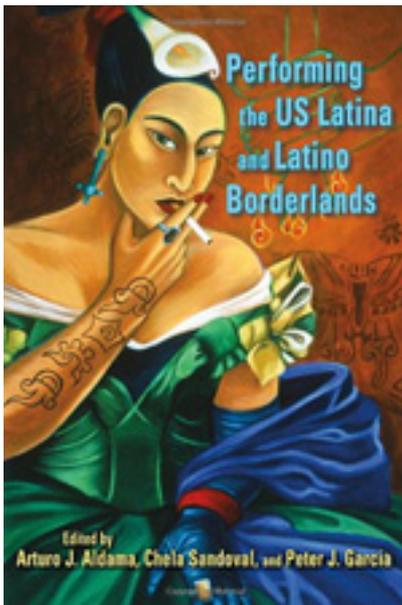


## ***Performing the US Latina and Latino Borderlands*, edited by Arturo J. Aldama, Chela Sandoval, and Peter J. García**

YVETTE MARTINEZ-VU | UCLA

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Considering that the field of Performance Studies has been predominantly centered around western (Euro- and white American-centric) epistemologies, Aldama, Sandoval and García's edited volume *Performing the US Latina and Latino Borderlands* challenges this field by asking what performance signifies in alternate traditions and epistemologies, such as those from US Indigenous, mestiz@, African@ and Spanish-speaking cultures (2). This interdisciplinary volume—which features scholars from cultural, visual, and performance studies, as well as folklore, and ethnomusicology—focuses on the relationship between Latina/o cultural identity and the concept of borderlands as it manifests in and through performance. As the title suggests, this volume introduces readers to “Borderlands Performance Studies”—a field committed to an “alter-Native cultural engineering” (1) –identifiable by its use of decolonizing performatives (whose techniques include: codeswitching, raquachismo, theater of the oppressed, haciendo caras, consciencia de la mestiza and conocimiento) that make up interventions they call “perform-antics.” In attempting to expand on performance studies, the volume itself becomes an important critical intervention that brings interdisciplinary border studies into generative dialogue.

This volume is structured by four sections or ACTOs: “Performing Emancipation: Inner Work, Public Acts,” “Ethnographies of Performance: The Río Grande and Beyond,” “Nepantla Aesthetics in the Trans/Nacional” and “(De)Criminalizing Bodies: Ironies of Performance.”

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ACTO 1 brings scholars from Chicana/o Latina/o and ethnic studies to locate forms of negotiations that oppressed subjects (Chicanas, Indígenas, or Machas) can practice to enable psychic and social forms of liberation (9). ACTO 2 provides visual and musicological approaches that map spaces and identities from and on border towns. ACTO 3 is the most varied of the four—inclusive of Spanish, English, Theatre, Education and American Indian Studies. This act complicates notions of femininity/masculinity by bringing them in conversation with lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer subjects and in a transnational context. ACTO 4 offers sociological and cultural readings of outlaw performances that exhibit musical, sartorial, and comedic responses to racial, class, and sexual denigration.

While most contributors are not performance studies scholars per se, they all show an investment in the field of Borderlands Performance Studies by placing an emphasis on corporeal, psychic, musical, or performative methodologies that highlight racialized, gendered, queer and indigenous subjects. Micaela Díaz-Sánchez contends that in the performances of Jesusa Rodríguez and Celia Herrera Rodríguez, they reclaim denied histories by using the corporeal as a primary signifier (31). Angie Chabram-Dernersesian's study centers on the narrative of Latina anxiety disorder in Chicana/o literature and claims that literature requires a performative textual practice that incorporates particular attachments to cultures, economies, and experiential knowledge, among others (61). Brenda M. Romero's entry focuses on Lila Down's borderless musical performance to denote the ways that sound functions as a central expressive feature in musical performance; sound also includes cultural attributes and semiotic weight for those on both sides of the border (272). Victor M. Rios and Patrick Lopez-Aguado take a performative approach by arguing that Chicana/o youth in Rivera, California respond to the expectation to represent a working class that must cater to rich white locals and tourists—a case exemplary of racial stigmatization, class subordination, and criminalization—through their cholo style (384-5).

Likewise several contributors—including Emma Pérez, Roberto D. Hernández, and Daphne V. Taylor-García—argue for a decolonial turn. Taylor-García defines this turn as the commitment to myriad perspectives, particularly those that are denied or deemed insignificant in narratives of progress and Western superiority (110). For Pérez, the decolonial turn is a survival strategy for queers in El Paso and Juárez who must negotiate racist, heteronormative, and colonial spaces (206). And according to Roberto D. Hernández, decoloniality also requires an understanding and stance against borders, including the interstate system that uses racial and sexual technologies to manage bodies for capitalist agendas (252). Across each ACTO, readers will find that contributions perform decolonizing performatives by highlighting interventions the editors call “perform-antics.”

This anthology, as a whole, is a compelling contribution to the fields of Latina/o and performance studies. However, while the title promises scholarship related to U.S. Latina/o studies, the contributors limit their scope (and understandably so) to cases situated in U.S. or Mexico. Likewise, the editors employ the term “Latin@” as a hypernym inclusive of various

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cultures, ethnicities and genders along the American hemisphere (4). Yet, an overwhelming amount of contributors focus on representations of and/or by Chicana/os, but what about the internal diversity of U.S., Mexico, and the borderlands? Performing the US Latina and Latino Borderlands' greatest strength is its ability to integrate scholarship on Borderlands Performance Studies from a variety of fields without privileging one over another. This anthology also provides scholars with a methodology of decolonial performativity that converges performances across genders, ethnicities or sexualities in an effort towards liberation.

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**Yvette Martinez-Vu** is a PhD student in Theater and Performance Studies at the University of California, Los Angeles. Her work examines the function of objects within contemporary Mexican and Chicana/o performances by women that concern issues of gender and indigeneity.