mr. López himself is sitting right in the front row
39. I feel like killing myself. I truly do.

**SCENE ELEVEN: MORE BORDERISMOS**
1. Jalapeños pusher- A petty criminal who sells chilies on the streets to intoxicate
2. innocent American children.
3. *Ganga-* From the English word “gang” A term coined by the US Police Department
4. to describe all people of color under the age of eighteen.
5. Last minute e-mail on cultural difference: An armed Anglo is a NRA supporter;
6. an armed Chicano is…a criminal. More than two Anglos in a car are carpooling;
7. more than two Chicanos in a car are...gang banging. Fresh from my lap top today,
8. *Intra-Latino joke:* What is a Cuban-American?…A Puerto Rican with a yatch!
9. Sign: El vernacular *anthropóloco* you met in Texas. I truly don’t remember this guy
10. But he keeps sending me ethnic jokes, dozen per week. You meet all kinds of locos
11. on the road, *verbigratía.*

**SCENE TWELVE: THE MEXICAN COMMUNITIY CENTER IN FORTH COLLINGS**
1. It’s 10:00 at night in the lonely streets of Forth Collings, an extremely racist
2. part Colorado, not that far away from the headquarters of “Soldier of Fortune”
3. magazine. Roberto my performance partner and I just arrived driving from
4. Boulder in a rented van. We are back to perform at the local university. An old
5. truck full of rowdy locals begins to follow us blinking their lights and honking at
6. us. We stop, not knowing exactly why perhaps out of fear. Our hearts beat real
7. The passengers look as if they just drove non-stop for two days straight
8. from Deliverance. They ask us the obvious question: “are we lost?” We reply we’re
9. looking for the university campus. The driver, a rural hippy with a nasal voice,
10. says he does not know how to get to campus but he certainly knows the way “to
11. the Meskin’ cultural center.” I cannot believe my ears: a Mexican cultural center
12. in Forth Collings? He volunteers to guide us.
13. We follow respectfully…from a certain distance; three blocks later they turn
14. left. We follow them. We suddenly find ourselves in the parking lot of a Taco Bell.
15. The driver screams from the truck’s window; “hey buddies, welcome to the
16. meskin’s cultural center.” They crack up all theatrically and drive away singing
17. “La Cucaracha, la cucaracha…”
18. Roberto and I look at one another with a combination of embarrassment, anger
19. and a desire to laugh: “Ease, we gotta give it to those racists. They were funny”
20. he tells me. We continue to drive randomly in search of the campus and wishing
21. we had been faster and funnier than them. It’s one of those cases in which reality
22. is much more interesting… and edgier than performance.

SCENE THIRTEEN: ON FEAR OF THE OTHER
1. Fear…America is the land of irrational fear we are al suffused in a culture of fear,
2. fear of cultural otherness, of differences; and yet, we love it. This is perhaps what
3. separates us from the rest of the world, but then, to bridge this gap, we import
4. cultural fear to the rest of the world. Nowadays, even Russians are afraid of
5. Mexicans. It’s … sweet.
6. Wait, do you hear the police sirens? Beautiful, que no?
7. Ammmmeeeeeerica, what a beautifully scary place to be
8. but then living in fear is normal for us?
9. we are all scared shitless of the immediate future.
10. The 21st century, que trip, que fuckin’ chorizo man,
11. by the way, are you scared of me?
12. of my accent, my strange intelligence,
13. my obnoxious capability to articulate your fears?
14. an articulate Mexican can be scarier than a gang member can, que no?
15. My colleagues and I get pulled over by the cops after the show; cause we are
16. still wearing our Mexterminator regalia:
17. tell me officer, what exactly are you scared of?
18. my accent?
19. my unpredictable behavior?
20. my poetic tarantula?
21. my acid politics?
22. my criminal tendencies?
23. my tropical diseases?
24. my alleged ancient wisdom?
25. (speaks in tongues) My shamanic ability to exorcise the evil out of white people,
26. que si que no; que tu que yo
27. yes or no? ‘cause I am scared of you.
28. of your silence pinche mustio,
29. your silence makes you really scary!
30. and the distance between you and I,
31. the distance makes it even worse
32. we spend the night in jail
33. Brownout!
SCENE FOURTEEN EL PRESIDENTE CAMPAIGNING FOR THE BROWN HOUSE
1. Dear Chicano and honorary Chicanos, y todos los demás
2. You know, the historical mission of the US is to put the world at risk and then
3. to save it from the very risks the created;
4. for example, to arm other countries
5. and then to attack them for being armed;
6. to provide weapons and drugs to the youth of color
7. and then to imprison them for using them;
8. to endanger species and then to raise consciousness
9. and create programs to save them;
10. to throw the working class into the streets a
11. and then to punish them for living on the streets
12. to turn women and people of color into freaks
13. and then laugh at us for acting out our freakiness.
14. The historical mission of the US is very, very peculiar.
15. Democrats call it “the best democracy on earth,”
16. Republicans see it as a “divine mission; a historical mandate.”
17. What do you think?
18. Dear audience,
19. If I were a politician, would you vote for me?
20. despite my outlaw looks, my obvious vices?
21. despite my lack of theatrical training?
22. would you vote for me?
23. If this was say a presidential campaign and not a performance art piece
24. What would I say? What should I say?

SCENE FIFTEEN IMAGINARY POLITICAL SPEECH NUMBER FIVE
1. Dear American people:
2. We are now faced with a very serious dilemma:
3. we have now entered the post-democratic phase of advanced capitalism
4. orale I’m rolling across borders
5. In this era of savage globalization
6. we politicians on both parties have total disregard for human pain
7. for the homeless, the newly arrived immigrants, the elders,
8. Our children and teens, the artists, the enfermed, the crazy ones like you
9. We have gotten used to living without seeing, without sharing
10. for the moment all we share is…the moment
11. no, no, no, that’s a bad phrase
12. for the moment
13. The only thing we share is time!
14. What time it is by the way. Que horas son cabrón?
15. Yes, we are citizens of the millennial barrio
16. and no, owing a gun is not a human right
17. no there is no way out of this sentence
18. Americans really love their weapons
19. I’ll try imaginary political speech number seven, sorry
20. Ay coño!
21. Dear Orphans of the nation/state
22. we now live
23. where do we fucking’ live ese?
24. we now live in a fully borderized and fragmented world
25. composed of virtual nations, trans-national pop cultures and hybrid races.
26. hey that’s a great line que no?
27. and all we share is fear and vertigo
28. fear of the future, of love, of disease, of loneliness,
29. of total disenfranchisement
30. and vertigo
31. the feeling of standing on the edge of a new millennium
32. yes! yes, pure horror vacui Y2K y que,
33. Apocalypse mañana!
34. we feel it in our crotch and it goes up out spine and into our throat
35. and out of our nostrils and eyes and its fucking unbearable!
36. Ay, I’m overdoing it, I know,
37. but I just see no other way to make my point
38. wait, there might be another way
SCENE SIXTEEN: IMAGINARY SPEECH NUMBER TWELVE
(Gómez-Peña lights a joint and smokes.)
1. I’m sorry Marva I hope they don’t fire you
2. Dear Generic American Citizen
3. If you vote for me
4. I can assure you that as the first Mexican president of the U.S.
5. I will fulfill your fears and desires like no other politician every did
6. and all your stereotypes will come true
7. I’ll open all borders, legalize drugs, make daily sex mandatory;
8. make Spanglish, the official language, cigarette smoking’s is back ajua!
9. legalize nude university campuses and public office buildings, abolish
10. altogether the police force, ban all weapons from handguns to missiles,
11. deport Bush back to Texas and deport Gore back to Epcott Florida,
12. deport the Taco Bell Chihuahua back to Mexilandia
13. and stop talking in the name of democracy
14. feels great to imagine que no?
15. you made your point carnal!
16. I am addressing the Brown House, OK chidísimo!
17. I am exercising my political imagination,
18. one objective of performance art is to exercise the freedoms and imagination
19. which have been denied to us by the government,
20. but then here is reality.
21. just as politicians are bad performance artists,
22. artists make lousy politicians
23. why? because we are lousy liars
24. and when we lie, we over do it, just to make a pinché point!
25. True story, Chicago TV station, September of 1999. I’m doing this PBS millennial
26. special with maestro Phillip Glass you know the composer. It's one of those corny 27. corporate humanism programs. The topic; the state of creativity in America Phillip 28. I and decide to surprise the producers, we were drinking Rum backstage, jiving. It's 29. my turn. Cameras 1 and 2 rolling

SCENE SEVENTEEN: ON CENSORSHIP
1. Imagine a U.S. of America controlled by far right, Christian fundamentalists. They 2. believe that “the liberal media” and experimental art have thoroughly destroyed our 3. social fabric, our moral and family values; and they are determined to restore the at 4. any cost. As part of their great project of “moral restoration” they have decided to 5. carefully scrutinize everything that goes on radio, TV and printed journalism, 6. performance art, including this very (beep). So from (beep) to sit comes and from 7. news (beep) to (beep) programming, they have digital censor which can detect key 8. words that trigger ideological or cultural differences. Since it is practically 9. impossible to monitor everything, they have devised a mechanism via which (beep) 10. the syntactic and conceptual coherence of a thought is (beep) especially when 11. dealing with conflicting opinion (beep). So, when it comes to say sexuality, 12. most explicit words have been (beep). And I mean, just words, such as (beep). 13. In politics things are not that different. In order to ensure that ideologically tend 14. (beep) information does not pollute the minds of true American patriots like 15. you they have (longer beep) forbidding the use of terminology like (beep) or 16. co (beep) or even a term like (beep). In a world such as this, content would be 17. restricted to (beep) and the possibility to make intelligent civic choices would be 18. affecting our funds… (beep)
19. Imagine what kind of a world this would be.

SCENE EIGHTEEN: LATE NIGHT PHONE CALL
1. You know someone called me last night at the Holiday Inn, here in town, 2. 3:00 in the morning I just arrived from Califas. 3. he said he was going to smash my greasy head and hung up 4. sounded as if he was serious 5. and I have a reason to believe he is here right now 6. waiting for the performance to be over to 7. smash my greasy head 8. are you here carnal? 9. I can see you 10. can you please stand up and identify yourself? 11. are you willing to discuss it or are you ready to shoot me? 12. do you wish to exchange places for a little while before you shoot me? 13. wouldn’t you love to be here, right here on this stage? 14. right in the center of the wound? 15. In the epicenter of the Great American earthquake? 16. don’t you wish to be Mexican for a few minutes? 17. cause…I don’t, 18. or the moment 19. hate it 20. It’s a huge burden 21. 3000 years of history in my throat
22. 10,000 years old genes, *que hueva*
23. I rather be…French
24. So imagine a French anthropologist, Jaques Fromage du Merde, (*que calor chingado*),
25. from la Sorbonne, he’s attempting to explain the racial eccentricity of America
26. to his colleagues back home

**SCENE NINETEEN: THE NEW HYBRID TRIBES**
1. This new society is characterized by mass migrations and bizarre interracial relations
2. As a result, new hybrid identities are emerging. All Mexican citizens have turned
3. into Chicanos or Mexkimos and all Canadians have become Chicanadians.
4. Everyone is now a borderígena, meaning a native of the greater border region.
5. According to Transnational Geographic Magazine, 70% of the population in New
6. World Border is undocumented, and up to 90% can be technically considered
7. *mesti-mulata*, that is the product of at least four racial mixtures. Such is the case of
8. the crazy chicarricuas, who are the products of Puertorrican-mulatto and Chicano-
9. *mestizo* parents; and also the innumerable Germanchurians who descend from the
10. union of West Germans and Manchurian Chinese. When a Chicarricua marries a
11. Hasidic Jew their child is called Hasidic *vato loco*. And when a displaced Belgian
12. marries a Chicano, the offspring is called Belga-chica, which loosely translates a
13. “litte Winnie.” Among the other significantly large half-breed groups are the
14. Anglomalans, the Afro-Croatians and the Jap-talians, many of whom I see here
15. tonight. It’s lovely and very, very Post- Colombian, Culombian, ma I say, say…
16. melting plot. We’ve replaced the bankrupt notion of the melting pot with a model
17. that is more germane to the times, that of the *menudo* chowder. According to this
18. model, most of the ingredients do melt, but some stubborn chunks are condemned
19. merely to float.

**SCENE TWENTY: MORE DEFINITIONS**
1. Culti-multuralism-An esperantic Disney world view in which all cultures, races and
2. sexes live happily together. The term went out of use in 1992. Free Taco Agreement
3. an innovative economic initiative designed by The Chicano Secret Service. Its main
4. objective is the production and distribution of free tacos to the starving and
5. deterritorialized gringo minority. En Español “*Tratado de Libre Comerse.*”
6. Translation please?
7. Thank you.

**TWENTY-ONE: SELF-REFLEXIVE PAUSE**
1. Tonight I’m feeling a bit insecure and introspective
2. I wonder if I’m still asking the right questions
3. Or am I merely repeating myself?
4. Am I going far enough, or should I go further? How?
5. Should I alter my identity through body enhancements, laser surgery, and
6. prosthetics? becomes a Ricky Martin with brains?
7. What a strange thought *que no*?
8. Should I go even further? Towards which direction?
9. North? The North does not exist, you know
10. South? Should I go back to Mexico for good?
11. But the Mexican nation/state is collapsing
12. So stricto sensu, Mexico no longer exists
13. Maybe I should just shut up and get
14. a job, cause and effect *que no?*
15. Can anyone give me a job?
16. Come on; you don’t have to pay me union wages, I’m Mexican
17. But the question is doing what?
18. Directing Shakespeare in Spanglish for the local Rep?
19. performing as the sidekick of Antonio Banderas?
20. No, they’ve got enough generic Latinos on call
21. What about conducting self realization seminars
22. come to terms with your inner Chihuahua?
23. or find your inner *pito* or the *pito* within?
24. It’s tough to find a useful task for a performance artist in the year 2000
25. I mean after Howard Stern, Jerry Springer, cunnilingus in the White House,
26. six year old killer, what else is there to transgress in America?
27. who can we shock? You?
28. Are you listening? Are they listening?
29. Does content matter anymore? Do ideas matter?

TWENTY-TWO: ON LANGUAGE AS MY PASSPORT

1. I step on the map of my America. I walk from Puerto Rico to Cuba, to Florida,
2. And then across Texas and the Southwest back into Mexico, while talking…
3. I speak therefore I continue to be
4. language, my passport to your country
5. language, my journey to your arms
6. language, my most effective weapon
7. language, my two way ticket to the past
8. language, my abracadabra
9. a memory per line
10. a thread of life per sentence
11. ten *dolares* a poem
12. postcard included
13. *life in Gringolandia*
14. a cheesy TV talk
15. a Spanglish Infomercial

SCENE TWENTY-THREE: SPANISH LESSON NUMBER TWO HUNDRED TWENTY SEVEN

1. The following Spanish lesson is directed to all the American people whom are still
2. having problems communicating with monolingual U.S. Latinos.
3. Please repeat after me:
4. *Maria tienes tus papeles en orden?*  
5. Mary are you fully documented?
6. *Puedo verlos ahora mismo por favor?*  
7. Can you show me now proof of residence or citizenship?
8. *Tu tienes muchos hijos?*  
9. Do you have many children?
10. *Tienes donde dejarios mientras trabajas?*  
11. Do you have a lace to leave them while you come to work?
12. Tu estás muy flaca, estás a dieta?
13. You’re so skinny. Are you on a diet?
14. La comida del refrigerador no es para ti.
15. The food in the fridge is not for you.
16. With men, one has to be a bit tougher.
17. Panchou, rrriegue el jardín.
18. Frank, water the garden.
19. No seas tan flojo amigou.
20. Don’t be so lazy my friend.
21. Tienes aliento alcoholico.
22. You stink of alcohol.
23. No me veas así tan directo.
24. Don’t you look at me so directly.
25. Yo voy a hablarle a la policía si no cambias.
26. If you don’t behave I am going to have to call the police.
27. Now, if Panchou has finished his job, and you are feeling restless, or adventurous,
28. you might tell him:
29. Amorcito, ven a mi cuarto y enseña-nos tus misterios. Untranslatable.
30. If you repeat these phrases as often as possible you won’t have communication
31. problems anymore.
32. For information another Spanish lessons about food, politics, identity and sex
33. please call The University Administration.
34. You know the very same politicians, who forced us into globalization and free trade
35. across borders, paradoxically don’t want us to be bilingual. I wonder if one can be
36. monolingual member of a multilingual community. Acaso alguien me puede
37. contestar en Español? Si puede ser un miembro monolingué en una comunidad
38. multilingüe? But at the same time I truly believe that people in the US knows more
39. Spanish that what the thin they do or they are willing to accept and I’m will prove my
40. point with a poem right now!
SCENE TWENTY-FOUR: LECCION DE GEOGRAFIA FINISECULAR EN ESPANOL
PARA ANGLO SAJONES MONOLINGUES
1. Dear perplexed audience members,
2. Repeat with me out loud:
3. Mexico es California
4. Marruecos en Madrid
5. Pakistan es Londres
6. Argelia es Paris
7. Cambodia es San Francisco
8. Turquia es Frankfurt
10. Centroamerica es Los Angeles
11. Honduras es New Orleans
12. Argentina es Paris
13. Beiging es San Francisco
14. Haití es Miami
15. Nicaragua es Miami
16. Chiapas es Irlanda
17. your house is also mine
18. your language mine as well
19. and your heart will be ours
20. one of these nights
21. es la fuerza del Sur
22. El Sur en El Norte
23. El Norte se desangra
24. El Norte se evapora
25. por los siglos de los siglos
26. and suddenly you’re homeless
27. you’ve lost your land again
28. estimado anti-Paisano
29. your present dilemma is to wander
30. in a transient geography de locos
31. sin visa, in flota, joder!
32. Interface: After the seventh margarita
33. After the twelfth margarita
34. the drunk tourist approaches a sexy señorita
35. At El Faisan club, in Merida, Yucatan:
36. “oie preciosa, my Mayan queen tu estar mucho muy bela
37. con tu ancient fire en la piel
38. para que io queme mis bony fingers
39. mi pájarrra belisma
40. io comprou tu amor con mia Mastercard
41. she looks at the guy y este pendejo and answers in impeccable French:
42. “ne me derange plus out jai vous arrache les yeaux!”
43. mistranslation: Like my carnal pinto poet Roberto Duran says:
44. “What ‘s that blond hair don down there…in my taco? Ooouch!

SCENE TWENTY-SIX: SPANISH LESSON FOR ADVENTUROUS GRINGOS
1. In this Spanish lesson you will learn how to co-mmu-ni-ca-te efficiently
2. With obnoxious Mexicans while travelling down there.
3. When standing at a bank teller:
4. Señor por favor no se me aserque demasiado me poñi nerviosa.
5. Sir, would you please step back. You are making me nervous.
6. After renting a summerhouse, you discover that the maid has seven rowdy kids:
7. Petra. Puede pedirle a sus niños que se callen? Estan molestando a mi perro
9. When talking to a dumb waiter at a restaurant
10. Que no hay otro mesero que hable bien Ingles carayo?
11. Is there another waiter who can speak English stupid Mexi…
12. When a policeman stops you for drunk driving, you may say:
13. Oficial, estamos bien pedos, cuanto de mordida?
14. Officer we’re shitfaced. How much is the bribe, I mean the fine?
15. Watch out women travelling alone. At the bars, horny men are always roaming
around. But there are simple phrases you can learn to keep them at a distance:

16. No pierdas tu tiempo matador
17. Don’t waste your time killer
18. No me desvistas con tu mirada desaforada. Nos soy un pedazo de carni
19. Don’t undress me with your drunken gaze. I am not a piece of meat!
20. After a few margaritas, you may not wish to keep them at a distance:
21. Soy tu fruta prohibida. I am your forbidden fruit
22. Lo quiero a el para llevar. I’ll take him to go
23. Or if you are up for a mariachi adventure:
24. Pedro, quisiera traducirme tu hermosas canciones a mi piel?
25. Peter, would you like to translate your beautiful songs into caresses?
26. Now a unique pick up line for the adventurous gringo male:
27. Maria, soy doctor, quieres que te examine?
28. Mary I’m a doctor. Would you like a check up?
29. But Mexican women are fiery and if you are not careful,
30. You may get the following response: Pinche pendejo, chinga tu madre!
31. Enough for today. Hasta mañana y vaya con dios vatos locos.

SCENE TWENTY-SEVEN: TECCHNO-PLACA
2. In the past eight hours, I’ve been a man, a woman, and a he/she
3. I’ve even been black, Asian, Mixteco, German
4. and a multi-hybrid replica.
5. I’ve been ten years old, twenty, forty two, sixty five
6. I’ve visited twenty-two meaningless chat rooms
7. I’ve spoken seven broken languages
8. (speaks in tongues)
9. As you can see, I need a break real bad;
10. I just want to be my self for a few minutes.

SCENE TWENTY-EIGHT: A NEW POST-COLONIAL ROBO-LANGUAGE
1. Performance is about exercising our radical imagination on stage; so imagine,
2. imagine a postcolonial syncretic robo-language made out of English,
3. Spanish, French, Latin and Nahuatl; one of the possible languages of the future
4. our future. What would it sound like? It would sound like.
5. Y es que la neta escueta?
6. plus o moi
7. aqui o alla
8. ceci, cela
9. questo que aquello
10. ici/laba
11. que te que yo, I mean
12. not really not really wanting to decide yet
13. cause for the moment machin
14. aujordui
15. tlancanácatl el mio
16. Il Corpo Pecaminos
17. Hurts un chingo
18. Specially me feet
19. Íkichítl
20. Pero tambiéém otras partes del cuer-po-po-ca
21. capiscas guey?
22. temepantly tinemi
23. Y es que la pisca existencial esta ka..ka.
24. So drop your fusca mujer
25. et fiche moa le pe
26. y hagamos la paz
27. con la lengua
28. easy babe, I mean, ici
29. dans la sacree rrranfla
30. my toyota flmaiger toyeo-tl
31. la salle du sex transculturelle
32. my lowrider sanctuary
33. tltoni
34. I say
35. ja’ne rian a declarer, donc
36. ponte chango y observa
37. las normas de la convivencia mortal
38. en el Barrio...Universal, apunta:
39. jamas de never meterse con las chavas de los cuates
40. jamais, jamais
41. jamás aburrir a tu público
42. jamais, jamais,
43. never look back in the crossfire
44. solo chupar bajo techo
45. cho, yo, jai, suis
46. titlahuancapo
47. El gran borracho integalactico
48. so have a drink monsieur
49. que El tepo One states:
50. porque aqui
51. ici, one more
52. se reinventan todos los significados
53. and al the nasty words
54. they reinvent themselves
55. by talking, los cabrones
56. los que nos robaron la lengua
57. cest arreversible
58. no, I don’t speak Spanish
59. oui, je parlais francaise...
60. an peu pe pendejo
61. per omina saecula saeculero
62. espes de pork a la manc
63. tu chinga’a Malitzin te malpario
64. tu chinga’a Malitzin te malpario
pardon e moi
me, yo me retracato
back to the very beginning
These texts have gotten me into serious trouble with all kinds of people who felt implicated in one way or another: neo-nazi skinheads, undercover backslappers, humorless academicians, Chicano essentialist, high art critics, you name it…but three is one particular text who has almost gotten me lynched by a wide spectrum of people and I wonder if I should perform it tonight? Should I?
but first let me put it in context.

SCENE TWENTY-NINE: EL PHONY SHAMAN
I always get invited to places where no other Chicano gets invited. So, this time I am in Germany at a weekend “Indian retreat,” ten miles east of Hamburg.
The phony shaman is addressing a group of naked Indian wannabe Germans and a few vie-versas and in-betweenkies, and I get inspired to write this irreverent “49er” on the culture of transnational spirituality.

Per ipsum ecu nipsum, eti nipsum
Et T-Video Pati Omni-impotent
Per omnia saecula saeculeros,(sings)
Hare Krishna, Krisnahuatl
Hare grandma, hairy nalga
(speaks in tongues) Ommmm
Christian girls, Chirstian girls,
Christian girls, Christian Girl Oh how I love, oh how I love, oh how I love those
Christian girls, Oh how I love, oh how I love, oh how I love those Christian girls,
ahhh…New age girls
New age girls, new age girls, New Age girls
Oh how I love, oh how I love, oh how I love those New Age girls,
Oh how I love, oh how I love, oh how I love those New Age girls, ahhh
Skinhead girls, Skinhead girls, Skin head girl
Oh how I love, oh how I love, oh how I love those Skin head girls,
Oh how I love, oh how I love, oh how I love those Skin head girls, ahhh…
Macho, macho, mucho, macho.
tongues…Tezcatlipun
tongues…Funkahukat
tongues…Khrishnahutl
tongues…Chichicolgatzin
tongues…Chili con Carni
tongues…Taco Bell Chihuahua
tongues…Changó
tongues…Chingo
tongues…Santa Frida
tongues…Santa Selena
tongues…Santa Pochanotas
tongues…Santa Shakira
tongues…Virgen Tatuada
Salma Hayek (speaks in tongues) Virgen de Nafta
37. Nafta, Viagra, Melatonin,
38. Nafta, Viagra, Melatonin,
39. “melatonin”
40. now everybody take your pill
41. Ginseng, Ginko, Guacamole,
42. Ginseng, Ginko, Guacamole,
43. “Guacamole”
44. now everybody, take a dip
45. Kava, ecstasy, chili beans,
46. Rosarito, Rosarito
47. Now everybody, take a shit.
48. You know my Indian and Chicano friends are cracking up. But my new age
49. colleagues are worried. They see my work as self-deprecating humor. They wish to
50. protect me from my self so I light up another cigarette in from of them, as a prop and
51. I tell then that it is my obligation as a performance artists to test the outer limits of
52. culture.

SCENE THIRTY: THE SOURCE OF THEIR HATRED
1. The Source of their hatred
2. But they still hate me for talking like this
3. They hate me for knowing exactly who I am
4. For being so openly fragile and direct
5. For putting my dirty finger in their ancient wounds
6. For not ever wanting to go back
7. Or not knowing exactly where to go back
8. And when I write in tongues
9. They hate me even more
10. (speaks in tongues)
11. I wrote like this
12. Por que mi lengua esta partida
13. (speaks in tongues)
14. ésta partida...
15. my very last departure
16. partiture de merde
17. hacia el otro lado de la niebla
18.1955 year 2000
19. un mito mas
20. un Mexicano menos
21. frito, finito
22. SOS,
23. es puro pedo
24. I make a final desperate attempt to recapture my clarity, even if only for the
25. duration of a poem, a fairly traditional poem I wrote in the sprit of Neruda
26. and Ginsberg.

SCENE THRITY THREE: FREE FALLING TOWARD A BORDERLESS FUTURE
1. I see,
2. I see a whole generation free falling
toward a borderless future
incredible mixtures beyond science fiction
Cholo-punks, cyber Mayans
Irish concheros, Benneton Zapatistas,
Gringofarians, Buttho rappers, Hopi rockers…
I see them all
wandering around
a continent without a name, the forgotten paisano
Howling corridos in Selma and Amarillo
The Mixteco pilgrims heading North toward British Columbia
The Australian surfers waiting for the big wave at Valparaiso
The polyglot Papagos waiting for the sign to return
The Salvadorans coming North to forget
The New Yorkers going South to remember
The stubborn Europeans still in search of the last island
Zumpango, Cozumel, Martinique
I see them all
wandering around
a continent without a name
the TJ transvestite translating Nuyorican versos in Univision
the howling L.A. junkie bashing NAFTA with a bullhorn
El Warrior for Gringostroika scolding the 1st World on MTV
Cholo warriors pointing their camcorders at the cops
Aids warrior reminding us all of the true priorities in life
Lacandonian shamans exorcising multi-nationals at dawn
Yuppie tribes paralyzed by guilt and fear
Grunge rockeros on the edge of a cliff
All passing through Califas, California
En-rout to other selves
And other geographies
(speaks in tongues)
standing on the map of my political desires
I toast to a borderless future with
our Alaskan hair
our Canadian head
our U.S. torso
our Mexican genitalia
our Central American cojones
our Caribbean vulva
our South American legs
our Patagonian feet
our Antarctic nails
jumping borders at ease
jumping borders with pleasure
Amen, hey man
Thank You-
The End. Gómez-Peña bows. and then he says: so why don’t we take a little break and if some of you are interesting having a conversation, lets meet back here in five minutes let talk, you know thank you immensely for being so warm, so open, so playful. Lets meet back here in five minutes.
APPENDIX B

HUMAN SUBJECTS APPROVAL FORMS

Florida State University
Office of the Vice President for Research
Tallahassee, Florida 32306-2763
(850) 644-5260 • FAX (850) 644-4392

APPROVAL MEMORANDUM
from the Human Subjects Committee

Date: July 14, 2003
From: David Quadagno, Chair
To: Marva Lopez
1460 Club Drive
Vero Beach, FL 32963
Dept: Art Education
Re: Use of Human subjects in Research
Project entitled: A Critical Analysis of Guillermo Gomez-Pena’s Performance Art: A Study in the Cultural Borderlands with Implications in Art Education

The forms that you submitted to this office in regard to the use of human subjects in the proposal referenced above have been reviewed by the Human Subjects Committee at its meeting on July 9, 2003. Your project was approved by the Committee.

The Human Subjects Committee has not evaluated your proposal for scientific merit, except to weigh the risk to the human participants and the aspects of the proposal related to potential risk and benefit. This approval does not replace any departmental or other approvals which may be required.

If the project has not been completed by July 8, 2004, you must request renewed approval for continuation of the project.

You are advised that any change in protocol in this project must be approved by resubmission of the project to the Committee for approval. Also, the principal investigator must promptly report, in writing, any unexpected problems causing risks to research subjects or others.

By copy of this memorandum, the chairman of your department and/or your major professor is reminded that he/she is responsible for being informed concerning research projects involving human subjects in the department, and should review protocols of such investigations as often as needed to insure that the project is being conducted in compliance with our institution and with DHHS regulations.

This institution has an Assurance on file with the Office for Protection from Research Risks. The Assurance Number is IRB00000446.

APPLICATION NO. 03-314
CC: T. Anderson
I have been informed that

Marva Lopez, who is a graduate student in Art Education at The Florida State University has requested my participation in a research study at this institution.

The purpose of the research is to investigate the performance titled Brownout: Border Pulp Stories, a monologue by Guillermo Gómez-Peña. The guiding question for the study is: What does Guillermo Gómez-Peña’s performance piece, Brownout: Border Pulp Stories say about identity construction particularly of Mexican Americans and what are the implications of that for art education? The other supporting questions that will be addressed are: First, what does Gómez-Peña do in his performances? Second, what meaning do these performances have for him? Third, how do they fit in the bigger picture of performance art? Finally, how can performance art such as Gómez-Peña’s be utilized and integrated as an aspect of contemporary art education practice?

There are no foreseeable risks or discomforts if I agree to participate in this study.

The possible benefits of my participation in this research study is that through the study of the performance piece Brownout: Border Pulp Stories there can be pedagogical contributions to the education field in general and performance art and art education in particular with regard to issues of social and cultural identity.

I have read the above informed consent form. I understand that I was tape recorded and videotaped by the researcher. The videotape will be transferred to a CD-Rom, it will only be used for this research study. I understand that I may withdraw my consent and discontinue participation at any time. In signing this consent form, I am not waiving any legal claims, rights or remedies. A copy of this consent form will be given to me.

Subject’s signature ___________________________ May 20, 2003
REFERENCES


Carlos, L. (1998). In Introduction: Performance Art was the one place where there were so few definitions. Performance: Live art since the 60s. RoseLee Goldberg. London: Thames and Hudson.


literature, and art. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.


Fusco, C. (2001). The bodies that were not ours and other writings. New York: Routledge/Iniva.


BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Marva Lopez

Education

Doctoral Candidate for a PhD in Art Education at Florida State University, Tallahassee, Florida. The title of the dissertation is *A Critical Analysis of Guillermo Gómez-Peña’s Performance Art: A Study in the Cultural Borderlands with Implications for Art Education*. Fall 2003.


Masters in Art Education from the University of Central Florida, Orlando, Florida. Summer 1997.

Bachelor of Arts in Bilingual Education from the University of the Americas, Mexico City, Mexico. December 1992.

School of Architecture, National University, Mexico City, Mexico. Full time student form Spring 1972 to Fall 1975.

High School Degree from The American School Foundation, Mexico City. Summer 1971.

Professional Experience

Instructor at Bowling Green State University, Ohio. Teaching ARTE382 Art For Special Learners, ARTE244 Art for Early Childhood and Supervising Student Teachers. August 2003.

Part time ESOL instructor at Indian River Community College at Fellsmere, Florida. Summer 2003.