

Migrating *Bandas/Banderas Sonoras*: Musical Affiliation and Performances of Passing in *Indocumentados...el otro merengue*

Este artículo analiza cómo Indocumentados...el otro merengue, obra teatral de José Luis Ramos Escobar, capta las tensiones que caracterizan a los actos migratorios caribeños y las consiguientes articulaciones identitarias. Ambientada en Nueva York, la obra explora los sentimientos de (no) pertenencia y las diferencias socio-culturales entre puertorriqueños y dominicanos expresados mediante el lenguaje, el racismo y los gustos musicales. El protagonista capta esta complejidad cuando compra los documentos de un puertorriqueño fallecido y deja de ser un dominicano indocumentado, Para examinar estas transformaciones, se utilizarán conceptos teóricos provenientes de los estudios performativos, queer y musicales.

Palabras claves: Identidad, música tropical, inmigración indocumentada, teatro y performance caribeño

This article analyzes how, Indocumentados...el otro merengue, by José Luis Ramos Escobar, captures the tensions that undergird Caribbean migratory flows alongside articulations of being. Taking place in New York, the theatre piece explores feelings of (not) belonging and socio-cultural divisions between Puerto Ricans and Dominicans via linguistic markers, racism and musical preferences. The protagonist best captures this complex situation when he buys the documents of a deceased Puerto Rican man, leaving his identity as an undocumented Dominican behind in favor of this new self. In order to analyze this transformation, I apply theoretical concepts from Performance Studies, Queer Studies and Musicology.

Keywords: Identity, tropical music, undocumented immigration, Caribbean theatre & performance

“Yo soy yo” – Gregorio Santa, Indocumentados

The notion that a person simply is who they are, in many ways, is an essentialist and simplistic articulation of identity formation. Yet, it is an idea so commonly expressed through popular iconic figures from mass media outlets and cultural productions that it has come to stand in for more complex reflections about why we are who we are.¹ Taking the epigraph, “Yo soy yo,” as a point of departure, I propose the following question: How do we become someone new, someone else? Answering this requires thinking through how one assumes a new identity, motivating factors, and the end result. In the specific case of the undocumented Dominican immigrant, Gregorio, in the play, *Indocumentados...el otro merengue* (1991), by José Luis Ramos Escobar, he is who he is until he arrives in New York. Once there, his undocumented status forces him into a desperate situation where he must choose between two options: 1) Continue to live in a state of legal vulnerability and working the most degrading jobs; or 2) Assume the identity of a deceased Puerto Rican man. Electing the second option, Gregorio’s journey prompts deliberation on precisely how one adopts the sounds, movements, tastes and physical appearance of another in order to pass. At the same time, even if Gregorio is able to convince others of his new identity, what is the ultimate toll of leaving his true self behind?

I explore these questions of identity construction and the performance of passing through this particular theatre piece with a focus on its protagonist. My analysis places various disciplines into dialogue with one another to enrich understandings of shifting identity formation in Latin/o American communities. Specifically, I blend scholarship on the idea of passing with work on musical affiliation in order to more deeply understand processes of establishing the self. My interdisciplinary approach is facilitated by the fact that the play emphasizes the tensions that undergird migration and identitarian divisions through musical affiliation as expressed by Puerto Rican and Dominican characters. Moreover, the playwright believes that “*algunas músicas tienen una base en la identidad nacional – mucha gente se define con la vinculación con esta música*” (Interview 2014).² Considering music as a mechanism for expressing community helps understand how identities are created or assumed based on an affiliation with not just a *banda sonora*, but also a *bandera sonora*.³ In the case of *Indocumentados*, this affiliation with a specific musical flag and subsequent national, ethnic, or racial identity is made possible by the act of passing. I use the term “passing” as it is especially relevant for the way migrating bodies navigate geographical spaces, but also in regards to performances of self. While the term is commonly associated with a spectrum of gendered transformations in the

case of this piece, the performance is that of the passing as another nationality, race and ethnicity. I suggest that one migrant body attempts to navigate the difficulties and limits of passing as another in this particular theatre piece by using musical identities to articulate boundaries.

SITUATING *INDOCUMENTADOS*

Despite the lack of critical attention it has received, *Indocumentados* is a valuable contribution to Latin/o American, Caribbean, and Puerto Rican drama, and of equal importance is the playwright himself. Though he too has received little consideration by scholars, Ramos Escobar is one of the most prolific contributors to theatre in Puerto Rico. He earned his bachelor's degree in Drama and Comparative Literature in 1971 from the University of Puerto Rico, his M.A. in Drama from the University of Kansas, and his Ph.D. in Comparative Literature from Brown University. Ramos Escobar has been an esteemed faculty member in the Drama Department at the University of Puerto Rico and served as Dean of the Humanities at the Río Piedras campus. Outside academic settings, his performative contributions really began with his participation in various theatre groups such as Anamú, Moriviví and the National Theatre Collective, starting in the 1970s (Irizarry 108). Within these different collectives, Ramos Escobar participated actively both as an actor and director in dozens of works. Moreover, each of these groups sought to create theatre and dramatic pieces that engaged with socio-political content that they could perform and transmit to marginalized communities. As an author, he integrated these interests and political undertones into some of his most notable pieces: the novel *Sintigo* (1985); the short story collection, *En la otra orilla* (1992); and plays such as *Indocumentados... el otro merengue* (1991), *Mano dura* (1994), *Gení y el Zepelín* (1995), *El olor del popcorn* (1996), *El salvador del puerto* (1996), *Salsa gorda* (2001), *¡Puertorriqueños?* (2001), and *Mascarada* (2004). Beyond the specific content, his work as a director, writer and educator is connected by his use of theatrical conventions, intertextual techniques and imagination to experiment and play with dramatic form as part of a process of questioning the world around him.⁴

Not operating in isolation, *Indocumentados* can and should be situated within a broader context of literary productions grappling with the theme of migration. Given the historical relationships and migration trends between Puerto Rico, the Dominican Republic and New York, Ramos Escobar's work continues the tradition of incorporating the topic into Puerto Rican literature and drama. For example, Gregorio, the uneducated Dominican navigating city life, resonates with the family of *jíbaros* that experience phases of geographical movement and social shifts as part of

their transition to urban settings in *La carreta* (1953) by René Marqués. The economic hardships and difficulties faced by Dominican immigrants to find decent employment in New York, as described in Ramos Escobar's piece, echoes the challenges that poor Puerto Ricans experience in New York such as the high costs of living, drug abuse, unemployment and linguistic alienation depicted by Tato Laviera in *La carreta made a U-turn* (1979). Outside the world of theatre, *Indocumentados* echoes elements of Ana Lydia Vega's short story, "El día de los hechos" (1983). Vega's text explores the displacement of Dominican bodies in Puerto Rico and their subsequent efforts to integrate (read "pass") into the community. However, their efforts are portrayed as thwarted by a return of instinctual acts, stereotyped as characteristic of an uncivilized "Other."⁵ Magali García Ramis's 1995 short story, "Retrato del dominicano que pasó por puertorriqueño y pudo emigrar a mejor vida en los Estados Unidos," though posterior to *Indocumentados*, shares many of the same controversial and disheartening topics.⁶ Ramis forefronts the story of an undocumented Dominican immigrant, Asdrúbal, whose efforts to pass as Puerto Rican by emulating speech, cultural references and visual identity markers are virtually the same as Gregorio's passing performances in Ramos Escobar's piece. Assuming the identity of a more acceptable "Other," then, lies at the heart of all these works attempting to work through, articulate and comprehend the complexities of U.S.-Puerto Rican-Dominican immigration relations.

PERFORMANCES OF PASSING: FROM GENDER TO RACIAL CONSTRUCTIONS

Before delving into *Indocumentados*, I would like to pause on the notion of passing. It is a term commonly used by those who engage in a spectrum of gendered transformations, and has become used more often in the last several years in the United States media.⁷ The term has been repeated and attached to high profile trans figures such as Laverne Cox, Carmen Carrera and Janet Mock.⁸ As emblems and icons for trans bodies, and especially those of color, discussions of gendered transformations revolve around an idea of passing, generally understood as being perceived as female, though it can also include presenting as male. The notion of passing has been used since the emergence of scholarship on gender identity starting with Esther Newton's seminal anthropological study, *Mother Camp: Female Impersonators in America* (1972). In this work, Newton distinguishes between different kinds of transformations, referring to successful and believable "female" representations as professional acts of impersonation. Newton explains that beauty, for female impersonators, "is the closest approximation, in form and movement, to the mass media images of

glamorous women” (43). As Queer Studies developed, greatly due to the efforts of Judith Butler and Jack Halberstam in relation to exploring acts of drag and transvestism, what emerged were articulations of gender as a gender spectrum and social construct. Notions of repetition, citation and convincing re-presentations have become the subject of numerous writings.⁹ Critical attention has also included the voices of those who live within this interstitial site of belonging and not belonging, as is exemplified by the scholarly conversations regarding the film, *Paris is Burning* (1990). In the film, those who participate in the world of showcasing and living amid the plurality of gender constructions discussed and coined terminology, such as that of passing.

Though deeply rooted in historical discourses regarding race, the notion of passing has more recently been used to inform conversations about gender as part of identity constructions. The beginning of this transition can be linked to Halberstam’s work, *Female Masculinities*, in which he refers to non-performative masculinity, forging a connection between gendered and racial drag. In concrete terms, Halberstam signals that even in female-to-male cross-dressing, masculinity is often understood as a white, dominant masculinity. This is to say that when the possibility to create a new representation of gender exists, most transformations are informed by what Halberstam refers to as this hegemonic model of race. Echoing this, Kathryn Rosenfeld claims, “while drag is by definition gender performed, it must also by extension be race performed, *at least* in as much as the stylistic and performative characteristics that compose ‘gender’ operate analogously to those which, if they are not one and the same, compose ‘race’” (210). This is particularly helpful for thinking about how masculinity is connected to race. If we understand that “gender and race function intersectionally,” then, as Rosenfeld asserts, “where one is performed the other is also necessarily performed” (203).

Reflecting upon the impact of social marginalization and stereotyping, racial theorists have found Queer Theory useful in conceptualizing how race too can be (re)-presented. Racial theorist Richard Thompson Ford explains, “queer theory offered me an alternative mode – indeed, an antagonistic mode – of engagement with identity politics scholarship and with racial identity itself” (127). Thompson Ford also draws parallels between gendered and racial identities: “racial identity, like sexual identity, comes with a set of norms attached; there are (politically) correct ways of exhibiting black, Asian, Latino, and white race” (125). These “correct” ways of being a specific race are what Anthony Appiah calls racial “scripts,” which serve much like the established norms of being male or

female. For Appiah, these scripts develop as a result of collective identities that are based on “notions of how a proper person of that kind behaves: it is not that there is *one* way that gays or blacks should behave, but there are gay and black modes of behavior” (159). Appiah suggests more broadly that bodies perform scripts according to the role society assigns them, and as such, that they act out acceptable modes of behavior. Racial(ized) bodies, then, are expected to perform a kind of identity that coincides and reinforces social expectations.

At the heart of the act of passing in either gendered or racial terms, is the credibility of the final result. A prime example in contemporary U.S. society is the case of Rachel Dolezal. Born a Caucasian woman, Dolezal constructed a new self-based on a fictionalized personal history and performances of racialized scripts in order to pass as an African American woman.¹⁰ As Caroline Rosenthal and Stefanie Schafer suggest, the construction of a personal identity, even a fabricated one such as Dolezal’s, “has to be constructed and performed by a Self but also validated and authenticated by an Other. Imposter cases show that authenticity, the concept that is vital in identity formation, is a construct based on stereotypical markers of language, behavior and dress” (11). Susanna Egan examines acts of exploiting stereotypes in her work, *Burdens of Proof*, in which she describes a white man who passed as a Native American tribe member. However, as she states, though using the language of the Other and assuming their cultural conventions, “for all the credibility that Grey Owl earned in white communities, he seems never to have fooled any Native people” (73). Here, passing becomes entangled with the very notion of distinguishing authenticity from an imposter. In this intersection, Laura Browder’s work on ethnic imposture, *Slippery Characters*, is particularly enlightening. She states, “what better place to study that performance than in the self-conscious, rather than naturalized, performances of race and ethnicity – that is, with those who have consciously shifted their performance of racial or ethnic identity?” (10). She cautions, however, that there are dangers imbedded within such performances; “while ethnic impersonators may free themselves from the historical trap of an unwanted identity by passing into a new one,” their success depends on being able to manipulate and perpetuate stereotypes of the Other, “thus further miring their audience in essentialist racial and ethnic categories” (10).

HISTORICAL TENSIONS BETWEEN TWO ISLANDS

In the case of *Indocumentados*, one character’s act of passing from Dominican migrant to a new ethnic and racial category by purchasing a

deceased Puerto Rican's papers, is achieved by manipulating stereotypes that are used to demarcate differences between the two nations. While I will explore this later, it is worth outlining the historical tensions between the two populations that have led to dominant discourses about what defines Puerto Ricanness and Dominicanness. As Deborah Pacini Hernández explains, Dominican immigration began to both the U.S. and Puerto Rico in the 1960s after the fall of the nation's dictator, Rafael Trujillo. One of the motivating factors was that many Dominicans believed Puerto Rico would offer "the advantage of being Spanish speaking and culturally similar, as well as an economy and social service sector directly linked to the United States" (Pacini Hernández, "Dominicans" 136). Yet, rather than the acceptance and opportunities they had hoped for, Dominicans experienced discrimination. According to Jorge Duany, "en el fondo, los inmigrantes dominicanos se han convertido en los chivos expiatorios de la sociedad puertorriqueña. Es urgente examinar las fuentes de fricción entre dominicanos y puertorriqueños para mejorar las relaciones entre los dos grupos" (*Los Dominicanos* 20). Moreover, he explains that much of this friction is due to the racialized perception of Dominicans from the perspective of Puerto Ricans: "the public perception of Dominicans as black, hampers their full socioeconomic incorporation and externalizes racial prejudice and discrimination to foreign Others" ("Racializing" 231). Despite the presence of African heritage in Puerto Rico, "most Puerto Ricans on the island regard themselves as white" (Duany, "Racializing" 239) and prefer to identify themselves along the lines of the mythic "indio" or the national image-icon? of the "jíbaro" (Bonilla 464).

This Puerto Rican rhetoric of a (de)racialized sense of self, especially in opposition to darker bodies, is a practice replicated by Dominicans when speaking of their Haitian neighbors. The work of scholars on the topic of Dominican racial perceptions, such as Silvio Torres-Saillant's, points to efforts not just to whitewash a conception of self, but also to deracialize the body as part of a prejudicial anti-Haitian rhetoric, one that links blackness to social actions (128; 141). Associated with uprisings, instability and poverty, the visible darkness of the Haitian body has been used rhetorically and conceptually by Dominicans to distance themselves from that kind of "blackness" and barbarity. As Torres-Saillant explains, "Dominicans of African descent possess what one might call a deracialized social consciousness whose origins date back to the decline of the plantation economy in colonial times," because a tendency emerged to "limit the term *black* to people still living in slavery or engaged in subversive action against the colonial system" (134). This split between biological and social blackness has been a repeated effort, further

cemented during the Trujillo regime by the dictatorship's outright manipulation and creation of a past that linked "the Dominican population with the indigenous Taino inhabitants of Hispaniola" (139). The motivation behind this was that, "ethnically, the Indians represented a category typified by nonwhiteness as well as nonblackness, which could easily accommodate the racial in-betweenness of the Dominican mulatto" (Torres-Saillant 139). Hence, articulations of being the "black, but white black" (Torres-Saillant 127), meaning socially civilized, have come to characterize an insular notion of racial discourse.

Though they bring with them these ideas, Dominicans traveling to the United States experience great difficulty in understanding how to negotiate a new system of deeply rooted racial divisions and hierarchies. In his seminal piece on Dominican immigration to New York, *Quisqueya on the Hudson*, Duany explains, "most Caribbean immigrants in the United States are classified as black or at least nonwhite" (61). This can be particularly unsettling, as, for example, Chiqui Vicioso, a U.S.-educated Dominican poet, states: "Until I came to New York, I didn't know I was black" (quoted in Shorris 146). The perceived blackness of recently arrived Dominican bodies is "confirmed by the inner city neighborhoods in which Dominican immigrants took up residence, alongside other poor people of color, especially Puerto Ricans (many of whom were dark skinned as well) and African Americans" (Pacini Hernández, "Urban" 1029). This experience reflects earlier threads of race and poverty explored not just by scholars such as Duany, but also in literary terms by Ana Lydia Vega, García Ramis and Ramos Escobar, among many others. Additionally, these inner city interactions cause dark bodies to become lumped together under the banner of race, as opposed to the more rigid definitions used to separate themselves in their respective home countries.

Indocumentados is an astute reflection of the tensions and prejudices that newly arrived immigrants attempt to navigate and understand. For example, a conversation between Gregorio and his Dominican friend, Ampliado, foregrounds the discrimination Dominicans face. First, Gregorio has had a difficult time trying to find work in the U.S. As he says, "muchos de nosotros no sabemos leer" (Ramos Escobar 35), and without documentation, they cannot even be considered for the worst positions: "he solicitado los peores trabajos, los que rechaza todo el mundo y ni aún así consigo nada" (Ramos Escobar 36). Sherri Grasmuck's work on Dominican migration, published contemporaneously to the play, reveals, however, that Gregorio's articulation is a stereotype removed from the real-life individuals coming from this Caribbean island. As Grasmuck's study suggests, "our New York survey data reveal a profile of the illegal

Dominican immigrant population that is significantly at odds with prevailing stereotypes of the illiterate and unskilled undocumented worker" (171).

Despite the play's inaccuracy in this regard, the characters must strategize how to obtain some kind of documentation for Gregorio. He proclaims, "Además, con esta cara y este color, quién me va a creer que soy gringo," to which Ampliado responds, "Nadie, pero sí pueden creer que eres puertorriqueño" (38). This exchange is a poignant display of not just the racism that Dominicans experience within the continental United States. It is also an observation that Puerto Ricans are not as racially or physically distinct from Dominicans as they would like to think. At the same time, there is much to be gained by assuming a Puerto Rican identity. As Mary Coombs suggests in her work on passing, "the phenomenon of passing demonstrates vividly the impact of racial classification. A person who passes can obtain many of the benefits whiteness provides in society" (179). In the play, Ampliado clearly states that the benefits of passing as Puerto Rican resides not only in a being perceived as having lighter skin, but also in gaining citizenship: "de lo que se trata es de conseguir la ciudadanía y los boricuas la tienen" (Ramos Escobar 38). In order to accomplish this, Ampliado suggests they seek out the papers of a deceased Puerto Rican man, stating: "Mira, el barrio puertorriqueño se ha vuelto un mercado de identidades" (39).

THE SOUNDS OF NATIONAL IDENTITY

The tensions between Dominicans and Puerto Ricans that arise out of migration are further highlighted through musical affiliation. Sonic productions offer a unique opportunity to explore the limits of the body as music has the capacity to exist beyond those who create it, reverberate outwards and impact others. The act of recording music for future replay is a great example of this; the music exists an aural sensation that can be transmitted to countless others of the present and future. In many ways, this auditory extension of the body becomes a central site of contention in the play. In the play, discourses about music revolve around the topic of ownership, and specifically the use of *merengue* and *salsa* signal physical spaces that solidify the characters' ethnic identities. As Ramos Escobar explained, the Dominican characters would live in Washington Heights, a popular Dominican neighborhood just beyond Upper Manhattan, and the Puerto Ricans would be found in East (Spanish) Harlem. However, Ampliado and Gregorio's identification as Dominicans is associated not just with where they live, but also with the sounds of *merengue*, while Puerto Ricans in the play identify with the sounds of *salsa*. The auditory

sensations do not just parallel the external realities and separation of Puerto Rican and Dominican groups, but also represent those complexities in a way that goes beyond space, and even language.

This sonic relationship reflects music's importance and absorption into society. In the case of *merengue*, being nearly synonymous with Dominican culture and identity is deeply influenced by social, cultural and political factors (Sellers 4). In fact, the equivalence between Dominicanness and *merengue* is a result of Rafael Trujillo's dictatorial decree that it be recognized as the national music. As ethnomusicologist Robin Moore explains, *merengue* has been the nation's most popular form of dance music since the turn of the century, notably gaining national acceptance "owing in part to the populist cultural policies of the country's leader at that time, Rafael Trujillo" (83). In his position of power, Trujillo "contract[ed] composers to make arrangements of the merengue for large ensembles that were called orquestas ... and he supported them generously" (Moore 72). He also controlled radio stations and recording studios to ensure suitable transmissions, and subsequently, formation, of the sounds of the nation. Hence, according to Paul Austerlitz, *merengue* has become so entrenched with the sounds of the nation that "for most Dominicans, then, to discuss merengue's origin is to discuss Dominican national and racial identity" (4). *Merengue* also functions as an aural connector between those who have remained on the island as well as its missing bodies: immigrants. Affiliation with the music has become so intertwined with articulations of belonging that the sound itself represents national character both on and off the island: "Dominican migrants carry their music with them, and that music responds in turn to their new situations" (Sellers 164).

In a similar fashion, although *salsa* is not the official music of Puerto Rico, many have come to claim the music as their own. This is primarily a symptom of how the sounds of *salsa* emerged from Latin/o American-dominated New York barrios in the 1960s as a new model of pan-Caribbean music. The collaboration, modification and adaptation exhibited by the musicians of various genres, life experiences, and nations resulted in the hybrid quality of *salsa*. Juan Carlos Quintero Herencia speaks of this when he declares, "la ficcionalidad de la nación salsera la hace acoplable, móvil, apropiable y difícilmente pueda ser reclamada por alguna cultura o Estado nacional como un destilado puro, como el axioma original de sus esencias ancestrales" (130). Yet the fierce debates among Puerto Ricans, Nuyoricans, Cubans and academics about the parentage of *salsa* have negated the possibility for a fluid and all encompassing discourse.¹¹ A prime example is Quintero Herencia, quoted above, who bases his work, *La*

máquina de la salsa, entirely on his experiences in the Puerto Rican *salsa* scene. This confirms Peter Manuel's observation that "Puerto Rican nationalist intellectuals as well as popular opinion have long embraced salsa – for example, as opposed to rock – as a characteristically (albeit not exclusively) local music" (249). It is worth noting that U.S. record executives created the term "*salsa*" and marketing campaigns at Fania! to obscure the music's Cuban roots out of fears about post-Revolutionary Cuban socialist politics.¹² Due to the political climate between the U.S. and Cuba, by the 1960s there was no longer an influx of Cuban immigrants contributing to this new musical sound, and thus, Puerto Ricans and Nuyoricans filled the void.¹³ This shift has often led to *salsa* being considered primarily Cuban music, but played by Puerto Ricans and Nuyoricans, and enriched by *jíbaro*, *bomba* and *plena* musical styles,¹⁴ sparking their identification with the sound.

AFFILIATIONS AND BANDERAS SONORAS

Just as migrating Dominicans and Puerto Ricans carry their music with them on their journey, *Indocumentados* reflects this sonic continuation of identity markers. Capturing the assertion that Dominican immigrants "belong not only to their host community but to their home as well" (Sellers 160), Ampliado's apartment in New York is consistently associated with *merengue* juxtaposed against other raging sounds of the urban landscape. For example, Gregorio's journey to and from work is characterized by the clashing sounds of "*una música 'rock' de la modalidad 'Heavy Metal,'*" mixed with "*las interjecciones, los murmullos y las conversaciones del coro que representa a la multitud, con las bocinas de los autos, los altoparlantes y el temblor ahogado de la calle ante el paso de los trenes*" (Ramos Escobar 21). As he approaches Ampliado's apartment building, "*el cual se ambienta con música de merengue*" (21), Gregorio has not only returned to shelter, but also to the sounds of home on the island. Ampliado even articulates this when he says, "*este apartamento es un pedacito de Quisqueya aquí en la ciudad*" (25), imagining a floating bridge between New York and his native country.¹⁵ It is no surprise, then, that when Gregorio and Ampliado go to East (Spanish) Harlem to purchase the documents of a deceased Puerto Rican man, there is a significant change in the auditory relations. While crossing the boundary into the Puerto Rican neighborhood, the text notes, "*la música de merengue se va diluyendo en la canción de salsa Maestra Vida de Rubén Blades. El escenario se va convirtiendo en el barrio puertorriqueño*" (40).

Interestingly, Ramos Escobar signaled a specific *salsa* song to be played throughout the piece, though no such indication was made in

regards to the *merengue* associated with the Dominican spaces and characters. Given that the playwright is Puerto Rican, this difference is worth a brief reflection, and even more so considering that *Indocumentados* was first performed in 1989.¹⁶ What is striking about this timeframe is that the musical genre of the *bachata* was on the rise and, by 1990, had broken into the world music market with Juan Luis Guerra's *Bachata rosa*. This particular album showcases *bachata* among other Dominican and Latin American musical styles and even earned him a Grammy. It is fair to argue that at this particular historical moment, for a variety of reasons, *bachata* was nowhere near as important as a national sonic marker for Dominicans as *merengue*.¹⁷ In that regard, Ramos Escobar explains that he did not want to use *bachata* as the sonic backdrop for the New York Dominican neighborhoods because, “merengue era la raíz más tradicional y la bachata no tenía la fuerza en Puerto Rico en este momento, no sería tan fuerte” (Interview 2014).

Ramos Escobar's decision also hinged upon a reading of musical affiliation and identification rooted in a Puerto Rican perspective. As Austerlitz and Sellers explain, “in Puerto Rico, merengue had a following for quite some time because the country is a Spanish-speaking nation with a Caribbean culture that shares similarities with Dominican Culture” (Austerlitz 128). Perhaps more importantly, Ramos Escobar's comments are an example of what Sellers describes as the way Puerto Ricans “have embraced merengue as a whole and perform it in the same way as Dominicans” (168). Yolanda Martínez-San Miguel echoes this in a chapter dedicated to merengue in her book, *Caribe Two Ways*. According to Martínez-San Miguel, on one hand, *merengue* had become deeply engrained into Puerto Rican music culture, especially by the 1980s. On the other, “el merengue se ha convertido en la superficie de una frontera muy porosa, en la que tanto dominicanos como puertorriqueños negocian la redefinición de imaginarios e identidades muy próximas que insisten en distanciarse para mantener su especificidad” (178). Hence, the *bandera sonora* associated with the Dominican migrant, Gregorio, is dually representative of efforts by both Dominicans and Puerto Ricans to maintain their perceived socio-cultural and racial differences.

Returning to the sonic transition from the *banda/bandera sonora* of the Dominicans to that of the Puerto Ricans, we hear “Maestra Vida” by Rubén Blades. Ramos Escobar chose this song because of the politically conscious lyrics that elucidate the injustices and difficulties that Latin/o Americans experience (Interview 2014). In the play, these ideas become embodied by the marginalized and humiliated dark-skinned Gregorio, the racist discourses about Latin American immigrants and Luis Jiménez's

crimes as a mode of survival. To better understand the connections between “Maestra Vida” and *Indocumentados* that Ramos Escobar envisioned, I include a section from the beginning of the seven-minute song:

Maestra vida, de injusticias y justicias
 de bondades y malicias
 aun no alcanzo a comprenderte
 maestra vida que seguro no perdona
 voy buscando entre tus horas el espejo de
 los tiempos para ver tus sentimientos
 y así comprender tus cosas

Although the sentiments behind these words resonate aptly with the play’s plotline, Rubén Blades is Panamanian. There are undoubtedly many Puerto Rican artists who comment upon the injustices Latin/o experience that the playwright could have selected, which prompts the question: Why use Blades for this *banda/bandera sonora*? First, Blades has a long history of making politically charged public statements, has run for President of Panamá, and most notably, is recognized as a leading contributor to a style of *salsa* referred to as *salsa dura*. This designation has much to do with the focus on socio-politically engaged lyrics, which Blades is famous for, as not only heard in “Maestra vida,” but also in “Pedro Navaja”¹⁸ and “Tiburón.”¹⁹ Secondly, according to Ramos Escobar, Blades is accepted by Puerto Ricans as one of their own, “porque es caribeño y para nosotros no es extraño – es muy cercano a nosotros” (Interview 2014). In this sense, the musical affiliation seems to be understood as transcending national and physical boundaries.

At the same time, the play’s affiliation with specific *salsa* royalty seems to imply an undertone of racial limits. Specifically, as part of his transformation, Gregorio practices commonly made musical assertions such as “el merengue es de los platanitos dominicanos. Lo nuestro es salsa: Willie Colón, Gran Combo, Héctor Lavoe” (Ramos Escobar 59). This statement astutely reflects the kind of *bandera sonora* Puerto Ricans claim, and although Gregorio must assume more than musical affiliation to complete a believable transition, his comment indicates the importance of music in shaping identity politics. The reference to “platanitos dominicanos” is explicitly degrading and racist, but what is perhaps more telling is the fact that Blades and the members of the Puerto Rican *salsa* scene mentioned in the play are all light-skinned individuals. Since *salsa* is the result of musical contributions from throughout Latin America and the

United States, and especially Afro-Cubans and black jazz artists, Ramos Escobar's could have been more racially inclusive. Hence, the exclusion of Dominican flautist, Johnny Pacheco, is particularly provocative. More than a contributor, Pacheco redefined elements of what would become the quintessential *salsa* sounds with his "nuevo tumbao" and worked directly with Jerry Massuci to found Fania! Records.²⁰ Moreover, he was visibly dark-skinned, and his absence from the list of iconic *salsa* figures is an interesting omission, especially since the play's protagonist is Dominican and physically representative of *salsa*'s Afro heritage. In response to this line of inquiry, Ramos Escobar said that leaving Pacheco out was a conscious decision to emphasize the falsity of envisioning *salsa* as a purely Puerto Rican musical form (Interview 2014). While it is certainly true that *salsa* does not pertain solely to one Caribbean island, the play's discourse, however, seems to only reinforce a reductionist view of musical ownership, production and identity.

PERFORMING PUERTO RICANNESS

Beyond the realm of musical affiliation, Gregorio's rehearsals of Puerto Rican identity markers enhance the unreliability of outward constructions. As if to musically signal a transformation, the script describes: "*el coro vuelve a apoderarse del escenario junto con la música, que esta vez mezcla merengue, salsa, 'rock,' por momentos simultáneamente, luego alternadamente, como si la estuvieran sintonizando en un radio*" (Ramos Escobar 52). As Gregorio undergoes this transition, ranging from visible markers to replicated speech patterns and racist discourses, "el protagonista se apropia del papel de otro hasta llegar a desaparecer la traza de su propio yo" (Irizarry 119). This transformation is made possible by the fact that, as Ampliado states, "Tiene las historias de Luis, sus gustos, cómo se vestía, cómo se peinaba, es decir su vida" (Ramos Escobar 44-45). While the whirlwind of sounds creates a kind of sonic battle to control the body of Gregorio-turning-Luis, his own words reflect the internal struggle of assuming this new identity. The first act ends with the following description of Gregorio's first rehearsals as Luis:

(Luchando con el acento dominicano e intentando la entonación boricua, arrastrando las eres y aspirando las eses) Sí señor, Luis Jiménez, de Ponce, Puerto Rico. Puelto Rrico. (A una mujer del coro). Hola, jeba estás más dura que el cemento Ponce (Ella intenta irse, pero él la toma por un brazo y la hace girar hacia él) Luiz Jiménez, de calle seis de Bélgica, que no se te olvide. (53)

The second scene begins with the description “*Gregorio luce ahore como Luis Jiménez: tiene un bigote a lo Gallito de Manatí y el peinado, la ropa, en fin, todo su físico transformado*” (55). Identical in physical appearance and stature, Gregorio-turned-Luis is ready for his close up. He and Ampliado pay a local photographer to fabricate a license to solidify his new identity in legal terms. Thus, even when faced with filling out job documents or speaking to authority figures, in the eyes of the law, Gregorio is Luis. Moreover, the two go over the details of Gregorio-turning-Luis’ life to ensure that he does not confuse his lines under pressure or when meeting new people:

AMPLIADO: Toma (*Le ofrece un cigarillo mentolado*).

GREGORIO: Ese es un cigarillo de nena, pura paja. Yo solo fumo Camel. (*Saca uno, lo enciende e inhala sin dificultad*).

AMPLIADO ¿Dijistes que eras de Bayamón?

GREGORIO: No, señó. Oyó usted mal. Soy de Ponce.

AMPLIADO: Ah, claro, Ponce, la capital de Puerto Rico.

GREGORIO: Debería serlo, pero no lo es. La capital es San Juan y está en el norte. Ponce está en el sur.

AMPLIADO: ¿Su número de seguro social?

GREGORIO: 599-41-3219

Ampliado: ¿Edad?

GREGORIO: Veintinueve años. (58)

Despite his ease rattling off these facts, Ampliado tries to warn Gregorio that this transition from the identity of an undocumented Dominican immigrant to that of a deceased Puerto Rican will not be as easy as it seems. He states:

No te engañes, es mucho más enredao de lo que puedes pensar. Los trámites no, eso es cuestión de esperar el momento. Lo difícil viene luego, porque no basta con tener los documentos que digan que eres puertorriqueño, sino que tienes que volverte puertorriqueño para que todo el mundo te acepte. (39)

Beyond memorizing basic information, Gregorio quickly begins to reproduce stereotypes and charged rhetoric about the Dominican Republic that some Puerto Ricans believe. For example, he asks: “¿Para qué? Para tener dictadores como Trujillo, o golpes de estado, guerras y gobiernos corruptos mientras el pueblo pase hambre” (Ramos Escobar 69). According to Duany, the first noticeable rise in Dominican immigrants happened immediately following Trujillo’s death, as a reaction to the

dictator's repressive travel and migration policies. The waves of immigration that followed in the 1970s and 80s are emblematic of material and economic hardships as well as the collapse of public services such as running water, electricity, and education (Duany, *Blurred Borders* 57-59). In response, Puerto Ricans repeated articulations of disdain, like the one above, to emphasize their perceived difference and superior standing, rather than embrace their Dominican neighbors in search of alternative, habitable spaces (Martínez-San Miguel 152-153).

Ampliado pushes Gregorio to think about what he is saying, reminding him that not all Puerto Ricans share those beliefs. To this, he retorts: "Seguro que hay muchos así. Pero éstos no me sirven. Para que nadie sospeche necesito que Luis Jiménez nos mire por encima del hombro y se burle" (60). When pushed to consider whether or not he can continue his charade and make fun of his Dominican self, Gregorio-turning-Luis asserts not only that he can, but that he must in order to survive: "no me queda otra alternativa" (62). Ampliado bids goodbye to his friend; "Tienes una nueva vida, primo, con amistades diferentes, un vecindario distinto; eres otra persona. En cuanto te mudes a Brooklyn, cruzarás el puente final hacia Luis Jiménez" (63). For Ampliado, physically crossing the bridge from their Washington Heights into a Puerto Rican neighborhood is an act that seals Gregorio's newly constructed identity. Moving to this new space, however, is only part of Gregorio's successful performance of passing as Luis Jiménez.

THE BURDEN OF RACIAL PASSING

Even though Gregorio has been practicing the assertion of his Puerto Ricanness, and especially the rhetoric that reinforces certain stereotypes, such as disdain for Dominicans, he could not have prepared himself for the challenges he would face in sustaining his imposture. As Coombs suggests, "a person who seeks to live his/her life passing must give up much of what he/she is, be ever alert not to say or do anything that would expose her immigrant status" (179). This can be applied to *Indocumentados* as Gregorio-turned-Luis had to answer a series of questions about his paperwork to even start working at a factory. Although he sailed through this part with ease, he was faced with a more grueling round of questions by his new Puerto Rican workmates, who try to probe him with different questions: "¿Entonces tú debes conocer a Manolín?" (Ramos Escobar 68), or "¿Tú no vivías en el barrio, allá por la 98 y Lexington?" (72). Gregorio-turned-Luis, however, manages to respond without messing a beat, offering the performance of a lifetime.

Earning their trust, Gregorio-turned-Luis accompanies his coworkers to a local bar, filled with the sounds of *salsa*. There, his new friends introduce him to Toña, a waitress and young Puerto Rican woman. While drinking together with the group, to maintain his cover, Gregorio-turned-Luis must not only listen to, but also laugh at and participate in the group's racist jokes about Dominicans.²¹ For example, one of Gregorio-turned-Luis' coworkers asks, "Luis, y ¿tú no sabes ningún chiste de dominicanos?" (82), and despite trying to change the subject, he eventually relents:

*(Tragando hondo: a duras penas logra expresarse) El poema dice: Cuba y Puerto Rico son de un pájaro de las dos alas
reciben flores o balas
en el mismo corazón.
Entonces, este cubano saramambiche le cambio
los versos y dice así: Cuba y Puerto Rico son
de un pájaro las dos alas...
y el pobre Santo Domingo... (84)*

And a coworker finishes the line; "Y el pobre Santo Domingo es por donde el pájaro caga" (84). Overcome by the laughter, Gregorio seeks refuge in alcohol; "*Gregorio se dirige al bar y agarra la botella y bebe largamente mientras los obreros vociferan. La imagen de los demás obreros debe demostrar la cara fea del prejuicio*" (84). While drowning his conflicted emotions, "*una canción de salsa acompaña su algarabía*" (84), as if to sonically taunt his pain and remind him of the importance of maintaining his cover.

The significance of the previously described scene goes beyond the exchange of a racist joke and subsequent feelings of demoralization; it reflects the prominence of the "chiste étnico o racial" in Puerto Rican communities (Martínez-San Miguel 151). On the island, this form of joking is symptomatic of the hostilities caused by Puerto Ricans sharing the same geographical spaces, social networks and economic possibilities as Dominican immigrants (Martínez-San Miguel 151). Martínez-San Miguel captures the complexity of this interaction:

Es precisamente en el humor donde se va formando el estereotipo de un dominicano ignorante y poco diestro que no se puede "asimilar" a la población puertorriqueña. El chiste demarca una frontera abiertamente hostil, que va trazando las coordenadas de exclusión de una población que por su raza – mayormente negra y mulata – y su cultura caribeña se asemeja peligrosamente a los contornos de amplios sectores de la población nativa puertorriqueña. (155)

Traveling with Puerto Ricans to the *barrios* of New York, this rhetoric informs the way Gregorio's new friends continue to see Dominicans. Moreover, these words aptly reflect the invisible borders that Gregorio would be forced to negotiate in his Dominican skin. In his new role, however, he must internalize them in order to solidify his performance of racial superiority.

Beyond being subjected to racist rhetoric, Gregorio-turned-Luis seems to provoke it with his constant assertion of Puerto Rican dominance. As quoted earlier, Laura Browder's observation of manipulating essentialist stereotypes in order to pass fits particularly well with this play's progression. Gregorio-turned-Luis must engage in perpetuating reductionist and false notions of identity in order for his performance to be believable. He must continue to do this even when Toña, his new acquaintance and soon-to-be girlfriend, insists on the similarities between Puerto Ricans and Dominicans. For example, she contends: "Además, yo no sé porque ustedes le tienen tanta manía a los dominicanos si total, somos dos ramas del mismo árbol" (74). Emphasizing their shared qualities, she focuses on Gregorio: "tú mismo, mírate, ¿qué diferencia hay entre un dominicano y tú? Ninguna, papi. Tú puedes ir a Santo Domingo y nadie sabría decir si eres puertorriqueño o no" (75). She seems to be addressing the Dominican Gregorio directly, sending him a message that, despite what this group of Puerto Rican men thinks, there is no need to hide his Dominicaness. At one point she even proclaims that she would date a dark-skinned Dominican, especially if he knew how to hold her close as they danced *merengue*. Yet, he does not shed his Puerto Ricanness.

The weight of this performance of passing does begin to change Gregorio-turned-Luis, as he uses alcohol more and more frequently to mask his pain. While no one suspects his identity is a performance, his behavior becomes more erratic and neurotic, so much so that, "la tensión interna lo lleva a la bebida y, por el desenfreno de su nueva vida, pierde el trabajo" (Irizarry 122). Even when Toña tries to console him, all he wants to do is drink: "Bebe, Toña, bebe conmigo ... Bebe, brindemos por las malditas leyes de este país, por las ventanas podridas, por los documentos sagrados" (Ramos Escobar 90). At this point, nearing the end of the play, not even drinking seems to help Gregorio control his inner battle. While asleep, his façade breaks down, and Toña observes: "saltaste de la cama como un loco y empezaste a decir disparates. ¿Qué te ocurre mi negro? ¿Por qué negabas tu nombre?" (91). Gregorio-turned-Luis cannot maintain the identity he has tried so desperately to assume.²² For Gregorio, he can

no longer bear the burden of passing as Puerto Rican nor the humiliating racial rhetoric.

When he confesses his true identity to Toña, he cements the credibility of his passing. The effort he exerted in reiterating stereotypes, memorizing Luis' background information and even listening to *salsa* made his transformation not just complete, but accepted. Although Toña emphasizes, "tú sabes lo que más me duele ... Que si me hubieras dicho desde el principio tal vez yo lo habría entendido" (Ramos Escobar 98), she still calls him Luis, a reminder of his successful transformation. In his attempt to shed his "Puerto Ricanness" he runs towards the direction of Ampliado's apartment and Dominican neighborhood, shouting "Yo soy dominicano, me oyen, y no renuncio a mi ser. Nunca es demasiado tarde. Yo soy yo, óiganlo bien, Gregorio Santa, con o sin documentos" (99). While Ampliado can offer him no help, Gregorio's assertion, "Regreso a Gregorio Santa," is accompanied by "*un merengazo imponente estremece el escenario*" (101), as if once again enveloping him in his *banda/bandera sonora* of Dominican identity.

UNINTENTIONAL MARKINGS: CONCLUDING REMARKS

In the end, the secret Gregorio tried to disguise was too much. Despite having successfully "passed" as Puerto Rican, the shift in national, ethnic and racial categories afforded him certain liberties while at the same time was marred by racist Puerto Rican views of Dominicans. Forced to participate in denigrating his own past, inhabiting this new identity led Gregorio to quickly spiral into a melancholic and alcoholic state. Reaching his limit and no longer able to continue passing as someone and something that he was not, the experience prompted him to embrace his racialized and *merengue*-listening Dominican roots. Effectively, he was what he was. Replacing his external indicators of passing equally included accepting anew the sounds of a nation, waving his *bandera sonora dominicana*. Shedding articulations of *salsa's* superiority and moved by the rhythms of *merengue*, Gregorio set out to return to his previous life on the island and himself. Sadly, though, his efforts were thwarted. He was not only mistaken for the body and identity he assumed as Luis, but also subjected to the same fate as his Puerto Rican counterpart: shot and killed by police. Tragically, this ending highlights the unforeseen consequences of attempting to pass as another, which in this case, forever marked Gregorio.

College of William and Mary

NOTES

- 1 The popular refrain, “I am what I am,” has been a catchphrase of United States icons such as Popeye, Gloria Gaynor, The Jonas Brothers and Merle Haggard, to name a few. The equivalent phrase in Spanish, “Soy quien soy,” was made popular by Mexican cinema actor, Pedro Infante, and more recently by Mexican Rapper C-Kan.
- 2 This is echoed by those who explore the importance of music in Caribbean cultures, such as music historians as well as cultural studies scholars. See Pacini Hernández; Austerlitz; Rivera; Benítez-Rojo; Quintero Herencia.
- 3 Deborah Pacini Hernández states, in regards to *reggeaton*, that it “is the expression of a community that shares a particular social context” (“Dominicans” 150). This is echoed by Ruth Glasser in her work on Puerto Rican migration and music; “the way Puerto Ricans made meaning of their music and musicians and how they decided what was an authentic or traditional expression varied between social groups as well as between individuals, always a dialectic with the concrete conditions under which the music was produced” (9).
- 4 As Priscilla Meléndez states, many Latin American dramaturges “han salido en busca de multiples formas de percibir la realidad tanto externa o contextual como interna” (173) as a reflection of broader theatre endeavors in the 1980s and 90s.
- 5 For a succinct summary of Lydia Vega’s piece see Méndez 102.
- 6 For an exploration of Ramis’ work see Méndez 109-110.
- 7 The term passing is commonly used along with the idea of “realness” to suggest someone looks like a cis male or female. The term “fishy,” is a slang term also used to reference men who look as feminine as cis females. The act of passing, does not solely pertain to notions of gender. Rather, for example, within the United States context, the concept of passing can be dated to historical moments of slavery and abolition. Negotiating citizenship and freedom, African Americans could pass as white based on phenotypical markers of race. See, for example, Ginsberg; Kennedy; and Browder. Outside of the United States, there are many instances of passing as another race or gender that can solidify identity transformations or serve as acts of survival, depending on context. *dejad esa oración en verde para que la formule la autora mejor*
- 8 Laverne Cox is a highly visible trans television and screen actress as well as activist and public speaker. On the topic of gender and sex, she states: “When we distinguish biological sex from gender identity, we begin to understand the constructs of man and woman as a set of culturally coded signifiers that are fluid rather than absolute”. Carmen Carrera is one of the most high-profile

trans figures to emerge from the hit television show, *RuPaul's Drag Race*. Carrera was not allowed to continue her transition during the show's filming, but openly discussed her trans identity afterwards, creating the possibility for trans bodies to appear on later seasons of *RuPaul's Drag Race*. She has also been public about her desire to become the first trans Victoria's Secret model. Janet Mock is a well-regarded figure in the trans community as an activist, former editor of People.com and appearances on an HBO series. She also wrote a memoir about her experiences growing up as a trans person of color, *Redefining Realness*. Mock explains that "realness" for trans women means "being 'undetected' to the 'untrained' or 'trained.'" Simply, 'realness' is the ability to be seen as heteronormative, to assimilate, to not be read as other or deviate from the norm" (116).

- 9 See Butler, *Bodies that Matter* and *Gender Trouble*; Halberstam, *Female Masculinity* and *In a Queer Time*; Freeman; Harris; Eschen; Murray.
- 10 The controversy of the Dolezal case runs deep. Not only did she perform a racial identity based on a personal affinity, but came to hold power based on a fictionalized narrative of Otherness; she was the President of the NAACP in Spokane, Washington. Moreover, as an educator of Africana Studies, her case, and her seemingly non-critical stance stating that she never intended to offend anyone, raises complex issues of intent and harm in relation to racial passing. See McGreal as one of many social media related stories. Also see also Brubaker for a consideration of Dolezal's story in conversation with the polemic transgender case of Caitlynn Jenner.
- 11 See Calvo Ospina; Padura Fuentes; Aparicio; Leymarie.
- 12 See Padura Fuentes 57.
- 13 See Leymarie 165-177.
- 14 See Manuel "Puerto Rican Musical and Cultural Identity," especially pp. 256-260.
- 15 Here, I use the notion of floating bridge inspired by the work of Fernando Valerio Holguín and his exploration of the floating border. Though examined and applied in relation to Dominican and Haitian relations, it is an apt way to understand the de-territorialization that happens as part of Dominican immigration to the U.S. and the bonds to the island that remain. See Valerio-Holguín 77.
- 16 The play was published in 1990, but first performed in 1989. See Irizarry 108.
- 17 For an in-depth historical and social analysis of how *bachata* music migrated from the periphery of Dominican culture to becoming a mainstream popular music, see Deborah Pacini Hernández. As the premier scholar on the topic, her writings span decades and cover complex issues such as race, politics and social class as they come into contact via musical production. See Pacini Hernández 1989; 1991; 1992; 1995. Most recently her work on *bachata* music in

- New York explores racial tensions and prejudices that musicians face as part of *bachata's* delayed success outside of the island. See Pacini Hernández.
- 18 “Pedro Navaja” is a song about a Latino man’s life as a criminal on the streets of New York.
- 19 “Tiburón” begins with the sounds of water and radio transmissions to sonically allude to U.S. imperialist acts in Latin America, which the song’s lyrics more openly address.
- 20 See Padura Fuentes 57.
- 21 Randall Kennedy’s description of what happened to a black woman who passed as white is particularly applicable to this situation: “She repeatedly found herself in situations in which whites, thinking that she was one of ‘them,’ freely damned ‘the niggers’ – verbal aggressions that bothered her despite her own alienation from Negroes” (162).
- 22 His subsequent undoing embodies articulations of the aforementioned black woman trying to pass as white; “Being on guard all the time against a slip that might unravel her tale of lies imposed a terrible burden that she eventually decided was too heavy to bear” (Kennedy 162).

WORKS CITED

- APARICIO, FRANCES. *Listening to Salsa: Gender, Latin Popular Music, and Puerto Rican Cultures*. Hanover: Wesleyan UP, 1998.
- APPIAH, K. ANTHONY. “Identity, Authenticity, Survival: Multicultural Societies and Social Reproduction” *Multiculturalism*. Ed. Amy Gutmann. New Jersey: Princeton UP, 1994. 149 – 163.
- AUSTERLITZ, PAUL. *Merengue: Dominican Music and Dominican Identity*. Philadelphia: Temple UP, 1997.
- BENÍTEZ-ROJO, ANTONIO. *La isla que se repite: El Caribe y la perspectiva posmoderna*. Hanover: Ediciones del Norte, 1989.
- BONILLA, FRANK “Beyond survival: Porque seguiremos siendo puertorriqueños.” *The Puerto Ricans: Their History, Culture, Society*. Ed. Adalberto López. Cambridge: Schenkman Publishing Co., 1980. 453-464.
- BROWDER, LAURA. *Slippery Characters: Ethnic Impersonators and American Identities*. Chapel Hill: U of North Carolina P, 2000.
- BRUBAKER, ROGERS. “The Dolezal affair: race, gender, and the micropolitics of identity.” *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 39.3 (2016): 414-448.
- BUTLER, JUDITH. *Bodies That Matter*. New York: Routledge, 1993.
- . *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*. 1990. New York: Routledge, 2006.
- CALVO OSPINA, HERNANDO. *Salsa: Havana Heat, Bronx Beat*. London: Page Brothers, 1995.

- COOMBS, MARY. "Interrogating Identity." *Mixed Race America and the Law: A Reader*. Ed. Kevin R. Johnson. New York: New York UP, 2003. 179-180.
- DUANY, JORGE. *Blurred Borders: Transnational Migration between the Hispanic Caribbean and the United States*. Chapel Hill: The U of North Carolina P, 2011.
- . Introducción. *Los dominicanos en Puerto Rico. Migración en la semi-periferia*. Ed. Jorge Duany. Rio Piedras: Ediciones Huracán, Inc. 1990. 19-25.
- . "Racializing Ethnicity in the Spanish-Speaking Caribbean: A Comparison of Haitians in the Dominican Republic and Dominicans in Puerto Rico." *Latin American and Caribbean Ethnic Studies* 1.2 (2006): 231-248.
- DUANY, JORGE AND CUNY DOMINICAN STUDIES INSTITUTE, "Quisqueya on the Hudson: The Transnational Identity of Dominicans in Washington Heights" New York: CUNY Academic Works, 2008. 2nd edition. 1-70.
- EGAN, SUSANNA. *Burdens of Proof: Faith, Doubt, and Identity in Autobiography*. Ontario: Wilfrid Laurier UP, 2011.
- ESCHEN, NICOLE. "Embodying the Past: Citing and Circulating Celebrity." *Extensions: The Online Journal of Embodiment and Technology* 4 (2008): 32-43.
- FREEMAN, ELIZABETH. *Time Binds: Queer Temporalities, Queer Histories*. Durham: Duke UP, 2010.
- GARCÍA RAMÍ, MAGALI. *Las noches del Riel de Oro*. San Juan: Editorial Cultural, 1995.
- GINSBERG, ELAINE. ED. *Passing and the Fictions of Identity*. Durham: Duke UP, 1996.
- GLASSER, RUTH. *My Music Is My Flag: Puerto Rican Musicians and Their New York Communities, 1917-1940*. Los Angeles: U of California P, 1995.
- GRASMUCK, SHERRI. *Between Two Islands: Dominican International Migration*. Los Angeles: U of California P, 1991.
- HALBERSTAM, JUDITH. *Female Masculinity*. Durham: Duke UP, 1998.
- . *In a Queer Time & Place: Transgender Bodies, Subcultural Lives*. New York: New York UP, 2005. Print.
- HARRIS, DANIEL. "The Aesthetic of Drag." *Salmagundi* 108 (1995): 62-74.
- IRIZARRY, GUILLERMO B. "Metadrama y subjetividad en tres obras de José Luis Ramos Escobar." *Latin American Theatre Review* 34.2 (2001): 107-125.
- KENNEDY, RANDALL. "Racial Passing." *Mixed Race America and the Law: A Reader*. Ed. Kevin R. Johnson. New York: New York UP, 2003. 157-168.
- LEYMARIE, ISABELLE. *Cuban Fire: The Story of Salsa and Latin Jazz*. New York: Continuum, 2002.
- MANUEL, PETER. "Puerto Rican Musician and Cultural Identity: Creative Appropriation of Cuban Sources from Danza to Salsa." *Ethnomusicology* 38.2 (1994): 249-280.
- MARTÍNEZ-SAN MIGUEL, YOLANDA. *Caribe Two Ways: Cultura de la migración en el Caribe insular hispánico*. San Juan: Ediciones Callejón, 2003.

- MCGREAL, CHRIS. "Rachel Dolezal: 'I wasn't identifying as black to upset people. I was being me.'" *The Guardian* 13 December 2015. N.pag. Web.
- MELÉNDEZ, PRISCILLA. *La dramaturgia hispanoamericana contemporánea: teatralidad y autoconciencia*. Madrid: Pliegos, 1990.
- MÉNDEZ, DANNY. *Narratives of Migration and Displacement in Dominican Literature*. New York: Routledge, 2012.
- MOCK, JANET. *Redefining Realness*. New York: Atria Books, 2014.
- MOORE, ROBIN. *Music in the Hispanic Caribbean: Experiencing Music, Expressing Culture*. New York: Oxford UP, 2010.
- MURRAY, SARAH E. "Dragon Ladies, Draggin' Men: Some Reflections on Gender, Drag and Homosexual Communities." *Public Culture* 6 (1994): 343-363.
- NEWTON, ESTHER. *Mother Camp: Female Impersonators in America*. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1972.
- PACINI HERNANDEZ, DEBORAH. *Bachata: A Social History of a Dominican Popular Music*. Philadelphia: Temple UP, 1995.
- . "Bachata: From the Margins to the Mainstream." *Popular Music* 11.3 (1992): 359-364.
- . "Dominicans in the Mix" *Reggaeton*. Eds. Raquel Z. Rivera, Wayne Marshall and Deborah Pacini Hernández. Durham: Duke UP, 2009. 135-159.
- . "'La lucha sonora': Dominican Popular Music in the Post-Trujillo Era." *Latin American Music Review* 12.2 (1991): 105-123.
- . "Social Identity and Class in *Bachata*, an Emerging Dominican Popular Music." *Latin American Music Review* 10.1 (1989): 69-91.
- . "Urban Bachata and Dominican Racial Identity in New York." *Cahiers d'Études africaines* 216.4 (2014): 1027-1054.
- PADURA FUENTES, LEONARDO. *Faces of Salsa: A Spoken History of the Music*. Trans. Stephen J. Clark. Washington: Smithsonian Books, 2003.
- QUINTERO HERENCIA, JUAN CARLOS. *La máquina de la salsa: Tránsitos del sabor*. San Juan: Ediciones Vertigo, 2005.
- RAMOS ESCOBAR, JOSÉ LUIS. *Indocumentados....el otro merengue*. Rio Piedras: Editorial Cultural, 1991.
- . Personal Interview. 2014
- RIVERA, RAQUEL Z. "New York Afro-Puerto Rican and Afro-Dominican Roots Music: Liberation Mythologies and Overlapping Diasporas." *Black Research Journal* 32. 2 (2012): 3-24.
- ROSENFELD, KATHRYN. "Drag King Magic: Performing/Becoming the Other." *The Drag King Anthology*. Eds. Donna Troka, Kathleen Lebesco and Jean Noble. New York: Harrington Park Press, 2002. 201-219.
- ROSENTHAL, CAROLINE AND STEFANIE SCHÄFER. "Introduction." *Fake Identity?: The Impostor Narrative in North American Culture*. Eds. Caroline Rosenthal and Stefanie Schäfer. New York: Campus Verlag, 2014. 11-26.

- SELLERS, JULIE A. *Merengue and Dominican Identity: Music as a National Unifier*. North Carolina: McFarland & Company, 2004.
- SHORRIS, EARL. *Latinos: A Biography of a People*. New York: Avon Books, 1992.
- THOMPSON FORD, RICHARD. "What's Queer about Race?" *After Sex? On Writing Since Queer Theory*. Eds. Janet Haley and Andrew Parker. Durham: Duke UP, 2011. 121-129.
- TORRES-SAILLANT, SILVIO. "The Tribulations of Blackness: Stages in Dominican Racial Identity." *Latin American Perspectives* 25.3 (1998): 126-146.
- VALERIO-HOLGUÍN, FERNANDO. "Primitive Borders: Cultural Identity and Ethnic Cleansing in the Dominican Republic." *Primitivism and Identity in Latin America: Essays on Art, Literature, and Culture*. Eds. Camayd-Freixas, Erik and José Eduardo González. Tucson: U of Arizona P, 2000. 75-88.
- VEGA, ANA LYDIA. *Encancaranublado*. Río Piedras: Antillana, 1983.