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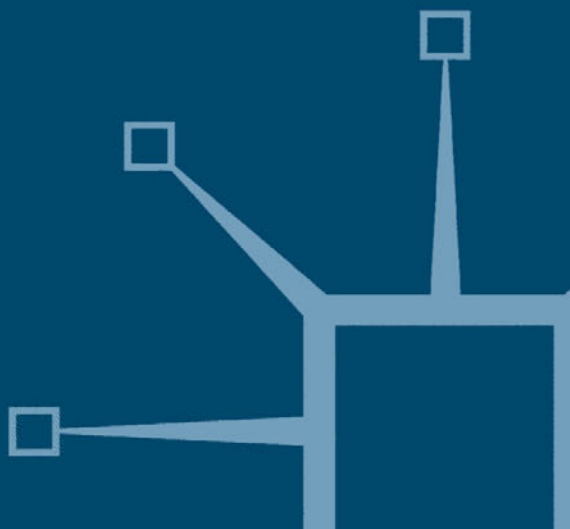
Performance in the Borderlands

Edited by
Ramón H. Rivera-Servera and
Harvey Young



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Acknowledgements

Performance in the Borderlands (PiB) was originally conceived as a research, teaching and public programs initiative at Arizona State University. Founded by Ramón H. Rivera-Servera in 2004 and currently directed by theater historian Tamara Underiner, the project sought to position performance as an object of study and an analytic from which to engage the history and dynamic social and cultural exchanges occurring in the US-Mexico borderlands region. Grounded on the specificities of Arizona's dramatic economic, social, and cultural changes over the second half of the twentieth century, and the transformation of the city of Phoenix in particular into an increasingly globalized metropolis, PiB focused on the documentation, presentation, and analysis of performance practices that reflected and sought to intervene in the public conversations over the future of the region. Furthermore, the project was instituted under the belief that starting from the particularities of Arizona as a locale, it could address issues of borders that were pertinent to a much broader constituency not only within the United States and Mexico, but also at locations the world over dealing with the encounters and clashes of border life. That is, PiB was both a localized ethnographic project attendant to the materiality of experience in a defined geography and a global theoretical venture. This anthology includes some chapters originally presented as part of PiB programming (at ASU) or by scholars who participated in the series between 2004 and 2007.

In fall 2006, Ramón H. Rivera-Servera invited Harvey Young to Arizona State to deliver a lecture as part of ASU's PiB programming. Shortly thereafter, we decided to develop a Borderlands collection that was not grounded within Arizona or, even, the US-Mexico border and that would account for our own personal, youthful experiences of living in the borderlands – Ramón in Puerto Rico and Harvey along the US(NY)-Canadian border. In 2007, we convened a seminar at the annual meeting of the American Society for Theatre Research entitled "Performance in the Borderlands," in which a variety of scholars, with differing hemispheric interests, joined us in articulating the ways in which performance operates within, alongside and across borders. This edited collection was developed in earnest between 2008 and 2009. In spring 2009, many of the contributors to this collection traveled to Northwestern University for a two-day authors' retreat and the opportunity to share early drafts of their PiB chapters.

Over the past six years, a number of people have been instrumental in the development of this anthology. At Arizona State University, President Michael Crow and Dean J. Robert Wills provided the seed funds that led

to the inauguration of the Performance in the Borderlands Project. Faculty in the School of Theater and Film, especially Tamara Underiner, Margaret Knapp, Stephani Woodson, Lance Gharavi, Gitta Honeger, Linda Essig, and Roger Bedard, provided crucial intellectual and logistical support to make the project a quick success. Colleen Jennings-Rogensack and Michael Reed at ASU's Office of Events and the Gammage Auditorium were ideal collaborators and travel companions as we sought to bring some of the world's most interesting, compelling, and engaged border crossers to our stages. The Office of the General Consul of Mexico in Phoenix and the City of Tempe's Office of Arts and Culture also provided financial and logistical support.

We are fortunate to work at an institution like Northwestern University, where theater and performance are valued as practices and modes of research central to the mission of the university. Barbara O'Keefe, Dean of the School of Communication, provided financial support that enabled us to bring the authors to Evanston for a writing retreat. E. Patrick Johnson, D. Soyini Madison, Tracy C. Davis, Sandra L. Richards, and Susan Manning are not only supportive colleagues, but critically engaged collaborators who have been most helpful in the development of this project. Our respective research assistants: Victoria Fortuna, Derek Barton, James Moreno, and Elias Krell in Performance Studies and Aileen Robinson, Laura Lodewyck, Lisa Kelly, Dawn Tracey, and Shannon Fitzsimons in Theater Studies have provided invaluable assistance with the organization of the Performance in the Borderlands authors' retreat and have worked arduously in the completion of the manuscript from fact-checking to copyediting. Alan Shefsky, Department Assistant in Performance Studies, has been most supportive with logistics, encouragement, and good humor.

Projects such as these are not imaginable without the presence of a thriving community of artists and thinkers who imagine and enact critical border crossings in the most creative of ways. We are grateful to Anne García-Romero, David Garfinkle, Diana Manole, Sophie Nield, Róisín O'Gorman, Yael Prizant, Connie Rapoo, Linda Sears, Megan Anne Todd, and Katie Zien for joining us in our Borderlands seminar at ASTR. Amelia Malagamba-Ansótegui and Jill Lane participated in early conversations that helped us to envision the scope of this collection.

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This book is dedicated to our partners Joel Valentín-Martínez and Heather Schoenfeld.

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1
Introduction: Border Moves

Ramón H. Rivera-Servera and Harvey Young

A border defines. It structures space by establishing a point of reference that immediately and consequently positions people and objects in relation to itself. To stand on *this* or *that* side of the border is to either physically perform your belonging within a community or to trespass into another. It is to be domestic or foreign, home or abroad, insider or outsider, citizen or immigrant, at rest or on the move. A border transforms space into place. It creates nations and states in addition to smaller and less formalized social units. It keeps communities apart or forces them to remain together. It not only makes cultural production – literally the production of culture – possible but also provides a mechanism for distinguishing and differentiating cultures. Borders inform our embodied experiences by framing our perspectives on the world, policing the movement of our bodies, and enabling (or denying) access to goods and services that support our physical, intellectual, cultural, and spiritual development. Simply put: we are the products of the borders that surround us. Our daily performances reflect our bordered existence.

As definite as borders are, they can be surprisingly difficult to pinpoint and identify. National borders, for example, are constantly under stress from that which at once exceeds and defines them. The fall of the Berlin wall, the thawing of the Cold War, the rise of free trade alliances such as AFTA, NAFTA and COMESA, the creation of the European Union and the Euro, and the rapid advances in technological communication (satellites, internet, cellular technology) have transformed national boundaries into regional and global units of movement, flow, and exchange.[1] What distinguishes when a wall no longer divides, when different nations share the same currency, when it can be easier to talk with a person in another hemisphere than a neighbor down the street? This is not to imply that borders are of no consequence. Borders have always been porous, their ability to demarcate a limit often undone by crossings that render them a material and rhetorical failure. Nevertheless, the history of violence spent maintaining them demonstrates their enduring weightiness. Is it, perhaps, the tenuous nature of the border's

demarcation that fuels the compulsive, oftentimes violent, performance to uphold it? In a post-9/11 context in the United States, in which the acknowledged porous nature of borders has ironically led to their multiplication, borders have become *dramatically* remilitarized. They have become increasingly visible through performance: the deployment of armed soldiers in Iraq and Afghanistan under the premise that an offensive strategy might prevent future infiltration of terrorists onto American soil, frequent requests for proof of belonging or citizenship on *this* side of the border, and the absurd theatrics of domestic vigilantism, such as the formation of groups like the Minutemen. Borders have proliferated, all the while showing their limited ability to contain, arrest, or limit the historic and present exchanges that continue to sneak through its cracks.

The border exists inasmuch as it is (or has been) imagined as a construct with the capacity to prevent movement. It can be most effectively conceived as a site of tension between an impulse for stasis and a desire for a controlled movement that polices the flow of the bodies and commodities that continuously push against it. A conceptualization of the border not only as a geographical setting but also as an active agent in the enabling of crossing and exchange invites a consideration of the ways in which it shapes the myriad performances that occur along its edges, the borderlands. The border is not merely a wall or a body of water. It is a force of containment that inspires dreams of being overcome and crossed; motivates bodies to climb over, burrow under, or float across; and threatens physical harm through the inherent dangers of falling, drowning, or, perhaps worse, being caught and/or killed after arriving safely on its other side. The border alters the way that bodies carry and, indeed, perform themselves not only in the moment of encounter but also for years (and even generations) afterwards. Entire cultures have been defined by their proximity to a border or by the border crossing of ancestors. Movement and geography are thus the critical factors against which a border is defined.

A focus on movement allows for a dynamic understanding of the border as a cultural geography that, while seemingly static, gains its groundedness through motion. The spatialized emphasis on routes, circuits, scapes, and contact zones, as James Clifford, Joseph Roach, Arjun Appadurai, and Mary Louise Pratt have observed, characterizes an understanding of social and cultural phenomena as complex systems that exceed national demarcations.[2] As scholars in post-colonial and diaspora studies have demonstrated, this spatial complexity is also a temporal one. For example, if our conception of the nation appropriately becomes a map of interrelated economies, political networks, migratory patterns, and cultural traffic, the ebbs and flows of these geographies are shaped by the deeply historical borders of colonization, nation-building, post-colonialism, global military conflict, capitalist and late-capitalist economic arrangements, and much more. But the traumas that many of these historical clashes represent to contemporary

experience are accompanied by similarly layered histories of collaboration, coalition, and pleasure that render the influence these crossings bear to present relations materially and emotionally complex. Attending to borders thus entails movements across spatial coordinates as much as it involves an engagement with the temporal dynamics (i.e., "past looking," "utopian futurity," "revisionist present") through which culture is both constituted and understood.

Performance, as an optic that prioritizes the multi-sensorial experience of embodiment, is particularly attuned to the ways in which border spatialities and temporalities are formed in/as movement. Performances gain their force from the circuitry of influences, both historical and contemporary, that shape experience and cast them into the present and future of public enactments. The very conceptualization of a performing body or the disciplinary frameworks that restrict/enable performance embodiments requires a delicate maneuvering through the minutiae of political economy and the abstractions of cultural imaginaries that become palpable, historical forces through the pauses and interruptions of imposed borders or by the movements and flows they prioritize or encourage. Movement casts both disciplinary and agentive borders and their crossing performatively.

If movement defines the logic of the border, then contemporary political strategy conceived relative to the perceived static structures of the state might fall short in its efficacy. Noting a tendency in academic analysis to engage the rhetorics of political speech while ignoring the ways in which social and political movements depend on the willful mobilization of bodies into voting booths or other collective action, sociologist Randy Martin has remarked that turning our attention to the movement of bodies might also offer an opportunity to envision a more articulate theory of political mobilization; one that accounts for the ways in which participation is actually encouraged and attained.[3] Visual artist and scholar Erin Manning offers a similarly politicized account for movement's doings. In her reading of tango's improvisational aesthetics and decentered emphasis on a sensual economy, touch, in particular, emerges as a potentially radical philosophy of interpersonal communication.[4] Here movement with and toward an/Other, the constitution of collective action and the skin's surface as thoroughly relational, avails subjects with a capacity, perhaps even a necessity, to traverse boundaries en route to becoming. Identity in motion is rendered performative, not by a recurrence to the linguistic realm, but by a calling forth of embodied experience as that which precedes and supersedes it.

Performance in the Borderlands critically examines a range of cultural performances produced in relation to the tensions and movements of/about the border. Comprised of 13 chapters and a transcribed roundtable conversation involving the majority of this volume's contributors, this book places a spotlight on both the material and imagined lines of division that exist within North America, including the Caribbean, and divide both geographical

regions and the people who inhabit them. In focusing upon the northern portion of the western hemisphere, *Performance in the Borderlands* does not center any one national border, but instead brings into focus the many boundaries that exist within the quadrant. It critically explores not only the border that exists between the United States and Mexico but also the intranational divisions (state and regional differences) within the United States, the creation of boundaries by multinational capitalist investment and militaristic presence in the Caribbean, and the natural and political obstacles that inhibit travel between Mexico and Guatemala, Haiti and the Dominican Republic, and Cuba and the United States. Although all of the borders possess a geographical dimension – either manmade obstacles (e.g., walls and checkpoints) or natural elements (e.g., the Caribbean Sea, a mountain range), the performances created within, along, and across them are inflected by the cultural experience of crossing and living within, along, and near borders.

The chapters in this collection press us to consider the border in new ways by acknowledging the sensorial and affective components of border encounters. Approached from the critical vantage point of Performance Studies, the concept of the border opens up to myriad manifestations that range from the aural spatialities of popular music to the traveling choreographies of social dance. As such, the border sensorium exceeds the artificial limits of the national boundaries traveling in embodied, as well as mediatized forms, tactics, even feelings, and extending its temporality well beyond the act of crossing. The performances of and about the border iterate both disciplinary and transgressive forces that map out the conflicted terrain of the historical traumas of colonization as well as the present violence of forceful neoliberal adjustments and uneven developments.

The aim of this edited collection is to animate the concept of the border within contemporary performance and cultural studies in the Americas. Performance Studies as an inter/anti-disciplinary tradition is equipped to engage with the in-betweenness of border geographies. As an academic discipline and a mode of theoretical investigation, Performance Studies has developed a multi-perspectival approach to look at cultural phenomena that accounts for the complexities of scale (from global flows to the single body in motion) and intersecting temporalities (from colonial encounters to future imaginings) manifested at the very instance of public enactment. It is precisely this ability to look at the macro-level of economic and political arrangements while keeping an eye on the emergent strategies from the body outwards that best suits an approximation to the border. As well, the border as a concept shaped by the interstitial spatiality and temporal overlaps of transculturation offers an important historico-theoretical contribution to Performance Studies' analytical toolbox.

Performance in the Borderlands brings together an interdisciplinary group of scholars within the Americas to examine the intersections of performance and the border as provocative critical strategies for understanding

contemporary cultural shifts throughout the hemisphere. Representing a range of academic disciplines, including sociology, literary and cultural studies, performance studies, and ethnomusicology, this collection crosses borders within the humanities and social sciences in order to develop a critical conversation about the present state and future of cultural practice in the era of globalization. We believe that a focus on performance – broadly constructed to include the enactment of ritual, the performance of duties of citizenship, and the manners in which communities and nations record their cultural histories – encourages an analysis that understands public cultural practice as both a barometer of and a catalyst for socio-cultural reconfigurations of the hemisphere. *Performance in the Borderlands* introduces eminent scholars from Mexico and Puerto Rico for the first time in the United States through the commissioning and translation of new contributions. Likewise, this anthology introduces recognized scholars in fields as diverse as Art History and Literary Studies to the conversation on Performance Studies. As such, this volume seeks to expand the field not only through the showcase of groundbreaking scholarship, but also through the expansion of voices, methodologies, and objects of study included within the purview of Performance Studies, Cultural Studies, and Border Studies.

Scholarly crossings

The centralizing keywords of this collection, border and performance, have been historically linked, if little recognized, as interrelated in US scholarship. In the early twentieth century, folklorists such as John Gregory Bourke and J. Frank Dobie ventured into the southwestern territory of the United States to document the cultural peculiarities of a region only incorporated into the United States a generation earlier as the result of the 1854 settlement of the US-Mexico War.[5] Bourke and Dobie, both key figures in the definition of the US-Mexico border region, modeled two distinct but interrelated approaches to the border. Literary scholar Ramón Saldívar has aptly observed that Dobie's approach focused on the "entertaining aspect of local color" that the difference of the border region represented to US national imaginaries, while Bourke "meant to deliver the kind of useful information that would aid in the ongoing pacification, colonization, and Americanization of the region."[6] Whether the purpose of their documenting and collecting of folklore traditions was to entertain or facilitate assimilation, the border in their works became identifiable in a catalogue of performance practices from vernacular orality to musical traditions.

It was precisely in these traditions where pioneer Mexican-American folklorists Jovita González and Américo Paredes saw the consciousness of borderland residents in Texas manifested in critical and resistive practices that asserted difference and challenged assumed homogenous conceptions of the nation. The scholarly attention to Mexican-American and indigenous

cultural expressions, along the border region throughout the first half of the twentieth century, offered a spectacular and uncontainable otherness that often troubled the certainties of the national advocated in the American exceptionalism of the "Myth and Symbol" school of American Studies as exemplified in the works of Henry Nash Smith and Leo Marx.[7] The alternative archives activated and circulated in the academic and literary works of Gonzalez and Paredes contained counterpointal gestures to Anglo dominance.[8] These challenges were identified and articulated in the form of jokes, sayings, popular songs, and other expressive forms that grounded border scholarship firmly in an economy of performance.

Performance and the border have traveled hand in hand in a tradition of literary and cultural studies that includes the groundbreaking ethnographic works of José E. Limón, Richard Flores, and Carlos Vélez-Ibañez, just to name a few.[9] This well-established and interrelated focus, born as it was of the folklore studies tradition from Bourke and Dobie to Gonzalez and Paredes, predates what Donald Weber marked as the transition in the field of American Studies from Victor Turner's concept of "liminality" to that of "borders" as the predominant critical optic of American Studies.[10] Noting a move from an analysis informed by the time-based concept of the ritual process to the spatially oriented notion of "borderlands," Weber notices a dramatic critical shift whereby the border emerges as a corrective to the assumed coherence of the community (in ritual) narrated in Turner's theoretical model. As Weber further notes, it was the field of Performance Studies where the tradition of Turnerian analysis continued to thrive during the 1980s. With the exception of a few feminist scholars who embraced the work of Chicana feminist poet and theorist Gloria Anzaldúa and Chicana playwright, poet, and essayist Cherríe Moraga, the border as site and theoretical concept remained for the most part unexamined in the field of Performance Studies.[11]

Popularized by Anzaldúa in the mid-1980s, the "border" drew attention to the political and cultural tensions relating to the US-Mexico border and depicted/characterized the unstable, indeterminate nature of racial, national, and gender identities.[12] Anzaldúa's spotlighting of the border both as real space and as a metaphor influenced the feminist writings of Angela Davis, and Edward Soja's work on the "third space," among others. The border in the 1980s and early 1990s offered a language for understanding the spatialized nature of social relations that depended on clearly demarcated limits (e.g., migration) while also offering a theoretical model from which to understand the crossings of categories of identity and/or political practice. In recent years, theories of the "border" have been supplemented by theories of "diaspora," which also allow for the existence of fluid identitarian categories without binding them to a specific place, region, or body. This collection engages the "border" by asserting that it has always been synonymous with conceptions of exchange and movement, and by refining it in terms consistent with the politics of contemporary, global society.

As such, it follows on José David Saldívar's call to account for the ways "border matters" offer important insights to diasporic theories.[13] That is, borders matter to the understanding of diaspora. As scholars of contemporary transnationalism such as Saskia Sassen and Arjun Appadurai have observed, an emphasis on movement also requires an engagement with the particularities of place and location (or locatedness).[14] This collection underscores the cultural impact and importance of the borders which are traversed within movement and, in select cases, those borders which prevent movement from occurring. It accounts for the role that geography and imagined boundaries play in the conception of Cuban-American and Cuban identity as expressed within the plays of contemporary American playwrights, the effect of "invisible" but widely recognized racial zoning lines on the comportment and self-presentation of black bodies in the US segregated South, and the popularity of migrant melodrama, the depictions of the suffering of Central American migrants' struggles to overcome natural and manmade barriers in order to illegally enter Mexico or the United States, among a variety of other performances.

In 1999, Michal Kobialka invited the contributors of his edited collection, *Of Borders and Thresholds*, to consider the relationship between the border and theatrical performance. In his introduction, Kobialka noted that the challenge that his anthology sought to address was "how to think borders differently – how to think *of* borders, how to think *in* borders, to paraphrase de Certeau, without losing sight of the consequences, both intellectual and material, of such a process."[15] More than a decade after the publication of *Of Borders and Thresholds*, we not only revisit the questions of how to think of/in the borders but also ask how does a conceptualization of the border as simultaneously a geographical locale and a condition/form of movement enhance our ability to critically read performances, from theatrical plays about the migration of bodies to the actual migrations themselves, that occur along, within, and/or across borders.

Border performances frequently feature bodies *on the move*. When bodies walk, drive, sail, or fly, their movements blur the *here* and *there*, constantly reorganizing spatial relations and negotiating the consequences (political, social, economic, cultural) of their crossings. Their actions "actualize the border," as Brian Massumi has written, by occupying a zone that exists between departure (formerly here and soon to be there) and arrival (formerly there and soon to be here) and triggering responses designed to contain or control their movements.[16] Writing about the capacity of the body to move and engage ideas of the border, Edward Soja offers:

> Our bodies in themselves are the centers or nodes of mobile regions of personal space, and our lived experiences take place, literally and figuratively, in a more sedentary nesting of increasingly larger nodal regions contextualized in scale from the local to the global. At each of these

> levels of life, borders and boundaries demarcate the dynamic interplay of space-knowledge-power and the more subtle performances of human subjectivity and sociality.[17]

According to Soja, borders and boundaries are everyday obstacles that are encountered within daily life. Bodies, individual nodal points, circulate within a series of regions. Their movements, coupled with the scale of the borders encountered and boundaries crossed, inform their subjectivity and shape their experiences. For example, the act of crossing the street within a town might not be considered a significant activity in many places. However, if the street that is crossed is the recognized boundary between the black and white sections of town, as E. Patrick Johnson describes in this collection, then that local crossing could prove as (or more) dangerous as the crossing of a national border. Indeed, the border, whether local, regional, or international, exists as the place, both material and imagined, where space, knowledge, and power converge through the circulation of bodies.

The performances featured within this book condense the local and the hemispheric into a glocal experience of movement across and within borders. Rather than adopt, as does Soja, a *matryoshka* model that views the personal, local experiences of an individual as the smallest part of a much larger set of global experiences, we maintain that the myriad, individual crossings similarly impact the various bodies on the move. The crossing of the black boy into the white section of town is as significant as the movement of the Cuban balsero, who risks his life to float across the Caribbean sea to reach the United States. An emphasis on the movements of individuals offers a ground-level perspective of the "ordering" nature of the borders, in which their "power […] is derived from their specific interpretation and a resultant (often violent) practice."[18] The performances addressed within this collection react against this ordering principle by seeking to transgress imagined and material lines of difference and by reflecting the political, cultural, economic, and social tensions that exist within communities who live within the borderlands.

The contributors to this collection not only interrogate the border but also perform a series of scholarly crossings of their own. They push the boundaries of their own by venturing into new disciplinary fields and geographies. For example, Patricia Ybarra, whose research interests frequently center Mexican performance practice, analyzes representations of Cuban-American identity within the plays of contemporary Cuban writers. Ana Elena Puga, an expert on South American theatre, studies the melodramatic framing of the suffering of Central American migrants who illegally enter Mexico. Ric Knowles documents his experiences as a non-Native working as the dramaturg on a Native Canadian production involving a transindigenous collective of artists. The authors' words are informed by their awareness of their own border crossings and heightened understanding of their role as a guest

within the terrain of another. As a result of the authors' maneuvering across disciplines, their chapters not only interrogate specific enactments along imagined and material borders but also exist as models of performative writing in which the feel of the border manifests itself through their prose.

Chapter 2, Josh Kun's "Playing the Fence, Listening to the Line," opens this edited collection by drawing attention to an aspect of the border that is rarely acknowledged by scholars. In contrast to readings of the border as a particular geographical setting or physical location, Kun contends that the scope and the influence of the border can only be appreciated by acknowledging both its material and immaterial presence. In his richly descriptive and theoretically sophisticated chapter, he asserts that "borders are also sonic spaces and sonic practices, acoustic regions full of sound and full of listening; they also cut up and create cultural ecologies rich in sonic sediment." Expanding his study of the *aural border*, which he defines as "binational territories of sonic performance and listening," Kun closely reads the performances of a series of artists who work along, and sonically across, the US-Mexico border: Octavio Hernandez, Pepe Mogt, Glen Weynant, Richard Lerman, Deborah Stratman, Steve Badgett, and Ricardo Dominguez. In drawing attention to the sounds of the border, Kun establishes *listening* as a vital performance act with the potential to offer new insights into the politics that surround border creation and enforcement. He writes, "I am interested in the relationship between listening, listening to the line, and the linked processes of migrancy and detainment – listening's role in the border dialectic of enclosure and mobility – with its 'differential mobility effects' by which some are allowed to move, the 'kinetic elites,' and others remain detained."

In Chapter 3, Alejandro Madrid traces the circuitous moves of danzón, a social dance music genre developed in the black neighborhoods of Matanzas, Cuba in the latter part of the nineteenth century and experiencing a vigorous revival in dance competitions and social clubs in Mexico since the 1990s. His chapter, "Transnational Cultural Translations and the Meaning of Danzón Across Borders," triangulates the ways in which social history, the tourist economy, and practices of nationalism intersect in annual dance competitions in Mexico and in Cuban-produced events geared towards a Mexican community of tourist/danzón aficionados. While he begins his chapter at the 2007 Habana Danzón Festival, he reaches back in time to document a history of traffic between Mexico and Cuba, epitomized by the "rubbing bodies" on the dance floor, that troubles national claims to the genre by both nations. Instead, he presents a musical and choreographic exchange system that depends on cross-border traffic to configure local investments in cultural practice. He writes that danzón, "as a historical experience and performance complex, shows the intricate ways in which seemingly fixed notions of national belonging are in fact responses to transnational flows that affect and often define local understandings of nationalism."

In Chapter 4, "Havana Isn't Waiting," Patricia Ybarra sets the border in motion by contextualizing border theory relative to performances of travel: Cuban migration to the United States. Ybarra urges a consideration of water, specifically the Caribbean Sea, as a spatially divisive element that functions as a border separating Cuba and the United States in order to "suggest connections between Mexican 'immigrant' and Cuban 'exile' experience that complicate notions of Cuban exceptionalism." Focusing upon theatrical representations of the Balsero Crisis, when Cubans created makeshift boats and risked their lives attempting to reach the United States, during Cuba's Special Period (1991–2005), she documents the role that travel, movement, and the border play in "Cuban American imagining of Cuba and Cuban (American) identities." Ybarra studies plays produced between 1996 and 2005 by a range of Cuban playwrights: Loretta Greco, Maria Irene Fornes, Jorge Cortiñas, Caridad Svich, Nilo Cruz, and Eduardo Machado.

If Kun in Chapter 2 attends to practices of listening that reshape how we conceive of the spatiality of the border, Chapter 5, Patrick Anderson's "'Architecture is not Justice': Seeing Guantánamo Bay," explores visuality as the dominant sensorial realm that sustains the on-going "War on Terror." He analyzes "This is Camp X-Ray," an installation piece by UK-based arts collective Ultimate Holding Company (UHC) that seeks to replicate the US military detention camp in Guantánamo Bay, Cuba. Anderson traces the "architectural premise" that governs the spectatorial dynamics of the camp and its purposeful "inaccessibility from public scrutiny." He argues that "the UHC installation epitomized the profound political value of representation broadly and performance in particular to materialize what is otherwise inaccessible." The border is here articulated as a performative visuality that operates under the supposed command of total vision by the state. But as Anderson suggests in his Foucauldian critique, this faith on the visual is rendered "discontinuous" by the very impossibility of Panoptic totality. Instead, the visual domain is achieved through an affective architecture that works fear, the possibility of being seen or disciplined, as a preemptive strategy that Anderson argues is not only operative in the "physical practice of power – the scale of the body – but also upon the experience of being – at the scale of inter-subjective self." Performances of affect sustain a border where you are either "with us" or "against us," as former US President George W. Bush once declared. But this judgment, much like the visual dynamic of Guantánamo Bay and its representation in "This is Camp X-Ray," also depends on the self-governing feelings of a fearful populace being always insecure as to their position in a violently bordered state. And this border, Anderson further suggests, is maintained through the absented presence of the captive and the exile whom he proceeds to outline in reference to the visual economies of the photographic negative and the silhouette.

In Chapter 6, "Crossing Hispaniola," Ramón Rivera-Servera spotlights a border that divides an island, Hispaniola, into two nations: the Dominican

Republic and Haiti. Offering a close reading of the political and racial tensions that have existed between the countries, he introduces and analyzes the performance work of three artists – author René Philoctète, actress/dancer Josefina Baez, and spoken-word artist Lenelle Moise – who center the Haitian/Dominican divide within their respective artistic projects. Working across the media of literature, dance, and spoken word, Rivera-Servera draws attention to the ways in which these performances address the violence that has erupted in an effort to maintain the border between the countries. At the same time, they express a longing, an affective intimacy, for the Haitian bodies prevented from (or punished for) attempting to cross the Dominican border. Positing the existence of an "erotic borderlands" within these performance works, Rivera-Servera offers a vivid, critical reading of the entanglement of colonial history, immigration, memory, and shifting conceptions of blackness within his chapter.

Paige McGinley, in Chapter 7, "The Magic of Song!," analyzes the collecting practices of folklorist John Lomax as a drama of circulation. Astutely observing that borders occur not only between nations but also within them, McGinley studies the travels of Lomax throughout the southern United States in the early twentieth century. Lomax, a white collector, who logged more than 40,000 miles driving across the United States, visiting communities, and recording their stories, staged public performances in which he would re-present the stories and songs encountered during his trips across the racially segregated United States. McGinley asserts that Lomax's performances not only transformed his body into a "living archive" but also served "as the link, an animate 'cultural broker' between his university students of folklore and the subjects that produced folk culture." His traveling body became the border bridging the racial, educational, social, and economic divisions that exist within the nation. When Lomax eventually elected to stop performing folk songs, especially African blues, folk, and spiritual music, and to "replace himself with a 'real Negro' performer – Huddie Ledbetter, better known by his stage name, Lead Belly," McGinley contends "this notion of singing-as-vehicle took a decidedly racialized turn."

E. Patrick Johnson in Chapter 8 engages in an exercise of "autobiographical criticism" in his "Border Intellectual: Performing Identity at the Crossroads." He explores the borders and boundaries that circumscribe his role as an African-American queer academic and performer in the United States. Engaging performance both as an object of study and as a way of knowing, the chapter travels spatially from the American South to the elite higher education institutions of the North and Mid-West and temporally from narratives of childhood to the established scholar's practice in order to argue how "none of these spaces is wholly nurturing or wholly discouraging; rather, they are *liminal* spaces that require agents within them to simultaneously conform to and transgress the temporal boundaries and borders that enclose them and the politics that emerge therein." Johnson's tactical

map showcases performance dramaturgies of the everyday deployed to both strategically cross borders and emotionally maintain a sense of place despite the continuous motions a cross-border position requires.

In Chapter 9, "Calling off the Border Patrol," Ric Knowles critically analyzes the function of the dramaturg within intercultural theatre. Defining the dramaturg as "a real, material, socially, culturally, and historically situated person engaged in a specific development process" of a theatrical production, Knowles questions how a dramaturg can meaningfully contribute toward the development of a play when it employs a different set of social, cultural, and historical experiences than he possesses. In contrast to John Lomax, the folklorist, who crossed borders in order to collect the stories of others, Knowles is interested in exploring how individuals from different backgrounds can collaborate toward the creation of a single story (or staged production). In his two-part chapter, Knowles interviews prominent dramaturgs who have worked on multicultural theatre productions and re-presents their best practices. In the second part, he constructs an auto-ethnographic case study in which the "situated person is me, a white Anglo-Saxon Canadian male academic/practitioner, the product of privileged cultural positioning within Canada and Euro-American training" and that chronicles his dramaturgical work on Monique Mojica's *Chocolate Woman Dreams the Milky Way*, a devised theatre piece involving a mostly "transindigenous" production/acting company.

José Manuel Valenzuela in Chapter 10 offers us a conversation with, and a portrait of, contemporary Tijuana-based choreographer Minerva Tapia. Valenzuela alternates between contextual narratives of violence and cultural responses to it at the border region between Tijuana, Baja California, and San Diego, California. In this candid and intimate engagement with the life and work of a single choreographer, we encounter the "ordinary affects," as anthropologist Kathleen Stewart would term them, of creative labor in the midst of a tumultuous history of regional transformation brought forth by political and economic policies and practices between Mexico and the United States.[19] Tapia's story is one of embodied border crossings translated into representational practices on the stage. And yet, as Valenzuela's brief and insightful interruptions demonstrate, these individual travels occasion an empathic and critical engagement with the movement of others, across the unequal landscapes of late-capitalism. Dance practice is here an optic from which to witness bordered lives and a laboratory from which to embody the experience of others and image (and imagine) it for a public in need of an opportunity to pause and contemplate the obstacles and flows that characterize their communities. In dancing the border and its traumas, Valenzuela argues, Tapia offers a view into practices of survival, pleasure, and hope at the borderlands.

Eng-Beng Lim, in Chapter 11, "The Epistemology of the Minor-Native in Transcolonial Border Zones," challenges the centering of the West, and

Western thought, in considerations of global circuits by highlighting and subsequently critiquing the continued existence of the "native" and "other" labels. In the third millennium marked by global flow and exchange, Lim notes that "the native, despite the routes of travel that make her appearance possible in her physical or mediated encounter with the West, seems stuck in place." She also appears stuck in time. Lim, reading the performances of Peranakan (Straits Chinese)-American performance artist-scholar Chin Woon Ping, addresses the various ways – but most consistently as "other" – that Chin was read in the many places (Singapore, Australia, and the United States) where she performed. In an effort to challenge the "othering" tendency of a Western perspective, he imagines a "transcolonial border zone," consisting of former colonies who have succeeded not only in freeing themselves from the colonizing power that oppressed them but also managed to form interdependent networks with one another, in which to study the performances of performers like Chin. Within this new zone, a new, more enlightened (to transnational global flows) audience emerges with the capacity not only to appreciate the work of artists, similar to Chin, who repeatedly cross multiple borders, but also to jettison anachronistic conceptions of the native.

Chapter 12, Harvey Young's "Remembering Genocide within Our Borders: Trail of Tears & US Museum Culture," is both an account of a "border within" that the forced migration of Native American communities to the western territories in the United States represents and a theoretical engagement with the difficulties encountered in remembering and memorializing such traumatic history in museum practice. Young, offering a comparative assessment of the representation of the Trail of Tears at the National Museum of the American Indian in Washington, D.C. and the Cherokee Heritage Center in Tahlequah, Oklahoma, focuses his query on "the intersection of movement and memory by looking at the ways that we remember the enforced relocation, border crossing at gun point, of the men, women, and children who walked trails of tears." He argues that the Trail of Tears, as an experience, was so absolute in its displacement and dispossession of those affected that it lacked the site-specificity of historical place and left little material evidence of its occurrence. Narrating the wide-spread uprooting of Native Americans in museum displays, theatrical performances, and living history events thus requires an emphasis on routes and an articulate investment in performances of memory that in their own rhetorical and material engagement with movement constitute the memorial/mnemonic site of national suffering.

In Chapter 13, "Poor Enrique and Poor Maria," Ana Elena Puga places a spotlight on the increasing popularity of the stories of the suffering of migrants in their efforts to illegally cross national borders. Centering two popular accounts, Sonia Nazario's *Enrique's Journey*, a nonfiction account in which Nazario actually retraces the journey of a Mexican teenager (illegally)

across the US border, and Tín Dirdamal's documentary film on the hardships experienced by Central Americans, primarily Guatemalans, who (illegally) enter Mexico, Puga reads these performances as melodramas that attempt to naturalize migrant suffering and, as a consequence, encourage spectators to remain detached from the everyday abuses experienced by migrants. She exposes "a series of calculations that [she sees] as the skeleton below melodrama's sentimental skin, what [she calls] the *political economy of suffering*."

Lowell Fiet closes the collection with a challenge to the very conception of a nationally discrete map of the Caribbean. In Chapter 14, "New Tropicalism: Performance on the Shifting Borders of Caribbean Disappearance," he attends to the material and conceptual circuitries offered by Caribbean regionalism as a significant cross-border geography shaped as much by a logic of inter-Island relations as much as by a bordering of the region relative to Europe and the United States as enduring (neo)colonial presences. Approaching the Caribbean "as performance," Fiet critically engages and qualifies novelist and literary scholar Antonio Benítez Rojo's concept of the "repeating island," a concept that points to both the valence and limitations of contemporary social, cultural, and economic interconnections in the region. His discussion, grounded as it is in contemporary Puerto Rican performance, posits an anti-colonial global geography articulated in performances that are at once local and global in their strategy. This tour through contemporary Puerto Rican performance – from the folkloric celebrations of the Fiestas de Santiago Apostol and the activists performances of Tito Kayak, to the activist street theatre troupe Papel Machete and the staging of historical anti-colonial figures – portrays the borders of the Caribbean in a dynamic and an exuberant multiplicity of layers, turns, and directions.

Carrying the border: Maps for reading

Performance in the Borderlands assumes a cross-border strategy in its arrangement. You may choose to read chapters in the order they are presented but you are encouraged to choose your own path: following perhaps geographic (Mexico, United States, the Caribbean), thematic (violence, history, affect), or genre (theatre, visual art, quotidian performance) routes through the text. In doing so we invite you to make an unexpected turn, to think across expected logics of affinity and analogy and, most importantly, to approach the scales of engagement offered in this volume not as a detached traveler but as an engaged border crosser attuned both to the pains and pleasures of traversing the border.

In setting the border in motion, *Performance in the Borderlands* argues for an engagement with a multiplicity of subject matters, scholarly approaches, and textual presentations. Along with traditionally focused chapters that engage a single object of study, we find survey chapters that explore a subject across a variety of cultural objects and contexts. Likewise, some chapters

privilege autobiographical accounts of border crossings while others read the representation of crossings on the stage, the page, film, or the museum wall. The transcribed dialogue in Chapter 15 that closes this volume is equally open-ended in format and seeks to perform the plethora of crossings occasioned by the intersections between/among authors who encountered each other in the live event of the conversation and on the pages of this volume. We hope that the reader will find in this text a critical performance that moves across borders that will ideally result not in the fetishized disorientations of a post-modern nihilism, but in simultaneously grounded but moving (emotionally, politically, physically) accounts of what living in a bordered world might have meant or felt like in the past and might mean or feel like in the present and future.

Notes

1. AFTA is the ASEAN Free Trade Area, involving Brunei, Cambodia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, Phillipines, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam. NAFTA is the North American Free Trade Agreement, involving Mexico, the United States, and Canada. COMESA is the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa, involving Angola, Burundi, Congo, Egypt, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Namibia, Rwanda, Seychelles, Sudan, Swaziland, Uganda, Zambia, and Zimbabwe.
2. James Clifford, *Routes: Travel and Translation in the Late Twentieth Century* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997); Joseph Roach, *Cities of the Dead: Circum-Atlantic Performance* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996); and Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (New York: Routlege, 1992).
3. Randy Martin, *Critical Moves: Dance Studies in Theory and Practice* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1998).
4. Erin Manning, *The Politics of Touch: Sense, Movement, Sovereignty* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2007).
5. The settlement included the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo (1848) and the subsequent Gadsen Purchase (1854), which resulted in the over-night loss of more than half of Mexico's recognized national territory.
6. Ramón Saldívar, *The Borderlands of Culture: Américo Paredes and the Transnational Imaginary* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2006), 33.
7. See Henry Nash Smith, *Virgin Land: The American West as Symbol and Myth* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1950; 1978); and Leo Marx *The Machine and the Garden: Technology and the Pastoral* (New York and London: Oxford University Press, 1964).
8. See Jovita González, *Dew on the Thorn* (Houston, TX: Arte Público Press, 1997); *Caballero* (College Station, TX: Texas A&M University Press, 1996); and *Life Along the Border: A Landmark Tejana Thesis* (College Station, TX: Texas A&M University Press, 2006). See also Américo Paredes, *"With His Pistol In His Hand": A Border Ballad and Its Hero* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1970); *Texas-Mexican Cancionero: Folksongs of the Lower Border* (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 1995); and *George Washington Gomez: A Mexicotexan Novel* (Houston, TX: Arte Público Press, 1990).

9. See José E. Limón, *Dancing With the Devil: Society and Cultural Poetics in Mexican-American South Texas* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1994); Richard Flores, *Los Pastores: History and Performance in the Mexican Shepherd's Play of South Texas* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian University Press, 1995); Carlos Vélez-Ibañez, *Border Visions: Mexican Cultures of the Southwest United States* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1996).
10. Donald Weber, "From Limen to Border: A Meditation on the Legacy of Victor Turner for American Cultural Studies," *American Quarterly* 47.3 (1995): 525–36.
11. Yvonne Yarbro-Bejarano's work on both Gloria Anzaldúa and Cherríe Moraga's literary and theoretical work remains some of the most enlightening and cited to date. See Yvonne Yarbro-Bejarano, "The Female Subject in Chicano Theatre: Sexuality, 'Race,' and Class," *Theatre Journal* 38.4 (1986): 389–407; "Gloria Anzaldúa's Borderlands/La frontera: Cultural Studies, 'Difference,' and the Non-Unitary Subject," *Cultural Critique* 28 (1994): 5–28; and *The Wounded Heart: Writing on Cherríe Moraga* (Austin: The University of Texas Press, 2001).
12. Gloria Anzaldúa, *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza* (San Francisco, CA: Aunt Lute Books, 1999).
13. Jose David Saldivar, *Border Matters: Remapping American Cultural Studies* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997).
14. Saskia Sassen, *Globalization and its discontents: Essays on the New Mobility of People and Money* (New York: New Press, 1998); Arjun Appadurai, *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996).
15. Michal Kobialka, *Of Borders and Thresholds* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999), 17.
16. Brian Massumi, "Everywhere You What To Be; Introduction to Fear," in *The Politics in Everyday Fear*, ed. Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minneapolist Press, 1993), 27.
17. Edward Soja, "Borders Unbound: Globalization, Regionalism, and the Postmetropolitan Transition," in *B/Ordering Space*, ed. Henk Van Houtum, Oliver Kramsch, and Wolfgang Zierhofer (Hants: Ashgate Publishing, 2005), 34.
18. Van Houtum, Kramsch, and Zierhofer, eds, *B/Ordering Space*.
19. Kathleen Stewart, *Ordinary Affects* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2007).

2

Playing the Fence, Listening to the Line: Sound, Sound Art, and Acoustic Politics at the US-Mexico Border

Josh Kun

In the language of real estate, Tijuana's Colonia Federal is "checkpoint adjacent." Buildings on the neighborhood's northern edge have clear views of the US interstate that feeds into the San Yisdro Port of Entry and have property lines that slam right up against the Mexican inspection stations. Its central traffic rotary is a favorite border pick-up and drop-off shortcut and its outdoor pedestrian market – stuffed with steamy *taquerias*, tourist vendors, and newspaper hustlers – is the first consumer zone that anyone walking from the other side of the line is immersed in. Its busiest street is a Pharmacy Row, an over-the-counter discount paradise of pills and creams crowned by a McDonalds, its corners crowded with taxis waiting to take anyone somewhere else. The human turnover of the border checkpoint keeps Colonia Federal in a shape-shifting state of constant motion and daily transformation and as a result, the place has a certain sonic buzz to it, a consistent ear-numbing hum of chattering bilingual voices and sputtering mufflers, the sound of spatulas, horns, cement, and exhaust.

There is one sound, though, that never goes away, one sound that is always lurking in the neighborhood's aural background – the repeating industrial, steel clank of the checkpoint turnstile that grates and knocks with each person who walks through it, a clank and knock that is made thousands of times each day at the world's busiest land border. This is the border as sound. The intervals vary with the flow of pedestrian traffic through the heavy steel turnstile, but in these days of constant crossing, in this era of exhausting incessant passage and weary back-and-forth, a minute rarely passes when someone is not pushing through to the other side, when someone is not dragging a rolling suitcase full of clothes and diapers bought in Chula Vista, when someone is not heading for a taxi direct to the tequila heart of la Revu, when someone is not lumbering or rushing across a line transformed into a national security complex, when someone is not making that sound. The border is, to be sure, many things. But here, at the *peotonal* walkway into Tijuana, the border is, unmistakably, a sound: the metallic

turnstile plunk and thump of monitoring and inspection that makes all North-South pedestrian crossings audible. The turnstile is the border's ticking clock, the clanging bell of its church tower, its *de facto* door chime.

Yet it is also the sound of the checkpoint as a contradiction of state sovereignty. While borders are allegedly designed to mark and seal the limit of the nation-state, to cleanly define the edge of sovereignty and separate one state from another, one side from the other, Us from Them, the checkpoint is a zone of state blurring where the state's insides and outsides fold into each other. Rather than a limit or an edge, border checkpoints are fluid zones of inspection and political theater where the state is eroded as much as it is solidified, "predicaments of state power," to borrow Wendy Brown's phrase.[1] The clank of the turnstile is the sound of being neither in nor out, but always both. Unlike a wall or a fence, the turnstile manages passage by allowing it and regulating it; the turnstile is defined for perforation and passage. The turnstile's clank is the sound of both sides at once, an always open, always closed doorway in and out of the state's confines.

Soundmarks, keynotes, and ethical listening

The clank of the turnstile is, in the soundscape lexicon of R. Murray Schafer, a "soundmark" of the Tijuana border. Communities not only possess landmarks that grant a sense of communal space and belonging, Schafer has written, they also possess "soundmarks," geo-acoustic traces that define a community territory through unitive, characteristic sounds.[2] Yet soundmarks are not the only characteristic sounds of a given soundscape. There also are what Schafer calls "keynotes," the sounds that exist in either background or foreground that are so common to a given sound environment that they become part of its identity and character.

The brutally clogged traffic lanes heading north out of Tijuana produce a daily cacophony of noise and music. Anyone who waits over an idling motor, jockeying for lane space between grinding brakes and bumper bumps, hears the score in their sleep, knows its melodies and rhythms by heart: the barked pitches of vendors, the alms pleas of orphanage buskers, the rattling mufflers of beat-down flatbeds, the bass booms of tourist Escalades, and the ricochet concerts that travel through open windows carrying bits of *banda sinaloense*, Lil' Wayne, Jose Jose, and Camila. It's a soundscape like no other, a sonic symphony of bi-national sonic traffic conducted by globalization's invisible 9-to-5 crunch and played with determination by urban rancheros in Ford Rangers, import/export assistants on their way to San Diego offices, gringos in college sweatshirts heading home after mountain biking in Ensenada, and Tijuana mothers on their way to JC Penney on the other side. These are keynotes that tell border stories, stories of desperate migrancy and free trade job insecurity, of tourist fear and desire, of narco-capitalist hustle and terror, of daily job commutes, and school