



**TEXT PRACTICE PERFORMANCE**  
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# TPP

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## Introduction: Culture, Circulation, Representation

Mathangi Krishnamurthy

Another year (or has it been two) and another painstaking process of manuscript gathering later, here we are with a journal of edgy, involved, experimental writing on and around questions of culture, representation and circulation. At the Américo Paredes Center for Cultural Studies at the University of Texas at Austin, we feel privileged to attract scholars with a diversity of geographical foci and analytical interests, who are at the same time engaged in ethnographic research of the highest order. The pieces we have chosen for this issue, will, we hope reflect this wealth.

Representation is the unifying force for this volume of essays. Attempting to push the boundaries of this venture, we include, literally, representation. The piece by Ann Buckun serves as a springboard to foster discussion around representational practices as well as deep-seated ways of seeing. Buckun stacks text onto dense images, and shepherds the viewer through a series of blurring planes of reality and haze. Disturbing dimension and borders, the piece hinges on the reader/viewer's willingness to play. Jenny Carlson's piecing of a fragmentary subject relies on a similarly blurred and messy perception. Self-realization across time and space is her object of analysis and through thickly rendered descriptions of event, memory, fleeting trauma and forceful emotion, Carlson coaxes a deeply affective cognizance.

Jeanette Vaught and Amanda Morrison explore cultural resonance and re-imaginings on and off-screen in the U.S film. Vaught follows the declining popularity of western films in the 1970s and relocates public interest and gaze in the trucker and "hillbilly" films set in the South. She argues that a larger shift in political events catalyzed abandonment of this cowboy ideal of American masculine identity. Morrison is interested in cinematic portrayals of Chicana youth in contemporary film and conducts a textual analysis of three films to explore young women's coming-of-age narratives. Her methodology is in itself of value to representational practices since the relative absence of Chicana youth in U.S film also speaks to the question of bodies that cannot/ need not be represented.

Claudia Campeanu and Dan Gilman are interested in the production and representation of spaces that mean variously to stakeholders and inhabitants. Campeanu's piece explores a post-socialist development project intended at creating a Dracula themed park in Romania. Her narrative deftly argues that the failure of this project was brought about by a political play that successfully opposed the terms of development with the language of heritage. Gilman's work is set in a café in Cairo, Egypt and looks at the liminality of what he calls this 'public-private' sphere. He argues that the transgression of cross-gender interactions in this space, although morally suspect must be seen in the context of its patrons' socio-economic aspirations.

Finally, Elizabeth LeFlore explores the cultural practices of a transnational community in Empalme Escobedo, Mexico. Relating devotion to the community's patrons saint, Maria Auxiliadora, with their cross-border movements across the Mexico-U.S border, LeFlore's attentiveness to spiritual practices, material investments and particular histories makes for a compelling portrait of a community formed through and in spite of transnationality.

We hope these pieces will implore a conversation on the multiple nodes of culture, cultural representation and circulation and indeed, render life-worlds in representation and excess.



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