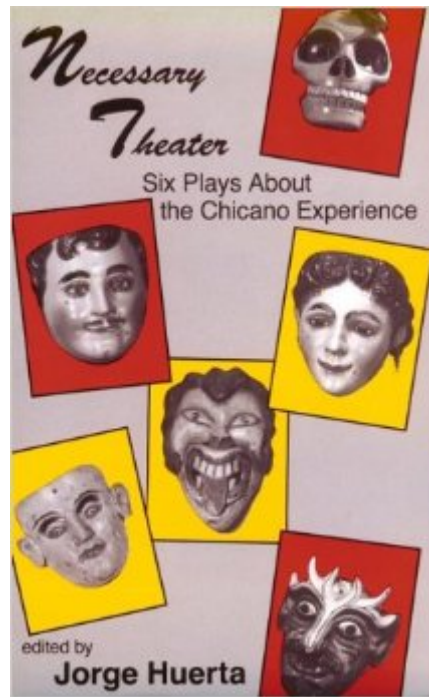


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Necessary Theatre



Synopsis

Necessary Theater includes: *The Shrunken Head of Pancho Villa*, by Luis Valdez; *Money*, by Arthur Giron; *Latina*, by Milcha Sanchez Scott with Jeremy Blahnik; *Soldierboy*, by Judith and Severo Perez; and *Guadalupe* and *La victima*, both by El Teatro de la Esperanza. Necessary Theater is the first anthology of Chicano theater published in a decade and includes only plays that have been professionally staged to critical acclaim. An introduction by Jorge Huerta, along with commentaries on each author and play, is included. Jorge Huerta, the author of *Chicano Theater: Themes and Forms*, is a professor in the drama department at the University of California-San Diego.

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The plays are Judith & Severo Perez's "Soldierboy," Milcha Sanchez-Scott's "Latina," Luis Valdez's "The Shrunken Head of Pancho Villa," El Teatro de la Esperanza's "Guadalupe" and "La victima," and Arthur Giron's "Money." The plays, with the exception of the fairly mainstream "Money," are written for bicultural, bilingual audiences. The Mexican/Barrio Spanish-to-English code switching might throw a few people. Univ. of Calif. theater scholar Jorge Huerta prefaces each play with production notes, critical analysis, and a playwright biography. In the book's introduction, Huerta writes, "All theater should be necessary; otherwise, why bother to produce it?" He recounts a capsule history of Chicano theater and headlines the plays. "Soldierboy" takes us back to 1945 and World War II. A Chicano soldier has come home to San Antonio; his Euro-American buddy didn't. Frank's return is haunted by flashbacks--leading up to the moment of his war buddy's

death--interwoven with the fate of Frank's ailing younger brother. In "Latina," Felix Sanchez presides over a growing empire of small businesses and a harem of Latina immigrants looking for work in Beverly Hills as domestics. Poor Sarita is caught between the workers and clients: "You always take the gringa's side." It's nice to hear these women's voices--your friends gossipin', bickerin', schemin' and dreamin'. Just plain weird and surrealistic, "The Shrunken Head of Pancho Villa" should be the first play you read when you study Chicano theater. Two of the characters are a bodyless head and a headless body, and they both belong to the same family.

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