

From the Editors

We are proud to present you with the second edition of *Text, Practice, Performance*, the graduate journal from the recently renamed Américo Paredes Center for Cultural Studies at the University of Texas at Austin. We dedicate this issue to Américo Paredes, gifted poet, journalist, scholar, activist, and the founder of our Center. He embodied the interdisciplinary approach this journal seeks to reflect.

The articles in this journal encompass the breadth of Cultural Studies, as defined by Richard Flores, Director of our Américo Paredes Center for Cultural Studies. “Its unique approach considers how culture is constituted and expressed, that is, how we actually produce and project cultural forms through verbal, visual, musical, kinesthetic, material, performance and performative means” (2000). Early in his career, Raymond Williams, a pivotal scholar for Cultural Studies, challenged static notions of culture, defining it as “a general reaction to a general and major change in the condition of our common life” (1958:295). This emphasis on social and political change is reflected in our journal.

Although they have diverse foci, several articles foreground the transformation of cultural practices decontextualized from their “source.” Brulotte highlights the complexities that come into play when Oaxacan material crafts are imagined through nostalgic high-tech cybermarketing, while Sharp illustrates the consumption and performative evolution of the Argentinean Tango in the Austin, Texas World Music scene. Similarly, Frank discusses the ways in which the meaning and experience of *qi*, a Chinese conception of “vital energy,” shifts once transported to the United States and performed by American practitioners in Seattle, Tucson, and by the ethnographer himself. In this sense, these articles tap into broader concerns within Cultural Studies, particularly “the interrelationships between supposedly separate cultural domains” (Grossberg, Nelson, Treichler, 1992:5). The cover of this journal serves as a provocative visual representation of the disparate associations present in post-modern society. The performers are members of Tosca, the subject of Sharp’s article. The photo was originally used to advertise an adult store in Austin, Texas—hence, the leather garments. Now, it serves as the cover for an academic journal. Within this cover, individual musicians, an Argentinean musical form, bondage-wear, and academic discourse commingle.

Cultural Studies has also been at the forefront of debates concerning representation, and the performance and politics of identity. Saunders draws attention to shifts in the representation of the terrorist in the American film industry, and how they reflect larger transformations in US political discourse. By interrogating the performance of her own ethnic identity, Park illustrates the “imagined” nature of US citizenship and subject formation.

Beyond these political concerns, all of these articles address expressive culture, broadly defined. One aspect of our approach to Cultural Studies is the fusion of analysis with the representation of cultural performances, which also asserts that ethnography itself can serve as a performative form. Like Américo Paredes, these graduate student authors, whether drawing upon ethnographic research of an “other,” a cinematic or multi-media Internet source, or personal experience, strive to not only raise and elaborate important theoretical issues, but to produce artful written works themselves.

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Austin, Texas
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Works Cited

- Flores, Richard. Website for The Américo Paredes Center for Cultural Studies at The University of Texas at Austin, 2000.
- Grossberg, Lawrence, Cary Nelson, and Paula Treichler. *Cultural Studies*. New York: Routledge, 1992.
- Williams, Raymond. *Culture and Society 1780-1950*. London: Chatto and Windus, 1963.