

From the Editors

Welcome to the fifth volume of *Text, Practice, Performance*. The theme of this year's journal is cultural fusion and hybridity, which mirrors the interdisciplinary approach of the Américo Paredes Center and the field of Cultural Studies at large. Our authors come from various fields and disciplines, but all attempt to unsettle long-standing binaries: Anglo/Mexican, self/other, human/machine, leisure/work, performance/text, authenticity/appropriation, global/local, modernity/tradition. The cultural practices they analyze occupy the in-between spaces that such binaries obfuscate. We chose this theme as a timely one in an age of increasing globalization and cross-cultural circulation and an accompanying proliferation of hybrid forms. Several pieces herein also examine early 20th-century hybrid popular culture, suggesting that such hybrid practices pre-date the declaration of postmodernity.

These practices are not mere exercises in aesthetics, but frequently transgressions of social boundaries with potential real-life consequences for their practitioners. They thus create "new signs of identity, and innovative sites of collaboration and contestation" (Bhabha 1994:1-2). Webel and Cobb explore the nexus of animal and human in public space; Webel also pays attention to transgressions in the public sphere of what constitutes acceptable performance and exhibition, as does Somdahl-Sands. Her piece also fuses text and performance to create a work that itself performs. Morrison and Sharp both examine the work of avant-garde performers who fuse cosmopolitan sensibilities with regional or ethnic expressive traditions in the Americas. Ramos and Mellard also analyze cultural exchange and musical syncretism across presumed ethnic boundaries, specifically between the U.S. and Mexico and between Anglos and Mexican Americans. Finally, Tyburczy discusses the hybrid as monstrous in relation to the filmic female body.

The increased attention to hybridity in recent scholarship can give the misleading impression that this is an entirely new phenomenon, a rupture. True, borders aren't what they used to be, but borders

never were what they used to be. They are often mutable, drawn through contested terrain, inhabited by “impure” identities and fluid categories. Foregrounding the “impure,” embracing the “inauthentic” helps to illuminate the shades of grey that are too often hidden in shadow.

Every border has a gap.

¹ Homi Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (London: Routledge, 1994:1-2)

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